

5. REALIST AESTHETICS

a. Politics, Censorship and Art

It is significant that within a year of the 'war idols' controversy, Anderson broke his ties with the Communist Party in rather spectacular fashion. Hence just as it was the issue of censorship that Anderson had defended the C.P.A from in 1928, so it was this issue that he attacked it on in 1932. Anderson had been invited to contribute a series of articles to the newly formed theoretical journal of the Melbourne University Labour Club, Proletariat and in his first article 'The Working Class', Anderson defended the notion of the 'working class' from its liberal critics, arguing that the proof of its existence lay in the existence of a working class movement and of working class theory.¹ He accepted Marx's definition of society as 'organisation for production', which he argued provided the only theoretically consistent account of social relations and which enabled the prediction or 'leading' of social action.² Further the 'proof' of the essential correctness of Marxist theory was to be found in modern Russia, where against the disbelief of liberal and conservative critics, it was shown that the working class could run society.³ This Marxist view of the State was therefore opposed to the Idealist theory where the 'State' represents the interests of society at large, for on the Marxist view there could be no such interests while there were class divisions and therefore the 'State' was an organ for exploitation of capitalists against the workers.⁴ However the bringing together of the workers into factories enabled co-operative relations to develop amongst them and with the abolition of private property, the possibility of a 'producers society' was opened up.⁵ In his second article 'Freedom and the Class Struggle', Anderson argued that the struggle of the oppressed proletariat against capitalism was a struggle for emancipation and freedom.⁶ The positive nature of this freedom was demonstrated in the exhibition of initiative, responsibility and productivity by the proletariat and that the class struggle occurs within a general producers movement which is not limited merely to the proletariat, but involves co-operation with intellectuals.⁷ However after an exchange of letters in Proletariat with J.B. Miles, the General Secretary of the C.P.A., Anderson wrote a more critical assessment of Communism under the title 'Leadership and Spontaneity', which was subsequently refused for publication in Proletariat. Anderson's response to this censure was to publish his article in pamphlet form under the auspices of the Freethought Society, signalling

1 Anderson, J. 'The Working Class' Proletariat 1, 1, April 1932 p 4

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 5

4 ibid p 4

5 ibid pp 4 - 5

6 Anderson, J. 'Freedom and The Class Struggle' Proletariat 1, 2, July 1932 p 2

7 ibid p 4 - 5

his formal break with the C.P.A. In this article, Anderson criticised the bureaucratic management of the C. P. A. as being based on fear of spontaneity, which he argued gave rise to personal abuse of dissenters from the 'official' line and the protection of members within the organisation from 'contamination' by those outside of it.¹ However he argued further that the 'sectarian, pedantic and bureaucratic' nature of the local Communist party had its origin in Communist theory itself, which neglected the independence of social movements, and particularly artistic movements, and in the false distinction between subjective and objective factors in history, where Communism is the only objective factor in history with all other forces being merely 'subjective'.² Anderson concluded by again calling for a necessary alliance between industrial workers and intellectuals.³

After this break with the C.P.A., Anderson became involved with the Trotskyist 'Workers Party' and much of his political writing during this period was published in their paper The Militant. From 1933 to 1936, Anderson contributed several articles to The Militant including three articles on 'The International Fabricators' and one on 'The Defence of Revision', although his role with the Worker's Party was not merely 'theoretical' and for several years he contributed financially to the party, assisting in the purchase of a printing press.⁴ Anderson also participated in the writing of the party's manifesto 'The Need for a Revolutionary Leadership' which was again critical of the bureaucratic nature of the local Communist party as involving the 'blind adherence' to directives from 'above' and its uncritical commitment to Russian Communist theory and problems.⁵ As he stated in a letter some years later, the attitude of the C.P.A. to Trotskyism '...is precisely that of bourgeois censorship - inspired denunciations, garbled quotations, prevention of access to original sources and (whenever any information whatever would be dangerous) silence."⁶ In response, he was derided by the local Communist party for "...using his privileged position to turn healthy, promising young radicals into lick-spittle degenerate opportunists."⁷ In his articles on 'The International Fabricators', Anderson was concerned to expose the undemocratic nature of Stalinist Communism with particular reference to the accusations against Trotsky and the trials of Zinoviev and Kamenev.⁸ At this time Anderson supported Trotsky's criticisms of the bureaucratic nature of Russian Communism under Stalin's leadership and accepted Trotsky's view

1 Anderson, J. 'Leadership and Spontaneity' in Censorship in The Working Class Movement 1932 p 5

2 ibid p 6

3 ibid p 7

4 Short, S. Laurie Short. A Political Life Sydney, 1992, p 30

5 Baker op cit p 102

6 ibid p 105

7 Isaacs, M. 'Anderson in the Thirties' Dialectic 1987 p 31

8 Baker op cit p 104

that Russia was still a 'Workers Republic', albeit under the temporary domination of the Stalinist bureaucracy.¹ However by 1937, he was seriously questioning Trotsky's thesis that Russia was still a 'workers state', expressing this view on several different occasions. Hence in his 1937 presidential address to the Freethought Society, 'Why Bolshevism Failed', Anderson argued that the failure of Bolshevism was based in no small measure, on Trotsky's uncritical belief in *party* democracy and his own authoritarian methods in suppressing the 1921 Kronstadt uprising.² He argued further that the 'corrupting' influence of Stalinism could be attributed to the 'end-seeking' nature of Marxism itself and therefore that any criticism of Bolshevism must also be a criticism of Marxism.³ Again, in a 1937 article in the A.I.P.P., Anderson criticised Marx's view that labour is the only original factor in production, arguing that the organisation of the proletariat is not a certain form of demand, but an organisation for production and therefore the proletariat is a new form of enterprise and distribution leading ultimately to a new society.⁴

For if we take society as organisation for production, then we are regarding it as enterprise and on that basis we should regard the exploitation of the workers as the prevention of their enterprise. At the same time we should regard the workers' revolutionary movement not merely as *aiming* at the abolition of the special function of the entrepreneur and at the union of the functions of labour and enterprise throughout society, but as being the actual exertion of workers' enterprise now. Seeing the movement in this way, not as a mere aspiration but as a new feature of the existing economic structure of society, we can more readily see how it may lead to a thoroughgoing redistribution of functions i.e., to a new society.⁵

Further in a 1937 review in The Australian Highway, Anderson argued that the 'bankruptcy' of Marxism as a directive force in society, was due to "...its failure to ally itself with pure science and scholarship - an alliance which would require a ruthless revision of its doctrines".⁶ However Anderson's most concise assessment of the revision necessary for Marxist doctrine appeared in his 1937 article 'Marxist Ethics'.

But if Marx had stuck to the view that what a thing is is prior to its aims, it would have meant a complete recasting of Socialist theory.

1 ibid p 106

2 Anderson, J. 'Why Bolshevism Failed' Eractitus No. 20 March 1990 p 1.

3 loc cit

4 Anderson, J. 'Production, Distribution and Exchange' A.I.P.P. XIII, 2, June 1937, p 138 ff

5 ibid p 142 (his emphasis)

6 Anderson, J. 'Freud and Marx: A Dialectical Study' The Australian Highway XIX, 9, N.S., Oct 10, 1937 p 141

The doctrine of the primacy of 'needs', of history as 'man's' pursuit of his 'ends', would have to be abandoned; it would have been seen that needs are the needs of already existing activities ...that things have their own ways of working even if they have *no* ends ...and that the working class movement exists positively as a form of activity now, and not relatively as a movement 'for' Socialism and would retain its good features ...even if Socialism never came about at all.¹

Although Anderson urged the Worker's Party to reconstitute its membership on a wider basis, this call was ignored by the party and after his sabbatical leave of 1938, he had no further contact with the Trotskyists.² However in the discussion following his paper 'Why Bolshevism Failed', Anderson made the significant statement that "The thing that made me suspicious of the Bolsheviks was their line on art".³ This suspicion had its origin some years earlier when he argued that Trotsky's social interpretation on art is 'expressionist' and that Trotsky's theory of art "...indicates not merely that the social interpretation of aesthetics is open to the same logical objections as the psychological interpretation, but that it has to use the latter as an intermediate link, arguing from art to feelings and from feelings to class, as if psychological as well as aesthetic questions could not be discussed in entire independence of social movements".⁴ Countering this reductionist interpretation of art, Anderson supported Sorel's view of the 'movement of producers' as contributing more positively to an independent theory of art and aesthetics. "If, for example, we take the view of Sorel that the working class movement is a movement of producers and conclude that it will advance artistic production and aesthetic appreciation, and if at the same time we consider that these things are hampered by existing commercial civilisation, then these will be important social conclusions and may also be incentives to action."⁵

Following the initial success of the Freethought Society in stimulating controversy and debate, Anderson began to develop it into an organisation concerned with the discussion of ideas *and* as a vehicle for the expression of *his* social, political and ethical ideas.⁶ Between 1932 to 1937, from the authority of his annual presidential addresses Anderson spoke on a variety of issues including 'Freedom of Thought' (1932), 'Some Obscurantist Fallacies' (1932), 'Bakunin's 'God and the State'' (1934), 'Censorship' (1935), 'Social Service' (1936), 'Censorship and the Monarchy' (1937) and

1 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 325 (his emphasis)

2 Baker op cit p 108

3 Anderson, J. 'Why Bolshevism Failed' op cit p 5

4 Anderson, J. Art and Reality Sydney, 1982, p 28

5 ibid p 29

6 Isaacs op cit p 31

'Why Bolshevism Failed' (1937).¹ Anderson also formed the society into a tightly knit study group comprised of staff and students, which explored a wide range of issues of public interest including censorship, capital punishment, the rise of Fascism in Italy, the failure of Communism in Russia and the Spanish civil war.² Although Anderson's involvement in the Freethought Society paralleled his involvement with the Worker's Party, it was his continued involvement with the Freethought Society that allowed him to develop his social and political views freely. This involvement in both the Freethought Society and the Workers Party clearly demonstrates his perception of the interrelation between his theoretical activity as a philosopher and his social and political activities as a critic of social customs and local values. Further just as his critical activity had led him to be denigrated by the Communists, so too was he abused from the other side of the political spectrum, when in 1932 he organised an address by the Trotskyist E. C. Tripp on the Soviet Union, at which both were heckled and jeered by a mob of 'King and Country' supporters.³ During this period Anderson pursued his teaching duties at Sydney University with vigour and he continued to exert an intellectual influence on the general culture of the university.⁴ By the end of the decade, he had also formed a supportive network of staff around him which included John Passmore, J. L. Mackie, W.H. Eddy and P. H. Partridge who would become the core of the 'philosophical Andersonians' in later years and in 1934 he took over the editorship of the Australasian Journal of Philosophy and Psychology, a position which he held until 1946 and during which time it became regarded as the 'house-journal' for Andersonianism.⁵ Anderson also dined with the prominent historian Max Crawford on regular occasions when both were involved in the Workers Educational Association and through which Crawford was first introduced to Marxism.⁶ It is also important to note that in 1934, Anderson published his first statement on academic freedom, which was not, he argued, something rooted in the constitution of universities but which struggled against obstacles to exist.⁷ Although at this time Anderson was still insisting, in line with his affiliation with the Workers Party, that academic freedom could *only* be pursued by

1 Isaacs op.cit p 30 ff; Baker op.cit p 108 ff

2 ibid p 30 ff. Members of the Freethought Society in these early years included John Passmore, Norman Porter, W.M. O'Neil, Raymond Firth and Margot Hentze amongst others.

3 Baker op.cit p 95.

4 In the Anderson archives there are 18 sets of Anderson's lectures from this period, covering such areas as Logic (1932), Greek Philosophy (1932), Modern Philosophy (1932), Kant (1933), Ethics (1933), Philosophy (1934), Reid (1935), Logic (1935), and Later Socratic Dialogues (1937).

5 Grave A History of Philosophy in Australia pp 84 - 85. Partridge was appointed to the department in 1934 and Passmore in 1936. See also Turney, C., Bygot, V. and Chippendale, P. Australia's First: A History of the University of Sydney Vol. 1 1850 - 1939 Sydney, 1991, pp 515 - 517

6 Crawford, R., Clark, M. & Blaine, G. Making History Ringwood, 1983, p 40

7 'Some Remarks on Academic Freedom' A.J.P.P., XII,4, Dec 1934, p 297. For the background to this debate see Walker, R. 'Public Controversies and Academic Freedom' in Dialectic Sept. 1987 pp 21 - 23.

co-operation with the proletariat, his central point was that "...freedom is not something given or guaranteed to a person but something exercised by a person".¹ It was *this* notion of academic freedom, and not that of a 'necessary alliance' between the proletariat and intellectuals, that he consistently adhered to and defended in his later years.

Despite Anderson's involvement in a variety of organisations and societies during the thirties, it was through his involvement with Sydney University's Literary Society that much of his aesthetic writing was done and through his presidency of the society he played an important role in introducing a wide range of new literature into the university.² His aesthetic writings covered both assessments of particular authors and the consideration of aesthetic theory itself and it is noteworthy that over two-thirds of the articles and addresses in Art and Reality were written during this period.³ Anderson's first aesthetic writing was his inaugural presidential address to the Literary Society in 1930 on the topic of Joyce's Ulysses. This was one of the few works of literature that ever satisfied his high aesthetic standards and as he never failed to do in discussing this work, he linked it with the question of censorship. "The doctrine of the autonomy of art" he argued "...involved not the irresponsible setting aside of moral considerations, but the rejection of the morality of prohibition"⁴ Joyce's success in 'Ulysses' was not merely personal, but was also a triumph for literature over censorship. "In fine, as against those who would save themselves or their juniors from hell (My hell and Ireland's is in this life), Joyce demonstrates that the protected bourgeois life itself is hell, and that salvation in any non-phantastic sense, the emancipation of the human spirit from bourgeois values, lies in uncensored art."⁵ Anderson had expressed the tension between the censorial and aesthetic outlooks concisely some years earlier when he stated, "'This ought not to be, therefore avoid it' says the moralist. 'This is, therefore grasp it' says the artist."⁶ Freedom, as the concern with liberty, was "...the ability to take things artistically" which required no other justification except its own activity.⁷

b. Realist Aesthetics

¹ Anderson op.cit p 297 - 8; Walker op.cit p 23

² Apart from circulating a copy of Ulysses disguised as the Bible to deceive the censors, the Literary Society under Anderson's leadership, established a lending library which contained works by E.E. Cummings, Thomas Mann, Katherine Mansfield, Dostoevsky, Marcel Proust, D.H. Lawrence and Sigrified Sassoon. See Isaacs op.cit p 28 ff

³ For a full exposition of Anderson's aesthetic views see Cullum, G. and Lycos, K. 'Introduction' to Anderson Art and Reality pp 5 - 22 and Rose, T. 'On Literature' Quadrant July 1977 pp 58 - 63.

⁴ Anderson Art and Reality p 95

⁵ ibid p 104

⁶ Anderson Education and Politics pp 19 - 20

⁷ ibid p 19

On a consistent account of Realism as based on the doctrine of external relations and the distinction between qualities and relations, beauty would be held to be a quality of things. However it is a curious feature of Anderson's aesthetic writings, that he rarely spoke of beauty as a *quality*, perhaps regarding it as such an obvious implication of his Realism that it did not require explicit statement. However the thrust of much of Anderson's aesthetic writings was to treat it as a quality, for on no consistent Realist theory could beauty be regarded as a *relation*, as this would be to confuse the nature of beauty with its relations, which Anderson did reject quite explicitly when he argued that "...the treatment of aesthetic objects in terms of their relations, resembling expressing or what not, is a mere obstacle to aesthetic science".¹ Further in his unfinished 'Further Questions in Aesthetics' Anderson raised the issue of whether beauty is, like red, a directly recognised *quality* of things and criticised Alexander for not regarding beauty as a *character* of an object.² Therefore rather than speak of the *quality* of beauty, Anderson preferred, in his aesthetic writings, to speak more of the *character* of aesthetic objects (although the two terms can be regarded as inter-changeable), where the question for the aesthetician is "...the character of certain things and not how they have been produced or what underlies them".³ This positive and scientific account of beauty was reinforced in his discussion of the theory of art as exhibiting beauty, of 'Art for Art's sake', which he argued would be absurd if it demanded that an artist should simply work for 'art's sake' or that people should like works simply for 'art's sake', for these are things which simply do not commonly happen. All that can be demanded in such a formula is that

...a consideration of the works of art should be a consideration of their aesthetic character. This is a condition of there being a science of aesthetics; relativism, the confusion of a thing with its relations or things related to it (causes, effects, and the like), is an obstacle to any science. For aesthetics, then, we must find a thing beautiful 'for its own sake', i.e., as *it is*.⁴

This objective treatment of beauty therefore implies a Realist theory of beauty as qualitative and in being qualitative, is determined and complex, with no account of the nature of beauty being given in terms of the relations which it has. Anderson's Realist theory of aesthetics then was a positive and scientific account of beauty and implied the rejection of relativist and subjectivist aesthetic theories which deny the

¹ Anderson Art and Reality p 36

² ibid p 263

³ ibid p 25

⁴ ibid p 32 (his emphasis)

possibility of discussing the beauty of the work itself.¹ However Anderson's theory was not Realist in simply emphasising 'social conditions' as occurs in the work of H.G. Wells, but required that a work of art have a 'real theme' and that this theme is logically worked out.²

The realist aesthetician demands that a work of art should have a real theme and that the theme should be properly worked out i.e., in its real stages or phases. A bad work of art on this view, exhibits heterogeneity or absence of a single theme ...and disconnection.³

Reinforcing this view, he further asserted that "Aesthetic Realism merely asserts that to have a definite order a thing must be definite".⁴ Anderson's aesthetic theory was also interrelated with his logical theory, as when he argued that in the 'aesthetic' judgement, (as in the parallel case of 'moral' judgement),

...something is judged to be a fact, some proposition is asserted to be true, and it is this proposition, and not the fact that someone believes it, that is a matter for discussion. And whether such aesthetic assertions are true or false, they indicate a region in which discoveries may be made.⁵

Anderson's Realist aesthetic theory then was a qualitative account of beauty as thematic or formal which is distinct, though interrelated, to its content. Hence Anderson's account of beauty can be regarded as a *formal quality* of things, which closely resembles Alexander's description of beauty as a 'tertiary' quality, irrespective of whatever mistakes Anderson regarded Alexander made in his account of beauty as involving the 'union' of the subject and object.⁶

c. Thematic Form

Although Anderson in his later years, discussed the application of Realism aesthetic principles to all of the arts, in his earlier work he was primarily concerned with literature, where theme, "...consists of the coherent presentation of character in a story, in the development of states of mind."⁷ However he argued that there was no real separation of the arts, for there is only the *presentation* of the theme, whether

1 loc cit

2 ibid p 189

3 ibid p 36

4 ibid p 37

5 ibid p 23

6 Anderson, J. 'Realism' The Australian Highway Sept. 1958 pp 55 - 6

7 Anderson Art and Reality p 189

musical, pictorial or human, and where the artist "...brings out those 'inner' characteristics that are not easily seen from the outward, everyday point of view".¹ This formal nature of beauty was exhibited by the thematic structure of the work of art - "It is the theme that determines the structure of a work of art;"² - which presented the 'stages' or 'phases' of the thing itself. The presentation of any theme in a work of art, he argued, is "...the eternalising of it. It is the seeing of the universal and the eternal in the particular and the temporal."³ Although Anderson argued that there could be no one universal theme, with there being as many themes in art as the diversity of human life can exhibit, if there was one leading theme of literature it was criticism itself.⁴

If anything could be said to be the leading theme of literature, it was criticism itself. The clash of human agencies presented in a literary work involved a clash between men's illusions and reality, and such illusions ...were of the romantic type - the finding of a 'meaning' which transcended mere facts ...The classicist has to say that romantic works were not literature at all, or, at the very least, that they were bad literature, since they did not work out a human theme in its own terms.⁵

Therefore the Realist position in aesthetics is the presentation of 'real' themes in their natural and historical order, the presentation of "...*human beings labouring under illusions*"⁶ and there are two functions of good or great literature - the thematic development of states of mind and the exposure of illusions.⁷ Anderson argued further that a 'real' theme is a "...recognisable complication whose working out has an objective structure" which is a necessary requirement for the recognition of good or bad works of art and hence of any aesthetic theory or discussion.⁸ This 'revelatory' function of art was particularly important in Anderson's distinction between tragedy and comedy. Drama, he argued, may accomplish the showing up of illusion, with tragedy being drama where the illusions are recalcitrant, while comedy is drama where the characters see through their pretensions, although the important thing is to have drama itself, "the interaction of characters with characters and characters with situations".⁹ This point was further

1 [ibid](#) p 175

2 [ibid](#) p 53

3 [ibid](#) p 114

4 [ibid](#) p 255

5 [ibid](#) p 256

6 [ibid](#) p 37 (his emphasis). See also pp 216, 233, 256.

7 [ibid](#) p 198

8 [ibid](#) p 45

9 [ibid](#) p 129

elaborated in his 1936 paper 'The Comic', where he argued that "The peculiar *human* clash (of drama) involves satisfactions and dissatisfactions; it involves therefore, some element of illusion, some clash of 'ideals' with reality and the working out of the complication is the showing up of the ideals, the exposure of the illusions and pretences."¹ On Anderson's thematic interpretation of beauty, the appreciation of a work of art lay not in subjective impressions or feelings, but in the recognition of the relatedness and distinctness of the formal structure of the work of art, a recognition which is conditioned by the operation of the aesthetic emotion.

Things interpenetrate, then, but in the complexity with which we are faced we turn our attention from one specific thing to another, and we are continually discovering new things. Now a work of art consists simply in setting forth such a discovery, in making visible the thing discovered. Its importance as a work of art depends on the clearness and distinctness with which the thing is set forth, and aesthetic appreciation consists simply in the recognition of the thing set forth. The aesthetic emotion is the discovery, the recognition of a thing in its distinctness, as itself and no other.²

This activity of aesthetic contemplation, as against the confusion of the 'panic-stricken moralist', consists in the recognition of art as "...a balance of forces or sequence of phases".³ The coherence of the development of the theme reveals the wholeness, harmony and radiance of the work of art, where the work of art is shown to be one thing, as a thing and as the thing as it is, and the aesthetic appreciation of *Ulysses* will therefore consist of the recognition of these qualities in terms of its theme.

Appreciation consists in recognition of the wholeness, harmony and radiance of a thing; when it is apprehended as *one* thing, as a *thing*, and as the thing that it is. *Ulysses*, then, is to be thought of as portraying one peculiar thing - the escape of the soul from hell, from its own dissociation.⁴

The assessment of a work of art as bad then, is no more than the assertion that it fails to present a theme, that it exhibits heterogeneity and disconnection.⁵ This failure of theme typically occurs when the artist's method is that of pointing out a moral which

1 [ibid](#) p 69 (his emphasis)

2 [ibid](#) p 52

3 [ibid](#) p 96

4 [ibid](#) p 101 (his emphasis)

5 [ibid](#) p 36

falls outside the structure of the story, so that there is a duality of theme.¹ This confusion between morality and art culminates in romantic theory where there is only one theme - Life - and art has to bring out its value or significance, such as in the work of Shaw, where the artist becomes a preacher or sermoniser, seeking to be helpful and uplifting.² There is therefore, 'one great class of bad books', in which there is duality of theme, where the artist is pointing out a moral which is extrinsic to the structure of the story, so that ultimately there is really no consistently presented theme at all.³ Another prominent example of such bad literature is the work of Kipling who, in his concern with 'repartees', is not interested in themes and their development. "It is his insistence on effort and success ...instead of process (the sequence of phases and balance of forces which are the mark of a work of art) that mars Kipling's work, making it definitely unbalanced and discordant."⁴

d. The Content of Beauty

Anderson's qualitative account of beauty implied that beauty could not be understood in terms of the relations that it has and therefore that aesthetic relativism in all its forms is to be rejected as the confusion of a thing and its relations. In particular, aesthetic creation and appreciation are to be regarded as objective processes, but which are irrelevant to the consideration of the beauty of the thing itself. "Artistic production is a social activity, affecting and affected by other social activities, and possibly forming part of a social movement, but it is not on that account the case that the works have a social character and are to be estimated in terms of that character."⁵ Similarly while recognising that artistic production is a social activity, the characterisation of the beauty of a work of art in terms of its social origins is also relativistic and must therefore be rejected as a positive theory of beauty. "The conception of the artist's activity as characterising the product is an instance of the common confusion between origin and character, between what a thing is and what it arose from."⁶ Hence whether it is the moralistic reaction of the bourgeois censor who regards some works as 'evil' i.e., 'immoral' rather than simply bad, or the proletarian attempt to assess all works in terms of their social origin and thereby denying what may be positive in bourgeois culture, a Realist aesthetics is opposed to both and concerned with beauty as a quality of things, to be appreciated for the objective features that it has in itself.

1 ibid p 96

2 ibid p 127 ff

3 ibid p 96

4 ibid p 169

5 ibid p 27

6 ibid p 25 - 26

Although Anderson argued that the content of beauty could be both human and non-human, the general content of art is a human content, understood as the conflict of emotions within characters and the conflict between characters in situations. In terms of the emotional content of literature, Anderson argued that literature deals with emotions such as wrath, oneliness and guilt, which are treated primarily as states of mind. "There is no literature but literature, and literature deals with states of mind."¹ With a work of art such as Homer's Iliad, Anderson argued that we can state that its theme is wrath, but it is this theme as a mental state and not its external setting, that determines the structure of the work of art.² Similarly in terms of the works of Doesteovsky he argued that

...his main themes (crime, punishment, humiliation, redemption and murder) are not peculiarly nineteenth-century themes - they are as old as man himself. While they are all social phenomena, Dostoevsky presents them as *states of mind*, as forces operating in the souls of characters; and this is not h story but literature.³

Art therefore has a close relation to psychology and deals with these emotions in a literary, rather than a scientific form, although it is to Dostoevsky's credit that he does not, as Trotsky does, attempt to reduce literature to social forces. for the logical outcome of this view would be "...a denial, not only of literature which is the art of presenting states of mind, but also of psychology which studies the mind, for both are reduced to, and muddled with, history, the function of which is to deal with states of society".⁴ However literature can also deal with social interactions as in the work of Ibsen, where the interaction of characters in specific social and historical situations reveals the illusions under which the characters operate.⁵ However the simple concern with social situations does not warrant the description of an author as a 'Realist' in Anderson's sense, for as in the case of Shaw and Wells, their presentation of social issues was often quite unaesthetic in neglecting the themes of social situations and imposing 'morals' into their works. Hence as in the case of Wells, Anderson argued that "...realism does not consist in social commentary or in reproduction of 'slices of life' with easily recognisable details, for these are quite compatible with an absence of theme - an absence of structure, and with the romantic treatment of psychological facts..".⁶ In contrast Ibsen "...has dealt very convincingly with his human material, has presented a certain psychological conflict and has treated dramatically, in its historical context, a clash between the

1 ibid p 216

2 ibid p 53

3 ibid p 215 (his emphasis)

4 ibid p 214

5 ibid pp 147 - 156

6 ibid p 189

ideals of men and the realities of things".¹ However the historical treatment of things is not only simply a concern with historical accuracy, with a scientific description of facts, but must also be artistic or thematic, as in the work of Croce where all the events related will assume significance in terms of his conception of liberty and be built around it.² Similarly with Vico and Ibsen, although they speak of 'providence' or 'spirit' as a force in history, this is not something external imposed upon events, but is something observable in the working out of events themselves.³ Hence Ibsen's conception of a 'world spirit' constituting a continuous theme in history, has force insofar as it works through *opposition* and not as a 'guiding force' through history.⁴ An aesthetic sense then is essential to an understanding of history, although the other important issue is that

...art occurs in society, in History; *it* has conditions and consequences, however little it may concern itself with such in its material. In brief, the struggle between art and moralism is the struggle between innovation and conservatism in society; neither can conquer, but that is not to say that the artistic way of life can compromise (that way lies artistic death and social stagnation); it must still seek to *discover* and to push its discoveries as hard as it can against the inertia of custom and the 'protection' of privilege.⁵

e. Classicism

Anderson rejected any aesthetic theory which treated beauty as a relation such as Romanticism or Expressionism the only possible objective and positive aesthetic theory being a Classical one.⁶ Classicism is the making of definite judgements on particular works as good or bad according to whether they

...succeed or fail in the working out the theme i.e., according to their structure. It is on this account that classicism is accused of being 'formalistic'; ...But clearly the form of a work (the order or, in general, the relations of its constituents) is as much a part of its content (what it contains) as is any constituent we care to select.⁷

1 ibid p 149

2 ibid p 148

3 ibid p 149

4 loc cit

5 ibid p 93 (his emphasis)

6 ibid p 56

7 ibid p 58

A classical theory then is one which treats theme or structure as a formal consideration of beauty, with the development of a psychological or mental theme presented in social and historical situations. As Anderson asserted, "Aesthetics is part of our heritage from the Greeks whose works have shown that the aesthetic is the unhistorical, in the sense that it is not concerned with the conditions of the production of a work of art; it is historical only in the way in which it shows how one phase of a work passes into another."¹ Hence although it is only Classicism with its notion of the development of theme as objective structure which is truly aesthetic, Classicism is not the mere imitation of certain forms or models but is concerned with the presentation of the structure of the thing itself.² Therefore the Realist and Classicist account of the qualitative nature of beauty implies that the Romanticist notion of 'striving' and the Subjectivist notion of 'expressing', in being *relations*, must be rejected as definitions of beauty. In particular, Romanticism as concerned with 'spiritual strivings' and the 'realisation of ideals', where all processes are summed up in one process and that this process is in the direction of the better, is rejected.³ The Classicist on the other hand recognises that "...all things do not work together and that there is no finality, no victory in a life struggle; that, on the contrary, there are many independent processes, each of which in occurring is achieved."⁴ The Romantic and the Classicist therefore both deal with process, but whereas the Romantic sees it as a 'union with a certain spirit', the Classicist deals with process simply as a beginning and an end within certain limits in time.⁵ The principle of Classicism then is that "...each work has a theme, that it presents one thing and no other".⁶ Classicism then, enables one to attribute goodness to a work of art, where "...the aesthetic object is presented in its proper order, that the development of its phases or a rangement of its forces is coherent and complete."⁷ The error of Romantic art is that it gives the 'construction' of a thing, not its objective structure, the presentation of which can only be achieved by Classicism.⁸ The nature of a classicist aesthetic then is determined by definite judgements being made on particular works, with the attribution of beauty to such works being determined by the extent that a work succeeds in working out a theme of human situations.⁹

1 ibid p 225

2 ibid p 54

3 ibid p 52

4 ibid p 51

5 ibid p 52

6 loc cit

7 ibid p 59

8 ibid p 54

9 ibid p 34

Anderson's criticism of Romanticism was particularly pointed in his 1936 article, 'Psycho-analysis and Romanticism', where he criticised Romanticism in aesthetics as essentially *backward-looking* – or an attempt to return to the 'bliss' of the pre-natal state and suggested, in line with the view of Otto Rank, that psycho-analysis itself, finally turns out to be "...a belated accomplishment of the incomplete mastery of the birth trauma."¹ However he further argued, contra Rank, that it is not all art but merely Romantic art whose constructions are "...a partial overcoming of the trauma, 'a representation and at the same time denial of reality', a compromise between what we long for and what we are confronted with - this compromise frequently taking the form of the projection of the ideal state into the future."² However the backward-looking character of Romanticism, of its *reminiscence* to its pre-natal state of *security*, was best exemplified in Hugh Walpole's The Golden Scarecrow, as an account of a 'Friend', a bearded man called St. Christopher. Anderson recounts the legend of St. Christopher as the saint carrying a child across water who becomes heavier and heavier until St. Christopher almost drowns under its weight, but becomes the 'saviour' of the child and to whom the adult is eternally grateful.³ Such a phantasy, as is all phantasy, is a compromise with the facts.

The Christopher legend is one particular compromise, one version of creation, and it may possibly be linked with the conception of a carrying by the father prior to the carrying by the mother. The notion of *self-creation* is not prominent in it; but it is at least interesting that, in spite of the strength required for his work as 'ferryman', the saint is almost borne down by his burden, and, in some versions of the legend, having picked up a child, he sets it down on the other side a grown man.⁴

This *metaphoric* treatment then, of what Anderson regarded as a treatment of the 'inter-uterine life as the symbolised *par excellence*', suggests that Anderson's conception of artistic meaning, and metaphor is not 'literalistic' as he elsewhere states, for this conception of the 'ferryman' as a 'bearer' of a load may indicate that Anderson took seriously (or at least in the raising of this issue is psychologically suggestive of) a 'metaphoric' conception of art.⁵

f. Enslavement and Redemption

1 ibid p 62

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 63 - 4

4 ibid p 65 (his emphasis)

5 Cf Anderson's criticisms of a 'humanistic aesthetic' or 'aesthetic of meaning'; ibid p 57

Anderson held that the classic theme in literature was Joyce's theme of enslavement and redemption as outlined in Ulysses, with Joyce's classicism lying in his definite and thorough treatment of themes.¹ In particular Romanticism is rejected by Joyce and Anderson as characteristic of youth.

Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word has broken the holy silence of his ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped at the call. To live, to err, to fail, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on.²

The crisis of youth is "...the birth of the soul, and the soul is born to estrangement, with the breaking of former ties".³ As Anderson said of this birth, quoting again from Joyce,

It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.⁴

Ulysses, Anderson argued, is concerned with escape from exile, with 'flying by those nets', an exile that is a sundering from self and the subsequent search for reconciliation.

'History', Stephen says again, 'is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake'. The subjection of man to history is the state of sundering from self; as the affirmation of the human spirit, the recognition, as Nietzsche has it, of the world as a aesthetic phenomenon, is the release from servitude. ...For the state of sundering from self is the state of being damned; the theme, in one of its formulations, is Hell and the escape therefrom.⁵

This state of being damned is the state of human society and apart from Dedalus and Bloom, "...the rest are sundered from self without hope of reconciliation; and all their drinkings and blusterings, songs and love-makings are but the antics of the damned.

1 ibid p 97

2 Joyce quoted in Anderson loc cit

3 loc cit

4 Joyce quoted in Anderson ibid p 97 - 8

5 ibid p 98

pretending that freedom does not matter, that illusions are best. They are Circe's swine, and would fain bring others to their own level."¹ Human society therefore is estranged from itself and enslaved to its past and it is only through embarking on exile that one can become free. "The conquered souls of Ulysses - Circe's swine who pretend that freedom does not matter, that illusions are best - are so many 'Peer Gynts' making false selves out of their fancies instead of affirming the spirit of Man."² For Joyce and Anderson, as the artist and the critic, the human spirit rebels against such servile affectations, as when Stephen Dadelus cries out in a Dublin street, "Break my spirit all of you, if you can".³ Ulysses therefore is concerned with 'Hell' and redemption therefrom, where the 'Hell' of human society is the state of being damned and the 'nets' of nationality, language and religion are flung at the soul to prevent it from 'taking flight'. However before he can enter upon his redemption, his work of affirmation, the artist or critic must escape from his own self-alienation and this redemption from human society is only possible through the participation of the artist or critic in artistic movements which affirm 'the spirit of man in literature'. This 'affirmation of the spirit of man in literature' is the attempt to 'fly by the nets' of nationality, language and religion, by the rejection of taboos and the acceptance of all things as aesthetic themes.⁴

'History' says Stephen 'is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.' And the escape from exile, from the hell of mental dissociation, is secured not simply by standing apart from the movements of the day .. but by finding a form of activity in the creation of the static or aesthetic, in 'the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature'. Solution is found in the presentation of things themselves, not in the uplifting or romantic or progressive treatment of them ...but in classicism. It is this classicism alike in development of the theme and as part of its substance that makes *Ulysses* the outstanding work that it is.⁵

For Anderson, this 'form of activity' is the work of the artist or critic who has purged themselves of the tragic or *kinetic* emotions of pity and terror and risen above these to the *stasis* of the aesthetic emotion. This 'form of activity' is the Classical attitude in art which recognises the work of art in its distinctness and not as any other thing. However in his 1940 paper '*James Joyce: Finnegans Wake*', Anderson returned to the Joycean theme of the emancipation of the human spirit, which he insisted is more

1 ibid p 99-100

2 ibid p 102

3 ibid p 100

4 ibid p 104

5 ibid p 112

than simply a 'shout in the street' as he had earlier suggested.¹ However in response to critics who wanted to know what *Ulysses* is 'about', Anderson was insistent that it is not 'about' anything such as 'Hell', but is the presentation of Hell itself and the supposed 'unintelligibility' of *Ulysses* is precisely the unintelligibility of Hell itself.² A work of art, he continued, has to be appreciated as a whole, not as some part of itself nor as something beyond itself and he regarded Arnold Bennett as failing to appreciate *Ulysses*, for Bennet

...wants a book to tell him what it is all about, not realising that *Ulysses* is not *about* anything. It speaks for itself; it *is* Hell and the unintelligibility he complains of is precisely a characteristic of the thing, Hell or Damnation. There is no question, apart from what arises in envisaging the process itself, of what happens before or after. Hell is *there*, presented to us, and the person who, having read the book, says, recognises or has discovered that it represents Hell, has appreciated the work.³

Anderson's interest in aesthetic issues continued after his return from sabbatical leave and in his 1939 address 'The Nature of Poetry', he argued that the difference between art and science is one of presentation.⁴ Similarly in another address at this time, he emphasised the close inter-connection between the artist and the critic when he stated that "...the fact that the artist was himself a critic (of illusions) and the critic himself an artist (in criticism) would permit of a close co-operation between the two."⁵ He further argued that when Joyce speaks of the 'eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature' he is evoking a spirit which is scientific as well as artistic, for both science and art constitute movements which enable the escape from servitude.

The true scientist, who is not devoted to utility, to 'service', produces what may well be called a work of art ...And the literary artist, in particular, has much of the scientist in him ...so when Joyce speaks of 'the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature', he is evoking a spirit which is scientific as well as artistic, and he is specifying what is, his own escape from servitude.⁶

1 *ibid* p 116

2 *ibid* p 53

3 *loc cit* (his emphasis)

4 *ibid* p 73 - 4

5 *ibid* p 257

6 *ibid* p 92

Science and art differ then, only in terms of their style or form of presentation, with science being more 'ponderous' whereas art particularises and "...bites through the defences of those whom mere argument would leave unaroused".¹ However it is still history that binds man - 'History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake' - and the awakening from this nightmare is *art*.² At this time Anderson also stressed the relation of love to the other forms of cultural activity, when he argued that "...freedom in love is the condition of other freedoms, that while in itself it does not constitute culture, there can be no culture without it, that it continually enriches and is enriched by the various forms of productive (enterprising) activity - Science, Art, Industry."³ This theme was reinforced in his 1942 paper 'Exiles', where he argued that the estrangement from one's self and one's fellows, is due to the loss of love.⁴ As he said quoting Heraclitus - "They are estranged from that with which they have the most constant intercourse".⁵ Love, he argued, moves through the alternation between doubt and certitude, its importance being in its 'leading the way' to culture. "Possibly there would be no release for free spiritual activities unless we wanted love for itself and not as a means; but being, or having been in a loving phase would release us for artistic activities; then we could go back to loving and so on."⁶ Further this alternation between opposites is the source of productive work. "The notion in *Exiles* is of a sort of alternation, even a struggle, between the point of view of emotion leading to productive work, and that of habit, and it is out of this that culture comes; for the 'secret cause' of loss of love lies in the seeming irreconcilability of the one with the other - of following one to the exclusion of the other."⁷

After 1942 Anderson wrote little on aesthetics with only 'The Detective Story' and 'Poetry and Society' being written up to the end of the decade. In the former article, Anderson reviewed the 'Ern Malley' affair, stressing that the importance of poetry lies in it being heretical in seeing the arbitrariness of orthodox beliefs and attitudes and that this motivated the creative drive to the creators of 'Ern Malley', McAuley and Stewart, to write some of their best poetry. However the more important theoretical point is that no country or people is safe for literature, for it must always, in Croce's phrase 'lead a perilous and fighting life'.⁸ Anderson's treatment of the detective story is also of interest if only for his psycho-analytic interpretation of them and his conclusion taken from Freud that "It does not matter who has really

1 ibid p 91

2 ibid p 92 (his emphasis)

3 ibid p 90

4 ibid p 118

5 loc cit

6 ibid p 120

7 loc cit

8 ibid p 81

done the deed (of murder); it only matters to psychology who has willed it emotionally and welcomed it when it was done."¹ After 1950 Anderson completed only two more aesthetic writings - 'Literary Criticism' and 'Orage and the *New Age* Circle' - with his 'Further Questions in Aesthetics' being a construction after his death, from notes drawn from his lectures and discussions.

¹ ibid p 240

6. REALIST ETHICS

a. Realist Ethics

After his return from sabbatical in 1939 and up to his break with the Freethought Society in 1951, Anderson's philosophical interests moved away from aesthetic and logical issues and he became more interested in general issues in ethics.¹ Hence of the ten articles on ethics in Studies in Empirical Philosophy, seven were written between 1939 and 1951, to which we can include his 1939 discussion paper 'Logic and Ethics' and his 1941 article 'Art and Morality'. On the other hand his writings on non-ethical topics (excluding educational and political topics) during this period were brief and infrequent, consisting mainly of two discussion papers on logic in 1939 and a series of aesthetic writings culminating in his 1942 address to the Freethought society on Joyce's Exiles.² Although Anderson had written on ethical issues as early as 1928, it was during the nineteen forties that he developed his ethical theory most extensively. In Some Problems of Positive Philosophy Anderson had argued that a sentiment is good when the motive of an action is identical with its objective, a view which was re-terated in his 1928 article 'Determinism and Ethics' where he argued that "It is possible for us to pursue something which is good".³ However such a view implied that goodness was an 'ideal' to be realised, which is inconsistent with a *qualitative* theory of goodness that a strict application of the Realist doctrine of external relations implied. However in his article 'Realism versus Relativism in Ethics' published only four years later, Anderson was quite clear that goodness was to be understood in a qualitative sense when he stated that "...the antithesis between good and bad, as contrasted with that between right and wrong, shows that a qualitative distinction was, however vaguely, recognised, and not a mere distinction between relations of support and opposition"⁴ In this article, Anderson argued for an objective and naturalistic account of goodness, of the existence of definite things which are in fact good and for the rejection of the two main relativist confusions in ethics - the notion of 'obligation' and the notion of an 'end' - as a confusion of a thing and its relations. "If the obligatory is *what we are to obey* and the end is *what we are to pursue*, then nothing at all has been said as to what these things themselves are; we do not know what to obey or to follow."⁵ Anderson's positive and scientific conception of goodness was therefore opposed to

1 For a full exposition of Anderson's ethical and political theories see Baker Anderson's Social Philosophy pp 24 - 76 Baker, A.J. 'Anderson's Social and Ethical Theory' Dialectic 1987 pp 78 - 84; Eddy, W.H.C. 'Ethics and Politics' The Australian Highway Sept. 1958 pp 64 - 68

2 See for example 'The Status of Logic', 'Logic and Experience', 'The Nature of Poetry', 'James Joyce: *Finnegans Wake*' and 'Imperor and Galilean', all referred to in previous chapters.

3 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 217

4 ibid p 244

5 ibid p 240

the establishment of the 'categorical imperative' or 'moral law' which is merely the presentation of an unasserted demand.

We can see, then, how a positive ethics is possible; we see that motives act in accordance with their nature, that communication occurs, and that the study of communicating and non-communicating motives must be thoroughly deterministic. Vague notions of ideals are simply covers for that domination which is the real exponent of the exponents of 'the moral law'. The safeguarding of morality, the discovery of 'incentives' to goodness, are, as expressions of ethical dualism or 'heteronomy', unscientific and, as repressive operations, bad.¹

Anderson's *qualitative* account of goodness was also reinforced in his 1937 paper 'Marxist Ethics', where he argued that

...without the recognition of a *quality* of goodness, there can be no distinction between the ethical and the non-ethical. But if there is such a character of things then the question whether a certain thing is good will be a question of fact, of objective truth, no matter what anybody demands or what class he belongs to.²

Given the relativism implicit in his earlier statement in 'Determinism and Ethics' where goodness is something which we can *pursue*, it is not surprising that in his 1939 discussion paper 'Logic and Ethics', Anderson rejected that interpretation when he asserted that "...what aims at good is of no ethical importance at all, that it is not by being aimed at that goodness comes about".³ Goodness then cannot be understood as 'something which is to be pursued' and Anderson argued that logic demonstrates that any theory which amalgamates a relation and a quality cannot be sound and must be falsifying the facts which it professes to set forth.⁴ Anderson's criticism of the relativist amalgamation of a quality and relation was further reinforced in his 1942 paper 'The Meaning of Good', where he argued that "The notion of that which is unconditionally binding on me falls with every other notion of 'that whose nature it is to have a certain relation', viz., in that it treats a relation as if it were a quality."⁵ This moralistic notion of the 'ought' as that which is 'commanded' or 'demanded' is only intelligible in terms of a *relational* theory of ethics and has no meaning if "...we regard good as a *quality*, as characteristic of a thing without further

1 [ibid](#) p 226

2 [ibid](#) p 317

3 Anderson, J. 'Logic and Ethics' [A.J.P.P.](#) XVII, 1, May 1939 p 56

4 [ibid](#) p 59

5 Anderson [Studies in Empirical Philosophy](#) p 252

reference".¹ Anderson argued further that such a relativist conception could be found in a writer as nominally Realist as G.E. Moore who, while contributing in some respects to a positive theory of ethics, in his conception of good as 'the ultimate object of demand' "...*amalgamates* quality and relation (this being the procedure which, in my view, is properly described as 'relativism') and so cannot give either a relational or a qualitative account of it (good)".² This this error, he argued, which contributes to Moore's conclusion that good is 'indefinable' and 'non-natural', a conclusion which can only be avoided by a qualitative view of ethics.³ "It is the confusion of the relation of command with the quality of goodness that leads to Moore's doctrine of the indefinability of good ...and hence to his belief in ethical intuition."⁴ Anderson's qualitative conception of goodness was further reiterated in his 1944 paper 'Ethics and Advocacy', where he argued that "The special importance of positive ethics ...lies in its rejection of the conception of absolute right (of the imperative or mandatory), as against which it emphasises the *quality*, goodness."⁵ However Anderson qualified his rejection of normative theories of ethics some years earlier when he argued that "...if we take good to be a quality, we must regard normative theories, whatever their logical confusions, as having played an important part in these controversies - as having, in their erection of an 'absolute standard', kept alive the sense of an absolute quality."⁶ Anderson's realist ethical theory then, in being based on the doctrine of external relations, treated goodness as a formal quality of things and this positive and scientific treatment of goodness implied the rejection of relativist and moralist theories of ethical form and Idealist, Christian, Socialist and Utilitarian theories of ethical content.

b. The Nature of Movement;

In Anderson's Realist ethical theory, the *formal* nature of goodness was indicated by goods being 'movements', 'causes' or 'common forms of activity'. Although the notion of the 'movement' had been mentioned briefly in his earlier ethical writings, Anderson's conception of it was not fully developed, referring merely to the 'absurdity' of discussing politics "...without discussing interests, in the form of social movements" and of goods being social forces or 'forms of organisation' which are engaged in social struggle.⁷ Further the role of the movement as a means of 'redemption' had also been mentioned in his aesthetic writings when in his 1936 paper on 'Doestoevsky' he stated that "...no redemption is possible except through

1 *ibid* p 253 (my emphasis)

2 *ibid* p 257

3 *ibid* p 267

4 *ibid* p 271

5 *ibid* p 287 (his emphasis)

6 *ibid* p 270

7 *ibid* pp 236 and 246 respectively (his emphasis).

movements".¹ The importance of the notion of the movement for a qualitative view of ethics was first stressed in his 1942 paper 'The Meaning of Good' when he argued that "...the consideration of social movements is of considerable importance for ethics and may assist the recognition of good as a quality."² However the importance of the *formal* nature of goodness was first evidenced in his 1941 paper 'Freudianism and Society', where he argued that the value of social equality lies not in the 'endowment of individuals', but in the "...primacy of the movement, the setting of the common *form* of activity above personal considerations".³ Anderson's treatment of goods as 'movements' or 'forms of activity' was neither exclusively psychological or social, but was a combination of both.

Goods, we may say, are those mental activities, or those social activities, which are 'free' or enterprising, which exhibit the spirit of enterprise. It may be better to come down on the mental side. The main point is that ethics penetrates both the psychological and the sociological field, but is nevertheless a distinct and positive inquiry.⁴

A colleague of Anderson's, W.H.C. Eddy, queried this apparent tendency to come down in favour of a psychological interpretation of goodness, arguing that it was more consistent for Anderson to adopt a social interpretation.⁵ However A.J. Baker, while agreeing with Eddy, has argued that the more important point is that Anderson is indicating that the notion of a 'movement' is concerned with a new and distinctive subject matter which is neither simply psychological nor social, but is a combination of both as 'psycho-social'.⁶ Anderson's explicit psychological treatment of goods was first evident in 'Determinism and Ethics' where he argued that "...goodness is a character of certain motives or mental activities".⁷ The goodness of a motive is the assistance which one motive brings to another and is evidenced in their participation in common activities where each assist the other to become good, while the badness or evil of a motive is the resistance which one motive will use to prevent another from acting.⁸ Good motives then will seek a means of expression, which in psycho-analytic terms will be achieved by either transference, where a patient uses the powers of the analyst to find expression or sublimation, where within one mind one motive uses another motive to find expression.⁹ Anderson's account of the

1 Anderson Art and Reality p 225

2 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 266

3 ibid p 350 (my emphasis)

4 ibid p 267

5 Eddy, W.H.C. 'Ethics and Politics' A.J.P.P., XXII, Sept. 1944 p 74

6 Baker op cit pp 45-6

7 Anderson op cit p 222

8 ibid p 223

9 ibid p 224

psychological component of goodness drew heavily from Freudian psycho-analytic theory and particularly the view that mind is a complex of motives or feeling which are either repressive or expressive. Hence in his 1928 article 'Censorship', he argued that in any mind there are any number of leading motives and that these operate censoriously when they refuse to recognise the presence of other motives or impulses.

Repression may prevent motives from operating in certain ways, but it cannot put them out of existence. It can force them to adapt themselves to it, but this only means that they find some clandestine and insidious mode of operation, while they remain ready to break out in the original direction at the first favourable moment.¹

This suppressed desire finds outlet in the bodily hysterical system and so "...precaution leads to precaution in an endless series, and the whole life acquires a twist away from carefree and forceful activity".² It is, he argued, from the attempt to avoid tension that repression arises, although such avoidance is futile, for tension is 'of the nature of all existing things' and becomes intolerable only when it is not recognised.³ Anderson's psychological view of goods was also evidenced in 'Freudianism and Society', where he argued that "...responsible participation in a productive movement is marked by a diminution in the sense of guilt, by a rising above 'personal values', and any movement which intensifies feelings of guilt is thereby shown to be anti-progressive."⁴ However Anderson rejected Freud's division of the mind into the id, ego and super ego, regarding these as possible ways that any mental tendency or passion can act.⁵ In this respect Anderson argued that it was Freud's *individualism* which wrecks his social theory, an over emphasis which could be rectified by a consideration of Marxist social theory, although this too had its limitations.⁶ "What Freud does not grasp here is that Socialism is a theory not of human nature but of society, of the laws of social working - though it can certainly be argued that Marx makes the opposite error to Freud's, reducing the psychical to the social instead of the social to the psychical."⁷

Anderson's social interpretation of movements was also evident in this same paper, when he argued against Freud that man is not confronted with the task of being social, but is social all along and, within society, is involved in conflicts with his

1 Anderson Education and Politics p 21

2 ibid p 22

3 loc cit

4 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 347

5 ibid p 346

6 ibid p 341

7 ibid p 348

social tendencies, his personal tendencies and between his social and personal tendencies.¹ The individual, then, has to be regarded as a member of a *movement*, where certain activities pass through him and there is the need therefore, to move from the conception of the individual as a *unit*, to one of him having activities passing through him.² In terms of such a conception, "...change of social structure *is* change of ways of acting, and issues from existing ways of acting (movements)."³ A 'social' conception of man then, is one where a common work holds men together, with the real cultural struggle being not the survival of particular peoples, but of different institutions and 'ways of living'.⁴ Such 'ways of living', as he argued in 'Realism versus Relativism in Ethics', are causally determined, although this sense of determination is not one which denies the reality of freedom but, on the contrary, recognises the reality of freedom as initiative.

Goods are found to be forces operating through persons, developing their own methods, fighting with the evil of interestedness or consumptiveness. We find, too, that we can describe them as working freely, not in the metaphysical sense, but as showing initiative as contrasted with compulsion and repression. No more than they are uncaused are they uncaused, but they have their own ways of working, securing their continuance, establishing solidarity among those who participate in them.⁵

The importance of this notion of a movement as a causal, social force in Anderson's ethical and social theory was further reinforced when he argued that, "All our actions, all our questionings and answerings, are part of the movement of things; and if we can work on things, things can work on us - if they can be our 'vehicles', we can also be vehicles; social and other forces can work through us."⁶ Movements then, are causally determined, but are not things 'we' create but have their own objective and positive ways of working. Anderson reinforced this deterministic, but liberating, view of movements in his 1937 paper "Marxist Ethics".

It is to be understood that participation in a movement will affect the character of the participants, but this does not mean that the movement can be summed up in, or expressed as a resultant of their attitudes. On the contrary, any serious student of society must recognise the way in which individuals are 'caught up' in movements,

1 [ibid](#) p 347

2 [ibid](#) p 341

3 [ibid](#) p 357 (his emphasis and brackets)

4 [ibid](#) p 345

5 [ibid](#) p 246

6 [ibid](#) p 241

the extra-ordinary extent to which social developments can raise or lower individual potential - including the capacity for thinking and the making of decisions.¹

This conception of movements was also stressed in his 1942 paper 'The Meaning of Good' where he particularly emphasised the importance of the notion of a movement for *inquiry*:

...the consideration of social movements is of considerable importance for ethics and may assist the recognition of good as a quality. It may be recognised firstly that there are qualitative differences among ways of life, and secondly that a way of life is not something we adopt, by a voluntary decision, but something that adopts us, takes us as a vehicle, kindles a certain 'spirit' in us. Thus the scientific spirit, the spirit of inquiry, may be said to be kindled in us by the scientific movement, by a social phenomenon which no individual or set of individuals could have planned and which in operating through an individual, never completely absorbs him but strengthens the communicating, as against the divisive, tendencies in him. The other ingredients in culture, like art and industry, are also generative of a communicating spirit and of institutions in which it may be expressed, and this, it may be said, is what prevents the taking of 'culture' in a non-qualitative sense, as merely what is established among a group of human beings at any given time.²

Anderson's conception of good as a movement then, was of it as a formal quality of human activity, which was neither exclusively psychological nor social but was a combination of both. On such a 'psycho-social' conception of goodness, individualist and solidarist theories of ethics are rejected and replaced with the notion of a 'movement' as both determined and liberating.³

c. Goodness as Production

Anderson held that the positive character of goodness was that of production and in line with his view in 'Utilitarianism' that politics could only be discussed in terms of movements or interests, Anderson distinguished between productive or ethical goods and consumptive or economic goods, a distinction which was the foundation of his ethical theory:

1 ibid p 326

2 ibid p 266

3 Baker op.cit p 15 - 23

We thus have a distinction between productive or ethical goods and economic goods or goods of consumption, a distinction connected with that commonly made between disinterestedness and interestedness, and with that drawn by Sorel between the ethic of the producer and the ethic of the consumer. The latter is that which attempts to treat all goods as objects of want and all actions as interested; it is the doctrine of utilitarianism.¹

Further with the recognition of the productiveness of good comes the recognition that production itself is good, a recognition which is intimately related to the goodness of inquiry:

The conception of the productiveness of goods leads to the view that production is itself a good; it fulfils the conditions mentioned above in the case of investigation, and it also assists and is assisted by investigation. Indeed, we find investigation flourishing where production is developing, and the assistance given by science to production is equally well marked. Similar considerations apply to aesthetic creation and appreciation; in fact the distinction between these forms of activity are hard to draw; the artist and the investigator are producers of a sort, the producer is in some measure an artist and an investigator.²

The productive nature of goods, he argued in 'Marxist Ethics', are exemplified in the 'heroic values' of the working class, such as initiative, emulation, care for exactitude and the rejection of the notion of 'reward', which were developed in their struggle with capitalism and through which they become assimilated into the various types of dis-interested activity.³

The 'consumers' view, that production is 'for the sake of' consumption, cannot account for the development of production itself. The common ethical notions of disinterestedness and of things which are 'for their own sake' are approaches to the conception of the independence of production, whether scientific, artistic or industrial. The truth of the 'economic interpretation is that society *is* production and that consumption is only incidental to its history.'⁴

1 Anderson op cit p 245

2 ibid p 245 - 6

3 ibid p 325

4 ibid p 326 - 7 (his emphasis)

The 'producer ethic' then, is characterised by communicativeness, independence, cooperativeness and disinterestedness, an interest in things for their own sake. In particular, communication is important as a good, in being something which is good in itself and fosters relations with other goods.

And here I would suggest that the distinction between thorough-going communication (co-operation) and repression is of considerable importance, that, while this may seem on the face of it to be a distinction between relations, there are distinct qualities that go with them, that a quality: goodness, is involved in communication itself, whether it be the communication of love, the communication of knowledge or any other. On this view, good is not merely something that we discover but is that by which we discover things - or, if inquiry is taken as one particular good, it at least communicates with other goods, and they assist in its operations.¹

Further the ethical notions of 'disinterestedness' and 'things for their own sake' are "... approaches to the conception of the independence of production, whether scientific, artistic or industrial".² Anderson particularly emphasised Sorel's notion of the inter-connectedness of goods, of the inter-relation between Art, Science and Industry, these being the categories of social culture.

But as we broadly distinguish between Science, Art and Industry within a social culture, so we may broadly distinguish scientific, artistic and productive activity. The recognition of them all as productive is in accordance with the Marxist conception of society as organisation for production, of production as socially fundamental. ...The finding of interrelated goods within the various cultural fields does not, however, support the hypothesis of social solidarity, of a gradually emerging and progressively defined social welfare. On the contrary, we have to recognise that what is good in social culture has had to fight and still has to fight for its existence; that science is faced not merely by open obscurantism but by obscurantism and scepticism masquerading as science; that waste passes for industry, and luxury is paraded as art.³

1 ibid p 266

2 ibid p 327

3 ibid p 246

This 'ethic of the producer' was opposed to the 'ethic of the consumer' with its emphasis on 'profit and return' and characterised by interestedness, repressiveness, dependence and divisiveness. This 'consumer ethic' is the doctrine of utilitarianism, although it is not limited to Bentham's utilitarianism, but also involved 'salvationist' ethics such as Christianity, Idealism and Marxism, all of which are opposed to each other and opposed to a positive theory of goodness as a quality of things. In his 1932 paper, 'Utilitarianism', Anderson was critical of the utilitarian reduction of goodness to the relation of utility.¹ Anderson argued that Bentham's attempt to define goodness in terms of 'what is demanded' is false, as is his attempt to justify his account of 'what is demanded' in terms of the notion of 'public interest'.² Goodness cannot be defined in terms of the relations that it has and a consistent account of demands, one which recognises that demands oppose each other, will be in terms of social movements or 'ways of life'.³ Further Bentham's notion of the 'public interest', is an intellectual concealment for 'public order', which is itself no more than a demand for rule by law.⁴ Such an account, in being based on the notion of property and of legal rights, is not, he argued, necessary for social life, for law is not necessary for the existence of rights.⁵

Anderson supported Sorel's rejection of the philanthropic 'ethics' of Christianity "...precisely because it is concerned with returns and has no conception of a system of *production*, and a system of rights connected therewith."⁶ In his 1941 address 'Art and Morality', Anderson criticised the Christian demand of obedience in terms of the commandments of God. "If, for example, we are told to do something because God commands us to do so, we can immediately ask why we should do what God commands - and any intelligible answer brings us back to human relationships, to the struggle between opposing movements."⁷ He was also critical of the 'bourgeois philanthropist' who seeks to maintain a 'circle of protection' by providing 'relief for the unprivileged', concluding that such philanthropic activity weakens the independent movements which provide the means of escape from servitude.⁸ The servile nature of bourgeois society, he argued, is not something that one can be 'saved from', for "...it is by what they *are*, not by what they are given, that men win release from servitude".⁹ Liberation therefore, is achieved through participation in

1 ibid p 227

2 ibid p 230 ff

3 ibid p 232

4 ibid p 233

5 ibid p 234 ff. For a full discussion of the implications of Anderson's views for law and legal theory, see Huntley, F.C. 'Anderson and the Law: A Short Comment' Dialectic 1987 pp 36 - 9; Morison, W.L. 'Anderson and Legal Theory' Dialectic 1987 pp 40 - 49

6 ibid p 325 (his emphasis)

7 Anderson Art and Reality p 86

8 ibid p 87

9 loc cit (his emphasis)

movements although in an important development of his ethical theory, Anderson now stressed that such liberation could be scientific as well as artistic.¹ Anderson further linked this 'bourgeois' philanthropy with modern Socialism when he asserted that "It is curious that the philanthropic ideology is what nowadays passes as 'Socialist', but its purpose in its new setting is the same as that of ordinary bourgeois philanthropy, to pass off a hierarchical system as egalitarian, to sidetrack on the one hand, and on the other hand to justify the repression of those independent movements which would alter the balance of power."²

Anderson also supported Sorel's criticism of the utilitarianism implicit in Marxism understood as an 'ethic of ends', arguing that the doctrine of "...the primacy of 'needs', of history as 'man's' pursuit of his 'ends'.." needs to be abandoned.³ As he argued in 'Marxist Ethics', both Marxist Socialism and Hegelian Idealism seek to establish an 'absolute standard', the realisation to which is simply a matter of degree.

Progress consists in advance to a postulated Absolute, reality's, or, on the Marxist theory, Society's, realisation of itself, the establishment of *true society* (Socialism), of the true condition of humanity. '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. The recognition of progress, in fact, depends on an implicit admission of a positive goodness which runs counter to the whole theory of 'needs' or any other moral relativism.⁴

Anderson returned to the moral relativism implicit in socialism in his 1943 paper, 'The Servile State'. Hilaire Belloc, in his book of this title, sought to avoid the consideration of moral issues in discussing social issues, an attempt Anderson argued fails, for "It is impossible ...to discuss social processes except in terms of ways of living or forms of enterprise, and that *is* moral characterisation."⁵ In particular, Belloc's (and Marxist's in general) insistence on 'security and sufficiency' is indicative of servility, for the attempt to secure the materials required for a 'way of life', would be a 'way of life' which would be poor and unenterprising.⁶ The conception of Socialism as an *end* is merely one aspect of the servility of the

1 ibid p 92

2 ibid pp 87-8

3 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 325

4 ibid p 320

5 ibid p 330

6 ibid p 331

'consumer ethic', for servility is as much evidenced in capitalist societies as it is in socialist states.¹

The distinctive nature of the ethical theories of the advocates of a 'consumer ethic' was that it advanced a normative or authoritarian ethical theory which defended the conception of good as an 'ought' or an 'end' to be realised, a conception which must be rejected if there is to be a positive science of ethics. "It seems to me that the prevalence of the 'normative' view is one main reason why ethics as a science has not progressed."² Hence the relativist confusion of a thing and its relations was particularly evident in ethical theories which treat goodness as an 'ideal' or 'ought' which must be realised and towards which one somehow becomes 'free'. Such a 'metaphysical' conception of 'freedom' must therefore be replaced by a deterministic treatment of it in terms of participation in 'movements' or 'causes', which enables a positive and scientific treatment of goodness as a quality.

...'freedom' may be taken not in the metaphysical sense of release from causation but as a power of devoting oneself to what transcends oneself (a social movement or 'cause'); that even duty may be considered as expressing the fact that individuals may fall away from movements and be painfully brought back. The vital point is the rejection of 'good as end', of the notion that goods come about by being wanted. This individualist or 'consumer's' view, is the main obstacle to the development of a positive science (i.e., a science) of ethics.³

d. Freedom as Liberty

Anderson's insistence on a qualitative conception of ethics implied the recognition of qualitative distinctions across a wide range of various forms of social life, all of which provide relations of support to each other. As he argued in his 1943 paper, 'The Meaning of Ethics', "I do not think there can be a coherent view (of ethics) which does not recognise a qualitative distinction similar in various cases, between science and obscurantism, between art and philistinism, between the productive and the consumptive spirit, between love and hate, between freedom and servility, and recognise also relations of assistance among the various goods."⁴ This productive nature of goods, he argued in 'Marxist Philosophy', implied that they co-operate or are allied with other goods in the development of culture. "I should rather contend,

1 ibid p 332 - 3

2 ibid p 268

3 ibid p 267

4 ibid p 276

in line with what I consider to be the only sound theory of ethics, that, as a good way of life is one in which productive forces fight for their continuance and extension and in which they are allied in their scientific, artistic and industrial manifestations (in the progress of what might be broadly called culture or civilisation), so the development of a pluralist or 'free-thinking' philosophy must harmonise with the general movement for a producers' society..."¹ In contrast to this productive and co-operative account of good, the consumptive nature of evils implied that they would compete against both goods and other evils, a view which he, borrowing from Socrates, expressed as "...while goods assist one another, they oppose bads; whereas bads oppose both goods and one another".² This view of the relations between goods and bads proved problematic for Anderson when A.D. Hope claimed to have detected a relativistic account of goodness in Anderson's ethical theory, when he argued that Anderson identified and hence confused, the quality 'good' with the relations that it has.³ Further in Anderson's response 'The Nature of Ethics', he was quite explicit that "...there would be no harm in using the term 'inquiry' to refer *both to the possession of the quality and to the possession of those relations which some things always have*."⁴ As some of Anderson's critics have argued, to regard inquiry as *both* a quality and a relation would be to commit the error of relativism.⁵ However although Anderson does appear to be inconsistent on this point, perhaps the more important issue is that he was at this time moving from an emphasis on goodness as an ethical quality, to a emphasis on liberty as a historical relation. As he argued in 'The Meaning of Good', 'goods' reside in 'causes', the content of which is liberty or freedom.

...goods are 'progressive' in that they continually grapple with new problems on the basis of their previous history. They are the continuing features of social life, the 'causes' to which men can devote themselves. The position may be summed up in Croce's description of history as the story of liberty or, as we may put it, liberty as the subject of history. Liberty resides in 'causes', and they alone have a history because continue as long as there is society.⁶

This view of the relational nature of liberty was reinforced in 'The Servile State' where he argued that,

1 ibid p 312

2 ibid p 223

3 Hope has recently reaffirmed the importance of Anderson's philosophical and aesthetic theory on his intellectual own development. See Hope, A.D. Chance Encounters Melbourne, 1992 p 52

4 Anderson op cit p 276 (my emphasis)

5 See Anderson, A.J. 'Following John Anderson' Dialectic 1987 pp 135 - 7: 141 - 2

6 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 267

It is *only* in the struggle with evils that goods exist, and the attempt to eliminate evils, as Croce points out, could lead, at its most successful, only to a drab existence which would emphatically be evil. Liberty has lived and always will live...a perilous and fighting life.¹

This emphasis on liberty as a relation was not a merely accidental appendage to his ethical theory, but was an essential aspect of his reformulated criticism of Socialism as concerned with 'ends', with the attempt to establish the belief that social struggle can be eliminated being important in the loss of vigour of independent movements which can result from the spreading of such a belief.

The doctrine of history as struggle is at once the liberal and the scientific part of Marxism; the doctrine of socialism as something to be established ('classless society') is its servile part. The point is not merely the drabness that might result from attempts to eliminate social struggles, but the impossibility of eliminating them - and, therewith, the loss of independence and vigour that can result from the spreading of the *belief* that they can be eliminated.²

Anderson argued further that liberty and servility are conditions of any society, with liberty declining under conditions of imagined security and re-emerging under conditions of adversity.

Croce, in 'History as the Story of Liberty' has particularly emphasised the way in which liberty (and, with it culture) declines under conditions of fancied security and is reborn in adversity. On this view both liberty and servility are features of society at any stage, but at least the *ordering* of society is antipathetic to liberty.³

The scientific student of society, he argued, will reject the notion of a 'social unity', not only as a description of present conditions but also as a conception of future society and although he insisted that this emergence of servility was indicative of long term cultural degeneration - we live, he said, in an evil age⁴ - freedom could never be completely eliminated.⁵ Hence social institutions which have a doctrine of independence could always oppose being mere instrumentalities of the State, being

1 *ibid* p 338 (my emphasis)

2 *ibid* p 339 (his emphasis)

3 *ibid* p 335 (his emphasis)

4 Anderson, J. *Education and Inquiry* Oxford 1980 p 221

5 Anderson *Studies in Empirical Philosophy* p 338 - 9

part of the 'ordering of society' and in opposition, be a measure of freedom within a community

What can be said is that so long as there are rights of opposition, ...culture will still have a front to fight on. And here independent institutions are of special importance - institutions, i.e., which are not nominally autonomous but have a *doctrine* of independence; Universities, trade unions, etc., which will resist being treated as servants of the State, or in which, at the worst, a resistant minority will remain. For the measure of freedom in any community is the extent of opposition to the ruling order, of criticism of the ruling ideas; and belief in established freedom, or in State guaranteed 'benefits', is the mark of the abandonment of liberty. The servile State is the unopposed State.¹

However although opposition is sufficient, it is not necessary for freedom, requiring intellectualism for there to be a truly liberal or free culture. The importance of a liberal opposition then lies in its intellectualism, its resistance to the treatment of inquiry and education, as concerned with their 'results' or 'relevance' and insists on *classicism* as the "...true form of scientific thinking and as the vehicle of an intellectual opposition."² Anderson believed it was not possible to predict the extent of this spread of social regimentation and cultural degeneration and argued further that this process had been greatly accelerated by the war and could even be said to be the purpose of the war, for by undermining political independence the war had given impetus to the establishment of the 'servile state'.³

After 1943, Anderson wrote on y two more, brief, articles in ethics - 'Ethics and Advocacy' and 'The One Good'. However after the end of the war there was a marked increase in his writings on political and educational issues, given mainly as university addresses and it was in these writings that Anderson's intellectual development was most pronounced, with an emphasis on the importance of the notion of *opposition* in the social and political arena.

e. Politics, Education and Freethought

One important consequence of Anderson's absence on sabbatical leave during 1938 was the creation of a second chair in philosophy at the University to counter

¹ *ibid* p 339 (his emphasis)

² *ibid* p 337

³ *ibid* p 334

Anderson's spreading influence during the thirties.¹ This appointment appears to have given Anderson more time to research for, as Horne reports, during the early period of the war Anderson was rarely seen and it was rumoured that he was 'working out a new position', a position of 'cunning, silence and exile'.² Between 1939 and 1942 Anderson continued being president of the Literary Society and was particularly interested in Joyce and Ibsen, writing on 'Finnegans Wake' (1940), 'The Banning of Ulysses' (1941), 'Exiles' (1942) and 'Emperor and Galilean' (1942).³ However Anderson's involvement with the Literary Society came to an end in 1942 when Horne defeated Anderson in the presidential elections.⁴ Henceforth Anderson was predominantly involved in the Freethought Society although there was an increasing estrangement between Anderson and a majority of the Freethought Society which resulted in the eventual dissolution of the Freethought Society in 1951. Another important consequence of Anderson's sabbatical leave was his complete rejection of Trotskyism and acceptance of Max Nomad's view that seizure of power is 'will-of-the-wisp' and that "...any attempts at it can only have reactionary effects, and that the true perspective is one of perennial opposition. But that opposition is not, and never will be, either common or peculiar to wage-workers."⁵ Although Anderson remained on a friendly basis with many of those involved in the Worker's Party during the war years, he was not involved with the party in any way and by 1946 had come to reject Trotskyism totally, expressing his views in a letter to ex-comrades of the party:

The idea of a revolutionary group having nice friendly discussions and agreeing to differ about whether Russia is a worker's state, would be amusing if it weren't pathetic. It is hard, no doubt, for believers in a workers' revolution to see even the beginnings of the case for the view that there never has been and never will be a workers' state, that if any group is in a dictatorial position and has preponderating control over production it is a bourgeois and 'exploiting' group; but they must be blind indeed if they can't see the reactionary character of the Russian regime.⁶

However Anderson's commitment to education during this period remained intact and was reflected in his teaching activities, with his university lectures covering a

1 Turney, Bygot and Chippendale op.cit p 516

2 Horne, D. The Education of Young Donald Sydney, 1988, p 237

3 See Anderson Art and Reality pp 103 - 4; 113 - 122; 147 - 156.

4 Horne op.cit p 245

5 Anderson, J. Letter to Marshall in the Anderson Archives, Sydney University

6 loc.cit

wide ranging set of subjects.¹ In his 1941 article 'Education for Democracy', Anderson argued that there could be a fruitful democratic interaction between education and politics with a thorough education being necessarily political, although it could not be thorough "...unless it involves preparation for struggle and criticism of the doctrine of social unity."² Democracy, he argued, resides in the openness and publicity of the struggle of social institutions and not in a subordination to a postulated 'general interest'.³ Such a view would reject the conception of institutions whereby people attain certain ends and maintain on the contrary, that it is only within institutions that policies have any meaning.⁴ Therefore in criticism of 'reformists' who seek to reconstruct society and its institutions, Anderson argued that institutions within society and particularly educational institutions, have their own history and this is a history of struggle.

If, then, we consider the history of educational institutions themselves, we shall find it largely taken up with the struggle between the development of inquiry (education in the strict sense) and opposing forces which regularly come in the guise of 'social utility' and frequently takes the form of state interference. And any attempt to enforce a view of what education shall be, inevitably interferes with inquiry.⁵

Anderson argued that the political preparation involved in education would lead to independent activity which would at times involve opposition to the state, a view which was reinforced in his 1945 introduction to Prospects of Democracy where he argued that "...independent activity, involving, at times opposition to the State, is not opposed to democracy; it is essential to it."⁶ Further as he argued in 'The Servile State', it is in the application of planning to education that servility is evidenced, with the real educational issue being not "...the provision of a career to individuals, of the supplying of education to them as a commodity, but of the maintenance of a tradition of learning, the continuance of the learned way of life."⁷ Anderson was particularly critical of the academic psychologist as a typical exponent of a servile ideology, who "...has introduced a factitious 'exactness' into the field of humane

1 His lectures during this period include 'Early Greek Philosophy' (1939), 'The Nature of Mental Science' (1940), 'Hegel' (1941), 'Dialectic: Hegel and Alexander' (1941), 'Political Theory of Bosanquet and Lenin' (1942), 'Ethics and Aesthetics' (1942), 'Alexander' (1944, 1947, 1949), 'Socialism' (1945), 'Mill' (1948), 'The Educational Theories of Dewey and Spencer' (1949) and 'Marx' (1950). Most of the above are held in the Anderson Archives at Sydney University.

2 Anderson Education and Inquiry p 162 - 3

3 ibid p 162

4 loc cit

5 loc cit

6 Anderson, J. 'Introduction' to Liddy, W.H.C. (ed) Prospects of Democracy Sydney 1945 p 9.

7 Anderson Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 336

studies" which resulted in the overlaying of freedom and culture with Philistinism.¹ 1943 was a year of controversy for Anderson with his address to the New Education Fellowship on the topic of 'Religion in Education', where he argued that education is necessarily secular and that the more religious instruction there is in any educational system, then the less is it truly educational.

Education, may be described as the development of inquiry, the setting up of habits of investigation; and on that understanding religion, in so far as it sets limits to inquiry, is opposed to education. Such limits are in fact involved in the notion of the 'sacred', to call anything sacred is to say: 'Here inquiry must stop; this is not to be examined'.²

The ensuing furore over these statements demonstrates the narrowly conservative and moralistic nature of war-time Australia which again saw Anderson facing a censure motion, although this time in a reversal of the 1931 controversy the censure motion now came from the N.S.W. parliament, which proclaimed that his statements were "...unjustified, inasmuch as they present a travesty to the Christian religion and are calculated to undermine the principles which constitute a Christian State".³ However Anderson was now defended by the Chancellor and the Senate of Sydney University and the result was again a marked extension of academic freedom.⁴ In an important extension of his earlier view on academic freedom, Anderson argued that in virtue of their distinctive activity of criticism, there was a need for special liberties for academics.⁵ In his 1944 paper, 'Education and Practicality', Anderson argued that "...any sort of education must involve a certain amount of freethinking; it must treat of certain *subjects* and these cannot be completely canalised or directed to external ends".⁶ However his defence of a liberal conception of education was found most clearly expressed in his 1949 lectures on Dewey and Spencer. "My contention is that education as such (that is, liberal education) is aesthetic; and that allowing for the confused and narrow way in which 'taste' is commonly spoken of, we can still refer to education as a training in taste or, using the broader term which we find in Arnold, a training in judgement."⁷ Throughout the rest of the decade Anderson was particularly vocal on the topic of education, defending student's rights

1 ibid p 337

2 Anderson Education and Inquiry p 203

3 Baker op cit p 120

4 ibid p 121-2.

5 Walker, R. 'Public Controversies and Academic Freedom' Dialectic 1987 p 17

6 Anderson Education and Inquiry p 109

7 ibid p 103

on the one hand while opposing the spread of de-centralised and 'technological' education on the other.¹

Finally in his annual presidential addresses to the Freethought Society, Anderson developed the Freethought Society into a platform for the expression of his views and from 1939 to 1949 he sponsored the Freethought Society as a "...tough-minded position concerned to expose illusions and to oppose servility-promoting forces that abound in society, whether their complexion is 'conservative' and bourgeois, or 'progressive' and proletarian."² In these addresses Anderson developed his nineteen thirties conception of Freethought as the study of doctrines into a view of it as concerned with opposition and criticism which was concisely expressed in his 1945 presidential address on 'Freethought', where he argued that Freethought was concerned with "...the critical analysis of current superstitions - of all systems of consolation, protection or salvation - in short of popular morality' and that the freethinking position was "...one of opposition - opposition to the setting up of idols and to the search for security".³ From 1939 to 1941 Anderson spoke on 'Totalitarianism', 'The Present Position of the Labour Movement', 'Liberal Education' and in his 1948 presidential address on 'Progress and Reaction', he argued that regardless of who is in charge of a ruling system, they are reactionary and hence opposed to free and critical thinking.⁴ Anderson was particularly critical of the Australian Labour Party in its attempts to promote culture amongst those who have no traditions of culture and this was particularly the case with its educational policies, with their emphasis on utility and equality rather than disinterested inquiry.⁵ Anderson's change in political attitude had become more pronounced by the time of his 1948 article 'The Politics of Proscription' where, while not supporting the banning of the Communist Party, he was vehement in his anti-Communist stand.⁶ However he regarded the proposal of the Liberal Party to ban the Communist Party as 'an act of colossal folly' and was a move away from truly Liberal principles.

The liberal doctrine of government as a trust, of statesmanship as finding a balance among a variety of interests...has lost much of its force and might even be thought to survive only in a few insincere electioneering phrases. But in fact it is what remains of that position that has given force to the opposition to the regime of regulations,

1 See 'De-Centralised Education' Honi Soit, XVI, 10, June 23 1944; 'Student's Rights' Heresy, 1, May 12 1948.

2 Baker op cit p 127. For an adolescent perspective on this period at Sydney University see Horne op cit pp 204 - 293.

3 Anderson quoted in Baker op cit p 128 - 9.

4 ibid p 125

5 ibid p 125 - 126

6 Anderson, J. 'The Politics of Proscription' Australian Quarterly XX, 2, June 1948, p 7 ff.

and it is only by a resurgence of such liberalism that government by regulation can be overthrown and the trend to dictatorship arrested.¹

Further in 1949, Anderson supported the use of force by the Chifley Labour Government to break a coal strike, which appeared to reject his earlier view in 'The Servile State' where he argued that the exercise of the right to strike by unions was an essential check on the spread of power of the State.² Then in 1950 when Menzies introduced a bill to ban the Communist Party, while Anderson did not support the bill, he was again vehement in his opposition to Communism.³ Further when Menzies proposed a referendum to ban the Communist Party, Anderson refused to let the 'No' case for the referendum be put to the Freethought Society, thus alienating a large membership of the society. Also in 1950, Anderson opposed the formation of an Anti-Conscription Committee at the university, which included many prominent 'Freethinkers' who were becoming increasingly disenchanted with Anderson's leadership of the Freethought Society.⁴ On this question, Anderson argued that there were more important issues than compulsory conscription, particularly the encroachment of Russia and the spread of its associated proletarian ideology. Therefore he argued, since one cannot fight on all fronts at once, one has to be political which is "...to have the power of deciding on what front we are going to fight - to have a sense for what is an immediate and important issue", which drew the retort from some Freethinkers that to wait for the 'immediate and politic' issue would be to prevent criticism starting at all.⁵ The Freethought Society then, which was originally a movement or vehicle concerned primarily with the expression of *Anderson's* ideas and views, became, with the development of independent views among other freethinkers, an independent organisation. With a marked change in Anderson's political views and attitudes, the only outcome of this tension could be the establishment of an organisation whose life was independent of Anderson.

1 *ibid* p 15

2 Baker *op.cit* p 130 - 1

3 *ibid* p 131- 2. On the 'conservative' element of Anderson's mature political theories see Stavropolous, P. 'Conservative Radical: The Conservatism of John Anderson' The Australian Journal of Anthropology 1992 3:1&2 pp 67 - 79

4 *ibid* p 132

5 'Fathers and Sons' Honi Scott Sept. 7, 1950 p 3. See also McCallum, D. 'Anderson and Freethought' in The Australian Highway Sept. 1958 pp 71- 5 and Baker, A.J. 'John Anderson and Freethought' Australian Quarterly Vol. XXXIV, 4, Dec. 1962, pp 50 - 63.