

The New Realism was a school or a tradition in American philosophy that emerged around 1910. It was established by a group of scholars from Harvard University and Columbia University. The main figures of the New Realism were Edwin Holt (a famous philosopher and psychologist), Walter Marvin, William Pepperell Montague, Ralph Perry (the editor of William James' posthumous *Essays in Radical Empiricism*), Walter Pitkin and Edward Spaulding. They co-edited a book titled *The New Realism: Cooperative Studies in Philosophy* which was published in 1912 and became the main source, helpful in reconstructing their views.

Philosophers who called themselves the New Realists were mainly interested in epistemology, that is – theory of knowledge. They rejected so-called Epistemological Dualism: a view established by John Locke and widely accepted in modern philosophy. Roughly speaking, according to Locke we don't know things in themselves but only ideas caused by these things – which are the products of our mind. According to Locke, the model of knowledge was the only possible account of how we can see the same object while its shape or color is changing (the first depends on the perspective and the second – on the color of light or luminosity.) However, a disadvantage of that theory is that we don't have a direct access to the world. The New Realists saw this conclusion as a source of a fundamentally wrong metaphysics that had been haunting philosophy from the times of Descartes. They proposed a new theory of direct realism – a view according to which we have direct access to things in the world.

But the New Realists are something more than another group of philosophers from a dusty bookshelf. They were also scientists, mainly psychologists. Suffice it to say that Edwin Holt was a teacher of two great behaviorists: Gordon Allport and Edward Tolman. The rest of them did some advanced research in experimental psychology; for example, they were amongst the first scholars who put stress on environmental factors in explaining human behavior. It is distinctive for their thought to merge science and philosophy. That's why their ideas might be interesting not only for the historians of philosophy but also for historians of science and scientists themselves.

Unfortunately, the New Realism is almost completely forgotten today. That's why I'm going to bring it back to life. I'd like to investigate the philosophy of the New Realism: reconstruct the main theses and arguments, discover its inspiration, show its influence on philosophy and science in general. Although my main purpose is to do some historical research, I'm also going to show that the problems undertaken by the New Realists might be found in recent philosophy. That's why I think my investigations on the New Realism might be beneficial to contemporary philosophers.