

### 3. REALISM.

#### a. The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy

From the start of the twentieth century, British Hegelianism came under increasingly hostile attack and entered a period of decline from which it never recovered. This period was characterised by Bosanquet as the 'meeting of extremes in contemporary philosophy', these extremes being the new Realism of Moore and Russell on the one hand and the speculative Idealism of Croce, Gentile and Husserl on the other.<sup>1</sup> After the death of Caird in 1908, the leadership of the Idealist movement passed to Bradley and Bosanquet, although Absolute Idealism had now entered a period of decline marked by the perceived loss of the philosophical battle with the new Realist and analytic philosophy and an attitude of hostility of anything influenced by, or originating in Germany in the aftermath of the first world war.<sup>2</sup> In the following decade, Idealism fought its final battle with the emerging Realist philosophy, which ended not so much in a decisive victory for the Realist's, but more of a gradual fading of the Idealist star that had shone so brilliantly only thirty years before. Anyone reading any of the histories of twentieth century British philosophy could be forgiven for gaining the impression that the transition from nineteenth century British Idealism to twentieth century analytic and Realistic philosophy was effected as it were, by the stroke of a pen, by G.E. Moore's 'Refutation of Idealism'.<sup>3</sup> Along with The Principles of Mathematics and Principia Ethica, this article signalled an apparently logical break from the preceding century and prepared the ground for the new philosophy of the twentieth century. Indeed many of the histories of twentieth century Anglo-Saxon philosophy often provide no more than a caricature of British Absolute Idealism and usually it is no more than a caricature of the Idealism of Bradley. The Scottish philosophic tradition of Hegelianism is typically ignored before Moore's 'refutation' is used to demolish both the Scottish and English Idealist philosophies, even though there were significant differences between the two. However, the older Idealism was not quite so easily 'refuted' and for the first two decades of the century, Idealism remained dominant, giving way to the new philosophy gradually and then only with the passing away of its members.<sup>4</sup> Another significant factor in the decline and fall of Idealism was the conversion of many of the older Idealists to the new Realism, philosophers such as

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1 Bosanquet, B. The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy London, 1924.

2 In response to these hostile perceptions of German philosophy, there was the notable defence of it by Muirhead in his German Philosophy in relation to the War London, 1915.

3 There are many histories of twentieth century British philosophy, the main ones being: Urnson, J.O. Philosophical Analysis. Its development between the two world wars London, 1960; Warnock, G.J. English Philosophy since 1900 London, 1969; Ayer, A.J. Philosophy in the Twentieth Century London, 1984.

4 Many of the nineteenth century Idealist's passed away during the twenties, with only Muirhead and Collingwood left to continue the Idealist tradition into the nineteen thirties.

Samuel Alexander who maintained a systematic conception of philosophy in their transition from Idealism to Realism, although they were recognised by Bosanquet as still contributing to the development of 'speculative' philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

#### b. The Refutation of Idealism

The philosophic reaction to British Hegelianism took the form of a 'refutation' of Idealism as the denial of both the content and method of Idealism and the two leading figures in the reaction to Idealism, G.E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, were at one in their assessment of Idealism, although they drew differing consequences to this assessment.<sup>2</sup> Both rejected Idealism as an account of the *content* of philosophy, but while Moore became more concerned with the practice of the philosophical method of analysis, Russell was more concerned with metaphysical and logical issues and in many ways the problems they discussed determined the philosophical agenda, if not the outcome, of British philosophy during the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> Both Moore and Russell were educated at Cambridge under the influence of McTaggart and it is of some value to examine the early views of Moore to illustrate the peculiarly Idealist nature of the views of these early Realists. In his 1896 article, 'The Nature of Judgement', Moore argued that an 'idea' is not a mental fact, but like a Platonic form, is eternal and immutable, existing independently of our thinking.<sup>4</sup> A proposition, on this account, is a relation between concepts, which is to say that the proposition denotes not a psychological belief nor a form of words, but the object of belief.<sup>5</sup> The truth of a proposition is a simple, unanalysable, intuitive property which belongs to some propositions but not to others.<sup>6</sup> As Passmore observes of Moore's account, the 'world' is "...composed of eternal and immutable concepts; propositions relate concepts one to another; a *true* proposition predicates 'truth' of such a relation of concepts, and is a 'fact' or a 'reality'."<sup>7</sup> On such an account propositions are identified with events and although Moore had, by the time of his lectures of 1910-11, come to reject

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1 Bosanquet op cit p vi

2 The course of their intellectual development has of course been mapped out on several occasions not least in their respective autobiographies. For general information of their views see Passmore op cit Ch 9; Caponigri op cit Vol. 5 pp 90 - 102; Ayer op cit Ch. 2; Warnock op cit Ch 2 - 3

3 See for example Moore's Philosophical Studies London, 1922 and Russell's 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism' in Muirhead, J. (ed.) Contemporary British Philosophy First Series, London, 1922. As only one example of their continuing influence, Russell's theory of definite descriptions outlined in his 'On Denoting' of 1905 is the starting point of much contemporary philosophic discussion on the nature of names and particularly proper names as found in the work of Kripke etc.

4 Passmore op cit p 202-4

5 ibid p 203

6 ibid p 204

7 loc cit

this identification of propositions and events, it was a view which John Anderson was to make exclusively and distir ctively his own.<sup>1</sup>

G.E. Moore's 'Refutation of Idealism' was, and still is, typically held to be an exemplary example of the analytic style of philosophy.<sup>2</sup> However although Moore later recognised certain 'confusions and mistakes' in this article, he did not use this opportunity to correct these errors.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore of some historical and logical value to re-examine Moore's 'refutation', to assess the exact force of the 'refutation' and the implications which follow from it.<sup>4</sup> The 'refutation' falls naturally into two parts - the first can be regarded as a propositional or logical refutation of Idealism and is primarily concerned with the logical status of the Idealist proposition 'esse est percipi', while the second can be regarded as an epistemological refutation of Idealism and is concerned with the ontological status of what actually exists in the act of perception.<sup>5</sup> Within the propositional refutation, Idealism is defined as "esse is percipi" which is held to be the logical foundation of all versions of Idealism, with 'esse' referring to reality or existence and 'percipi' involving both perception and conception, it being sufficient for Moore's argument that 'percipi' refers to what is common to both sensation and thought.<sup>6</sup> Moore argued that there are three possible interpretations of this proposition. Firstly, Idealism could be an analytic proposition where 'percipi' and 'esse' are synonymous, but as he correctly observes, Idealism was not intended to be simply a tautological proposition.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, Idealism could be a proposition where 'percipi' is part of the meaning of 'esse', where 'percipi' and 'something else besides' ( which he designates with an 'x' ), defines what 'esse' is.<sup>8</sup> Moore argued that the only important sense of this interpretation of Idealism where 'percipi' is part of the meaning of 'esse', is whether 'percipi' is necessarily connected with this other part 'x'.<sup>9</sup> This conclusion yields the third possible meaning of the proposition 'esse is percipi', where 'esse' and 'percipi' are connected by a relation of necessity and hence forms a necessary synthetic proposition, where two distinct, empirical terms are related by the copula of necessity.<sup>10</sup> As such a necessary synthetic proposition, Moore concedes that it cannot be refuted and if this

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1 ibid p 205.

2 ibid p 207.

3 Moore op.cit p viii

4 For discussions of Moore's refutation within the analytic tradition see, Ducasse, C.J. "Moore's 'The Refutation of Idealism'" in Schipp, P.A. (ed) The Philosophy of G.E. Moore New York, 1952, pp 223 - 251; A.J. Ayer Russell and Moore Cambridge (Mass.), 1971, pp 137 - 160.

5 Moore op.cit pp 1 - 30. Moore himself suggests such a division on p 16 of the 'refutation'

6 ibid p 5 ff

7 ibid p 8 - 9.

8 ibid p 9 - 10

9 ibid p 10

10 ibid p 11

proposition is taken by Idealist's as simply a 'self evident' truth, by which he seems to mean a synthetic contingent truth, then Moore argued that such a proposition does not appear to be true to him.<sup>1</sup> Although Idealism understood as a necessary synthetic proposition is the only sense in which it can be true and important, Moore argued that it can have another sense in which it is an important falsehood, which he believed all Idealist's hold.<sup>2</sup>

They (Idealist's) do not perceive that *Esse is percipi* must, if true, be merely a self-evident synthetic truth: they either identify with it or give as a reason for it another proposition which must be false because it is self-contradictory. Unless they did so, they would have to admit it was a perfectly unfounded assumption; and if they recognised that it was *unfounded*, I do not think they would maintain its truth to be evident. *Esse is percipi*, in the sense I have found for it, *may* indeed be true; I cannot refute it: but if this sense were clearly apprehended, no one, I think, would *believe* that it was true.<sup>3</sup>

Moore argued that the Idealist theory of a necessary connection between the subject and object of experience is based on the assumption that it is an analytic truth which is proved by the law of contradiction alone.<sup>4</sup> The Idealist, he argued, fails to see that the subject and the object are distinct; that when he thinks of 'yellow' and the 'sensation of yellow', he fails to see that there is anything in the latter which is not in the former.<sup>5</sup>

To assert that yellow is necessarily an object of experience is to assert that yellow is necessarily yellow - a purely identical proposition, and therefore provable by the law of contradiction alone. Of course, the proposition also implies that experience is, after all, something distinct from yellow - else there would be no reason for insisting that yellow is a sensation; and that the argument thus both affirms and denies that yellow and the sensation of yellow are distinct, is what sufficiently refutes it.<sup>6</sup>

Moore conceded however that many Idealist's would deny that they fail to distinguish between a sensation and its object, although he argued that they would admit that the

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1 loc cit

2 ibid p 11 - 12

3 ibid p 12 (his emphasis)

4 ibid p 12 -13

5 ibid p 13

6 ibid p 13 - 14

sensation and the object form an 'inseparable or organic unity'.<sup>1</sup> However Moore argued that the defence of such a principle involves the practice of holding two contradictory propositions, a practice which he regarded as fallacious.<sup>2</sup> Moore concluded therefore, that the proposition 'esse is percipi', if it is to be true must be either the analytic proposition that whatever is experienced also must be experienced or else the Idealist gives as a reason for it, a proposition which must be false because self-contradictory.<sup>3</sup> At this point Moore proposes a 'complete break' in his argument and commences what might be called his epistemological refutation of Idealism in considering the question of what a sensation or idea is. Moore argued that in every sensation there are two distinct elements - 'consciousness', in respect of which all sensations are alike, and the 'objects' of consciousness, in respect of which all sensations differ.<sup>4</sup> On this account of knowledge, Moore argued that there are only three possible relationships which could occur between the subject and the object of knowledge when the sensation of blue is said to exist. Either consciousness alone exists, the blue alone exists; or both exist, the second of which he rejected for if the sensation of blue exists, then consciousness must also exist.<sup>5</sup> As he argued, "If, therefore, any one tells us that the existence of blue is the same thing as the existence of the sensation of blue he makes a mistake and a self-contradictory mistake, for he asserts either that blue is the same thing as blue together with consciousness, or that it is the same thing as consciousness alone."<sup>6</sup> Hence if it is asserted that 'Blue exists' is meaningless without the assertion 'The sensation of blue exists', then 'blue' is to be identified with 'the sensation of blue' and such an identification denies the independence of the object which is therefore false because self-contradictory.<sup>7</sup> That is, if we are told that the existence of blue is inconceivable apart from the existence of a sensation then this is a self-contradictory error for we "...can and must conceive of the existence of blue as something quite distinct from the existence of the sensation"<sup>8</sup> The only alternatives left, Moore concluded, is that either both consciousness and the sensation exist or that consciousness alone exists. Moore therefore considered the Idealist contention that it is consciousness alone which exists, where the 'object' is the *content* of a sensation or idea. Hence when we consider a blue flower, Moore argued that when 'blue' is said to be the content of the 'sensation of blue' then the relation between 'blue' and 'consciousness' is the same as the relation between 'blue' and the 'flower'.<sup>9</sup>

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1 ibid p 14

2 ibid p 16

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 17

5 ibid p 18

6 loc cit

7 loc cit

8 ibid p 18 - 9

9 ibid p 21 - 2

The 'sensation of blue', on this view, differs from a blue bead or a blue beard, in exactly the same way in which the two differ from one another: the blue bead differs from a blue beard, in that while the former contains glass, the latter contains hair; and the 'sensation of blue' differs from both in that, instead of glass or hair, it contains consciousness. The relation of blue to the consciousness is conceived to be exactly the same as that of the blue to the glass or hair: it is in all three cases the *quality* of a *thing*.<sup>1</sup>

On this Idealist theory therefore, any sensation or idea is a 'mental image' and the 'object' is no more than a *quality* of this 'image'.<sup>2</sup> However Moore rejected such an account arguing that we have no reason for supposing that there are such things as 'mental images' and that even if there were such things then no sensation or idea is merely a 'thing' of this kind. That is, if 'blue' is part of the 'sensation of blue', blue is also related to the sensation in another way, a way which traditional Idealism has overlooked and it is this way which alone makes sense of the sensation of blue.

The true analysis of a sensation or idea is as follows. The element that is common to them all, and which I have called 'consciousness', really *is* consciousness. A sensation is, in reality, a case of 'knowing' or 'being aware of' or 'experiencing' something. When we know that the sensation of blue exists, the fact we know is that there exists an awareness of blue. And this awareness is not merely, as we have hitherto seen it must be, itself something distinct and unique, utterly different from blue: it also has a perfectly distinct and unique relation to blue, a relation which is not that of thing or substance or content, nor of one part of content to another part of content. This relation is just that which we mean in every case by 'knowing'.<sup>3</sup>

Moore concluded therefore that when we have a sensation, there is a direct relation between the object and consciousness.<sup>4</sup> We are as directly aware of the existence of material things as we are of our own sensations and what we are aware of in each case is exactly the same - of the existence of actual things - and the Idealist belief that 'Reality is Spiritual' is "...as baseless as the grossest superstitions".<sup>5</sup>

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1 ibid p 22 (his emphasis)

2 ibid p 23 (his emphasis)

3 ibid p 24 - 5 (his emphasis)

4 ibid p 30

5 loc cit

Moore's 'refutation of Idealism' therefore held that Idealism was false because it was either self-contradictory or empirically false and this conclusion applied to both the content and method of Idealism. Firstly in terms of philosophical content, the theory of the Absolute as the unity of subject and object was held to be self-contradictory because it identified the subject and object of knowledge. Hence Moore's 'refutation' regards the 'proposition' as a unity that can be, and indeed must be, analysed into its constituent terms to reveal the true meaning of the terms and which 'refutes' the Idealist claim of necessary, synthetic propositions. Similarly Idealism, as an epistemological theory based on the doctrine of internal relations, is the view that in any relationship of knowing there are two terms which are related by necessity and the supposed subsumption of objects to the status of the 'content' of a sensation is likewise rejected as this would imply a necessary relation between two distinct terms. Secondly in terms of philosophical method, the method of Moore's 'refutation' is exclusively analytical and in the practice of this method and in his denial of necessary synthetic propositions, there is an implicit denial of the Hegelian method of dialectic and Bradley's method of 'synthesis'. Hence the theory of the dialectic as the identification of the subject and predicate of the proposition can be held to be self-contradictory because it is a necessary synthetic proposition. The logical conclusion of this 'refutation', which Moore himself did not draw, was that if Idealism is false then Realism is the true account of the content of philosophy and asserts an empirical relation between the subject and object of knowledge and a contingent distinction between the subject and the predicate of the proposition. However the more important, though unstated, assumption of Moore's 'refutation' is that the relationship between Realism and Idealism is one of contradiction.

### c. Realism

On the assumption that the relation between Realism and Idealism is one of contradiction, if Idealism is false then Realism is true. That is, if the philosophical doctrine of Idealism is the view that reality exists dependent upon mind, that 'esse' is 'percipi', then Realism as the contradictory of Idealism, is the view that reality exists independently of mind, that 'esse' is *not* 'percipi'. This doctrine of Realism, insofar as it is based on Moore's 'refutation of Idealism', can be said to have three key implications. Firstly if there are no necessary synthetic propositions, then all synthetic propositions are contingent. That Moore himself regarded Realism as an empirical proposition is supported by his (in)famous attempt to 'prove' the existence of the external world by placing his hands in front of his eyes.<sup>1</sup> Secondly if the subject and the object of knowledge are not identified in being necessarily related, then they must be distinct and there is an external and contingent relation between the subject and the object of knowledge, which Moore held to be that of

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<sup>1</sup> Moore, G.E. Philosophical Papers. London, 1959, p 146.

consciousness.<sup>1</sup> Finally insofar as Idealism is logically based on the doctrine of internal relations, then if Idealism is false then the Realist doctrine of external relations is true. However an adequate account of external relations proved elusive for both Moore and Russell and arguably, was never satisfactorily articulated by either.

The other leading exponent of Realist philosophy at this time, Bertrand Russell, accepted Moore's criticisms of Idealism and his intellectual indebtedness to Moore was made clear in The Principles of Mathematics where he wrote that "...my position, in all its chief features, is derived from Mr. G. E. Moore. I have accepted from him the non-existential nature of propositions (except such as happen to assert existence) and their independence of any knowing mind - also the pluralism which regards the world, both that of existents and that of entities, as composed of an infinite number of mutually independent entities, with relations which are ultimate and not reducible to adjectives of their terms or of the whole which these compose", with these 'entities' being the terms in propositions.<sup>2</sup> However as Morris Weitz has argued, neither the doctrine of the independence of matter from mind nor the vindication of analysis as a method of philosophy could be upheld without a defensible theory of external relations and it was this issue that both Moore and Russell explicitly addressed.<sup>3</sup> In his article 'On Appearance, Error and Contradiction', Bradley had criticised Russell's pluralism as outlined in his Principles of Mathematics as 'incomprehensible'.

On the one side I am led to think that he defends a strict pluralism, for which nothing is admissible beyond simple terms and external relations. On the other side Mr. Russell seems to assert emphatically, and to use throughout, ideas which such a pluralism surely must repudiate. He throughout stands upon unities which are complex and which cannot be analysed into terms and relations. These two positions to my mind are irreconcilable, since the second, as I understand it, contradicts the first flatly. If there are such unities, and still more, if such unities are fundamental, then pluralism surely is in principle abandoned as false.<sup>4</sup>

Bradley's own view of relations had been defended in Appearance and Reality where he had argued that relations 'link' qualities and that the terms in a relation must have qualities of their own which are distinct to the relation itself. Such a view was

1 Moore later retracted this theory of 'consciousness' arguing that there is a *something* which has this relation of knowing. See Moore Philosophical Studies pp 174 -5.

2 Russell quoted in Passmore op cit p 225 - 6.

3 Weitz, M. 20th Century Philosophy: The Analytic Tradition New York, 1966, pp 1-2.

4 Bradley, F.H. 'On Appearance, Error and Contradiction' in Mind Vol. XIX (N.S.) 1910 p 179



reasserted in this article when he stated that "To my mind a relation must imply terms, and terms which are distinct and therefore different from one another; and our only ground for thinking otherwise in any case is our failure to apprehend the diversity which has really been introduced."<sup>1</sup> In his reply to Bradley, Russell denied that 'unities' are incapable of analysis and criticised Bradley's doctrine of internal relations, which he interpreted as meaning that if an object  $x$  is related to an object  $y$ , then there is complexity in both  $x$  and  $y$ , or as he put it in slightly different words, that  $x$  and  $y$  have 'natures' in virtue of which they are related by  $R$ .<sup>2</sup> Russell argued that if an object  $x$  is related to an object  $y$ , then the relation  $R$  is as real as either  $x$  or  $y$ .

I maintain that there are such facts as that  $x$  has a relation  $R$  to  $y$ , and that such facts are not in general reducible to, or inferable from, a fact about  $x$  only and a fact about  $y$  only; they do not imply that  $x$  and  $y$  have any complexity, or any intrinsic property distinguishing them from  $az$  and  $aw$  which do not have the relation  $R$ . This is what I mean when I say that relations are external. But I maintain also - and it is here that Mr. Bradley sees an inconsistency - that whenever we have two terms  $x$  and  $y$  related by a relation  $R$ , we also have a complex, which we may call " $xRy$ ", consisting of the two terms so related. This is the simplest example of what I call a "complex" or a "unity". What is called analysis consists in the discovery of the constituents of a complex.<sup>3</sup>

Russell's method of 'metaphysical analysis' is clear at this early stage of his philosophical development, where analysis can only proceed on the assumption of a unified metaphysical entity which has the logical form ' $aRb$ ' and upon which, the method of analysis necessarily depends. As Morris Weitz comments "Thus, according to Russell, analysis - 'the discovery of a complex' - is a legitimate philosophical procedure. A *necessary metaphysical condition* of analysis is the existence of independent unities whose constituents are terms and qualities in their (sometimes) external relations."<sup>4</sup> However Bradley's criticisms and Russell's own articulation of the doctrine of external relations were sufficiently troublesome for Russell, that he felt the need some nine years later, to restate his doctrine of external relations in a more explicit 'logical' form.

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1 ibid p 180-1

2 Russell, B 'Some explanations in reply to Mr. Bradley' Mind Vol. XIX (N.S.) 1910 p 374

3 loc cit

4 Weitz op cit p 2 (my emphasis)

What, then, can we mean by the doctrine of external relations? Primarily this, that a relational proposition is not, in general, logically equivalent formally to one or more subject-predicate propositions. Stated more precisely: Given a relational propositional function 'xRy', it is not in general the case that we can find predicates  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , such that, for all values of x and y, xRy is equivalent to  $x\alpha$ ,  $y\beta$ ,  $(x,y)\gamma$  (where (x,y) stands for the whole consisting of x and y), or to any one or two of these. This, and only this, is what I mean to affirm the doctrine of external relations; and this, clearly, is at least part of what Mr. Bradley denies when he asserts the doctrine of internal relations.<sup>1</sup>

Further Russell now sought to replace the terms of 'unity' or 'complex' with that of the 'fact', which he argued cannot be significantly used in any proposition where the word 'simple' is used significantly.<sup>2</sup> However Russell *does* continue to use the terms 'unity' and 'complex', arguing that when he asserts 'There are simples' and 'There are complexes', he is using the words 'there are' in *different* senses.<sup>3</sup> To use the words 'there are' in the *same* sense, he argued, would imply that the assertion 'There are not complexes' would be neither true nor false, but *meaningless*.<sup>4</sup> Russell concluded that his notion of 'simples' is not something which is known through experience, but is only known inferentially as the limit of analysis.<sup>5</sup> This theory is of course, Russell's well-known doctrine of 'logical atomism' which was to become so influential during the nineteen twenties, although it is interesting to note that even though Russell quoted the above passage of Bradley's in full, he never fully responded to those criticisms, qualifying his comments with general statements about the inadequacy of ordinary language in dealing with this issue of relations.<sup>6</sup> It is also of interest to note that Bradley's criticism of Russell was equally problematic for Moore, taking him also nine years to come to Russell's defence in an article which is *not* a paradigm of philosophical clarity or lucidity.<sup>7</sup> After spending fifteen pages discussing the ambiguities involved in the doctrine of internal relations, Moore then spends another nineteen pages examining the formal implications of these ambiguities, concluding, not unsurprisingly, that the doctrine of internal relations is false. Without examining Moore's arguments in detail, it is perhaps sufficient to note that if the falsity of Idealism could be demonstrated with such apparent ease, it is surprising, to say the least, that the doctrine of internal relations

1 Russell, B. 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism' op.cit p 373

2 loc.cit

3 ibid p 374 (my emphasis)

4 ibid p 375 (my emphasis)

5 loc.cit

6 ibid p 375 ff

7 Moore op.cit pp 276 - 309

could itself not be so easily refuted. This interpretation of Realism as a *metaphysical* doctrine therefore, was based on an *atomistic* interpretation of external relations, where 'reality' has the logical form 'aRb' which is a 'complex' or 'unity' and can only be known through the method of analysis. This theory of logical atomism, as Urmson has observed, stressed the intimate relationship between its metaphysical content and its analytic method, with the attempt to justify the metaphysical assumptions of logical atomism by the use of the analytic method and the justification of the analytic method being derived from the metaphysical claims of logical atomism.<sup>1</sup> However Urmson subsequently argued that apart from any particular difficulties in logical atomism itself, it was as *metaphysics* that logical atomism committed its greatest error and it was precisely in the rejection of metaphysics, that the movement of Logical Positivism was to claim its greatest victory.<sup>2</sup> However Logical Positivism was itself to face certain undesirable conclusions in terms of its own principle of verification and it too was to be a mere passage to the general tendency known as analytic philosophy, which stressed the open advocacy of analysis as the method in philosophy, separated from any specific content.<sup>3</sup>

However typical of the mood of Idealist philosophy in Britain at this time was Bosanquet's The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy. Although this work had one eye firmly fixed on the analytic and Realist philosophy of Moore and Russell, it was more concerned to articulate a conception of 'speculative' philosophy which drew together the theories of philosophers such as Alexander, Croce, Gentile, Husserl and Heidegger. Bosanquet's assessment of Moore's 'refutation' is clear and unambiguous. Moore is to be welcomed to the ranks of speculative philosophy if he is holding, as he does, that "...the Idealist is in the wrong if he maintains that particular things in space are in themselves altogether different from what they look like to us."<sup>4</sup> However Bosanquet argued that if Moore's view is the opposite, "...that in maintaining the spirituality of the universe, the idealist both does *and must* maintain that we are wholly wrong in our common notion of a chair, then I must think that he has misunderstood the facts necessary to idealism, and so far has failed

1 Urmson op cit p 22 ff. It is interesting to note the remarkable similarity between Anderson's philosophy and the early philosophy of Wittgenstein and the remarkable difference between Anderson and the work of the later Wittgenstein. Another unusual coincidence between Anderson and Wittgenstein was their mutual contact with Rush Rhees - as a student of Anderson's at Edinburgh in the twenties and as a colleague of Wittgenstein at Chelsea, Wales during the thirties.

2 Urmson op cit p 102 - 114. It is curious to note that Urmson, while rejecting the 'inferred entities' of speculative metaphysics, does not recognise that Russell himself treats his 'simples' as not known by experience, but only 'inferentially' as the limits of analysis. ibid p 47 and Russell op cit p 375

3 For histories of analytic philosophy within that tradition see Urmson, Warnock and Ayer in the works already cited. For a historical treatment outside of the analytic tradition see Camponigri op cit Vol.5 pp 301 - 329 and Passmore op cit Ch 11, 15, 16, 17, 18.

4 Bosanquet op cit p 3

to bring assistance to speculative philosophy."<sup>1</sup> Bosanquet's assessment of Moore's argument then, is that it is merely formal and verbal and does not establish any substantive point of issue.<sup>2</sup> However by the end of the twenties most of the Idealist's of the preceding century had passed away, although this period did witness the emergence of one particularly vocal defender of the Idealist conception of 'speculative' or 'constructive' philosophy and a pointed critic of the new analytic and realistic philosophy, R.G. Collingwood.<sup>3</sup> In his defence of the possibility of 'constructive' philosophy, Collingwood sought to rebut the two sceptical responses to the claim that there can be constructive philosophical systems - the 'critical' and the 'analytic'.<sup>4</sup> The 'critical' philosopher, he argued, claims that the purpose of philosophy is simply to criticise philosophical propositions by demonstrating self-contradictory errors.<sup>5</sup> However Collingwood argued that to suppose that others commit such 'errors' is to suppose that one has a positive and constructive conception of philosophy. To have such a conception of philosophic criticism implies a logic in terms of which this conception of criticism can proceed, which in turn presupposes a constructive conception of philosophy.<sup>6</sup> The 'analytic' philosopher on the other hand, claims that the purpose of philosophy is simply to analyse existing beliefs and judge them in terms of common sense or science.<sup>7</sup> In response to this claim Collingwood argued that to give an account of their philosophic position, the analytic philosophers would have to provide the principles from which the analysis proceeds and to provide such principles would be to state a constructive philosophical conception.<sup>8</sup> Each sceptical account then, disclaims the possibility of a constructive philosophy although each claims not a body of doctrine but a method, but fails to recognise that these methods imply principles and that systematic methods imply systematic principles.<sup>9</sup> Collingwood's conclusion then is that a constructive or systematic philosophy is necessary for any philosopher who takes the question of the logical basis of their philosophical method seriously.

However the distinctive feature of British Realist philosophy in the period during the two world wars was that on the one hand the philosophical method of analysis gained increasing acceptance among many philosophers discontented with the

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1 ibid p 5 (his emphasis)

2 ibid p

3 For an overall assessment of Collingwood's philosophy see Ayer op cit p 191 - 213; Passmore op cit p 302 - 8. It is interesting to note the description of Collingwood as an 'Edwardian' Idealist, thereby making the contrast with the preceding 'Victorian' Idealism even more pronounced. See Patrick, J. Madgalen Metaphysicals Mercer, 1985.

4 Collingwood, R.G. An Essay on Philosophic Method Oxford, 1933, p 137

5 ibid p 138

6 ibid p 139

7 ibid p 142

8 ibid p 146

9 ibid p 147

extravagant claims of traditional metaphysics while on the other hand the philosophical content of Realism was defended with vigour, but was not held to be inconsistent with a 'constructive' conception of philosophy. This systematic conception of philosophy represents the other strand of British philosophy which was evident during the twenties and thirties, where rather than a refutation of and victory over Idealism, a transition from Idealism to Realism had occurred. Prominent among these were Dawes Hicks who wrote on the transition from Idealism to Realism and possibly R.F.A. Hoernle who addressed a similar issue.<sup>1</sup> However undoubtedly the most important of these defections from Idealism was Samuel Alexander who although embracing the general principles of the Realist movement, retained an 'Idealistic' emphasis on a constructive or systematic conception of philosophy. Alexander therefore did not accept the 'atomistic' or 'analytic' interpretation of external relations and defended a pluralistic interpretation of external relations derived from the American 'new Realists'.<sup>2</sup> This theory had its roots in the 'radical empiricism' of William James, but was first fully articulated in 1912 by Marvin who argued that 'In the proposition 'the term a is in the relation to the terms b', aR in no degree constitutes b, nor does Rb constitute a, nor does R constitute either a or b.'<sup>3</sup> The notable feature of this account when contrasted with Russell's theory is the absence of an insistence that 'aRb' constitutes a 'unity' from which the method of analysis proceeds. On this theory, the terms in the relation can be regarded as both complex and simple and therefore could be known through either the method of analysis or in terms of a systematic method of synthesis. Although this theory of relations was not to play a large role in the development of British analytic philosophy and its importance even for Alexander is uncertain, it was to become the logical foundation of the Realist philosophy of John Anderson.

#### d. Empiricism.

Samuel Alexander, after arriving from Melbourne in 1877, had been an early convert to Absolute Idealism at Oxford, seeking like many Idealists at the time to reconcile Hegelian Idealism with Darwinian evolutionary theory.<sup>4</sup> However after

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<sup>1</sup> For statements of the philosophical development of Hoernle and Dawes Hicks with regard to this transition from Idealism to Realism see Muirhead, J. Contemporary British Philosophy 2nd Series, London, 1925. For more information of Hoernle see Metz op cit p 349 - 40; Passmore op cit p 89 while for more information on Dawes Hicks see Metz op cit p 509 ff; Passmore op cit p 281 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Although Alexander does not discuss the 'new Realists' in detail in Space-Time and Deity and did not even hold a universal theory of external relations, John Anderson, in his 1962 address 'Realism' asserts that Alexander came to accept the 'new Realist' doctrine of external relations. However although Anderson does not give a reference for this claim, his knowledge of Alexander's philosophy is unquestionable. At any rate, the influence of both the 'new Realists' and Alexander's philosophy was immense on Anderson's own philosophy.

<sup>3</sup> Marvin quoted in Passmore op cit p 261

<sup>4</sup> For general information on Alexander see Metz op cit pp 622 - 655 and Passmore op cit pp 265 - 76. For more detailed accounts see Brettschnieder, B. The Philosophy of Samuel

winning the Green prize in 1883 with his essay 'Moral Order and Progress', he wrote little until after the turn of the century, feeling that he had little to say.<sup>1</sup> However he was subsequently much influenced by Moore's conclusion in the 'Refutation of Idealism' that consciousness is both a quality and a relation of mind and he subsequently developed this conclusion into a philosophy which was Realist in its basis, but which never denied its Idealist origins. As Metz says of Alexander, "The fact that Alexander's philosophic visions ranges freely over the whole, and that he wishes to form a system and delights in speculation, he probably owes to Idealism. But, unlike most thinkers of his way of thinking, he has not simply ignored the idealist movement, but has passed right through it."<sup>2</sup>

In his first article published after the turn of the century, Alexander outlined what he took to be the three major forms of Idealism.<sup>3</sup> Firstly, as in the case of the British Empiricists', mind can be regarded as the origin of reality where things are dependent upon mind for their existence. Secondly, as in the case of Kantian Idealism, mind can be regarded as the source of the order of reality where things are dependent upon mind for their unity and order. Finally, as in the case of the Hegelian philosophy, mind can be regarded as intrinsic to our understanding of reality, where things are spiritual in nature. Alexander held that all three versions of Idealism were 'relativistic' where only the 'contents' of consciousness can be apprehended and the 'world' is, in some sense, the 'contents' of our consciousness and things depend upon the mind, not only for being known but also for their very existence. However Alexander argued that the fact that things can be known shows only that they are related to mind and this does not imply that they are dependent upon mind for their existence. "The only truth contained in the doctrine that reality is experience is that, as a matter of observed fact, the universe is one which contains both mind and things in relation to each other."<sup>4</sup> Further, in his 1912 article 'The Method of Metaphysics', Alexander argued that the Idealist conception of metaphysics where things are made to depend upon mind for their 'reality', unduly exalts the fact of knowing and treats this relation as primary above all others.<sup>5</sup> In response, he defined metaphysics as the attempt to describe the "...ultimate nature of existence and the pervading and pervasive characters of things" and advocated the

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Alexander New York, 1964; McCarthy, J.W. The Naturalism of Samuel Alexander New York, 1948; Weinstein, M.A. Unity and Variety in the Philosophy of Samuel Alexander Indiana, 1983.

1 Alexander, S. Philosophical and Literary Pieces London, 1939, p 53

2 Metz op cit p 624

3 Alexander, S. 'Ptolemaic and Copernican Conceptions of The Place of Mind In the Universe' Hibbert Journal Vol. VIII, Oct. 1909. p 48ff

4 ibid p 58

5 Alexander, S. 'The Method of Metaphysics; and the Categories' Mind Vol. XXI, 1912 p 5ff

empirical method in metaphysics as that which describes and systematises the facts of experience.<sup>1</sup> Finally in his 1914 article, 'The Basis of Realism', Alexander argued that the spirit of Realism in metaphysics was a democratic spirit insofar as it recognises mind as merely one thing in a universe of things, albeit the most perfect.<sup>2</sup> However the basis of Realism is that experience itself "...assures us of the existence of a mind, an object and a relation of compresence between them", although the directness of such an experience does not justify the 'naive' conception of Realism, where the independent existence of physical things is assumed or postulated.<sup>3</sup>

For postulation of the independent objectivity of things is the evasion of a problem, by way of escape from the belief that all we know is ideas. But our principle is the mere transliteration of the very experience of objects. If it is asked on what evidence we know that an independent object can exist, the answer is that in the experience of it the independent object is revealed as entering into relation with the apprehending mental act. The problem is not evaded but shown to be gratuitous.<sup>4</sup>

The importance of this Realist principle, he argued, is not merely to assert the independent existence of the object which is therefore non-mental, but to make the more important *empirical* assertion that the mind is also a thing which exists side by side with the object and is itself one of the things which make up the universe.<sup>5</sup> Hence his own conception of the mind in the universe is one where the universe is not determined as mental or spiritual, but where the mind is simply one thing in the general class of things.<sup>6</sup> On such a conception of metaphysics, the *quality* of mind as 'consciousness or knowing' implies that mind is "...the most gifted individual in the democracy of things".<sup>7</sup> In mind, as in other objects, we can find the categories of things as the *a priori* characters of objects which are dependent upon mind in no way, except in their being known through experience.<sup>8</sup>

During his Gifford lectures at Glasgow University between 1916 and 1918, Alexander re-iterated and developed these views into a systematic philosophy which he later

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1 [ibid](#) p 5 - 6

2 Alexander, S. 'The Basis of Realism' [Proceedings of the British Academy](#) Vol. VI 1914 p 280. Passmore suggests that it is not absurd to attribute Alexander's 'democratic metaphysics' to his Australian origin. Passmore [op cit](#) p 566

3 Alexander [op cit](#) p 285 - 6

4 [ibid](#) p 286

5 [ibid](#) p 283

6 Alexander, S. 'The Place of Mind in the Universe' [op cit](#) p 60 ff

7 Alexander, S. 'The Method of Metaphysics' [op cit](#) p 6

8 [ibid](#) pp 11 - 12

published in his major work, Space, Time and Deity. In his introduction to this work, Alexander argued that philosophy is to be distinguished from the special sciences not by a difference in method, but by the comprehensiveness of the subject matter that it treats.<sup>1</sup> Philosophy, understood as metaphysics, is

...an attempt to study these very comprehensive topics (substance, quality, causality, etc), to describe the ultimate nature of existence if it has any, and these pervasive characters of things, or categories. If we may neglect too nice particulars of interpretation we may use the definition of Aristotle, the science of being as such and its essential attributes.<sup>2</sup>

The method common to both philosophy and science is the empirical method, which proceeds by reflective description and analysis of its special subject matter, a process which is essentially experiential.<sup>3</sup> However the subject matter or content of philosophy is non-empirical, for it is the study of a *priori* or categorial characters of things.<sup>4</sup> As he stated, "Philosophy may therefore be described as the experiential or empirical study of the non-empirical or *a priori*, and of such questions as arise out of the relation of the empirical to the *a priori*."<sup>5</sup> In considering the problem of knowledge, Alexander argued that the most striking philosophical classification of the knowledge of finite things is into minds on the one side and external things on the other, with the relation between the two being experience.<sup>6</sup> On the basis of this classification, the doctrine of Idealism claims that experience is something unique to minds such that minds acquire a privileged place in the universe with respect to other things.<sup>7</sup> However the attitude of the empirical method in metaphysics is to treat "...finite minds as one among the many forms of finite existence, having no privilege above them except such as derives from its greater perfection or development."<sup>8</sup> This empirical method in metaphysics implies the attitude of Realism where minds are "...the most gifted members known to us in a democracy of things."<sup>9</sup> However Alexander also argued that this empirical method is not inconsistent with British Absolute Idealism, for the essence of that philosophy is not the identity of reality with mind or experience, but is the conviction that the truth is the whole, in

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1 Alexander, S. Space-Time and Deity. Vol 1 London, 1920, p 1

2 ibid Vol. 1 p 2

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 4

4 loc cit

5 loc cit

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 5

7 loc cit

8 ibid Vol. 1 p 6

9 loc cit



comparison with which, all finites are "...incomplete and therefore false".<sup>1</sup> Alexander argued that all philosophies are concerned with experience as a whole, and that other philosophies, including his own, could well adopt this definition, provided that the above phrase - "incomplete and therefore false" - be removed.<sup>2</sup> With respect to the terms 'Realism' and 'Idealism', he argued that they have many shifting senses and carry much prejudice and he would be heartily glad to remove them altogether.<sup>3</sup> The true difference between Realism and Idealism lies in their spirit of method, for Idealism assumes that mind is the measure of things and the starting point of inquiry, while Realism regards mind as having no privileged place, except in terms of its perfection.<sup>4</sup> However mind does have a useful role in the study of metaphysics for it is through an analysis of our own mind that we can gain the clue to the nature of existence and Alexander commenced his study of metaphysics with a brief review of what he regarded as the central issue in epistemology.<sup>5</sup> In a passage which clearly expressed his method of procedure and the basis of his later views, Alexander argued that "Any experience may be analysed into two distinct elements and their relation to one another. The two elements which are the terms in the relation are, on the one hand the act of mind or awareness, and on the other the object of which it is aware;"<sup>6</sup> It is here that Alexander acknowledges his debt to Moore's 'refutation of Idealism', a debt which he took care to reinforce in his preface to the new impression seven years later.<sup>7</sup> In this preface, Alexander makes clear the importance of Moore's 'refutation' in understanding the physiological basis of experience;

Asking how a thing could be the cause of the mental act which apprehended it, and observing that we were unaware of the neural effect which it actually produced, I concluded that the presentation of the object was not as it were a mental picture produced by the thing in my mind, but was the thing itself or a selection from it, and that the mental process was an 'act' of mind which I lived through. It was then I understood the position of Mr. Moore's article in refutation of Idealism.<sup>8</sup>

In Moore's conception of 'consciousness', Alexander believed that he recognised that the relation between mind and its objects as one of togetherness or 'compresence'. It

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1 ibid Vol. 1 p 7

2 loc cit

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 7 - 8

4 ibid Vol. 1 p 8

5 ibid Vol. 1 pp 8 - 10

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 11

7 ibid Vol. 1 pp xxx - xxxi

8 loc cit

is probably without exaggeration to claim that this analysis of consciousness formed the basis of Alexander's entire philosophical theory, as it provided the basis for the description of his philosophy as a 'Realism' and also provided the 'clue' to his account of qualities as 'emergent'.<sup>1</sup> However to return to Alexander's analysis of experience, he argued further that;

...the relation between them (the act of mind and the object of awareness) is that they are together or compresent in the world which is thus so far experienced. As an example which presents the least difficulty take the perception of a tree or a table. This situation consists of the act of mind which is the perceiving; the object which is so much of the thing called tree as is perceived... and the togetherness or compresence which connects these two distinct existences (the act of mind and the object) into the total situation called the experience.<sup>2</sup>

Minds and its objects are compresent in the world and any experience can be analysed into the act of mind which does the experiencing and the object which is experienced, with consciousness being both a quality of mind which has the experience and the relation that mind has to its objects. However as Alexander stated further,

But the two terms are differently experienced. The one is experienced, that is, is present in the experience as the act of experiencing, the other as that which is experienced. To use Mr. Lloyd Morgan's happy notation, the one is the *-ing*, the other an *-ed*.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander explained this difference of experience in terms of the epistemological distinction between contemplation and enjoyment. The object, as the '*-ed*' of experience, is contemplated by consciousness, while consciousness, as the relational '*-ing*' of experience is 'enjoyed' or lived through. As he stated, "The act of mind is an enjoyment; the object is contemplated".<sup>4</sup> Further in a passage which makes clear his precise meaning of this distinction Alexander argued;

What is of importance is the recognition that in any experience the mind enjoys itself and contemplates its object or its object is contemplated, and that these two existences, the act of mind and the

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1 On this latter point see especially Book 3 Ch.'s 1 -3

2 *ibid* Vol. 1 p 11 - 12

3 *ibid* Vol. 1 p 11

4 *ibid* Vol. 1 p 12

object as they are in the experience, are distinct existences united by the relation of compresence. The experience is a piece of the world consisting of these two existences in their togetherness. The one existence, the enjoyed, enjoys itself, or experiences itself as an enjoyment; the other existence, the contemplated, is experienced by the enjoyed. The enjoyed and the contemplated are together.<sup>1</sup>

However for Alexander, epistemology was merely one 'chapter' of metaphysics and central to his metaphysical theory was his contention that 'compresence' is not unique to mind as 'consciousness', but is the most basic relation between any two objects and the consideration of compresence in this sense presages his investigation of the nature of Space and Time.<sup>2</sup> Any object, in existing, occupies a Space and a Time and also possesses certain categorial features which he regarded as 'forms of relation or features of things'.<sup>3</sup> The consideration of Space and Time is Alexander's concern of Book 1 of Space, Time and Deity while the investigation of the categories forms Book 2 of that work. Book 3 is concerned with the order and problems of empirical existence while the concluding Book 4 is an investigation of the nature of Deity.<sup>4</sup>

In his *empirical* investigation into the nature of Space and Time, Alexander considered Space and Time in terms of their three different interpretations; the physical, the mental and the mathematical. In terms of physical Space and Time, Alexander insisted that Space and Time are to be considered as they are *experienced*, which is to treat them as extension and duration, as *forms of existence*.<sup>5</sup> As experienced, both Space and Time are infinite and continuous which can be regarded as their 'crude' and 'original' characters.<sup>6</sup> Both Space and Time are apprehended as wholes of parts, with these parts being 'points' in Space and 'instants' in Time.<sup>7</sup> However the more important feature of Space and Time is their interdependence, such that there is neither Space without Time nor Time without Space and Space and Time considered by themselves are abstractions from the one, continuous Space-Time.<sup>8</sup> From this conception of an interrelated Space-Time, it follows that there is no instant in time without a position in space and no point in space without an instant

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1 ibid Vol. 1 p 13

2 ibid Vol. 1 p 27. See also Vol. 2 p 75

3 ibid Vol. 1 pp 28. Alexander's ambiguity as to the precise nature of Space, Time and the categories is important to note, for the characterisation of them as either formal relations or natural features is an important issue in the conflict between Realism and Idealism.

4 John Anderson's assessment of the structure of Space, Time and Deity is put succinctly in 'The Non-Existence of Consciousness' in Studies in Empirical Philosophy pp 66 - 7, where he argued that a large part of the discussion of knowing in Book 3 is 'nugatory', as presumably would be the case with *all* of Book 4.

5 ibid Vol. 1 p 37

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 40

7 ibid Vol. 1 p 43

8 ibid Vol. 1 p 44 - 8

in time, with there being only 'point-instants' or 'pure events'.<sup>1</sup> This Space-Time however is not a static reality, but is a system of motions or, more precisely, is Motion itself, where the 'points' of Space are continually redistributed as 'instants' in Time.<sup>2</sup> In discussing mental Space and Time, Alexander referred to them as they are experienced psychologically, with mental time being the time in which mind 'enjoys' itself or experiences itself as living and mental space being the space which mind 'enjoys' or experiences itself as living.<sup>3</sup> Both mental space and time are parts of physical Space and Time and each involve the other in the one mental space-time.<sup>4</sup> Although much of Alexander's discussion of mental space-time is concerned with particular issues of mind such as memory and emotion, the more important point of the discussion, which he does not reach until Book 3 of Space, Time and Deity, is that mind, in being based on the distinction between 'enjoyment' and 'contemplation' and in being identical with the brain implies that the relation between Time and Space is the same as that of mind to the body. That is, as he later says 'Time is the mind of Space', where it could be said, (Alexander does not express it in precisely these terms although it appears to convey the spirit of his thinking) that Time 'enjoys' itself and 'contemplates' Space.<sup>5</sup> In terms of mathematical Space and Time, Alexander argued that mathematics does not treat a separate Space-Time to that of metaphysics, but that both are concerned with the same Space-Time.<sup>6</sup> Their difference lies in the fact that mathematics treats Space and Time as *a priori*, whereas metaphysics treats them as they are in themselves.<sup>7</sup> Therefore the only important question for Alexander in this discussion, is whether the mathematical investigation of Space and Time is consistent with the treatment of them as experienced as the metaphysician studies them.<sup>8</sup> However the mathematician does present a theory of Space and Time which Alexander needs to respond to and this is the relational theory of Space and Time where Space and Time are *relations* between things.<sup>9</sup> Such a theory clearly contradicts Alexander's own theory where Space and Time are entities or, more precisely, form the one entity or 'stuff', Space-Time.<sup>10</sup> The difficulties of the relational view were clearly brought out by Alexander when he argued that if Space and Time are relations, then the *things* they are meant to relate must exist in some other sense than as spatio-temporal, for clearly Space and Time cannot be both

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1 loc cit

2 ibid Vol. 1 p 61 - 63

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 93

4 ibid Vol. 1 p 94 - 134

5 ibid Vol. 2 p 38 ff. Alexander does say however that "What is contemplated as physical Space-Time is enjoyed as mental space-time." ibid Vol.1 p 180

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 155

7 loc cit

8 ibid Vol. 1 p 163 ff

9 ibid Vol. 1 p 168

10 loc cit

relations between things and the defining features of things.<sup>1</sup> The assumption of the mathematical treatment of relations is due to its purely logical treatment of them, which does not say what relations are in themselves.<sup>2</sup> On his own theory, Space-Time is the 'simplest being itself' with material things being "...modes of this one simple *being*, finite complexes of Space-Time or motion, dowered with the qualities which are familiar to us in sensible experience".<sup>3</sup> This 'simple being', he says elsewhere, is the 'hyle' or 'stuff of substances' where "...Space-Time is the stuff of which all things, whether as substances or under any category, are made".<sup>4</sup> Relations then, are as real as objects and in being so are spatio-temporal.<sup>5</sup> Hence Alexander regarded Space-Time as an 'infinite, given whole', the elements of which are events, existents or 'point-instants', with these existents being "...complexes of motion differentiated within the one all-containing and all-encompassing system of motion".<sup>6</sup>

Having determined the fundamental nature of Space and Time, Alexander in Book 2 of Space, Time and Deity, considered the nature of the categories of things. Finite things or 'existents' are the things or events of our ordinary experience, occurring in Space-Time and possessed of certain qualities.<sup>7</sup> Alexander argued that there is a clear distinction between the 'pervasive' characters or categories of things and the empirical or 'variable' characters or qualities of things.<sup>8</sup> The categories are *a priori* and non-empirical, although they may be experienced because they are the universal constituents of whatever is experienced.<sup>9</sup> They are, as 'forms', the 'groundwork of all empirical reality' and are fundamental properties of Space-Time itself which are even 'begotten' by Time on Space!<sup>10</sup> However these categories are not mental as Kant had held, but are objective features of things and there is no Hegelian 'evolution in thought of logical categories', for evolution only occurs with respect to determinate, empirical things.<sup>11</sup> Alexander's classification of the categories falls under eight broad headings which need to be considered briefly to present his general conception of the categories and of their relation to each other. His first division of the categories is in terms of identity, diversity and existence. Identity is the occupation of the same Space-Time while diversity is the occupation of a different Space-Time.<sup>12</sup> The union of identity and difference is existence as

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1 ibid Vol. 1 p 169

2 ibid Vol. 1 p 171

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 172 (my emphasis)

4 ibid Vol. 1 p 341

5 ibid Vol. 1 p 173 - 4

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 183

7 ibid Vol. 1 p 183 - 4

8 ibid Vol. 1 p 185

9 loc cit

10 ibid Vol. 1 pp 185 - 189

11 ibid Vol. 1 pp 190 - 1; p 205 fn.

12 ibid Vol. 1 p 194

determinate being or existent, which is understood as the general occupation of Space-Time.<sup>1</sup> Existence then is numerical identity as identity of place and time and is contrasted with universality which is identity of kind which leads on to his second division of the categories as those of universal, particular and individual.<sup>2</sup> There is, he argued, no such *thing* as a particular or a universal, but that all things are individuals and every individual possesses both particularity and universality.<sup>3</sup> Any event is particular in being distinct from other events, but is also universal in existing with other events in Space-Time.<sup>4</sup> Any object possesses universality or identity in kind insofar as it can undergo change in place or time without alteration and universals in this sense are 'plans of configuration' of particulars, with all the categories being regarded as *a priori* 'plans of configuration' of Space-Time.<sup>5</sup> Alexander's third division is that of relation and all existents are in relation because all things are connected within Space-time.<sup>6</sup> Relations are as much spatio-temporal as the terms that they relate, with every relation being a situation or a transaction between terms.<sup>7</sup> However although empirical relations hold primarily between things, categorial relations hold between the different categories. Hence the relation between a universal and its particulars is that of the relation between different particulars in respect of that universal and there can be certain relations between the subject and the predicate of a proposition and also relations of identity and difference between things.<sup>8</sup> Conversely relations themselves can 'communicate' with other categories and may, for example, be either particular or universal and similarly a relation may *exist* in holding between two distinct empirical terms.<sup>9</sup> On this latter issue, Alexander put his view clearly:

Relations, then, are the spatio-temporal connections of things, these things being also in the end spatio-temporal complexes. Since Space-Time is continuous, the connecting situation which constitutes a relation is but spatio-temporal continuity in another form. The relations and the things that they relate are equally elements in the one reality and so far are separate realities. But the business of relations is to relate, and there is consequently no relation without things it relates, which are then called its terms. On the other hand, there are no things which are unrelated to others, which would imply:

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1 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 197 - 8

2 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 208

3 [loc cit](#)

4 [loc cit](#)

5 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 214 - 5

6 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 238

7 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 242

8 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 244 - 5

9 [ibid](#) Vol. 1 p 245

spatio-temporal discontinuity. They must at least be connected in Space and Time, and it is plain that they must be connected by all the relations which arise out of the categories, seeing that categories are pervasive features of all things.<sup>1</sup>

On the issue of whether relations are internal or external, Alexander argued that neither alternative is true without certain qualifications, thereby resembling Bradley's view and differing substantially from the standard Realist position that all relations are external.<sup>2</sup> Hence he argued that if by 'external' relations it is meant that the relation between two existing terms is itself real, then relations are external. However if this doctrine means that relations can exist in separation from their terms, then relations are not external.<sup>3</sup> Conversely if by 'internal' relations it is meant that a relation is a quality of its terms, then relations are not internal, although if this doctrine means that the relation cannot exist independently of its terms, then relations can be internal.<sup>4</sup> However Alexander argued that the more important question was whether relations - as either empirical or categorial - are extrinsic or intrinsic, with intrinsic relations expressing the *essential* properties of a thing while extrinsic relations express what is *accidental* to a thing.<sup>5</sup> The importance of this distinction for Alexander was that while empirical relations are extrinsic, categorial relations are intrinsic for nothing can exist which does not carry its categorial characters into its relations with other things.<sup>6</sup> As he stated, "The categorial characters of things remain, whatever extrinsic relations they may enter into, and hence their reality in these regards is unaffected. It is only the empirical modifications of these categorial characters and relations which are affected."<sup>7</sup> Empirical characters on the other hand can be affected by the extrinsic relations which they enter into.<sup>8</sup> This is Alexander's answer to Bradley's claim that relations and qualities are contradictory. Although empirical qualities may change when they enter into extrinsic relations and hence exhibit 'contradiction' and thereby be 'appearance', categorial characters do not so change and therefore can be regarded as 'reality'.<sup>9</sup> Alexander's fourth division of the categories was that of order, which is due to the 'betweenness' of things in Space-Time.<sup>10</sup> 'Betweenness' involves relation and order only occurs when there are three terms and relations between

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1 ibid Vol. 1 p 249

2 ibid Vol. 1 p 251

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 250

4 loc cit

5 ibid Vol. 1 pp 252 - 253

6 ibid Vol.1 p 253

7 ibid Vol. 1 p 254

8 loc cit

9 ibid Vol. 1 p 256 - 7

10 ibid Vol. 1 p 262

them.<sup>1</sup> Hence order occurs when x is in relation to y and y is in relation to z, with each term being ordered according to the nature of that order.<sup>2</sup> Order then, is a pervasive character of things insofar as there is order of position in Space-Time.<sup>3</sup> The fifth division of the categories was that of substance, causality and reciprocity with all existents being substances because any portion of Space-Time is temporal or is a 'theatre of succession'.<sup>4</sup> The relations between different motions is that of causality which is a relation of continuity, although causality is not simply one-directional, but can also be reciprocal and both causality and reciprocity are relations of substance.<sup>5</sup> His sixth division of the categories is that of quantity and intensity, with extensive quantity being the occupation of any space by its time while intensive quantity is the occurrence of various spaces at the same time.<sup>6</sup> His seventh classification is that of whole and parts and number with every existent being a whole of its parts and number as the constitution of the whole in relation to its parts.<sup>7</sup> Alexander's final classification of the categories is that of motion which is not a category as such, but is the borderline between the categorial and the empirical.<sup>8</sup> However although Alexander insisted that the categories have no origin - "they do not come into being otherwise than as all things come into being and because things come into being" - he was also given to assert that they have their origin in Space-Time itself.<sup>9</sup> The categories are in fact indefinable, for definition can only occur in terms of existent entities.<sup>10</sup> Space-time, he concluded, can be identified with the 'Absolute' of the Idealists.<sup>11</sup>

In Book 3 of Space, Time and Deity, Alexander turned to a consideration of the order and problems of empirical existence. The clue to quality, he argued, is to be found in the neural basis of mind, which provides the clue to the lower forms of existence.<sup>12</sup> Mind is an 'emergent' from life and life is an 'emergent' from a lower physico-chemical level of existence.<sup>13</sup> This conception of mind as emergent provided the basis for his controversial formulation of the relationship between Space and Time - 'Time is the mind of Space' - where Time bears the same relation to Space as mind

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1 ibid Vol. 1 p 263

2 ibid Vol. 1 p 264

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 264 - 5

4 ibid Vol. 1 p 269 ff

5 ibid Vol. 1 p 279 ff; p 305

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 306 ff

7 ibid Vol. 1 p 312 ff

8 ibid Vol. 1 p 322 ff

9 ibid Vol. 1 p 331: 336

10 ibid Vol. 1 p 336

11 ibid Vol. 1 p 346

12 ibid Vol. 2 p 3

13 ibid Vol. 2 p 14



bears to the body.<sup>1</sup> Quality is a so 'emergent' and occurs from a previous collocation of motions at a lower level and stands in the same relation to a thing as mind stands to body.<sup>2</sup> However in an important sense Time is the 'author of finitude' for it is the principle of motion and change.<sup>3</sup> As he stated, "Time is in truth the abiding principle of impermanence which is the real creator".<sup>4</sup> For Alexander then, Time stands in a certain logical relation to Space and is also the source of all movement: "If it be true that Time is the mind of Space, or rather if Space and every part of it has something standing to it in the relation of mind to body, and that something is Time, then for us, as for certain Greek philosophers, soul is the source of movement."<sup>5</sup> However Space-Time cannot be regarded as 'material' but is *anterior* to matter - "Space-Time ...*precedes* finite things which are determinations of that stuff" - and is "...the recipient of quality in its various empirical or finite forms".<sup>6</sup> Therefore when Time in its movement through Space reaches a certain degree of complexity, matter is created and with the creation of matter, the process of 'emergence', through the collocation of qualities, produces more complex objects which are 'higher' in the evolutionary scale thus producing an hierarchal 'order' of Being.<sup>7</sup> In perhaps one of the clearest statements of his overall position Alexander argued:

New finites come into existence in Time; the world actually or historically develops from its first or elementary condition of Space-Time, which possesses no quality except what we agreed to call the spatio-temporal quality of motion. But as in the course of Time new complexities of motions come into existence, a new quality emerges, that is, a new complex possesses as a matter of observed empirical fact a new or emergent quality. The case which we used as a clue is the emergence of the quality of consciousness from a lower level of complexity which is vital. The emergence of a new quality from any level of existence means that at that level there comes into being a certain constellation or collocation of the motions belonging to that level, and possessing the quality appropriate to it, and this collocation possesses a new quality distinctive of the higher level. The new quality and the constellation to which it belongs are at once new and expressible without residue in terms of the processes proper to the level from which they emerge;<sup>8</sup>

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1 ibid Vol. 2 p 38

2 ibid Vol. 2 pp 45 - 7

3 ibid Vol. 2 p 48

4 loc cit

5 loc cit

6 ibid Vol. 2 p 48 - 9 (my emphasis)

7 ibid Vol. 2 pp 45 - 70

8 ibid Vol. 2 p 45

The first qualities created in this process are the categories or primary qualities, although strictly speaking the categories are not 'qualities' of things at all, but are the *determinations* of things.<sup>1</sup> After the creation of these primary qualities, there is the creation of 'matter' in which 'existents' come into being.<sup>2</sup> Following the creation of matter and their attendant secondary qualities, there is the creation of life.

Quality is something empirical which in every case but that of motion is seen to emerge from a level of existence lower than itself; and as to motion it is to be described indifferently as empirical or categorial, for it is the meeting-point of the two. Each new type of existence when it emerges is expressible completely or without residue in terms of the lower stage, and therefore indirectly in terms of all lower stages; mind in terms of living process, life in terms of physico-chemical process, sense-quality like colour in terms of matter with its movements, matter itself in terms of motion.<sup>3</sup>

Alexander next considered the various 'problems' of empirical existence, the details of which need not concern us except in two respects. Firstly, the end result of this process of emergence has produced mind, which had been previously characterised in terms of consciousness as involving both contemplation and enjoyment. This epistemological distinction is at the basis of the knowledge of Space-Time and the categories, for each mind in being a 'thing', 'enjoys' the spatio-temporal and categorial nature of itself and 'contemplates' the spatio-temporal and categorial nature of other things.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the distinctive values of human life - the tertiary qualities of truth, goodness and beauty - are created with the emergence of mind, although these 'qualities' are unlike the empirical qualities of external things in that they have their origin in distinctive human instincts and imply the amalgamation of the object with the human appreciation of it.<sup>5</sup>

Truth does not consist of mere propositions but of propositions as believed; beauty is felt; and good is the satisfaction of persons. ...We have values or tertiary qualities in respect of the whole situation consisting of the knower and the known in their compresence. Strictly speaking, it is this totality of knower and known, of subject and object, which is true or good or beautiful. The tertiary qualities are not objective like the secondary ones, nor peculiar to mind and

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1 ibid Vol. 2 p 56

2 ibid Vol. 2 p 52

3 ibid Vol. 2 p 67

4 ibid Vol. 2 pp 143 - 164

5 ibid Vol. 2 p 238

thus subjective like consciousness, nor are they like the primary qualities common both to subjects and objects. They are subject-object determinations.<sup>1</sup>

Truth then, is a judgement about reality as a whole grounded in the speculative instinct, goodness is the system of satisfactions secured by right willing and art is the externalisation of the artists impulse to create.<sup>2</sup> The relations between these 'tertiary qualities' are inclusive in that each involves the other, although all values are included in truth.<sup>3</sup> However these 'tertiary qualities' are not strictly qualities but are relational for every value has both an objective and a subjective element.<sup>4</sup> The final book of Space, Time and Deity is concerned with the nature of Deity, which is the next empirical quality to emerge after mind.<sup>5</sup> However this is generally the least regarded element of his work and we can pass over from this section without further exposition.

Alexander's philosophy has been criticised for treating things under the double aspect of form and quality and in taking the categories as *a priori* qualities, requires the postulation of a non-empirical or phenomenological method of intuition whereby they are known.<sup>6</sup> Brettschnieder also accused Alexander of lapsing back into the Idealism that he sought to escape, a judgement that John Anderson would probably have concurred with, although substituting 'Rationalism' for 'Idealism'.<sup>7</sup> However, Brettschnieder appears to place too much weight on Alexander's description of himself as a Realist, for as Alexander himself stated in the introduction to Space, Time and Deity, the terms Realism and Idealism have shifting senses and he would be heartily glad to do away with them altogether.<sup>8</sup> In Alexander's philosophy there is a Realist working out of the Idealism of Hegel's 'philosophy of nature', for in both Hegel and Alexander there is a discernible development from the logical categories of Space-Time to the creation of things and then through the evolution of the species to the development of man. In both, this development is the creative or speculative result of the tension between things and their ideal categories and in both this tension culminates in Deity or Spirit. Although Alexander's philosophy has been extensively discussed and criticised, his contribution to the development of a

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1 loc cit

2 ibid Vol. 2 pp 247 - 313

3 ibid Vol. 2 p 299 ff

4 ibid Vol. 2 p 302 ff

5 ibid Vol. 2 p 345

6 McCarthy op cit p 19; Brettschnieder op cit 71 ff; 93 ff

7 Brettschnieder op cit p 163 ff. Anderson's early views on Alexander are succinctly expressed in 'The Knower and the Known' and 'The Non-Existence of Consciousness' in Studies in Empirical Philosophy pp 27 - 40 and 60 - 67 respectively. For his detailed assessment of Alexander's philosophy see his 1949 lectures on Alexander.

8 Alexander op cit Vol. 1 pp 7 - 8

systematic account of Realism has not been examined in detail and it is to the logical development of Alexander's philosophy by John Anderson that we now turn.

### c. Positivism

Having outlined the historical and philosophical nature of Idealism and the response to this by the twentieth century Realists, it is now necessary to develop the philosophical views of John Anderson as a critic of Idealism and contributor to the general philosophical movement of Realism. To do this, we need to move from the general issue of philosophic history and begin the study of philosophic biography as the development of Anderson's distinctive philosophic views in terms of the philosophical and intellectual context in which they were formed. Born on 1 November 1893 into the family of a socialist schoolteacher, John Anderson showed an early precociousness in intellectual matters, first at Hamilton Academy and then at the University of Glasgow. He was first in the Open Bursary Competition for university entrance in 1911 and awarded the Cunninghame Medal in the Honours class in Mathematics in 1915. Anderson attended Alexander's Gifford lectures at Glasgow University between 1916 and 1917 and in that year was awarded the University Silver Medal for an essay in Political Science and the Caird Medal and first prize in the Honours class of Moral Philosophy. Although Anderson's Silver Medal essay is notably 'idealistic', he had little time for the 'measured rhetoric' of Henry Jones or the Idealist logic of Robert Latta at Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> Anderson also appeared to know J.W. Scott, author of Syndicalism and Realism and a lecturer in the department, whose work Anderson must have known of, through being associated with Scott in the activity of the Glasgow University Philosophical Society.<sup>2</sup> Anderson's personal life during this period was apparently stimulated by his relationship with his older brother William who had studied philosophy at Glasgow a few years before him (graduating in 1911) and his presumed acquaintance with Mathew Robieson who had also studied philosophy at Glasgow and, like John Anderson, gained the university Silver Medal for an essay in Political Science.<sup>3</sup> Anderson graduated with Master of Arts in 1917 with a dissertation on William James, gaining a Ferguson Scholarship in philosophy which enabled him to teach at Glasgow during 1917-8.<sup>4</sup> Anderson taught at University College at Cardiff during 1918-9 and then in 1919 he won a Shaw Philosophical Fellowship which enabled him

1 For partial extracts of Anderson's Silver Medal essay see Baker, A. J. 'Anderson's Intellectual Background' (Pt. 1) in Heraclitus No. 33 Oct. 1993 pp 6 -7 while for his rejection of the Idealism of Henry Jones see Passmore, J. 'John Anderson and Twentieth Century Philosophy' in Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p i

2 Anderson, J. 'The Fallacy of Optimism' in Heraclitus No. 32 Aug. 1993 p 7

3 Baker op cit pp 6 - 7. Robieson also contributed a number of articles to The New Age, before his sudden death in 1919. ibid pp 10 - 12

4 A copy of Anderson's M.A. thesis on James can be found in the Ruth Walker Archives, Fisher Library, Sydney University.

to return to teaching duties at Glasgow.<sup>1</sup> Anderson lectured at Edinburgh University between 1920 and 1926, where under the influence of A.E. Taylor and Norman Kemp-Smith, he developed his Realist philosophy. Kemp Smith, who had been a student of Henry Jones and an assistant to Robert Adamson, was especially appreciative of Anderson's ability, mentioning him in the introduction to his Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Anderson also made a contribution to Taylor's Plato: The Man and his Work in making certain suggestions to Taylor's interpretation of Plato.<sup>3</sup>

The Scottish philosophical heritage influenced by Hegel was considerable at this time, for apart from incorporating much Realist and Empiricist criticism into their own philosophy, the Hegelian philosophy taught at Scottish Universities spread to many parts of the British Empire, including Canada, India, South Africa and Australia. Although this spread of the Scottish philosophy could be attributed to the 'democratic intellectualism' which had been so prominent during the nineteenth century, the Scottish Universities had entered a period of institutional crisis and instability.<sup>4</sup> Philosophy lost its privileged place in the Scottish Universities in 1916 and a bitter struggle ensued, until its central place in the university curriculum was re-instated in 1927. It was in the context of this intellectual tension, and under the philosophical tutelage of Idealists at Glasgow and Edinburgh, that a young John Anderson gained his philosophic education, an education which was enhanced somewhat by Alexander's Gifford lectures at Glasgow during 1916 and 1917 and Anderson's early philosophy can be described as a unique combination of the 'democratic intellect' of his Scottish philosophical education and the 'democratic metaphysics' of Alexander's Empiricism. Although Anderson contributed to the general Realist reaction against Idealism, the influences upon him were wider than the Realism of Moore and Russell or even Alexander, and included Burnet, James, Marx, Freud, Sorel and James Joyce.<sup>5</sup> Although Anderson lectured on Spinoza and Hegel and wrote an early outline of his philosophy during this period, his only publications before arriving at Sydney University were two articles published in Mind, which were critical of the pragmatist F.C.S. Schiller.

In his early paper, 'Some Problems of Positive Philosophy', Anderson defended a 'positive' account of philosophy which was opposed to both comparative or relativist

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1 For a full list of Anderson's academic achievements and teaching experience see the copy of his application for the Challis Professorship at Sydney University reprinted in Dialectic Vol. 30 1987 pp 144 - 5

2 Kemp Smith, N. Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge London, 1924.

3 Baker, A. J. 'Anderson's Intellectual Background' (Pt. 2) in Heraclitus No. 34 Jan. 1994 p 6

4 Davie, G. E. The Crisis in the Democratic Intellect Edinburgh, 1986.

5 Baker op cit pp 7 - 8

philosophy and superlative or 'Idealist' philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Anderson defined comparative philosophy as the view that there are no 'Absolutes' and where philosophic thinking differs to scientific thinking only in terms of degree. Superlative philosophy, on the other hand, was the view that there are 'Absolutes', although this 'Absolute' is independent of experience and therefore unhistorical, which implied that philosophic thinking differs from scientific thinking in kind.<sup>2</sup> Anderson's positive conception of philosophy was opposed to both of these views in being based of the positive nature of things as they are found in experience and in holding that philosophic thinking differs from scientific thinking only in terms of the comprehensiveness of the treatment of the objects.<sup>3</sup> Philosophy gives 'definition' to the sciences and both share the common hypothetical or empirical method, but whereas science is concerned to 'save' hypotheses, philosophy is concerned with 'removing' hypotheses.<sup>4</sup> These hypotheses are continuous with data and are subject to the same conditions of belief or disbelief, for any proposition which can be asserted can also be denied, as all propositions are either true or false.<sup>5</sup> The main concern of 'positive philosophy' then is to distinguish its distinctive subject matter from those of the sciences and part of the special subject matter of philosophy are the 'sciences' of logic, psychology and ethics which deal with truth, mind and goodness.<sup>6</sup> On the comparative or relativistic conception of philosophy, there are no 'absolutes' and truth and goodness are held to only have meaning in terms of the contexts of believing or valuing. In its most extreme form, this is the view that the 'majority' is always right, which Anderson argued is illogical for on such a conception no one would ever come to hold a belief in the first place, for they would be forever waiting for the 'majority' to decide what to believe.<sup>7</sup> Similarly in terms of ethical matters, goodness would be reduced to the issue of mere likings and such a position would naturally lapse back into the difficulties of relative truth where any position which is advanced is only supported by the claim that it is simply 'my' opinion.<sup>8</sup> In reaction to this view, the superlative or Idealist view asserted that there

1 Anderson, J. 'Some Problems of Positive Philosophy' reprinted in Dialectic Vol. 30 1987. The date of the paper is unknown although Anderson suggests that it was written in 1922. There is at least one piece of psychological evidence on p 158 to support this suggestion, 1922 being the year of his marriage to Janet Baillie.

2 ibid p 146 - 147

3 ibid p 147

4 ibid p 147 - 8

5 ibid p 148

6 ibid p 149. One obvious omission from this list of the 'philosophical sciences' is that of aesthetics as the science of beauty. That Anderson did regard aesthetics as a science will be argued for presently although it can be noted at this stage that in a 1931 paper he contrasted the Realist way of thinking with the 'false thinking' of servility and sentimentality, which he argued could also be expressed as a conflict between 'positivism' on the one hand and 'comparativism' and 'superlativism' on the other. See Anderson Art and Reality p 163

7 loc cit

8 ibid p 150

are 'Absolutes' - Truth, Goodness, Mind - and to which everything is a question of degree.<sup>1</sup> However Anderson argued that the difficulty with this theory is that it is 'unhistorical', for the Absolute, whatever its manifestation, is beyond experience and the occurrence of everyday things and cannot provide us with a criteria or 'measure' of what to believe or what to do.<sup>2</sup> 'Positive' philosophy on the other hand, holds that there are 'Absolutes', but that these 'Absolutes' are based in the occurrence of actual things. 'Positive' philosophy sets up ways of measuring situations in terms of a diversity of forms of truth, goodness and beauty and these forms provide the direction in which to look for the solutions of particular problems.<sup>3</sup> Hence logic, in dealing with truth, seeks to provide a positive measure of things themselves as a logic of events.<sup>4</sup> Things are events in Space and Time and the formal characters that they have gives the direction in which we can provide solutions for specific difficulties.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, to know that every event has a cause, does not tell us what the cause of a certain event may be, although it does show that causality will be operative in any situation and we will be able to follow out the line of causality in any particular case.<sup>6</sup> The main problem of logic is to give a description of the categories, which can only be done in terms of events occurring in the medium of Space-Time.<sup>7</sup> The truth of propositions is their occurrence in Space-Time and under certain categorical features and such an account provides a positive distinction between truth and error in terms of occurrence or existence.<sup>8</sup> Similarly psychology seeks to give an account of mind, not as 'Absolute', but as involving certain positive features.<sup>9</sup> The common definitions of mind as 'behavioural' or 'active' are found to be features of all things, with *emotion* being the differentia of mind, occurring in the genus or field of *instincts*.<sup>10</sup> On this account the body is *emotionalised*, where every emotion will find a bodily expression and every action will arise from emotional conditions.<sup>11</sup> Finally ethics seeks to give a positive account of good and the positive field of goods is that of *sentiments*, which are a complex of emotions organised with reference to a particular object or class of objects.<sup>12</sup> The differentia of good are those sentiments which are *intrinsic* or where the sentiment has itself as its own object. A sentiment is good, in other words, when the motive of an action is identical with its objective.<sup>13</sup>

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1 [ibid](#) p 151

2 [ibid](#) p 151 - 2

3 [ibid](#) p 152

4 [loc cit](#)

5 [ibid](#) p 153

6 [loc cit](#)

7 [loc cit](#)

8 [ibid](#) p 154

9 [loc cit](#)

10 [ibid](#) p 155

11 [ibid](#) p 156

12 [ibid](#) p 157

13 [loc cit](#)

The sentiment of truth, for example, is motivated by the love of truth and has as its object the continuance and communication of this love of truth and there are many such sentiments, including the love of beauty, creation and work, regard for variety, human love, freedom and the comic spirit.<sup>1</sup> Goods then, can communicate and assist each other, with this assistance being the object of education.<sup>2</sup> However ethical study and the independent operation of goods will be opposed to the normative conception of the 'ought', where an external standard is applied to ethical actions. Such a conception will be authoritarian and compulsive and will seek to place obstacles in the path of the operation of goodness, such an obstacle taking the form of the 'right' or the 'ought'.<sup>3</sup> This *extrinsic* conception of sentiments is *possessive* and is contrasted with the *creative* conception of intrinsic sentiments.<sup>4</sup> Positive philosophy then, seeks to provide the formal solutions for problems and in removing the metaphysical hypotheses which the special sciences generate, philosophy seeks to organise the sciences.<sup>5</sup> Anderson's early conception of philosophy can therefore be regarded as a 'positive' theory of the traditional forms of philosophy - truth, beauty and goodness - and on a Realist interpretation of Anderson's philosophy, these 'forms' can be regarded as *qualities* of objects.

#### f. The Development of Realism

The first three decades of the twentieth century were the periods of greatest vigour for the Realist movement in its opposition to the preceding Hegelian Idealism and the Realist reaction to Absolute Idealism denied the identity of content and method that the Hegelians had assumed. In place of the identity of the Absolute Idea and the dialectic, Moore and Russell argued for an account of philosophic method as analytic and an account of philosophic content as concerned with 'reality'. Rejecting the Idealist theory of internal relations where what is known is dependent on its being known, the Realist's argued that what is known is independent of its being known, a view which was formally expressed in the doctrine of external relations. This doctrine implied that any proposition is either true or false but not both true and false as in the Hegelian theory of dialectic and that the reality of an object is not dependent upon its 'ideal form' as the Absolute Idealist's had believed. However both Moore and Russell took Idealism to be a monistic doctrine established by the method of synthesis and in their defence of Realism, they argued that 'Reality' is a 'unity' or whole which is only known through the method of analysis. Hence Moore regarded the 'proposition' as a logical unity which is to be analysed into the meaning of its terms, while Russell held that the doctrine of external relations constituted a

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1 *ibid* p 157 - 8

2 *ibid* p 160

3 *loc cit*

4 *ibid* p 161

5 *ibid* p 158



metaphysical 'unity' which must be analysed into its component parts. In this sense the views of the early Moore and Russell can be regarded as an 'analytic Realism' where there is an identity of the content of Reality with the method of analysis and thereby reproduced the Idealist error of identifying the content and method of philosophy. The explicit content of Realist philosophy can therefore be said to be expressed in the proposition 'esse is not percipi' which as an empirical contingent proposition, was a direct denial of the Idealist claim that 'esse is percipi' is a necessary synthetic proposition. This definition of Realism was based on the doctrine of external relations which was initially articulated as an epistemological theory where the subject and object of knowledge exist independently of each other and of the relation between them. However an alternative theory of external relations was articulated at this time by the American 'New Realists' which was thoroughly pluralistic and which did not imply the necessary acceptance of the analytic method in a Realist conception of philosophy. The subsequent development of a systematic account of Realist philosophy was based on this pluralist interpretation of external relations, although Alexander's 'empirical' philosophy upheld the view that the conflict between Realism and Idealism was without meaning and therefore that relations could be regarded as both internal and external. The basis of this empiricist ontological theory was the claim that mind is an existing thing in a universe of things and the method of this philosophy was not exclusively analytical as Moore and Russell had assumed, but was an 'empirical' method which was both analytic and synthetic. The logical completion of this systematic conception of Realism was undertaken by John Anderson in his account of a 'positive' philosophy, where the categories of truth, goodness and beauty were held to be *qualities* of objects. It is on such an interpretation of Anderson's philosophy that the major subjects of his philosophical theory will be presented. Hence Anderson's metaphysical theory will be treated as a Realist account of truth as a formal quality of things, his aesthetic theory will be treated as a Realist account of beauty as a formal quality of things and his ethical theory will be treated as a Realist account of goodness as a formal quality of things. These subjects will be presented in terms of certain historical periods when Anderson's interest in these subjects predominated. This examination of Anderson's philosophical development will conclude with a consideration of his mature philosophical theories, which were primarily concerned with his theory of history and his unified conception of philosophy, as concerned with the *formal* nature of truth, goodness and beauty.