

#### 4. REALIST METAPHYSICS

##### a. Realist Metaphysics

Although John Anderson rejected metaphysics as the search for 'ultimates', Samuel Alexander had described his philosophy as metaphysics in the Aristotelian sense of "the science of being as such and its essential attributes" and Alexander's definition is one that can accurately be applied to Anderson's own theory of reality. As such Anderson's metaphysics, like Alexander's, involves both epistemology as a theory of knowledge and ontology as a theory of existence but, unlike Alexander's theory, also involved a logic as a theory of propositions, an addition which can be regarded as Anderson's *development* of Alexander's empiricist metaphysics. Further Anderson's metaphysics, like Alexander's, is concerned with the spatio-temporal and categorial nature of reality, although unlike Alexander's theory, it is based on a strict application of the Realist logic of external relations. Such a logic implied the distinction between qualities and relations which in turn implied the treatment of the categories as formal *qualities* of things. Further, insofar as Anderson regarded the primary logical category as *truth*, then this too, on a strict interpretation of the doctrine of external relations, must be treated not as a *relation* as Idealist's such as Bradley had argued, but as a *formal quality* of things.

Despite the criticisms of G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, the 'Absolute' Idealism of F.H. Bradley remained dominant in British philosophy up to the time of his death in 1924. Shortly after his death, one of Bradley's more insistent critics, the pragmatist F.C.S. Schiller, wrote a short article for Mind summarising his main criticisms of Bradley's Absolute Idealism.<sup>1</sup> Schiller argued that Bradley's doctrine that Reality was an 'Absolute' unity or totality which determines the truth of judgements, implied that since the truth of the judgement is only known in terms of the 'Absolute', of the 'all embracing whole', no truth could be attributed to any partial standpoint.<sup>2</sup> On such an account, the judgement must renounce independence and be placed within the context of the Absolute as the totality of reality.<sup>3</sup> Every human judgement therefore, is necessarily 'partial' and cannot be absolutely true and Bradley's 'Absolute Idealism' lapsed into the sceptical conclusion that there is no truth.<sup>4</sup> Schiller argued that the origin of this scepticism was due to Bradley's confusion between propositions and judgements, where he sought to substitute the propositional form of words for the psychic context in which the judging took place. As he argued "...to maintain the validity of a form of judgement in its verbal integrity

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1 Schiller, F.C.S. 'The Origin of Bradley's Scepticism' Mind Vol. XXXIV (N.S.) 1926 pp 217-223

2 ibid p 218 - 9

3 ibid p 218

4 ibid p 219

it would be necessary to provide in advance against every collocation of accidents in the wide universe capable of creating a situation that would militate against its literal truth. And no human truth could stand that strain."<sup>1</sup> Hence although Bradley claimed that he was concerned with the *truth* of judgements, Schiller argued that he ignored the 'psychic' context of the judgement and therefore could give no account of the validity of judgements in advance of the contexts that might occur. Bradley's scepticism therefore, derived from his refusal to recognise the actual procedures of our thought on the ground that they are 'psychological' and to strengthen his lack of attention to the actual psychological context of judgements, he systematically substituted propositions for judgements. The question of 'absolute truth' therefore, becomes that of '...whether the totality of truth can be packed into a single form of words."<sup>2</sup> All 'truth', according to Schiller, was necessarily dependent on the context within which a judgement was made. Although Schiller may have had the last word on his old opponent, his article provoked a swift response from a young lecturer at Edinburgh University, John Anderson. In the course of his response to Schiller and during his first four years at Sydney University, Anderson developed a *doctrinal* conception of philosophy, with his 'positivist' theory of logic based on the realist doctrine of external relations and the empiricist doctrine of one way of being. This 'positivism' was a single logic of events, with truth being a formal quality of things and not a relation between ideas. This 'positive' treatment of logic implied the rejection of relativistic and Idealistic theories of truth and the development of certain doctrines which Anderson held constituted the logical nature of Realism. Although Anderson still wrote on logical and 'metaphysical' issues during the nineteen thirties, his presentation of these issues was increasingly done in terms of the history of philosophy which, in line with his aesthetic interests during this period, reflect a *thematic* approach to philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

#### b. Positivism

In his first article, 'Propositions and Judgements', Anderson agreed with Schiller's claim that Bradley was sceptical, but argued further that Schiller's account of the judgement was likewise sceptical and for the same reason, namely that it confused judgements with propositions.<sup>4</sup> A positive account of logic, he argued, is one which stresses the truth or falsity of propositions independently of the context of judging. Schiller had argued that since we can never pack the 'totality of truth' into a single

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1 *ibid* p 220

2 *ibid* p 223

3 This change in Anderson's philosophical interest can be further confirmed by the fact that after 1939 he wrote nothing on logical issues until his 1952 article 'Hypotheticals' and then nothing again until 'Relational Arguments' and 'Empiricism and Logic', written after his retirement.

4 Anderson *Studies in Empirical Philosophy* pp 15 - 19

form of words, then we must reject the forms of words. Anderson argued that if we take the assertion that 'Bradley is sceptical' then he would agree with Schiller that we cannot resolve questions of the *meaning* of this judgement without reference to the context in which the judgement is made.<sup>1</sup> However Anderson argued further that this is no reason for rejecting the 'form of words', for in a proposition we have the assertion that something has occurred and this assertion is independent of the judging of it.<sup>2</sup> Schiller had failed then to distinguish between his *judging* and *what he had judged* and it is only for the latter that truth can be claimed. To confuse the context or circumstances of a judgement with the truth of that judgement is to deny the possibility of truth at all.

To supplant verbal forms by psychic settings is therefore to despair of communicable truth and eventually of all objectivity. Thus there is no need to appeal from propositions to judgements, but every reason for not doing so, if scepticism is to be avoided. A distinction has to be made, in considering the question of context, between the psychical conditions of our thinking and the objective conditions of the occurrence of which we are thinking. No doubt it depends on our state of mind whether we believe a certain proposition or not....But to explain how we come to think anything does not explain whether it is true or not.<sup>3</sup>

It is only, Anderson argued, by accepting or rejecting propositions as they stand, that we can have objective and communicable truth and therefore in propositions, "...we are not concerned with application or context; nor are propositions 'about' anything. They are simply true or false; and, if true, they are independently or 'absolutely' true. To reject this view it would be necessary to show that we do not mean by a 'truth' something which actually occurs".<sup>4</sup> Both Bradley and Schiller Anderson concluded, were sceptical in assuming that a judgement cannot be considered apart from its conditions or circumstance. For Bradley, this assumption leads to the view that only the absolute or 'unconditioned whole' can be considered or thought, whilst for Schiller it leads to the view that only particular circumstances or contexts can be considered or thought.<sup>5</sup>

However Schiller was not to be so easily 'refuted' and in his reply argued that the distinction between the meaning and truth of propositions implied a 'radical

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1 [ibid](#) p 16

2 [loc cit](#)

3 [loc cit](#)

4 [ibid](#) p 17

5 [ibid](#) p 19

difference' between the logic of propositions and the logic of judgements.<sup>1</sup> The logic of propositions he argued is a formal logic which deals with verbal forms or propositions which have no actual meaning, whilst the logic of judgements is a 'psychologic' which deals with the logic of actual thinking or judging which have actual meaning and which are always dependent on the context in which the judgement is made. For such a 'psychologic', Schiller argued, the meaning of a judgement is the personal meaning of the man who makes the judgement and that no assertion of its truth or falsity can be achieved until the meaning has been revealed, which is to understand the context in which the judgement has been made. However in formal logic the meaning of a proposition can "...never be determined with certainty in advance of its use, because the 'ambiguity' inherent in the form may always frustrate our anticipations."<sup>2</sup> The only important thing for formal logic is the meaning of the words in the proposition, which can never be determined in advance. Anderson's error, according to Schiller, is that he takes the selection of predicates in judgements to be a question of either their truth or falsity, but this selection "...does not appreciate the fact that what we want to know is precisely whether our predicates are true or false, not that our choice is never between absolute truth and absolute falsity, but always between truer and falser judgements."<sup>3</sup>

In his response to Schiller, Anderson detailed what he took to be the errors of Schiller's scepticism and particularly his confusion between propositions and judgements.<sup>4</sup> Anderson argued that if 'judgement' means simply the *act* of judging then no truth can be claimed for such an act, for the issue of *what* is judged, i.e. the proposition, is still relevant and it is for the proposition that truth is claimed. Schiller is sceptical therefore because he denies that assertions are simply matters of fact and therefore denies that any definite assertions can be made at all and the illogical nature of such a theory is demonstrated by the fact that any theory can only be upheld by making definite assertions and statements of fact.<sup>5</sup> It is only by *aiming* at 'absolute truth' that we can have truth which we definitely believe, although there is no question of truths,

...of which we can be eternally certain, of beliefs which under no conceivable circumstances could we give up. Any proposition whatever can be denied, i.e. can be conceived to be false; and we have

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<sup>1</sup> Schiller, F.C.S. 'Judgements versus Propositions' Mind Vol. XXXIV (N.S.) 1926 p 338

<sup>2</sup> loc cit

<sup>3</sup> ibid p 343

<sup>4</sup> Anderson op cit p 20

<sup>5</sup> loc cit

all had the experience of giving up beliefs which we once confidently held. But *while* we held them, we held them to be absolutely true; <sup>1</sup>

Anderson argued that while experience has shown us to be mistaken at times it could only do so if at other times we did not make mistakes and that the mere possibility of contradiction, that 'we may be wrong', would not be sufficient to make us give up a particular belief.

The very fact that contradictory views are held is sufficient to show that some beliefs are true. Now when any belief is true, what is believed (the proposition) is something that has occurred; and when a belief is false, it is still, in being believed *supposed* to have occurred. To speak, on this basis, of 'absolute' truth, while it may be said to add nothing to the notion of occurrence, at least emphasises the fact that we cannot speak of relative or conditional occurrences.<sup>2</sup>

Such a view of the truth of propositions is equally opposed to coherence and correspondence theories of truth, for no other theory is required if the proposition is simply a statement of fact. "I still maintain that what is 'proposed' or supposed in a proposition is a certain state of affairs, and that whoever believes the proposition takes that state of affairs to have actually occurred - as he indicates by the use of the copula 'is'."<sup>3</sup> So when we consider the assertion that 'Bradley is sceptical', we are considering whether the actual Bradley is characterised by being sceptical, which will be a question of simple truth or falsity, with the proposition indicating that something has occurred.

In general, then, when a person formulates a proposition, the copula indicates that he thinks something has occurred, and the terms (the different functions of which need not to be considered here) indicate what he thinks has occurred. In other words, a proposition is something which can be thought to have occurred or not to have occurred. But thinking that something has occurred is simply judgement, in the sense of judging. Thus when we speak of judgement in the sense of what is judged, we are speaking about a proposition; and the proposition or judgement is true, when the supposed situation *has* occurred.<sup>4</sup>

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1 ibid p 21 (his emphasis)

2 loc cit (his emphasis)

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 22 (his emphasis)

Anderson also criticised Schiller's view that questions of meaning and particularly the question of ambiguity, raised problems for an account of the propositional 'form of words'. Anderson agreed with Schiller that knowledge of actual occurrences is conveyed by means of words, but argued that while the misunderstanding of the meanings of words does in fact occur, we also understand what these words and statements mean.<sup>1</sup> Such an understanding could not occur if there were in principle a 'plurality of meanings'. It is only by speaking of things independently, of things simply occurring, that we can have any intelligible statements or propositions and it is only by reference to propositions which we *believe*, that we can have any theory of logic.

And the nature of belief requires the rejection of any theory of distinct *sorts* or different *degrees* of truth; truth being simply what is represented by the copula 'is' in the proposition. Any such theory, or any view which attributes different meanings to 'is' is inherently sceptical or illogical, since only by the unambiguous 'is' of occurrence could the theory be formulated at all. We must think of propositions, therefore, as capable of being unconditionally true;<sup>2</sup>

Anderson's 'positivist' logical theory then was a propositional theory of reality where the truth or falsity of propositions is determined independently of the proposing or judging of them with truth being determined in terms of occurrence and indicated by the copula in the proposition. However it is also important to recognise that even at this early stage, Anderson distinguished between the different *functions* of the proposition, a view which he made clearer in his 1929 paper " 'Universals' and Occurrences".

In terms of occurrence ...we can distinguish the functions of subject, predicate and copula; the subject is the region within which the occurrence takes place, the predicate is the sort of occurrence it is and the copula is its occurring. This theory ...deals with the proposition as a whole - as a complex arrangement, S is P. In taking *is* as occurrence i.e., as involving Space and Time, we are taking it as it appears in the proposition in relation to a subject and a predicate, and indicating by its position both their connection and the difference of their functions.<sup>3</sup>

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1 loc cit

2 ibid p 26 (his emphasis)

3 ibid pp 117 - 8 (his emphasis)

On the basis of this account of the proposition, Anderson drew two important conclusions which formed the basis of his logical theory.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, the function of the predicate is to describe, while the function of the subject is to indicate and any propositional term can have either function, with its predicative function 'characterising' in its being a universal and its subject function 'locating' in its being a particular.<sup>2</sup> Hence the subject and the predicate functions indicates the universality and particularity of the terms of the proposition and hence signifies the categorial import of the proposition. Secondly, on the basis of the quantification of the copula - where 'quantifying' the copula indicates whether any proposition is universal or particular - and of the logical form of any proposition being 'S is (or is not) P', Anderson was able to develop his propositional account of reality into the 'four forms' of the traditional syllogistic logic.<sup>3</sup> Hence 'All S are P' is the universal affirmative proposition; 'No S are P' is the universal negative proposition; 'Some S are P' is the particular affirmative proposition; and 'Some S are not P' is the particular negative proposition. From this account of the logic of propositions, Anderson sought to defend the traditional syllogistic logic from the newer developments in logic which occurred during the twentieth century.

Following his dispute with Schiller, Anderson applied and was successful for, the Challis Chair of Philosophy at Sydney University. Although it is commonplace in writing of Australian intellectual and cultural history to remark on Manning Clark's distinction between the 'Melbourne historians' and the 'Sydney philosophers' and the different intellectual 'faiths' which they reflect, it is perhaps not so widely recognised that on its philosophical side, such a distinction had its origin in the Scottish intellectual and philosophical heritage that was referred to previously.<sup>4</sup> Appointments to the inaugural chairs at Melbourne and Sydney universities in the late 1880's were made from Edinburgh and Glasgow universities respectively, in the personages of Henry Laurie and Francis Anderson who had been students of Seth Pringle-Pattison and Edward Caird.<sup>5</sup> Laurie's most important work The Development of Scottish Philosophy, was in the historical tradition of Edinburgh University, a tradition which was transmitted to his student Morris Miller, whose article on the origin of philosophy in Australia, Anderson responded to in 1930. Although Francis Anderson wrote little, he was highly respected as a teacher and an educational reformer, thus continuing the tradition of public-spiritedness which was such a

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1 For a full discussion of Anderson's logical theory see Baker, A. J. Australian Realism pp 76 - 94; Rose, T. 'Logic' The Australian Highway Sept. 1958 pp 57 - 60 and later expanded as 'Some General Features of Anderson's Logic' Dialectic 1987 pp 85 - 95.

2 Anderson op cit pp 116 - 7

3 ibid pp 138 - 9

4 Clark, C.M.H. 'Faith' in Coleman, P. (ed) Australian Civilization Sydney, 1962, pp 78 - 88

5 For details of the early history of philosophy in Australia, see Grave, S. A History of Philosophy in Australia St. Lucia, 1984, Ch. 1 - 2

characteristic of Caird's school at Glasgow. Indeed, even the Professor of English and later Vice-Chancellor at Sydney University, Mungo MacCallum, had been an early student of Caird and was no doubt instrumental in bringing Henry Jones to Sydney in 1908. Following them, the next eight appointments as professors of philosophy were made either from students of these pioneers or else, as was the case with John Anderson, from Scotland itself. Francis Anderson's successor in the Sydney chair, Bernard Muscio was educated at Sydney and Oxford, as was A.C. Fox who went on to the University of Western Australia. Laurie's successor at Melbourne, W.R. Boyce Gibson had been educated at Oxford and Glasgow, while Laurie's student, Morris Miller was appointed to the chair at Tasmania. South Australia, had long been the domain of Sir William Mitchell, an Edinburgh man, and his successor McKellar Stewart had also been a student of Laurie. This difference in Sydney and Melbourne 'faiths', then can be accounted for in no small way from the Glasgow and Edinburgh differences in philosophy that had existed in Scotland at the end of the nineteenth century. Although the new Realism had already been briefly promoted by Bernard Muscio, John Anderson's predecessor in the Sydney chair, this still made for a remarkably homogenous philosophical environment when Anderson arrived in 1927, and given Anderson's 'suitability' to Sydney social life, one that he took great delight in dismantling.<sup>1</sup> By the time of his arrival in Sydney, Anderson had developed a condensed and logical view of philosophy which George Davie suggests could not find sufficient room for development in the intellectual turmoil of Scotland during the nineteen twenties, but which, in the open spaces of Australia, could develop into a philosophical 'school' very soon after his arrival.<sup>2</sup> Upon his arrival at Sydney University, Anderson immersed himself in his teaching and research duties in a frenzy of philosophic activity and over the next four years developed a conception of philosophy as an interrelated set of *doctrines*, these doctrines consisting of propositions, which in being based on the Realist doctrine of external relations, implied a treatment of *truth* as a quality of things.<sup>3</sup> In his lectures to students and in a series of articles written for the Australasian Journal of Philosophy and Psychology (A.J.P.P.) from 1927 to 1931, Anderson presented the basic doctrines of his philosophical position which, at first glance, appear to remain remarkably consistent for the remainder of his life.<sup>4</sup>

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1 On Anderson's suitability to Sydney social life see Buckley, V. 'Intellectuals' in Coleman op cit pp 101-2.

2 Davie, G. E. 'John Anderson in Scotland' in Quadrant July 1977, p 57. Alexander bemoaned the fact that he had failed to establish a philosophic 'school' and Anderson recognised that there was no distinctive 'school' of Realism, a problem which he obviously sought to rectify in his own teaching. See Alexander Philosophical and Literary Pieces p 40 and Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 60.

3 Anderson, J. 'The Book of Diogenes Laertes' (Rev.) A.J.P.P. IX, I, March 1931. p 72.

4 Anderson began and ended his philosophical career with statements of his adherence to Realism and Empiricism. See 'Empiricism', 'Realism and its Critics', 'Empiricism and Logic' (all in Studies in Empirical Philosophy) and 'Realism' in The Australian Highway Sept. 1958 pp 53-56. Anderson's extensive teaching interests during this early period are reflected in



### c. Empiricism

In his dispute with Schiller, Anderson's argument had been based on the view that the truth of any proposition depended upon the occurrence of an objective state of affairs and his account of 'state of affairs' was derived from Alexander's empiricist account of reality as spatio-temporal. Alexander's empiricist theory of reality was so influential on Anderson, that Alexander's philosophy, once rid of what Anderson termed 'rationalist' confusions, formed the core of Anderson's own empirical philosophy. In 'Empiricism', his first article published in the A.J.P.P., Anderson argued that there were several different names which could be given to his general conception of philosophy, but that it is as an empiricism that his philosophical outlook could best be defined. Distinguishing his own theory from the historical theory of empiricism as an epistemological thesis, Anderson defended empiricism as a doctrine that maintains that there is only one way of being, rejecting rationalism as a doctrine of 'higher' or 'lower' truth.

Rationalistic theories of all sorts are distinguished from empiricism by the contention that there are different kinds or degrees of truth and reality. The distinguishing mark of empiricism is that it denies this, that it maintains that there is only one way of being.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly although 'rationalism' has been traditionally associated with the theory of a faculty of 'reason', Anderson argued that the discussion of 'faculties' would be pointless if the postulation of different orders of being is shown to be illogical.<sup>2</sup> Hence the dispute between rationalism and empiricism is a dispute about different theories of existence and not about the ways of knowing truths and rationalism, in postulating a theory of 'higher' and 'lower' truth or reality, is opposed to the very nature and possibility of discourse. Discourse is only possible if there is one way of being which is indicated by the copula in the proposition.

The chief, and I think final, objection to any theory of higher and lower, or complete and incomplete, truth is that it is contrary to the very nature and possibility of discourse; that it is 'unspeakable'. The empiricist, like Socrates, adopts the attitude of considering things in terms of what can be said about them i.e. in propositions. And he

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the fact that in the Anderson Archives at Sydney University there are 24 sets of lectures on topics ranging from 'Descartes to Kant' (1927), 'Later Platonic Dialogues' (1928), 'Early Greek Philosophy' (1928), 'Alexander' (1929), 'Moore's Ethics' (1929), 'Greek Philosophy' (1929) and 'Logic' (1931).

<sup>1</sup> Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 3

<sup>2</sup> ibid p 4

regards this not as a 'second best', but as the only method of speaking or thinking at all, since every statement that we make, every belief that we hold, is a proposition.<sup>1</sup>

If as the rationalist assumes, that there is something 'above' or 'below' the proposition, then this 'something' would be beyond speech and understanding and therefore unintelligible. There is no way then, to get 'behind' the proposition and propositions can stand by themselves with nothing else to supplement them. The rejection of rationalism is therefore based upon the rejection of the copula of identity and its replacement with the copula of existence.

The objection to rationalism is just that what is meant by 'truth' is what is conveyed in the proposition by the copula 'is'. And logically there can be no alternative to 'being and not being'; propositions can only be true or false... Thus empiricism regards it as illogical to make such distinctions as that between existence and subsistence, or between the 'is' of identity, that of predication and that of membership of a class; and still more obviously illogical to say that there *is* something defective about 'is' itself. These are all attempts to get behind the proposition, to maintain - in words ! - that we mean more than we say.<sup>2</sup>

Anderson argued that in discourse, any proposition can be either asserted or denied and therefore there will be no 'undeniable truths', for whatever can be asserted can be subjected to inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Further there will be no need to postulate the existence of 'necessary truths' in defence of an 'absolute', for every proposition will be a contingent proposition and will have the function of either conclusion, premise, hypothesis or observation, with such functions being determined by discourse itself.<sup>4</sup> On such an account of the proposition there will be no distinction between empirical and rational science for all sciences, in dealing with contingent propositions, will be observational and experimental. With the rejection of the doctrine of different ways of being, so too Anderson rejected the theory of different ways of knowing and in particular, the distinction between sense and reason. Hence the British Empiricists', in holding the dualistic view that *experience* provided 'data' which *reason* then 'organised' into knowledge or science, held a view of experience as *inferior* to reason.<sup>5</sup> Similarly Hume, in holding that experience was of *isolated*

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1 ibid p 4

2 ibid p 5

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 6

5 ibid p 12

data, had to admit that no coherence could be imposed on this data and therefore could not show how objective knowledge or science was possible. However the criticism of Hume by T.H. Green that it is the *mind* that relates the different objects of sensation, also fails because the mind cannot perform such a function.<sup>1</sup> The 'radical empiricism' of William James is 'radical' simply because, contra Green, mind is not required to perform such a relating function for things are given as related as much as they are given as distinguished. As Anderson stated, "Connections and distinctions, in fact, are given together; and those who argue that the work of the mind is required to connect distinct things, might equally well maintain that work had previously been required to distinguish them."<sup>2</sup> Any theory then, which refers to the 'work of the mind' as determining the intelligibility of things is 'self-refuting' or 'unspeakable'. "If whatever is intelligible has both connections and distinctions, then in order to speak intelligibly of what is contributed by the mind we shall have to assume that it has both connections and distinctions, and in order to speak intelligibly of what is given by things we shall have to assume that *it* has both connections and distinctions, so that no 'work of the mind' is required to make it intelligible."<sup>3</sup> All the objects of science, whether psychological, social or ethical, are therefore both connected and distinct and Anderson's empiricist conclusion then, is that

..all the objects of science, including minds and goods, are things occurring in space and time....and that we can study them by virtue of the fact that we come into spatial and temporal relations with them. And therefore all ideals, ultimates, symbols, agencies and the like are to be rejected, and no such distinction as that of facts and principles, or facts and values, can be maintained. There are only facts, i.e., occurrences in space and time.<sup>4</sup>

Anderson's theory of occurrences in Space and Time was derived from Alexander's empirical metaphysics and Anderson, after excising certain 'rationalist' confusions from Alexander's philosophy, incorporated much of Alexander's empiricism into his own philosophy. In his introduction to Space, Time and Deity Alexander had argued that

Any experience whatever can be analysed into two distinct elements and their relation to one another. The two elements which are the

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1 loc cit

2 loc cit

3 loc cit (his emphasis)

4 ibid p 14

terms of 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>1</sup>

In his 1927 article 'The Knower and the Known', Anderson argued that this account of consciousness disclosed Alexander's rationalist tendency and similarity to Descartes. In both cases, he argued, there is an account given of knowing or experience and in each case "... it is assumed that what is found, by the observer of the experience, to be involved in it is experienced by the person having the experience;"<sup>2</sup> The fact that two terms are required for the relation he argued, does not imply that both terms are experienced. If an experience is experienced or known, then "...the knower must be known as knowing and the known as known. But this gives no ground for saying in any experience the knower knows his own knowing, or that there are two ways of knowing, enjoyment and contemplation."<sup>3</sup> In his 1929 article 'The Non-Existence of Consciousness', Anderson returned to Alexander's theory of empiricism to make his criticisms more precise. Anderson argued that when Alexander speaks of 'the object of which an act of mind is aware', he is talking of the relation 'aware of' and not simply the 'of' which is Alexander's grammatical expression of the relation. Therefore,

...when the relation, reduced to 'of', is expressed as togetherness in some situation, it is symmetrical; that is, either term may be called the knower and the other the known... The unfortunate feature of this contention of Alexander's is that, when he comes to deal with the spatio-temporal relation of togetherness, he imports into it certain of the peculiar characteristics of knowledge, and so is developed the theory of perspectives, which opens the way to relativity...<sup>4</sup>

Hence just as Anderson rejected Alexander's theory of consciousness, he also rejected Alexander's view of spatio-temporal relations as 'compresent', for such a theory invests relations with peculiar features of knowledge which opens the way for relativism. Anderson next considered Alexander's 'perfectly gratuitous assumption' that the two terms in the experience are differently experienced; that one is the act of experiencing, the '-ing', and the other is that which is experienced, the '-ed'.<sup>5</sup> Anderson argued that this claim means that the experiencing is experienced but that it is experienced in a different way to which the experienced is experienced.

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1 Alexander Space-Time and Deity: Vol. 1 p 11

2 Anderson op cit p 38

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 63

5 loc cit

It ought to be clear, without any argument, that what is experienced or known in any experience is the object; that is what we mean by the object. It is, indeed, possible that that which knows that object, or again the relation between the two, may also be known, i.e. may *also* be an object but that there is nothing in the first thing's being known to show that this must be so; and where it is so the second thing's being known will be a *different* experience.<sup>1</sup>

The object of experience then, is always distinct from the experience of it, even when the object of the experience is itself an experience. To suppose otherwise, as Anderson had argued in 'The Knower and the Known', is to identify the character of a thing and the relation of experiencing or knowing. Hence Anderson concluded, Alexander's epistemological dualism of contemplation and enjoyment, that "The mind enjoys itself and contemplates its object", must be rejected, for there is "...no such thing as enjoyment or 'self-sustaining knowledge' (consciousness), but that if minds are known, as they are, they are contemplated."<sup>2</sup> However Alexander's theory of mental processes as brain processes can be retained insofar as it gives the clue to the spatio-temporal theory of all things belonging to "...the single order of events or *propositions*."<sup>3</sup> Further when Alexander's notion of 'compresence' and his notion of Space-Time as a 'stuff' are rejected, we are left with a theory where the relations between things are spatio-temporal and the notion of Space-Time is an account of the *medium* in which things *are*.<sup>4</sup> Such a revised theory of Space-Time is therefore the foundation of a thoroughgoing Realism as a *logic* of events.<sup>5</sup> Hence in his assessment of Alexander's empiricist philosophy, Anderson rejected two major components of Alexander's own theory. Firstly he rejected the notion of 'consciousness' as the quality of mind, as the confusion of a quality and a relation and therefore the epistemological dualism between contemplation and enjoyment is to be rejected, with the Realist conclusion being that there is only one way of knowing, contemplation. Empiricism as an epistemological theory, recognises only one way of knowing, with no faculty of 'consciousness' being peculiarly mental or knowing. Secondly the rejection of the 'rationalist' element of Alexander's epistemological theory implied a rejection of his ontological notion of compresence and the view that Space-Time is an ontological 'stuff', with Anderson arguing that relations are simply spatio-temporal with Space-Time being a medium in which things exist. In so doing Anderson rejected Alexander's notion of emergence and his conception of a hierarchy of existence. However Anderson retained much of the

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1 loc cit (his emphasis)

2 ibid p 64

3 ibid p 67 (his emphasis)

4 loc cit (his emphasis)

5 ibid p 60

positive character of Alexander's theory into his own theory and particularly his theory of Space-Time and the categories.

#### d. Realism and its critics

In 'The Knower and the Known' Anderson had argued that Realism is the logical theory of the independence of qualities and relations and any term which confuses or identifies a quality and a relation is to be rejected as illogical.

Arguing then, as realists, that no thing or quality of a thing is constituted by the thing's relations, we have to assert that nothing is constituted by knowing and nothing by being known. The notion of 'that whose nature it is to know' is expressed in the term 'consciousness'; the notion of 'that whose nature it is to be known' in the term 'idea'. Realism is therefore concerned to reject these terms, as involving the attempt to take relations as qualities.<sup>1</sup>

In support of this view, Anderson quoted Montague's view that "Realism holds that things known may continue to exist unaltered when they are not known, or that things may pass in and out of the cognitive relation without prejudice to their reality, or that the existence of a thing is not correlated with or dependent upon the fact that anybody experiences it, perceives it, conceives it, or is in any way aware of it."<sup>2</sup> Knowledge then is a relation, which implies that the knower and the known are distinct things and Realism upholds the view that distinctions are 'absolutely real' which is opposed to the Idealist thesis that objects are in some fashion constituted by or dependent upon mind and its 'ideas'.<sup>3</sup> In particular Realism is opposed to the Absolute Idealist view that distinctions are 'distinctions within identities' and that any relation is a 'form of identity'.<sup>4</sup> Anderson also criticised the Absolute Idealist claim that 'truth is the whole' as a search for an 'ultimates, for there could be nothing which is *the* truth or *the* whole and Realism is precisely the denial of such 'ultimates' or 'universals'.<sup>5</sup> The assertion of any 'universal' or 'ultimate' involves the assertion on the one hand, of the 'self-subsistent' as the basis of things and the relative existence of things themselves to that basis on the other, with no relation possible between the two levels of existence. As he argued in a 1930 paper

...all doctrines of 'ultimates' fall together, because they all have to admit the 'relative' but can give no coherent account either of its

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1 ibid p 29

2 ibid p 27

3 loc cit

4 loc cit

5 ibid p 61

relation to, or its distinction from, the 'ultimate'. If this relation or distinction is ultimate, then both its terms must be ultimate, and if it is not, then there is, 'ultimately', no relation or distinction.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine of Realism as an epistemological thesis then is that we do not perceive 'red' or 'hard', but that we perceive a red or a hard thing, with one of the more important contributions of modern Realism being the distinction between the two meanings of 'sensation' i.e., as the *knowing* of a thing and as a *copy* of a thing.<sup>2</sup> The position of Realism then, is that "...if there are sensations, they exist objectively or as a matter of fact; if there are minds they exist as a matter of fact or have objective reality; and nothing can 'exist more than', more objectively than, more essentially than, anything else".<sup>3</sup> Realism then, is the view that we are able to know what exists independently of its relation to mind and that the study of anything "...is not, on account of it being a study, at the same time a study of mind, and that the study of mind must be a definite, particular undertaking; or as Alexander himself put it 'that minds are existences in a world of existences and alongside of them'."<sup>4</sup> The logical basis of this epistemological interpretation of Realism was the doctrine of external relations and Anderson revealed his further indebtedness to the New Realist's in his acceptance of their account of the doctrine of external relations. Quoting from Marvin, Anderson upheld the doctrine of external relations: "In the proposition 'the term *a* is in the relation *R* to the term *b*', *a R* in no degree constitutes *b*, nor does *Rb* constitute *a*, nor does *R* constitute either *a* or *b*."<sup>5</sup> The basis of Realism then is *logical* and despite any specific difficulties it may encounter in its development, the doctrine of Realism must be worked out in terms of this logical basis.<sup>6</sup> Such an account of external relations, it must be stressed in emphasising Anderson's remarkable consistency in his philosophic views, is an account he reinforced over thirty years later.<sup>7</sup>

Anderson's *doctrinal* conception of philosophy is one that was particularly characteristic of his early philosophical development and in his 1930 paper 'Realism and Some of its Critics', he outlined the doctrines of Realism in a particularly clear fashion. In this paper Anderson argued that Idealism is the position which makes the settling of every issue depend on the settling of every other issue, with the consequence being that no issue can ever be settled.

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1 [ibid](#) p 49

2 [ibid](#) p 302 ff. For Anderson's assessment of the state of philosophy at this time see his review of the 'Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of Philosophy' [A.I.P.P.](#), VI, 3, Sept. 1928, pp 223 - 228

3 [ibid](#) p 305

4 [ibid](#) p 61

5 [ibid](#) p 27

6 [ibid](#) p 40

7 Anderson, J. 'Realism' [op.cit](#) p 53.

Nevertheless, the fact that discussion is advanced by consideration only of *the issue itself*, and not of the minds of persons who hold views about it, is evidence of the truth of the realist position. For Idealism which makes the settling of every issue depend on the settling of every other, no issue can ever be settled - and thus Idealism itself cannot be upheld. All actual argument implies the independent or individually true proposition, and this is the same sort of independence as the realist finds in terms of the relation, 'knowledge'.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson went on to elaborate the three distinctive philosophical doctrines which constitute Realism and which are therefore in opposition to the three confused doctrines which constitute Idealism. Realism appears firstly he argued, "...as a *pluralistic* doctrine or theory of independence; and this brings it into conflict with the monistic doctrine properly called Idealism, which denied independence to everything but the 'Absolute' or one true Being."<sup>2</sup> Anderson's rejection of Monism was based on what he held to be the illogicality of the doctrine of internal or constitutive relations. As in the case of either Green or Bradley, this doctrine is the view that the character of a thing is constituted by the relations that it has or what it is related to, and on such a view, there can be no real distinction between the knower and the known, for there are only 'distinctions within identities'. On the contrary, the Realist must recognise 'real differences' for "...any relation has two terms, or holds between different things; and if these things are not really different, then there are not really two terms and there is really no relation."<sup>3</sup> Therefore in terms of the subject-object relation. Anderson argued that the recognition of the relation between the knower and the known, implies that each of these is an independent thing which has an existence and characters of its own and is not reducible to or describable in terms of the other thing or of the relation between them. On this doctrine of relations Anderson again followed Marvin when he said "...that the thing which is known, or the 'object', is not *constituted* by the knower or by being known, nor is the thing which knows, or 'subject', constituted by knowing or by the known."<sup>4</sup> An important consequence of this view for Anderson, is that the Realist must reject notions that are defined in terms of the relations that they have to other things. Thus the Realist must reject notions such as 'consciousness' and 'ideas' as 'terms' which are constituted by the relations which they have and recognise that unless things had qualities of their own, there would be nothing to

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1 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 41 (his emphasis)

2 ibid p 46 (his emphasis)

3 ibid p 42

4 loc cit (his emphasis)



have relations to other things. The Idealist's on the other hand, in the language that they use, unknowingly concede that relations exist between things and that qualities belong to the thing itself. As he said, "Idealism, then, stands or falls with the doctrine of constitutive relations, and I have tried to show that it falls because that doctrine cannot even be consistently stated, because it is contrary to the fact of independence which we all in some measure have to recognise in our discussions."<sup>2</sup> The Idealist treatment of relations as internal to the 'Absolute', of difference as a 'form of identity', is therefore to be rejected and the Realist response is that,

... if we say that differences are comparatively unreal, then 'the comparative unreality of differences' *is* ultimately real. Yet it is not *the* ultimately real or Absolute; it must be an aspect or expression of the Absolute. But, in taking this view, we are admitting that it is *really different* from other aspects or expressions. Again, when we say that the Absolute *is* self-subsistent and its aspects *are* relatively existent, we are recognising the independent existence of 'the self-subsistence of the Absolute' and 'the relative existence of the aspects'; i.e., we are recognising, in spite of ourselves, a *single way of being*. It is seen, therefore, that Monism is not only a false doctrine but an incoherent one; that it implies a division, which it cannot sustain, between 'higher' and 'lower' orders of being, i.e., that it is dualistic or rationalistic.<sup>3</sup>

Anderson's rejection of Dualism followed directly from his rejection of Monism and Realism therefore appears secondly as " ...an *empiricist* doctrine, or theory of existence as the single way of being".<sup>4</sup> The dualist, according to Anderson, postulates a distinction between two types of reality - a 'higher' or ultimate one that is above the world of process or change and a 'lower' one that is concerned with the 'real' world of change. Any such theory he argued must fail, for if the 'real' is unhistorical and 'above' change, then the historical is therefore 'unreal' and the believer in ultimate or eternal entities is logically bound to deny the existence of historical things altogether.<sup>5</sup> The Realist doctrine of external relations therefore not only implies the epistemological theory of the independence of the subject and object of knowledge, but also the ontological doctrine of the independence of any object and the relations between them, for " .. a relation can hold only between two things, each having characters of its own, i.e., between two independent existents,

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1 ibid p 42 - 3

2 ibid p 48

3 ibid p 47 - 48 (his emphasis)

4 ibid p 48 (his emphasis)

5 loc cit

not between an 'ultimate' and a 'relative', or, for that matter, between two 'ultimates'."<sup>1</sup> The important empiricist conclusion for Anderson is that we must reject the Platonic theory of 'forms' which insists that 'forms' exist outside the realm of ordinary existing things.

The correct conclusion, then, is the empirical one, that there are no 'higher' entities, but every thing that concerns particulars is on their own level of existence....The real point is that no matter how we describe the relation, the description must be such that we can recognise *as a single situation* 'a thing partaking of a form', and this situation can only have a neutral sort of being ... which must likewise be that of its own constituents. And all the proposed relations are intelligible only as perceptible relations between perceptible things, i.e., historical relations between historical things.<sup>2</sup>

Nothing, he argued, can 'partake' of the 'form' of being, since if it is 'being' then there is no relation and if it is not 'being' then there is nothing to have the relation.<sup>3</sup> The 'theory of forms' then far from settling problems, renders them insoluble for the solution of problems can only be achieved by the adherence to the view of things as historical situations or occurrences. Hence we have to "...reject the distinction between being and becoming, and recognise, with Heraclitus, that whatever is, is in process and whatever is in process, is."<sup>4</sup> Therefore the Realist rejection of constitutive relations develops into the empirical recognition of a single way of being, which in turn develops into a Positivism or pluralistic logic of events. Realism then, "...appears finally as a *positivist* doctrine, a logic of propositions or events; and this brings it into conflict with every theory of degrees of truth and reality."<sup>5</sup> Anderson's rejection of relativism followed from his rejection of monism and dualism. In response to the relativist who claims that nothing is absolute and that all is relative, Anderson argued that the Realist answer to relativism is "...that there is something absolute, namely facts; that even the relativist doctrine itself implies that 'the relativity of all' is an absolute fact - not absolute in the sense of being above history, but absolutely historical; so that the doctrine cannot be maintained."<sup>6</sup> Any attempt to define truth as 'relative' fails then in terms of its own intelligibility; namely that there must be at least one truth that is not relative - the claim that truth is relative. The Realist position then, is that " ...there is no criterion of truth, nothing *by believing which* we believe something else. If the criterion is

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1 *ibid* p 49

2 *ibid* p 52 (his emphasis)

3 *ibid* p 51

4 *ibid* p 53

5 *loc cit* (his emphasis)

6 *ibid* p 54

a proposition, we have not 'get away from propositions', and we still require a criterion to apply to it. If it is not it cannot settle any dispute."<sup>1</sup>

After this paper, Anderson's presentation of a strictly doctrinal conception of philosophy began to wane and he presented his metaphysical views in the context of the history of philosophy. However in his few logical writings of the nineteen thirties, Anderson was concerned to re-inforce his propositional theory of logic and he stressed that the question of the truth or falsity of a proposition can only be understood in relation to the affirmative and negative copula, 'is it so or not'.<sup>2</sup> Further in a review of Stebbing's Logical Positivism and Analysis, he argued that it is only by thinking about the conditions of existence that philosophical clarification is possible. Such clarification can only be achieved by the consideration of a theory of the 'logical form' of statements, such a theory only being possible in terms of a theory of the forms of situations.<sup>3</sup> Such a theory of 'logical form', on Anderson's account, must be a *propositional* theory.

Obviously I can only verify what I believe by reference to something else that I believe; but what I believe, I believe to be a fact. And any facts that may be in question are themselves *propositional*; otherwise their relevance to my beliefs would be nil. Nothing short of a theory of existence as propositional can get over the difficulties confronting solipsism and 'correspondence' theories alike.<sup>4</sup>

This is the traditional or 'Socratic' approach to logic which "...leads up to and does not abrogate the consideration of what is involved in the recognition of the thing as existing; it is only in terms of existence that we can, in the end, criticise discourse."<sup>5</sup> However Anderson's logical view of propositions implied that the exponent of an alternative logical theory not only has a false view of existence, but also, in his own statement of the case, implicitly admits the view that we are upholding against him, as when someone *argues* against objective implication or *denies* objective truth. This method of 'indirect proof' may also take the form of showing that our opponents view involves him in insoluble problems for such a view will be contradicting the possibility of discourse.<sup>6</sup> After his return from sabbatical leave in 1939, Anderson became involved in a dispute on the nature of logic with Rhys Miller and Professor Boyce-Gibson from Melbourne. In his initial response to Rhys Miller, Anderson was

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1 ibid p 55 (his emphasis)

2 Anderson, J. 'Sur le Principe du Tiers Exclu.' A.J.P.P. XIV, 1, March 1936, p 80.

3 Anderson, J. 'Logical Positivism and Analysis' A.J.P.P. XV, 3, Sept. 1937, p 239

4 ibid p 240 (his emphasis)

5 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 123

6 loc cit

concerned to re-state his earlier identification of propositions and situations and to insist on his propositional logic being a *method* of philosophic discourse.

One of the main points made in my *Empiricism* article was that no contrast is possible between things as we think them and things as they are; the very suggestion that things themselves may exist in an unorganised state, or under forms other than those our thinking imposes, is one in which the forms of our thinking are *already* 'imposed' on them - more exactly, we recognise no such imposed forms, because whatever we think of we think of as *actual*, i.e., we think of the forms not as imposed, but as *there*. ...In fact, whatever theory or supposition we may advance, we think situations, and it is impossible to distinguish thought-forms from situational forms or situational forms (actuality) from a postulated 'reality'. Logic, then, as the theory of situations in general, will operate in criticism alike of any general supposition of the non-situational and of any attempt to treat the objects of some special science as other than situational.<sup>1</sup>

On this view of logic then, human thinking is as much a subject of logic as any thing else. Hence the objection to Kant's procedure in the Critique of Pure Reason is not that he attempts to present things under the forms in which we experience them, but that he supposes that these forms are not in things themselves. Removing this dependence on forms of thinking, we are left with Alexander's logic of things as spatio-temporal and categorial. However what neither Kant nor Alexander clearly brings out, he argued, is that such a logic "...is a logic of things as propositional, and that it may be best approached from the side of discourse, from the consideration of the proposition as an issue, something on which people may take opposing views, on which they may agree or disagree, about which they may ask "Is this so or not?"<sup>2</sup> This insistence on philosophic method, it should be noted, had been stressed sometime earlier when Anderson had argued that

If it is held in the Kantian manner, that existence in Space and Time and subjection to the categories are our ways of regarding things, the answer is that either things are *not* under those conditions and so our principles are principles of error - and in that case, moreover, we are wrong even about there being such principles, and in fact know nothing at all - or things *are* under those conditions, and while we are right in thinking so, there being so is an independent fact.<sup>3</sup>

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1 Anderson, J. 'Logic and Ethics' L.Q.J.P.P., XVII, 1, May 1939 p 60 (his emphasis)

2 ibid p 61

3 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 46 (his emphasis)

In a follow up article to Rhys Miller, Anderson reinforced the methodological and critical importance of his logic when he argued that in attacking a doctrine on logical grounds it is more to the point to show "...that the upholder of the doctrine implicitly accepts the logical position he is overtly opposing".<sup>1</sup> Indeed the failure to recognise the unambiguous copula of propositional logic may reduce philosophy to a state of competing dogmas, "...among which we choose the one which presents the most pleasing pattern."<sup>2</sup> Logic, he said in a typically Heraclitean manner, is concerned with 'what is common to all things'.<sup>3</sup> In his final article in this series, Anderson, in response to criticisms from Boyce Gibson, argued that anything in 'nature' exists as spatio-temporal and in so doing consists of certain 'ways of working', affecting and affected by the 'ways of working' around it. Further, any knowledge of man or of his 'freedom' is of the same sort of knowledge of 'ways of working' and therefore, we have the same grounds for treating man as necessitated, as for anything else.<sup>4</sup> Hence he sought to defend the *apriorism* of his logic understood as the doctrine that Space and Time are found in every experience but which is opposed to the doctrine that the conditions of the possibility of experience are not experienced.<sup>5</sup> After 1939 Anderson produced no other published writing dealing specifically with logic or ontology until his 1952 article 'Hypotheticals' and then nothing else until 'Relational Arguments' and 'Empiricism and Logic'. This lack of interest in logical issues may be partly attributable to the belief that he had already worked out his logical theory to his own satisfaction, but can also be explained by a change in his philosophical interests during the nineteen thirties, forties and fifties, when his main philosophic interests were aesthetics, ethics and history respectively.

#### e. The History of Philosophy

After 1930 Anderson's interest in strictly 'logical' issues waned and he became more interested in the general history of philosophy, discussing figures such as Descartes, Berkeley, Freud, Marx and Hegel and this historical treatment of philosophy was most clearly exemplified in the 1932 article 'The Place of Hegel in the History of Philosophy'. Although Anderson denied the Hegelian identification of history and philosophy, he did support Hegel's contention that philosophy should be both systematic and historical.

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1 Anderson, J. 'The Status of Logic' A.L.P.P. XVII, 2, Aug. 1939, p 165

2 ibid p 167

3 ibid p 169

4 Anderson, J. 'Logic and Experience' A.L.P.P. XVII, 3, Dec. 1939, p 260

5 ibid p 270

Hegel is right, then, in opposition to eclecticism or pragmatism, that philosophy should be systematic. But its systematic character should appear in the form of a single logic, not in the form of 'totality', of a pretended *solution to all problems*. He is right, also, in maintaining that this logic should be historical, if we take this to mean that it is a theory of things as historical; but it should not itself be considered as advancing, however the study of it may do so. ...To substitute for a logic of things as developing; a developing logic is to do away with the object of philosophical study and fall into scepticism; for logic can only develop illogically. The *pretended* object of philosophical study which remains for the devotees of a progressive logic - the totality, the 'Absolute', the historical-unhistorical - merely exemplifies this scepticism, for its 'phases' have to be taken at random; there is nothing to show that any phase is a phase of *its*, that any history is *its* history.<sup>1</sup>

To avoid this scepticism, the history of philosophy cannot be a 'universal' history exhibiting 'one-track development', but that there is retrogression as much as there is progression, where philosophical truths can be forgotten as much as they can be remembered.<sup>2</sup> Although Anderson argued that Hegel distorted the actual historical development of Greek philosophy to make them fit into his scheme of logically successive outlooks, he also recognised that Hegel had greatly stimulated interest in Greek philosophy.<sup>3</sup> In the 'classical' or Hellenic period of philosophy Anderson argued that the transition from rationalism to monism was most clearly demonstrated in the coalescence of many ultimates into one.<sup>4</sup> Hence the early Pythagorean view that the 'real' are certain units with empirical things being arrangements of those units, was criticised by the Eleatics in that this derivation of the 'real' admitted the reality of something other than the 'real'.<sup>5</sup> Hence the paradoxes of Zeno demonstrated that there is no need in accounting for the 'real', for recourse to anything other than the distinctions and relations which hold between things themselves.<sup>6</sup> However the 'Absolute' of the Eleatics could itself be subject to the same criticism of the Pythagoreans, with the Parmenidian 'One' which constituted the 'reality' of empirical things being unable to account for the empirical relations between things.<sup>7</sup> In contrast to the monism of Parmenides, Heraclitus upheld the historical nature of things themselves and much of the Heraclitean theory can be

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1 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 80 - 1 (his emphasis)

2 ibid p 81

3 ibid p 80

4 ibid p 61

5 ibid p 49

6 ibid p 50

7 ibid p 48

found in Socrates' criticisms of Parmenides. Anderson argued that the importance of Socrates was his introduction of a definite reference to the proposition, although this was not sufficient to overthrow the theory of 'forms' which was such a characteristic feature of the Socratic theory.<sup>1</sup> Plato completed the logical work of Socrates as far as he was able and the Platonic philosophy was, through the work of Aristotle, to exercise a continuing influence on subsequent philosophical thinking.<sup>2</sup> In the period of modern philosophy - the passage to which he regarded as possibly philosophically 'null' - Anderson held that modern philosophy was unduly concerned with problems in epistemology rather than with questions of existence and he was particularly critical of the 'rationalism' of Descartes, regarding his 'cogito' as one the greatest impositions on human thought in its history.<sup>3</sup> Further while he argued that the British Empiricists' had adopted the right empirical method, in treating things in terms of 'ideas' they lapsed into subjectivism and scepticism. Hence Berkeley exposed Locke's representationism, but wrongly opposed his recognition of the existence of things independently of their being known.<sup>4</sup> Likewise Hume refuted Berkeley's theory of 'spirit' but regressed to an acceptance of 'rational science' in his doctrine of relations of ideas.<sup>5</sup> Kant's theory of the categories was a significant advance on the 'sensationalism' of the empiricists' with his correction of Hume's theory of spatial and temporal discontinuity and development of his theory of causality, although Kant himself lapsed into a dualistic doctrine of moral causation.<sup>6</sup> Kant's importance lay in the foundation which he established for a logic of things as historical, although in his treatment of things as mere 'phenomena', he lapsed back into the dualistic assumptions of the 'empiricists'.<sup>7</sup> Anderson argued that while Hegel rightly attacked the Kantian dualism, he was equally dualistic in his conception of a reconciliation or transcendence of differences in Spirit and hence lost what was positive in Kant's phenomenalist conception of science.<sup>8</sup> Hegel then, was 'reactionary' in terms of Kant's logic and his conception of the 'union of the diverse' is the typical Idealist trick of wanting to have things both ways.<sup>9</sup> According to Anderson, Hegel's outstanding *defect* is that every new historical fact alters logic by introducing a new 'logical moment' or category, although his insistence on a 'criticism of categories' is in accordance with sound logic.<sup>10</sup>

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1 ibid p 49

2 ibid p 203 - 4

3 ibid p 114

4 ibid p 81

5 loc cit

6 ibid p 81-2

7 ibid p 83

8 ibid p 82

9 ibid p 83

10 ibid p 84

Thus ...the illogicality of the Hegelian position is most clearly seen in the general conception of the reconciliation of opposites, or of questions to which the answer is *both yes and no*. A sufficient rejoinder to such attempts to have things both ways is that 'No' means 'Not Yes', as is indicated by the fact that we can intelligibly say that the answer is *not both yes and no*.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson's rejection of Hegel's method of dialectic was even more severe a few years later when he asserted that "...dialectic' is dream-work, it is mythology, not science. Not all the sophistry in the world can alter the fact that, however we may proceed in dreams, one of two contradictories is false."<sup>2</sup> The rejection of Hegelianism then requires the rejection of any form of rationalism and the proper response to the claim that the universe is spiritual is that there is no such universe, although any monistic doctrine of 'the physical universe' can no more provide an answer to Hegel, than any form of atomism. "Only a thoroughly pluralistic doctrine," he argued, "a logic which, in its application to psychology, will eliminate the totalistic conception of The Mind, can meet and overturn the position of Hegel."<sup>3</sup> Therefore we need to reject the optimistic doctrine of progress and recognise accident in the operation of things, such a recognition supporting a life of 'adventure and responsibility' and leading to scientific discovery. As he concluded,

The philosophy of aspects is not an aspect of philosophy, though philosophers can learn much from studying it and may see more clearly, in considering its influence, what is and what is not a refutation of it. And this will help them to see that philosophy is not 'the history of philosophy' but is a certain subject to be studied, that the philosopher's business is the enunciation and demonstration of philosophic truths, and that these truths do not progress.<sup>4</sup>

Anderson's defence of a pluralistic theory of mind was based on the Freudian theory and in his 1934 article 'Mind as Feeling', Anderson rejected both cognitive and conative theories of the mind, defending an affective theory of mind as emotional. Firstly Anderson rejected the cognitive conception of mind as knowing because of its idealist and rationalist implications. There cannot be, as he had previously argued, a 'consciousness' whose nature it is to know nor any 'ideas' whose nature it is to be known, with what knows and what is known having a character of their own and

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1 ibid p 85 (his emphasis)

2 Anderson, J. 'Freud and Marx: A Dialectical Study' The Australian Highway XIX, 9, N.S., Oct 10, 1937 p 140

3 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 85

4 ibid p 86



cannot be defined by their relation to something else.<sup>1</sup> The Realist rejection of 'consciousness' was also supported, he argued, by the psycho-analytic view of the unconscious, understood not as processes of which we are not aware, but as 'unknowing' where mental processes having a character of their own, which may or may not know.<sup>2</sup> The cognitivist theory propagates the theory of 'ideas' which implies either the coherence or correspondence theories of truth, both of which fail because they must admit the Realist view that we deal with independent things and admit of objective truth and error.<sup>3</sup> The conative theory of mind as an account of mind as striving, seeks to provide a solution to the problems of cognitivism. According to the conative theory we are right when we get what we strive for and wrong when we do not.

Error ... is comparable to missing ones mark (mis-taking) and here the Freudian theory of errors as satisfactions of (unacknowledged) wishes is important. We are in error when we treat A which is not B, as if it were B; when we mistakenly use it as a B...<sup>4</sup>

Error then, is exemplified in the misuse of things and arises in our striving, with the means at our disposal, to satisfy our wishes. That is, "we believe what eases our mind", whether it is true or false.<sup>5</sup> Error arises when our motives, in a state of tension to find an object, find an outlet or release which puts our minds at ease.<sup>6</sup> However Anderson concluded that "Striving, like knowing, is a relation, and the mental quality (mentality) is still to seek."<sup>7</sup> Anderson's conclusion then is that mind has the relations of knowing and striving, which on an affective theory of mind, is to say that emotions, as qualities of mind, have the relations of knowing or striving and in general interact with other things.<sup>8</sup> With the rejection of rationalism then, Anderson concluded that we can recognise that a mental process may exist without our knowing it, a mental process may exist without knowing and that nothing mental is passive, but that we have a vast complication of tendencies which pass through one another.<sup>9</sup> That is to say, mind is a society or economy of impulses or activities of an emotional character.<sup>10</sup> However in an important addendum, Anderson went on to clarify some of the issues raised by an affective theory of mind when he argued that

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1 ibid p 69

2 ibid p 70

3 ibid pp 70-1

4 ibid p 72

5 loc cit

6 loc cit

7 loc cit

8 ibid p 73

9 ibid p 74

10 loc cit

when we regard what we want, as brought about and if our action is such to bring it about - if we get what we want - then we have a true belief.<sup>1</sup> However in cases where our action is unsuccessful, then our primary tendency is to regard the wished for result as brought about. That is, we obtain a certain satisfaction or release from tension under a condition of hallucination or illusion and such a condition, he argued, is not logically different to a general conception of error for one way of obtaining 'ease of mind' is to have the false belief that the object has been achieved.<sup>2</sup> However drawing on the Freudian theory of 'substitutive satisfaction', Anderson argued that such unsatisfied tendencies may remain in a state of subdued tension or repression, in which they do not secure an outlet and can draw energy away from the operation of the interests and interfere with the other interests by altering the direction of their activity, thereby creating the various psycho-pathological forms of behaviour of everyday life.<sup>3</sup> Hence these various forms of behaviour can range from hallucination to self-deception and substitution of another object for the one desired, although it is possible to have a rearrangement of tensions - the 'development of mind' - where the repressions and dissatisfactions are overcome.<sup>4</sup> We can therefore distinguish simple error from various forms of 'interpretation' of the things we deal with, where we can either have the search for simple solutions which will lead us to error or we can have the simple insistence on special uses of certain things.<sup>5</sup> In this respect Anderson stated that both Heraclitus and Freud speak of a transition from seeing things as desired to seeing things as they are, although he warned that "...we must be wary of over-stressing such a transition, since understanding, or adherence to the reality-principle, is still the operation of an interest".<sup>6</sup>

In 1935, Anderson continued his historical treatment of philosophy in his article 'Design'. In this article Anderson was concerned to defend Hume's criticisms of the 'the argument from design', although Hume was, as were all the empiricist's, rationalistically concerned with 'ideas', regarding them as 'ultimates' whose nature it is to be perceived and insufficiently concerned with logic or what is the case.<sup>7</sup> Anderson argued further that although Kant incorporated much of Hume's criticisms of 'the argument from design' into his Transcendental Dialectic, in his conception of the ultimate 'thing-in-itself', Kant remained a dualist and therefore was subject to

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1 ibid p 76

2 ibid p 77

3 loc cit

4 loc cit

5 ibid p 77 - 8

6 ibid p 78

7 ibid p 88. For a full discussion of the issues raised in this article see Olding, A. 'Space, Time and Atheism' in Dialectic 1987 pp 118 - 128

the same criticisms as Hume subjected the 'argument from design' to.<sup>1</sup> Any theory of 'ultimates', whether one, two or many, must be rejected, for all theories of higher and lower realities are "...stated in terms of the common reality we all know - and, indeed, can be stated in no other way" and therefore the very conception of 'ultimacy' is untenable.<sup>2</sup> To regard something as 'ultimate' implies the existence of some other thing which is dependent upon this 'ultimate' for its very existence, thus creating

...a dualism of ways of being, that which has its being in supporting and that which has its being in being supported. The only way to escape from this vicious circle, in which dualism collapses into monism and monism explodes into dualism, is to adopt a pluralist position in which variously characterised and related things are recognised as existing in the same way (spatio-temporally) - a single logic of existence replacing conceptions of 'self-subsistence' and 'relative subsistence' and other flights of rationalist fancy.<sup>3</sup>

The 'argument from design' therefore, in resting upon the notion of the 'Universe' as the totality of things or the notion of the 'Creation' of all things, is illogical, for to think of either 'The Creation' or 'The World', is to think of them as certain things acting in certain ways, with there being no observable situation of *all* things working together or caused in a single way.<sup>4</sup> The supposition of Hume then, that we may be able to travel to the further reaches of the 'Universe' to discover its 'origin' is unfounded and illogical, for "...we cannot travel away from logic, however distant a system we go to, but the very supposition of such a system is the supposition of complex and interacting things".<sup>5</sup>

Anderson's 1936 article 'The *Cogito* of Descartes' was an attack on the founder of 'rationalism' in modern philosophy and Anderson sought to demonstrate that the 'cogito ergo sum' of Descartes is without logical foundation. Descartes, in search of something that is 'true and certain', claimed to discover the 'I' or 'ego' as something that in the process of doubting itself remains indubitable.<sup>6</sup> Anderson, however, regarded the 'cogito' as one of the greatest impositions in the history of human thinking and the source of rationalist confusion in both psychology and social theory.<sup>7</sup> Despite the presence of the 'ergo', he argued, the 'cogito' is not an

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1 [ibid](#) p 89

2 [ibid](#) p 90

3 [loc cit](#)

4 [ibid](#) p 96

5 [ibid](#) p 100

6 [ibid](#) p 102

7 [ibid](#) p 114

inference, but is a proposition which is ultimately tautologous.<sup>1</sup> By the mechanism of systematic doubt, Descartes sought to show that any proposition that he can think of, except for one, can be doubted. This proposition, of course, is the famous *cogito*, "I think therefore I am". However Anderson argued that all Descartes has established is that the proposition 'I think that I think, but I may be wrong' involves a contradiction, but not the more substantive claim that 'I think that cogito ergo sum, but I may be wrong'.<sup>2</sup> However in an important statement on his view on contradiction Anderson argued that

...nothing follows from the principle of contradiction, and no proposition is 'self-contradictory'. It may here be remarked that those who contend that a 'self-contradictory' proposition must be rejected as false, and thus its contradictory accepted as true and certain, do not observe that, since it is its own contradictory, its contradictory also must be false.<sup>3</sup>

Descartes' principle, Anderson argued, can only be established for himself and not as a proposition certain in itself and he has to set up a 'universal essence' to support his conception of himself as a particular thinking essence.<sup>4</sup> In such a case, the assertion "I think and it is not possible that I do not think" is simply the statement of identity, "cogito ergo cogito", where the "ergo cogito" is superfluous. Hence Anderson argued that the very notions of 'certainties' or 'necessary truths',

...is an attempted amalgamation of truth and implication, a uniting of a proposition with a relation between propositions in the supposition that it has that relation to itself - just as the theory of 'ideas' attempts to unite being true and being believed in the supposition of something whose truth resides in its being believed. The conception of 'that which establishes itself by *thinking* itself', is, then, only a special case of the general confusion of character and relation.<sup>5</sup>

This 'rationalism' of Descartes also appeared in the philosophy of his successors such as Berkeley, Hume and Reid, where their claims of 'ideas', 'self' or 'inner knowledge' demonstrate their implicit acceptance of rationalist assumptions.<sup>6</sup> The response to such assumptions is in terms of a logic of situations, where the mental and the non-mental alike are situations of the same order, having neither a peculiar 'inwardness'

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1 ibid p 101

2 ibid p 102

3 ibid p 103

4 ibid p 104

5 loc cit (his emphasis)

6 ibid p 106 - 7

nor 'outwardness', with spatio-temporal relations existing between all things.<sup>1</sup> The Cartesian method of 'absolute doubt' then must be rejected, for there can be no such thing as 'absolute doubt', for we only doubt in relation to what we believe.<sup>2</sup>

Doubt arises, then, only in particular cases, and is settled not by what is indubitable but by what is believed. Propositions are not doubtful or certain; we doubt and are certain - and sometimes when we are certain, we are wrong. Thus we may hold with assurance certain propositions about ourselves or our minds; alternatively we may be doubtful about them, or we may have our assertions challenged. Such an issue can be settled only by observation and inference from observations.<sup>3</sup>

However it is interesting to note that this article can also be interpreted as an attack on the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Although it is possible that Anderson did not know of Husserl or his work, such a possibility is remote. The Professor of Philosophy at Melbourne University at this time, W.R. Boyce Gibson, had written an article on Husserl's phenomenology for the A.J.P.P. in 1923 and had translated Husserl's 'Ideas' in 1931. At the time of publication, Norman Porter, who had assisted Boyce-Gibson in his work, was a lecturer in Anderson's department in Sydney and involved in the Freethought Society. Further in 1933 and 1934 there had been a protracted examination of Husserl's phenomenology by Professor MacKeller Stewart of Adelaide University in the pages of the A.J.P.P. and to assume that Anderson had not heard of Husserl's work, appears unlikely in the extreme. Anderson must have had at least a passing acquaintance with some of the main concepts in Husserl's work and this hypothesis is confirmed when in the 'Cogito' Anderson discussed the procedure of 'bracketing', a familiar phenomenological concept, although without referring to Husserl.<sup>4</sup> Further Anderson also referred to the typically Husserlian term of 'erlebnis' in his 1934 article 'Mind as Feeling', although he did not discuss the term in any detail.<sup>5</sup> Although Husserl's foundation of phenomenology on the Cartesian philosophy is well known, what Anderson actually thought of Husserl's phenomenology, as distinct from the Cartesian philosophy itself, remains an insuperable mystery.

In his 1935 article, 'Marxist Philosophy', Anderson argued that there is much of philosophical value in Marx's work and insisted that the philosopher must recognise

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1 ibid p 108

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 109

4 ibid p 103

5 ibid p 74

that philosophising is a social activity. Further he argued that the philosopher who has an independent interest in philosophy as a social activity, must not merely show that philosophy is *not* reducible to social theory, but must also demonstrate what the relation between the two is.<sup>1</sup> Anderson regarded Marx's key social doctrine of the economic interpretation of history as fundamentally sound, although he was critical of Marx's conception of relative truth, where an account of the origin of ideas *is* an account of their truth, arguing that an account of the origin of a thing is not an account of the thing itself.<sup>2</sup> Hence an account of the social origin of philosophical thought *is not* philosophy and can settle no philosophical problem and the very presentation of a relative truth such as 'X is true for Y' is the presentation of an absolute truth which is either true or false.<sup>3</sup> The fundamental criticism of any relativism is that "... in trying to evade the issue of fact, the relativist is himself presenting an issue of fact ( a proposition which must be adjudged true or false)".<sup>4</sup> Similarly Anderson was critical of the Marxist representational theory of knowledge, for in order to show that an 'idea' is a good or bad copy of an 'external thing', we should have to know both and compare them, but in knowing such things directly the whole representational theory collapses. "Thus the Marxists, just like Berkeley, neglect the proposition (the statement of fact) as the object of any knowledge whatever, and, in taking their departure from 'ideas', are unable logically to *arrive at* propositions and thus to have any coherent theory."<sup>5</sup> However, Anderson was supportive of Engel's argument, as he was of Freud's argument, that the explanation of error is to be found in "...the 'practical' character of knowing i.e., its occurrence as part of our manipulations of things, our demands that X should be Y, and the illusory satisfaction of some demands, our satisfaction that X is Y when actually it is not."<sup>6</sup> Hence returning to an issue which he had raised in 'Mind as Feeling', Anderson argued that the *dissatisfaction* which arises when X is not Y when we demand that X should be Y, may lead us to see that we were mistaken or in error.<sup>7</sup> However Anderson not only rejected Hegel's 'mental monism', but also Marx's 'material monism', as a doctrine of a 'primary reality'.<sup>8</sup> Hence the doctrine of a 'primary reality' leads directly to monism and the rejection of monism, whether Marxist, Hegelian or Parmenidean, is the same.

..the One, however it may be characterised (strictly speaking it cannot be characterised at all, and thus the position of Parmenides, like that

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1 [ibid](#) p 292

2 [ibid](#) p 293 ff

3 [ibid](#) p 294

4 [loc cit](#)

5 [ibid](#) p 301 (his emphasis)

6 [loc cit](#)

7 [loc cit](#)

8 [ibid](#) p 306

of Berkeley, can be refuted by a consideration of the plurality involved in the proposition - in any assertion or theory), is incompatible with history or plurality; and the only resort is the assertion of a thorough-going pluralism, the denial of a 'universe' or totality of things, and the recognition of the existence anywhere and at any time of the heterogeneity of things, things of various characters of which 'materiality', if it is a character at all (i.e., if it does mean more than existence), is only one.<sup>1</sup>

Monism, as a philosophical theory, fails, regardless of whether the 'One' is mental or material and both Hegel and Marx seek to preserve both 'facts' and 'the universe', by introducing the contradiction between them into the universe itself in the form of the 'dialectic'.

Duhring is right ...in holding that there can be no contradictions in reality. If two propositions contradict one another, that indicates that one of the two is false, that in one of them what is asserted is not the case; and it is only by means of ambiguity or plain error that either Hegelians or Marxists have made it appear that contradictories can both be actual facts.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore there can be no 'contradictions' in motion as Engels had held, for the 'moments' of motion are simply the 'boundaries of durations' and require no notion of contradiction to explain its movement.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Anderson was critical of the Marxist teleological conception of society, the 'animistic' belief that the proletariat has the 'universe' on its side, the source of which was to be found in the notion of the 'dialectic', which he argued was necessarily 'fideist' or authoritarian and the source of the corruption of the present working class movement.<sup>4</sup> However the great virtues of Marxist philosophy, he concluded, lay in its recognition of the causal determination of things, its rejection of the view that things exist dependent upon minds and the recognition that all things are events or processes, interacting with other processes.<sup>5</sup> The advantages of this historical position are obscured though by the monism, rationalism and relativism which run through all Marxist theory, from Marx's own time to the Communist or 'working class' theory of the nineteen thirties.<sup>6</sup> The common error of both Hegel and Marx, Anderson argued in a later paper, is that they regard philosophy as normative and truth as relative.

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1 loc cit

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 307

4 ibid p 311 - 2

5 ibid p 311

6 loc cit

'Scientific Socialism' reveals itself as Hegelian metaphysics, with the substitution of Society for the Idea. But since, short of the attainment of the Absolute, we are left with the merely comparative, with degrees of adequacy, it must always be purely arbitrary to say whether and what progress has been made.<sup>1</sup>

In a review of 1937, Anderson returned to the issue of the relation of history to philosophy, which he had first raised in his article on Hegel. While agreeing with the view of Richard McKeon who had argued that to state the doctrine of either Plato or Aristotle "...is a task of exposition, of philosophical history; to state their differences or their agreements is a task of pure philosophy". Anderson argued that the more important point regarding the inter-relation of philosophy and history was that "...while we can make philosophical progress by historical study, it is only within the limits of our understanding of pure philosophy that we are able to present philosophical history."<sup>2</sup> Comparing the differing academic procedures of Abailard and Erasmus, Anderson criticised the humanism of Erasmus which subordinated questions of scholarship to issues about ways of living and supported the dialectical method of Abailard, as the only philosophical method.

In fact, there can be no exposition, alike of single doctrines and of connections between them, without criticism, i.e., without an independent knowledge, on the part of the expositor, of the subject matter. Dialectic, so understood, is an essential ingredient of scholarship;<sup>3</sup>

Throughout this review, Anderson supported the application of a 'dialectical' method to philosophy, although he argued that philosophical scholarship involves a combination of textual accuracy with sound philosophy, this 'sound philosophy' being when "...we have experience of nothing less, and nothing more, than situations (propositions), and this propositional theory, as against all essences, powers or instrumentalities, is alone entitled to be called empiricism."<sup>4</sup> The empiricist application of pluralism to all areas of philosophy had particular implications for the category of causality. In his 1936 paper, 'Causality and Logic' Anderson argued that the logical response to the rationalist division of reality into different realms is to point out that there cannot be any relation, causal or otherwise, between the different realms.<sup>5</sup> Indeterminism then, is a rationalist theory which elevates man

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1 ibid p 320

2 Anderson, J. 'Studies in the History of Ideas' A.I.P.P. XV, 4, Dec. 1937 pp 299-300

3 ibid p 301

4 ibid p 306

5 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy pp 123 - 4



over nature and as an empiricist and determinist, Anderson defended the notion of nature as 'what is', involving a theory of the conditions of existence and embodying a general theory of causality.<sup>1</sup>

...a thing as spatio-temporal exhibits a certain character eg. that it occupies a definite place in a regular sequence of a certain type. To speak of a thing, it may be said, is to speak of certain 'ways of working', the continuance and development of which are, of course, affected by the other ways of working by which the thing is surrounded. It would be argued, in this way, that it is a condition of a thing's existence that it determines and is determined by other things, and that to investigate or 'give an account of' it involves consideration of such determinations.<sup>2</sup>

In a 1937 review, Anderson was particularly concerned to defend a 'classical' theory of causal interaction as involving the recognition of a causal *field*, which is the recognition of the fact that "...it is not a question simply of A causing B, but of a *certain sort of thing* X becoming B under the condition A, whereas Y may not do so."<sup>3</sup> Further in his 1937 paper 'The Problem of Causality', Anderson rejected Mill's theory of induction because "...on the theory of infinite complexity of things, there will be various necessary and sufficient conditions of anything, these all being necessary and sufficient for one another."<sup>4</sup> A cause, he argued, is always a cause within a field. "A may be necessary and sufficient for the occurrence of B within the field X, and yet not be necessary or sufficient for its occurrence within the field Y."<sup>5</sup> Hence the determination of the necessary and sufficient conditions of a things occurrence is, in fact, the determination, through predicates, of the definition of a species in terms of its genus.

In trying to determine when a phenomenon is present, and when it is absent, in a given field, we are endeavouring to divide a genus (the field) into two species, one of which has a certain property, while the other has the opposite. We are asking what distinguishes the cases in which a G is P from the cases in which a G is not P; that is, in terms of the doctrine of predicables, we are looking for a difference (or differentia) which will solve the problem posed by the variable property in the genus.<sup>6</sup>

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1 ibid p 122

2 ibid p 123 (his emphasis)

3 Anderson, J. 'Mathematique et Philosophie' A.I.P.P. XV, 1. Mar. 1937, p 80 (his emphasis)

4 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 128

5 ibid p 130

6 ibid p 131

Further, the recognition of the infinite complexity of things will lead us to recognise that

...there will be many different laws 'governing' the same process, that everything goes on in various, though interrelated ways. And... there will be many causes of the acquisition of a character by a certain sort of thing, since any situation which is said to have this effect will be a complex of interrelated ways of working. Since, in fact, to have a character is itself to have a complex way of working, there will be no line of demarcation between the inquiry into differences and the inquiry into causes (and no distinction between classificatory and historical or developmental science), but the former will involve recognition of causal action within a thing (of the thing as a system), this being never unconnected with causal action without.<sup>1</sup>

Anderson's conception of the presentation of philosophy changed significantly during the nineteen thirties. Up to 1931, he was primarily concerned to present a *doctrinal* conception of philosophy and particularly emphasised the logical development of the doctrines of Realism, Empiricism and Positivism. After this time however, he became more concerned with a *historical* presentation of philosophical issues and problems, which in keeping with his interest in aesthetic issues during this period, reflects a *thematic* conception of the presentation of philosophy. While this conception cannot be said to be explicitly stated in Anderson's writings at this time, it is one that became more pronounced in his later years.

#### f. Communism, Education and Freethought

Between 1927 to 1931, Anderson's philosophical development was not merely a 'theoretical' pursuit, but was also an active engagement with practical affairs and Anderson's doctrinal conception of philosophy was reflected in his social theory from the time. In particular, his social and ethical theories emphasised the doctrines of objectivity, determinism and pluralism and it was his belief in the truth of these doctrines that explains, in part, his early attachment to Communism. Anderson's contact with Communists in Edinburgh during the 1920's led him to make early contact with the Communist Party of Australia (C.P.A.) and this involvement in the Communist Party, reflected his belief that there was no divergence between theory and practice in morals or politics.<sup>2</sup> For a short time he adopted the role of 'Theoretical Advisor' to the C.P.A. and wrote articles for 'The Workers Weekly' and

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1 ibid p 135

2 Anderson, J. 'Theory and Practice in Morals' A.J.P.P. VII, 4, Dec. 1929, p 299

'The Communist' where he expounded his theoretical views on Communism and their coherence with the main doctrines of his Realism - determinism, pluralism and objectivism.<sup>1</sup> Firstly, his social determinism was evidenced in his acceptance of the view that the proletariat could be regarded as the 'society of the future'. In discussing the emergence and future of the proletariat, Anderson argued that it is their "...power of co-operation, evolved as a defence against oppression, is what entitles the working class to be regarded as the society of the future. It is in this sense that history is on their side."<sup>2</sup> As his discussion of 'Evolution and Revolution' makes clear, such a process is determined, - no 'accident' in evolution - although it is not for that reason a gradual or 'reformist' process, for evolution is a 'struggle for existence', of which social revolution can be one form.<sup>3</sup> However in a rather remarkable passage (in light of later developments in his thinking) he later argued that,

Granted that it is among the oppressed working class that revolutionism does take hold, it would be meaningless without some conception of a better society for which capitalist society has prepared the way but to which it is at present a hindrance. Thus a recognition of the positive evils of present day society, and of the positive goods which the rising proletariat is to secure, is an essential part of revolutionism.<sup>4</sup>

That revolution and opposition would be *meaningless* without a conception of a future, better society is not only an idea that he later rejected, but was contradicted by other writings of the time, such as when he asserted that the "...importance (of the seizure of power) would disappear unless it were recognised that this revolutionary act is a continuation of the struggle which is everywhere going on."<sup>5</sup> Secondly Anderson's social pluralism was revealed in his acceptance of the 'class theory' of society, where society is the scene of conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. However even at this stage he could not be described as a 'crude' or economic Communist, for his acceptance of the 'class theory' was modified by his argument that the motivation of the proletariat was not merely economic, but was also moral in its concern with freedom.<sup>6</sup> Finally Anderson's social objectivism was demonstrated in this treatment of freedom as an objective force in history and his explicit denial of the possibility of any subjective forces in history.<sup>7</sup> On the question

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1 On Anderson's social and political theories see Baker [Anderson's Social Philosophy](#) pp 1-76

2 [ibid](#) p 84

3 Anderson, J. 'Evolution and Revolution' [The Workers Weekly](#) 15/7: 1927, p 3.

4 Baker [op cit](#) p 84

5 Anderson [op cit](#)

6 Baker [op cit](#) p 84

7 [ibid](#) pp 99 - 100

of political power itself, Anderson was unclear as to its importance and necessity. He had previously argued that the quest for power has no importance unless seen in the context of an on-going struggle, but regarded ruling as a 'pious fiction' if it was no more than the transmission of values to the ruled, and not expressive of the virtues of the many.<sup>1</sup> On the question of whether there is any force of law in a community - that we are forced into anarchy - he appeared to vacillate, remarking merely that we are not forced into a Hobbesian war of 'all against all' because "...people find co-operation natural and enjoyable".<sup>2</sup> But still in politics he argued, the moral factor is operative and liberty, the concern with things as they are, is the mark of a free society. Such a society recognises the desirability of a 'certain amount' of opposition rather than the servile demand for 'loyalty', although he again appeared to equivocate on this issue, for "...when opposition goes so far as to attack the basis of co-operation itself, it must be rooted out".<sup>3</sup> The ambiguity in the phrases of a 'certain amount' or 'the basis of co-operation' are evidence that Anderson was unclear as to the precise meaning of political opposition. This tension between the notions of political struggle and social co-operation were to become a recurrent theme in his later social and political philosophy.

One question which was of considerable political importance to Anderson and was an issue that he returned to constantly in later years, was that of censorship. At the time of his involvement with the Communist Party, Anderson was critical of the censorship imposed by the Bruce-Page federal government on a number of books dealing with Communism, organising a petition to Prime Minister Bruce complaining about the censorship of these works.<sup>4</sup> In all three classes of censorship - the obscene, the seditious and the blasphemous - the attempt is made to determine degree without determining kind and so long as such a distinction is not stated, one cannot say if one agrees with the censoring or not.<sup>5</sup> In an earlier article, Anderson made it clear the sort of distinction he had in mind here. The Russian Communist government, he argued, gives as its reason for censorship the fact that it is a means for re-education, whilst the British bourgeois conception of freedom, as merely the 'law of the day', implies that it has the right to censor without giving reasons at all.<sup>6</sup> Anderson argued further that if propaganda is not a crime then the importation of the means of propaganda cannot be unlawful and to argue that the banned works are an incitement to crime was not supported by the reading of the texts themselves.<sup>7</sup>

1 Anderson, J. Education and Politics Sydney, 1931, p 26

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 27 - 8.

4 Copies of Anderson's letter to Bruce and Bruce's reply to Anderson are held in the Anderson Archives at Sydney University.

5 Anderson op cit p 23

6 Anderson, J. 'Politics and Publicity: Are we to be allowed to discuss Communism' The Workers Weekly 7/10/ 1927 p -

7 loc cit

Censorship then, is an activity that has its origin in the psychological states of fear and ignorance and its social expression in a paternalism which treats the citizenry as political infants in denying them the opportunity to read and think what they liked, with the refusal to be 'protected for ones own good' being a sign of maturity and independence.<sup>1</sup> Anderson concluded that liberty demands publicity and is opposed to the obscuring and confusing of issues and will provide the means for the repressed to liberate themselves.

A free society, on the other hand, would be concerned only with things as they are. Its attitude towards repressive and obsessional activities would be to provide channels through which they could express themselves as criticism of existing arrangements or as demands for material upon which to work. It would recognise that a certain amount of opposition is a good thing - instead of demanding unanimity and expressions of 'loyalty' to particular policies...<sup>2</sup>

The tension between censorship and freedom was reflected in Anderson's early views on education when he contrasted the censorial conception of education - the 'educing' of people to 'take things in' - with the aesthetic conception of education which stresses that minds have characters of their own.

The preceptive or mandatory method neglects the fact that minds have characters of their own, that they have original impulses, wherewith to attack the situations into which they enter. It is only by these impulses finding outlet that we are able to take anything in; the range of our knowledge is determined by the co-ordination of our impulses, the systemisation of their direction of output.<sup>3</sup>

In his early articles on education, Anderson argued that the university's function is not to provide theoretical training to professionals but is a "...corporation invested with the privilege of maintaining and spreading culture".<sup>4</sup> The only safeguard against narrowness of outlook and the dominance of sectional interests is to place the university in a position where it can carry out its real function of the disinterested pursuit of knowledge.<sup>5</sup> He later defended the conception of a liberal education within the university as not some 'leisurely affair by gentlemen and for gentlemen', but as something that 'a man must put into his work'.<sup>6</sup> "It is" he argued "a training,

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1 Anderson Education and Politics p 16

2 ibid p 27

3 ibid p 18

4 ibid p 9

5 ibid p 10

6 ibid p 53

not for a particular job or service, but for a whole life"<sup>1</sup> An essential element of this conception of education is that of classical study, which enables one to understand the basis of modern civilisation and to treat politics and aesthetics in an objective fashion. As he stated, "Putting the matter more broadly, what is required for liberal education is that all the subjects studied should be brought into the closest possible connection, that classics, literature, history and science should be taught as parts of a single culture."<sup>2</sup> However it was in his 1931 article 'Socrates as an Educator', that Anderson gave his clearest account of education, which was also one of the clearest accounts of his own philosophy. Anderson accepted Burnet's distinction between the Socratic and Platonic dialogues and argued that Socrates theory of 'forms' revealed his deficient, historical sense, with the forms being 'above' things and hence outside the historical process.<sup>3</sup> However Plato had a more developed historical sense than Socrates in recognising the importance of working within existing social and political forces and was primarily responsible for the political and educational theories in the dialogues.<sup>4</sup> The relationship between education and politics was demonstrated by Socrates' constant criticism of the prevailing political and educational theories of the day. Hence the unhistorical political doctrines of anarchy and theocracy and the Sophistic identification of virtue and tradition were criticised in terms of the Socratic claim that the only virtue was knowledge.<sup>5</sup> The Socratic education, the life of examination - "the unexamined life is not worth living" - begins with "...the awakening of the mind to the need for criticism, to the uncertainty of the principles by which it supposed itself to be guided".<sup>6</sup> However Anderson argued that consistent with his division of reality, Socrates separated knowledge from opinion, identifying knowledge with the intelligible forms and opinion with the things of the sensible world.<sup>7</sup> Opinion is tied to tradition which, while it represents some things of worth or value, can give no account of its own value. Opinion can change without reason, although we may continue to believe these opinions.<sup>8</sup> Education however is essentially critical, for the aim of education "...is to give an account of things, to find out the reason why, and thus put knowledge in the place of opinion. Knowledge then, being based in criticism, is systematic in providing the reasons why things are as they are - that they are tied down by the 'chain of cause'."<sup>9</sup> This Socratic conception of education is opposed to the Sophistic method of instruction in traditional opinions and values, which assumes that one is

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1 ibid p 55

2 ibid p 60

3 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 204

4 loc cit

5 ibid p 205 - 6

6 ibid p 206

7 ibid p 207

8 ibid p 208

9 ibid p 207

imitative in respect of learning and 'habitual in respect of action.'<sup>1</sup> Instruction, Anderson argued, fosters specialisation and efficiency and regards the student as no more than a collection of abilities and who seeks to do no more than acquire 'knowledge' that is relevant to an occupation or career. "If the aim of education is to be fulfilled, the Sophistic method of instruction must be avoided, and the dialectic method, in which the pupil is led to form his own hypotheses and test them adopted. Instruction, by discouraging the critical exercise of the pupil's intelligence, prevents the real acquisition of knowledge."<sup>2</sup> However the acquisition of knowledge is not merely an academic or intellectual exercise where the results of one enquiries are separated from one's life and activities, but are intimately connected to it. Opposing the moralism of the Sophists, Anderson argued that "...the systematic character of a man's thinking is the test of his progress from opinion to knowledge, as the orderly character of his actions is the test of his progress towards goodness."<sup>3</sup> Education then is both intellectual and ethical in being the empirical discovery of things by the method of trial and error and encouraging spontaneity of action. Education encourages co-ordination and integration of both one's knowledge and one's life, where the student is regarded an active learner who seeks a 'way of life', a life that can be considered in its social and political context.<sup>4</sup> However Anderson also recognised in Socrates a critic of traditionalism and specialism, a recognition which implies that no one can depend on either the specialist or traditionalist to tell him how to act or to think. It was in the Socratic philosophy that Anderson found the essence of his own philosophy where

...we can criticise only by reference to beliefs which we definitely hold; otherwise there would be nothing to say for or against any disputed view. And unless this feature of logical criticism is recognised, the Socratic insistence on logic, the setting of criticism against instruction, is misleading. So long as we do not set anything above criticism, we can make progress.<sup>5</sup>

It must also be stressed that although Anderson had adopted the title of 'Theoretical Advisor' during his involvement with the Communist Party, he was at the same time arguing in line with his views developed in 'Determinism and Ethics', that there is no real difference between theory and practice in morals, theory simply being the description of various moral activities, for moral activity is not prescriptive or action guiding but simply the facts of a descriptive, ethical science.<sup>6</sup> One important

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1 ibid p 210

2 ibid p 207-8

3 ibid p 208

4 loc cit

5 ibid p 213

6 Anderson 'Theory and Practice in Morals' op cit p 299

implication of this distinction between theory and practice, was that there could be no division in social terms between citizenship and inquiry.

Every scientist should be a dialectician, critical of hypotheses and recognising the continuity of things ...every teacher should be an investigator, every politician a thinker. And ...the logical extension of the argument is ...that every citizen should be a politician. No one else can do his thinking for him; and the least thinking will lead him to reject the political and social guidance of 'experts' who have no social or political theory.<sup>1</sup>

The notion of freedom was of particular importance in Anderson's social life, for through his involvement in the Freethought Society, he accepted the principles on which the society were formed (if indeed he did not formulate them himself) which asserted the primacy of science the extension of knowledge and the opposition to every form of censorship and restriction of inquiry.<sup>2</sup> Although Anderson disclaimed responsibility for the formation of the Freethought Society claiming that the impulse for it had come from the student body, he had given a paper on 'Philosophy as Freethought' in Melbourne in 1929, twelve months before the society was first formed.<sup>3</sup> Freethought, he argued, was not a certain style or set of conditions for thinking, but a definite doctrine that asserted the primacy of science.<sup>4</sup> Indeed Anderson had thrust the Freethought Society into the public eye in July 1931 with his famous 'war-idols' controversy, when he argued that political superstitions or 'idols' such as war memorials, in attempting to set certain objects above discussion, hinder inquiry into social values and hence must be opposed and criticised.<sup>5</sup> These statements produced a public uproar and although he was subsequently censured by the Sydney University senate, he was vigorously defended by the Lang State government and remaining defiant, argued that he had done nothing deserving of censure and that the censure motion ought therefore be withdrawn. Indeed the Labour Education Minister Davies read to the State Parliament Anderson's own statement of academic freedom which stressed that a university teacher is free to develop his subject in any way that he or she pleases without interference from the administration of the university, this being the very essence of university work.<sup>6</sup>

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1 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 212-3

2 McCallum, D. 'Anderson and Freethought' The Australian Highway Sept. 1958 p 72

3 A.J.P.P. VII, 1929, p 159

4 McCallum op.cit p 73

5 For a full discussion of this controversy see Walker, R. 'Public Controversies and Academic Freedom' Dialectic 1987 pp 11 - 23; Baker Anderson's Social Philosophy pp 90 - 95

6 One particularly interesting feature of this controversy was the extent of public support that he received. In the Anderson Archives at Sydney University's Fischer Library there are approximately one hundred letters from as far afield as Victoria, Queensland and South



Although the censure motion was not withdrawn, Baker argues that the real achievement of this controversy was a marked extension of academic freedom at Australian universities.<sup>1</sup> Also in 1931, in repelling an attempt by Christians to take over the Freethought Society, Anderson gave perhaps his clearest statement on the clash of opinion that Freethought presupposed when he stated that

...if there is a definite clash of opinion on a specific issue (if, for example, we have the view: that freedom of speech is good and that freedom of speech is not good), then there is nothing whatever between the 'extremes'. We may, of course, suspend our judgement on the particular issue, but there is nothing scientific about suspension of judgement; it is merely a confession of ignorance...<sup>2</sup>

Anderson's doctrinal conception of philosophy was therefore reflected in his ethical, political and social theory which was pluralist, objectivist and determinist and his involvement in the Freethought Society and other organisations demonstrate his commitment to both theoretical and practical activity. One recurrent theme of this activity of social criticism was his attack on censorship in all its forms and criticism of local customs and beliefs was a key aspect of his involvement in the Freethought Society, an involvement which reflected his belief that freethinking is a struggle against existing opinion and dogma.

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Australia and within N.S.W. from places such as Moree, Gunnedah, Broken Hill and Armidale, expressing support for his stand on freedom of speech.

1 Baker *op cit* p 93

2 *ibid* p 114