

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of the place of John Anderson in the history of philosophy is one which requires both philosophic and Historical consideration. As a study in the history of philosophy, there is the need to examine Anderson's *historical* contribution to that history and this requires the examination of two distinct issues. Firstly, in examining the place of John Anderson *in the history of philosophy*, there is the need to examine the general issue of philosophic history and the *theme* which Anderson held constituted the nature of the history of philosophy. This theme can be said to be that of the conflict between Idealism and Realism, a conflict which can be articulated in terms of the philosophic distinction between content and method. Secondly, in examining the place of *John Anderson* in the history of philosophy, there is the need to examine the particular interpretation of philosophy which Anderson defended with respect to the philosophical theme of Realism and Idealism and to elucidate this issue historically, there is the need to examine Anderson's philosophical development in terms of a philosophic biography. However this historical study of Anderson's place in the history of philosophy needs to be complemented by a *philosophical* treatment of this question and to explicate Anderson's distinctive contribution to the history of philosophy, this question requires the examination of two distinct issues. Firstly, there is the need to present a systematic and critical exposition of the particular doctrines which Anderson held constituted the nature of philosophy and such a treatment requires an examination of Anderson's philosophy as a Realist philosophy. Secondly, having provided a critical assessment of Anderson's philosophy there is the need to examine the development of his philosophy and such an examination requires the re-examination of the general issue of the relation between Realism and Idealism. Having provided an assessment of Anderson's philosophical theories in terms of the issue of Idealism vis-a-vis Realism, it is then possible to assess the place of John Anderson in the history of philosophy.

In considering the place of John Anderson *in the history of philosophy*, there is the need to consider the general *theme* which Anderson took to be definitive of the nature of philosophy. In terms of the specific content of his philosophy, Anderson argued that while there are many different descriptions which could characterise his philosophy, the most consistent and widespread *doctrine* that can be used for this purpose is that of *Realism*.¹ However in examining Anderson's contribution to Realist philosophy, it is necessary to examine Realism as a historical and logical reaction to Hegelian Idealism and to understand the nature of this Idealism, it is necessary to understand the logical doctrines which were said to constitute it. The conflict between Realism and Idealism is an enduring one in the history of

¹ Baker, A.J. Australian Realism, Cambridge, 1986, p. 1.

philosophy and the articulation of the key doctrines which are said to be definitive of both, involves a distinction that is fundamental to both Realist and Idealist philosophy - that of content and method. In general terms philosophical content can be defined in terms of the particular propositions or sets of propositions which are said to be *contained* in a particular philosophy, while philosophical method is concerned with the way such propositions are arrived at. Both Realism and Idealism have distinct interpretations of the content and method of philosophy and the exposition of these differences can clarify the nature of the relationship between Realism and Idealism. Although Idealism as the theory of 'form' or *eidos* can be traced back to the philosophy of Plato and therefore forms a continuing theme in the history of philosophy, in the period of modern philosophy Idealism has been characteristically understood as a doctrine of 'ideas' and typically defined in terms of the proposition 'esse est percipi'. The development of modern Idealism through its subjective, transcendental and Absolute phases culminated in the explicit identification of the content and method of philosophy in the philosophy of Hegel, where the content of the Absolute Idea was held to be identical with the method of the dialectic. The philosophy of Hegel had a significant influence on the development of Idealism in British universities in the latter part of the nineteenth century and it was as a reaction to British Hegelianism, that modern Realism had its origins. British Hegelianism held that the content of philosophy was expressed in the proposition 'reality is spiritual or rational' which Anderson held implied the associated doctrines of monism, rationalism and relativism, while in terms of the method of philosophy, they defended the notion of the synthesis of distinct elements into a higher unity of thought or reality. Having established the defining characteristics of Idealism, the historical development of Realism as a reaction to Idealism can then be examined.

Twentieth century Realism was founded on G.E. Moore's 'refutation of Idealism' and a central assumption of that refutation was that the relationship between Realism and Idealism was one of contradiction. Therefore when Idealism defined as the proposition 'esse *is* percipi' was held to be false then this implied that Realism, as the denial or negation of Idealism, was true and could be defined as 'esse *is not* percipi'. However the development of British philosophy during the twentieth century followed two distinct and diverging paths. Hence on the basis of the philosophy of Moore and Russell, much of British philosophy was of a distinctly *analytical* character, which either implicitly or explicitly denied the possibility of systematic philosophy. On the other hand, there were persistent attempts, especially in the earlier decades of the century, to maintain and defend the notion of systematic philosophy and the attempt to do so on a *Realist* basis, was the notable feature of the philosophy of Samuel Alexander. The philosophy of John Anderson was derived in no small part from the empirical philosophy of Alexander and it is in terms of the systematic development of this conception of Realism that Anderson's contribution to

twentieth century philosophy can be assessed. The content of Realist philosophy can therefore be expressed as the proposition 'esse is not percipi' - that reality is not dependent on mind - and Anderson held that this definition of Realism implied the associated doctrines of pluralism, empiricism and positivism. The method of philosophy appropriate to Realist philosophy varied with the conception of the content of philosophy with Moore, Russell and their followers advocating the exclusive use of the analytic method, while for Alexander and Anderson the method adopted was the empirical method of combined analysis and synthesis. However the analytic movement in modern philosophy has been distinctively a-historical, although the systematic conception of philosophy defended by Alexander and Anderson has opposed this a-historical tendency and while denying the Idealist identification of philosophy with history, they have sought to present their systematic conception of Realism in terms of the history of philosophy. Hence although Anderson insisted that philosophy could never be reduced simply to its history, he was equally insistent that philosophical progress could only be made through the study of the history of philosophy and many of his own articles had the unique quality of being both philosophical and historical.

Having determined the general historical and philosophical context in which Anderson's philosophical views were formed, it is necessary, in considering the place of *John Anderson* in the history of philosophy, to consider the particular issue which Anderson took to be definitive of his conception of Realism. Anderson contributed to the systematic conception of Realism as a *qualitative* treatment of the categories of truth, goodness and beauty in terms of the traditional subjects of metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics and the adoption of a biographical treatment of Anderson's philosophical development allows for the presentation of these subjects in terms of certain historical periods of his life. However on Anderson's own view, biography is not simply the description of all relevant psychological and social facts about a person's life, but is also artistic in articulating the *theme* that is consistent through that life, although he also insisted that any biography may have several themes and the choice of themes is in one sense arbitrary.¹ Such a choice of themes though is unavoidable in terms of the thematic treatment of a person's life, for as Anderson argued in reference to Vico "...it is impossible, in the case of any forceful thinker, to avoid 'interpretation' in the sense of determining which of certain competing strains are 'characteristic' and to present a position in which they are all tidily accommodated".² An 'interpretation' of the nature of Anderson's philosophy will therefore require the recognition of certain 'competing strains' in his philosophy, but will also seek to avoid the presentation of a 'position' into which his

1 Anderson, J. *Art and Reality*, Sydney, 1982, p. 48.

2 Anderson, J. 'Time and Idea: The Theory of History of Giambattista Vico' *A.J.P.*, Vol. XXXVIII, Dec. 1960 p 163.

philosophy is 'tidily accommodated'. Hence in treating Anderson as a *philosopher*, it will be necessary to examine his relationship to the main philosophical movements in terms of which, or in opposition to, he defined his philosophy and this will require an assessment of his philosophy in terms of the general philosophic theme of the conflict between Realism and Idealism. However consistent with Anderson's view that there is no division between theory and practice, there will also be the need to examine the relation between his philosophical development and the development of his social and political theories which will include his participation in various public movements. As he stated in his review of Acton's The Illusion of the Epoch, "...if we are to give a serious account of a man's life, we must present the interrelation (including the clash) of forms of activity in which he and others participate"¹ Such an approach allows for the examination of any connections between the development of his social and political theories and the development of his philosophical theories.

Anderson's Realism was primarily a systematic and historical philosophy concerned with the subjects of metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics and an account of his philosophical development can best be understood as the working out of his Realist principles into these three broad subject areas. In A.J. Baker's Anderson's Social Philosophy, there is the suggestion of how a biographical account of Anderson's theoretical and philosophical development could be presented.² In this work, Baker discusses the changes of Anderson's social and political views in respect of four distinct periods: his Communist phase of 1927 - 32, his Trotskyist phase of 1933 - 37, his Freethought phase of 1939 - 49 and his anti- Communist phase from 1950 - 62 and in discussing the development of Anderson's philosophic views during his lifetime, these periods will be used to discuss the changes that occurred in his general philosophical views.³ Hence paralleling Baker's division of Anderson's social and political philosophy into four periods, it will be argued that Anderson's philosophical interests also fall into four rough periods. Therefore during his first four years at Sydney University and corresponding to his 'Communist' phase, Anderson's philosophical interest was primarily with issues in metaphysics. Although this interest in metaphysics continued through the nineteen thirties, after his return from sabbatical in 1939 he published virtually nothing on this topic until 1952 and then nothing again until 1962. However Anderson's interest in aesthetic questions was prominent during the nineteen thirties with three quarters of the contributions for Art and Reality written in this time and if we extend this period to 1942 over

1 Anderson, J, 'The Illusion of the Epoch' A.J.P., XXXVII, 3, Dec. 1959, p 162.

2 Baker, A.J. Anderson's Social Philosophy. Sydney, 1979, pp 77 - 143.

3 These historical divisions are not the only ones that could be used. For example, Anderson's philosophical development can be divided into three periods of eleven years dating from 1926 to 1937, 1939 to 1950 and from 1951 to 1962. However the adoption of the above divisions at least parallels Baker's divisions which are themselves based on a fairly clear delimitation of the main periods of Anderson's political and social development.

ninety percent of his aesthetic contributions were written in this period. Further, although Anderson's interest in ethical issues was evident from 1928 and throughout the nineteen thirties, these issues became predominant during the nineteen forties where he was exclusively preoccupied with the nature of goodness. Finally during the nineteen fifties, Anderson was primarily concerned with historical issues and after his retirement in 1958, he was concerned with a complete restatement of his philosophical views in a systematic and historical manner. This treatment of philosophical subjects in terms of biographical periods is, of course, not to be taken as a substitute to an examination of the philosophical issues that he raised, but does allow for an examination of possibility of any changes or development in his philosophic position, a position which at first glance appears to be remarkably consistent during the course of his lifetime.¹

Having presented the exposition of Anderson's philosophical views in their historical development, it is necessary in assessing the place of John Anderson in the history of philosophy, to next consider the distinctive philosophical issues involved in Anderson's theories. The first philosophic issue to be considered is that of the *critical exposition* of Anderson's account of philosophy in terms of the general issue of Realism and Idealism. On Anderson's view the *exposition* of the doctrines of a particular philosopher is primarily an exercise in philosophic history and is concerned with the definite content of a particular philosopher or philosophical school.² However such an exposition presupposes an independent understanding of the subject matter itself, an understanding which he regarded as the task of 'pure' philosophy.³ The systematic exposition of Anderson's Realist philosophy will therefore be in terms of a *qualitative* treatment of the categories of truth, goodness and beauty, as the subjects of the traditional disciplines of metaphysics, aesthetics and ethics, a treatment which will be complemented by a consideration of Anderson's historical theory and his unified philosophical theory. Secondly in terms of the issue of philosophic *criticism*, if, as on Anderson's view, the exposition of particular philosophic content requires an independent understanding of the subject matter itself, then philosophic criticism is the demonstration of inconsistencies between the content of a particular philosophy and what there in fact is.⁴ However criticism in this sense is not the merely negative method of 'fault finding' in the works of particular philosophers, but is the application of the systematic method of 'immanent critique' which seeks to bring out, in discourse, the errors and inconsistencies of a particular philosophic position. The critical method most commonly advocated by

1 The question of consistency is an important one for Anderson's philosophical development as he began and ended his philosophic career with statements of the Realist and Empiricist nature of his philosophy.

2 Anderson, J. 'Studies in the History of Ideas' A.J.P.P. Vol. XV, Dec. 1937, p 299.

3 loc cit

4 Anderson, J. Studies in Empiric: I Philosophy Sydney, 1962, p 123.

Anderson was that of the detection of the relativist confusion of identifying qualities and relations and in this sense of philosophical criticism, Anderson's philosophy can be critically examined.

Having presented a critical exposition of Anderson's philosophy as a *systematic* philosophy, there is the need to next examine the second philosophical issue of the development of Anderson's philosophy in terms of the issue of the logical relation between Realism and Idealism. In the spirit of Anderson's philosophy as a systematic enterprise, this development of his philosophy will therefore recognise the force of certain criticisms of his philosophy and will seek to resolve these criticisms in a positive manner in suggesting a theory of philosophy which is based on Anderson's philosophy. Having determined such a reformulated account of his philosophy in terms of Realism vis-a-vis Idealism, it will then be possible to assess Anderson's historical and philosophical place in the history of philosophy.

However in treating Anderson's philosophy in historical or biographical terms, there are several difficulties which must first be considered. Firstly, although John Anderson was Professor of Philosophy at Sydney University for over thirty years and was reputed to have had a significant influence as a philosopher, an educator and a Freethinker, there has been a remarkable silence on the issue of his place in the history of philosophy.¹ This lack of attention to the historical treatment of Anderson's philosophy is surprising when it is realised that in the final decade of his life he was preoccupied with issues in history, writing several review articles and reviews on the philosophy of history and the history of ideas in general. However this silence is perhaps even more surprising given the fact that one of his prime philosophical motivations was the creation of a philosophical 'school' which would defend, maintain and elaborate his general philosophical position. While some of his students rose to positions of pre-eminence in the philosophical world and extended his general philosophical orientation into a variety of subjects including the history of philosophy, it is ironic that there has been no attempt to assess Anderson's place in the history of philosophy. The reasons for this silence would, no doubt, be many and complex, with perhaps Anderson's own insistence that his students work their own positions out, rather than content themselves with what he himself may have thought and said at various times and places, being the most important.² However there can be no doubt that one of the central themes of Anderson's general philosophical position was that there are no 'idols', no subject that cannot be studied, even if this subject is Anderson himself and given the silence on his place in the history of philosophy, there is the need to examine the precise nature of his

1 For a brief outline of Anderson's life see O'Neil, W.M. 'Anderson, John', Australian Biographical Dictionary Vol. 7, 891-1939, Melbourne, 1981, pp. 56 - 59.

2 Anderson, A. J. 'Following John Anderson' Dialectic Vol. 30 1987 p 133 ff.

philosophy and of his philosophical development in the context of the history of philosophy.

Secondly, in terms of assessing the philosophical works of John Anderson himself there are certain difficulties in assessing his philosophy in its entirety. Despite a productive capacity which was particularly prolific in his early years, he published no book in his own lifetime with only a collection of some of his articles being published posthumously under the title Studies in Empirical Philosophy.¹ For many years this work was the only public source of Anderson's philosophic writings and although in recent years there has been the publication of collections of his aesthetic and educational writings which to some extent reflect his broader intellectual and philosophical interests, there is still much of Anderson's writings unpublished.² Hence there is an extensive corpus of Anderson's lecture notes in the archives at Fisher Library at Sydney University dating from the late twenties to the mid fifties and while some of these writings are referred to in the present work, there has been no attempt to systematically assess these lecture notes in the context of Anderson's philosophical development and the reasons for this are clear and straight forward.³ Firstly some of these lectures are not by Anderson himself, but are notes taken by different students at different times and even those lectures which are by Anderson, are written in his own handwriting (and often in pencil) and the task of deciphering these is difficult. While it may be the case that Anderson did verify the accuracy of some of these notes, the tasks of distinguishing those that he did check from those he did not and of deciphering his handwritten notes would be immense and beyond the scope of the present work. Secondly, the range of topics covered and the mere size of the archives themselves is so extensive and large, that any thorough-going assessment of these lecture notes would distract from the present task of presenting a thematic account of Anderson's philosophical development. Thirdly, while there is some original material in the lecture notes which is not published or referred to elsewhere (especially in the later period of his life), many of the lecture notes are often more detailed expositions of what he said in general terms in his published writings. While proof or criticism of a thematic interpretation of Anderson's philosophical development could involve reference to

1 Anderson was apparently responsible for the choice and ordering of these articles and some comment needs to be made on this aspect of his work. The choice of articles covers the span of Anderson's lifetime but not necessarily the range of his interests as almost all of the articles are concerned with either issues in 'logic' or ethics. Indeed the first sixteen articles run in a roughly chronological order from 1926 to 1962 and deal with issues such as propositional logic, epistemology, the history of philosophy, causality, the nature of relations, etc. The next 16 articles again run in roughly chronological order from 1928 to 1960 and are concerned with ethical and educational issues including questions in psychology and social theory.

2 Anderson's other writings have been collected in Education and Politics, Sydney, 1931, Art and Reality Sydney, 1982 and Education and Inquiry, Oxford, 1980.

3 For a full list of the contents of the Anderson archives held at Fisher Library, Sydney University see Appendix 1.

these lecture notes, such a task could only occur after a definite thematic account of Anderson's philosophy had been presented and it is the latter task that the present work is concerned with. Finally apart from these lecture notes, there is also a wide range of his writings on political, historical and educational issues contained in various journals and magazines which remain conspicuously unpublished, but which further indicate his range of interests and active involvement in public affairs. These writings will be dealt with in some detail as they pertain to the issue of the development of Anderson's social and political philosophy and the possible development of his general philosophical theories.

Thirdly, in presenting an account of Anderson's philosophical development, it is important to reflect on a general feature of Anderson's philosophical style which was concisely expressed by his son, Sandy:

I have always contended that the *condensation* achieved by John Anderson in his articles is astounding. For anyone else, most of his paragraphs would have served as the basis for an article, and each article, a book. This compression certainly facilitates the reduction of his position to a system of cogmata; but at the same time, it opens the way for the elaboration and clarification that is much needed for the presentation of his position in its full force.¹

This technique of condensation presents certain difficulties in presenting the clarity and force of Anderson's philosophy. While this technique does facilitate the presentation of his philosophy as a set of doctrines, in presenting a thematic account of his philosophy the force of a particular interpretation of his philosophy can often rest on the emphasis on a particular paragraph or even on a particular word. To avoid the reproduction of Anderson as simply the upholder of a certain set of doctrines, it has been necessary in the present work to let Anderson 'speak for himself' and such an approach requires at certain points, the use of detailed and sometimes lengthy quotations. However Anderson himself supports such a method, for in his review of Caponigri's Time and Idea, he criticised Caponigri for *not* providing detailed quotation or rendering, with it being unclear whether one is presented with Caponigri's gloss of Vico or with Vico's own formulation.² While such an approach does have certain disadvantages, it does allow for the presentation of Anderson's philosophical development to occur in his own terms and in its natural and historical order.

¹ Anderson, A.J. op cit p 134 (my emphasis)

² Anderson 'Time and Idea' op cit p 163

Finally in terms of the published literature on Anderson himself there has been very little work on Anderson done. The only substantial work which we have to date is A.J. Baker's Australian Realism and when complemented with his Anderson's Social Philosophy are valuable works for understanding the *doctrinal* features of Anderson's philosophy.¹ Although this *doctrinal* treatment of Anderson's philosophy is common enough amongst Anderson's students, Baker's works suggest, but do not fully explore, the *thematic* nature of his philosophical development. Hence in Anderson's Social Philosophy Baker recognises that Anderson's views on certain social and political issues *changed* during his lifetime, but he does not provide an account of what principle, if any, lay behind these theoretical changes and hence fails to give an account of whether these changes indicate philosophical development or philosophical decay.² Similarly in his Australian Realism, after devoting a substantial amount of the book to an articulation of the *doctrines* of Anderson's philosophy, Baker's last sentence suggests the need for a *thematic* interpretation of Anderson's philosophy. "But good literature, in its Realist concern with the exposure of illusions, has a natural affinity with what Anderson calls the *theme* of philosophy, 'that of objectivism versus subjectivism, of the issue versus the purpose, of truth versus satisfaction'."³ However this statement remains a mere suggestion in Baker's work and the need for a fully developed thematic interpretation of Anderson's philosophy remains. Baker's books are useful then as an exposition of Anderson's philosophy, although as Eugene Kamenka rather harshly commented on Australian Realism,

Baker's exposition is careful authoritative, structured; it is also a little compressed, formal or rather neutral in tone. It fails to convey directly any of the excitement implicit in or engendered by Anderson's thought. It is the work of a serious rather than an imaginative man, concentrating on the genuinely philosophical and especially on logic and, in a broader sense, 'the logic' of Anderson's position and criticism."⁴

1 Apart from Baker's books, mention must be made of G. E. Davie's book The Crisis of the Democratic Intellect Edinburgh, 1986, which although discussing Anderson's philosophic views in relation to the crisis of the 'democratic intellectualism' of the Scottish Universities, treats his general philosophical views only in passing. The only other sources of writing *on* Anderson are various collections of essays by ex-students and colleagues, which include a 1958 edition of the Australian Highway to which Anderson himself was a contributor, the July 1977 edition of Quadrant to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Anderson's arrival in Australia, a 1987 edition of Dialectic, the student philosophy journal of the University of Newcastle and more recently the 1993 issue of the Australian Journal of Anthropology which examined Anderson's notion of social inquiry.

2 On the issue of 'decay' or 'development' of Anderson's social and political theories, see Birchall, B.C. 'John Anderson's Social/Political Theories: Degeneration or Development?' Australian Journal of Politics and History Vol. XXIV Apr. 1978 pp 15 - 40.

3 Baker Australian Realism pp 14--5

4 Kamenka, E. 'The Andersonians' Quadrant July 1987 p 61

It is a work, Kamenka suggests, that is ideal as an *exposition* of Anderson's philosophy, although it is a work which is not thorough in being a *critical* assessment of that philosophy, for as he concluded, "For someone as conversant with Anderson's thought as Baker is, he is, like so many of Anderson's closer disciples, remarkably reluctant to pit himself or subsequent developments and other philosophies against the Master's thought and to assess what is living and what is dead, what is right and what is wrong in the philosophy of John Anderson."¹ The present work, while not having the advantage of being the result of one intimate with the personality of John Anderson, does, for this same reason, attempt to assess what is living and what is dead in the philosophy of John Anderson.

¹ ibid p 61-2

2. IDEALISM

a. The History of Philosophy

The history of philosophy is sometimes referred to as no more than a series of footnotes to Plato and in this sense Platonic philosophy is often held to constitute the nature of philosophy itself, or at least that interpretation of philosophy known as Idealism.¹ The substantive content of Plato's philosophy is well enough known as a theory of 'forms' or *eidos*, which are held to exhibit the 'universal essence' of particular things and yet also 'exist' in some supra-sensible realm apart from ordinary objects. Similarly the Platonic method in the dialogues is equally well known as either the sceptical procedure of *elenchus* or as the more positive dialectical procedure of discussing the nature of the forms. Indeed for the pre-eminent historian of philosophy, G.W.F. Hegel, Plato's philosophy was said to constitute the essence of the history of philosophy. Hegel argued that Plato's philosophy constituted one of those rare moments of philosophical progress in the history of philosophy where the abstract universal is united with the concrete particular.² Hence for Hegel, Plato's philosophy is not an abstract theory of 'forms', but is where the intellectual world is the real world, where the True is not something which exists for the senses, but is, in itself, universal. As Hegel argued, "The essence of the doctrine of Ideas is thus the view that the True is not that which exists for senses, but that only what has its determination in itself, the implicitly and explicitly Universal, truly exists in the world; the intellectual world is therefore the True, that which is worthy to be known – indeed, the Eternal, the implicitly and explicitly divine."³ However Plato's philosophy is not simply a theory of 'universal ideas' as the *content* of philosophy, but is the explicit result of his *method* of philosophy. In a passage which makes clear not only Plato's conception of the content and method of philosophy, but also Hegel's own views on these issues, Hegel argued,

Now because the universal which has emerged from the confusion of the particular, i.e., the true, beautiful and good, that which taken by itself is species, was at first undetermined and abstract, it is ...a principal part of Plato's endeavours further to determine this universal in itself. This determination is the relation which the dialectic movement in thought bears to the universal, for through this movement the Idea comes to these thoughts which contain the

¹ The claim for the importance of Plato's philosophy in the history of philosophy belongs to Whitehead, while the related issue that there is a continuous Platonic tradition in Anglo-Saxon philosophy is one fully addressed by Muirhead, J. The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy London, 1931.

² Hegel, G.W.F. Lectures on the History of Philosophy 3 Vols., Vol. 2, London, 1892, pp 13-14, 46, 53, 68

³ ibid p 30

opposites of the finite within themselves. For the Idea, as the self-determining, is the unity of these differences and thus the determinate Idea. The universal is hence determined as that which resolves and has resolved the contradictions in itself, and hence is the concrete in itself; thus this sublation of the contradiction is the affirmative.¹

These universal forms of truth, goodness and beauty therefore emerge dialectically from the consideration of their particulars and are unified in the conception of the 'Idea', a conception which resolves the contradictions of the particular into the notion of the universal. For Hegel then, the Platonic philosophy is based upon the distinction between the content and method of philosophy and the history of philosophy is for Hegel, precisely the realisation and development of the Platonic insight that the universal is not abstract but concrete, a philosophy which can best be defined as 'Idealism'. However as Hegel rather pointedly states, if the Platonic philosophy is to be understood as an 'Idealism', then it should not be confused with the subjective Idealism of the modern period of philosophy where the individual produces all 'ideas' from within himself.² In *this* sense of 'Idealism', he argued, there have been no 'Idealists' amongst the philosophers and is a position far removed from Plato's philosophy.³ 'Idealism' is a term with many distinct senses and meanings, which need to be clarified if we are to arrive at a conception of the issue which distinguishes Idealism from Realism in the history of philosophy.⁴

b. Modern Idealism.

The modern conception of philosophy as primarily an epistemological question of knowing has its origins in the Cartesian reaction to Scholasticism and the definition of the 'idea' as whatever is the object of mind or thought.⁵ Modern Idealism adopted this definition of the 'idea', although the subjectivist interpretation of the 'idea' by the British Empiricists', created certain difficulties for a thorough-going account of the 'idea' as an object of thought or understanding.⁶ The Empiricists' adopted the 'rationalist' conception of the 'idea' as an object of knowledge, but rejected their doctrine of 'innate ideas', arguing that all 'ideas' are derived from experience. Hence

1 ibid p 52

2 ibid pp 1, 19, 44

3 ibid p 43

4 For a fuller discussion of the various meanings of Idealism see Hoernle, R.F.A. Idealism as a Philosophical Doctrine London, 1924, Ch. 1

5 ibid p 34. For Anderson's criticism of the 'epistemological' conception of modern philosophy see Studies in Empirical Philosophy p 195 ff.

6 For this conception of the dialectical development of Idealism I am indebted to Dr. B.C. Birchall's The Dialectical Structure of Idealism (unpublished Honours lecture notes, University of New England, 1982)

Locke in his Essay on Human Understanding, held that the 'idea' is the 'object of understanding', but which was also an entity that existed 'in the mind'.¹ On the basis of such a dualistic conception, Locke postulated a causal connection between these 'objects of understanding' and these 'ideas' in the minds of men, arguing that all 'ideas' are derived from either sensation or reflection.² In terms of 'ideas' derived from sensation, he argued that it is the qualities of the object which cause us to have 'ideas' in our mind, with the 'ideas' of primary qualities 'resembling' their objects, while the secondary qualities do not resemble their objects but are immediately perceivable.³ However the problem for Locke now became that of how we know the resemblance between these qualities and the objects which they are said to resemble and he argued that the notion of 'corporeal substance' is required to maintain the objectivity and existence of the objects of our experience.⁴ Berkeley in his Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge sought to address this problem of resemblance by arguing that both primary and secondary qualities are 'ideas' which are only known in the perceiving of them and therefore that Locke's notion of 'corporeal substance' is contradictory.⁵ However Berkeley retained Locke's subjectivist interpretation of 'ideas' existing in the mind in his famous definition of Idealism as the proposition 'esse est percipi' where no object could exist independently of the perception of it. The difficulty of providing an account of the continuity of objects was resolved by Berkeley by the postulation of an incorporeal 'spiritual substance' which is the cause of all 'ideas' and therefore of the material world.⁶ In his Treatise on Human Nature, Hume accepted the subjectivist interpretation of the 'idea' as an entity existing within the mind, defending it in terms of the empiricist principle that all knowledge is derived from experience.⁷ Hume argued that any appeal to 'substance', whether corporeal or spiritual, must be an 'idea' for it to be known and in being known must exist in the mind.⁸ However in this case, there can be no possible perception of any necessary element in causation and hence no connection between the various 'fleeting ideas' which exist in the mind.⁹ There cannot be, in other words, any knowledge at all and Hume's empiricism, based on the subjectivist interpretation of the 'idea', lapsed into an unashamed scepticism.¹⁰

1 Locke, J. Essay on Human Understanding reprinted in Ayer, A.J. & Winch, R. British Empirical Philosophers London, 1952, p 34

2 ibid p 43 ff

3 ibid p 53 ff

4 ibid p 91 ff

5 Berkeley, G. Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge reprinted in British Empirical Philosophers p 181 ff

6 ibid p 180 ff

7 Hume, D. Treatise of Human Nature reprinted in British Empirical Philosophers p 299 ff

8 ibid p 310

9 ibid p 361 ff

10 ibid p 442 ff

It was against this sceptical conclusion that Kant reacted and instigated a 'higher' or 'Transcendental' phase of Idealism. That all knowledge begins with experience Kant agreed, but argued that this does not imply that all knowledge arises out of experience.¹ Hence the continued existence of objects is not known through immediate sense experience, but is known *a priori* through transcendental reflection upon the object, as an object of possible experience.² For Kant, the *a priori* nature of objects was a categorical account of the nature of things and his account of the categories revealed, according to Hegel, a 'great instinct for the Notion', where the first category is positive, the second negative and the third, the synthesis of the two.³ However Hegel argued that although Kant conceived of the 'Notion' or 'Idea' as the product of reason, the 'Idea' remained merely an 'abstract' universal.⁴ However in a regression to the subjectivism of the Empiricist's, Kant sought to provide an account of the *origin* of the categories, arguing that no object can exist without our representations of it and that the laws of these representations have their origin in the synthetic activity of the transcendental ego.⁵ In his Science of Knowledge, Fichte extended Kant's subjectivist interpretation of the idea even further when he argued that the unity of Kant's distinction between pure and practical reason was to be found in the moral activity of the transcendental ego. Fichte argued that we are necessitated to think that we are affected by an object, because the Ego as moral activity required the concept of the non-Ego or nature for its practical and moral purposes.⁶ Hegel argued that Fichte took the Kantian notion of the ego and elevated it to an absolute principle, so that from it, "...the direct and immediate certainty of the self, all the matter of the universe must be represented as produced".⁷ Schelling, in his System of Transcendental Idealism, accepted Fichte's view that nature is not a thing that stands outside of thought, but must function as an object of thought and rejected Fichte's view that nature is a mere 'resistance principle' posited by the Ego.⁸ Schelling argued that any principle of the relationship between Ego and Nature must be 'indifferent' to both and hence be 'Absolute' which he expressed as the formal principle $A = A$ which could only be known through 'intellectual intuition'.⁹ As Hegel wryly observed, such a principle is 'a night in which all cows are black', a principle which thereby lacked a definite

1 Kant, I. Critique of Pure Reason London, 1956, p 41

2 ibid p 610

3 Hegel op cit Vol. 3 p 439

4 ibid p 444

5 Kant op cit p 152 ff.

6 Fichte, G. Science of Knowledge Cambridge, 1982, pp 59 - 60

7 Hegel op cit p 481

8 Falckenberg, R. History of Modern Philosophy New York, 1893, p 477

9 Hegel op cit Vol. 3, pp 525 - 6

method.¹ The development of Idealism during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can therefore be regarded as an attempt to articulate an account of the *content* of the 'idea' which retains an emphasis on the objectivity of knowledge, but which also attempts to reconcile this account of the content of philosophy, with a methodological consideration of how we come to know this account of philosophical content. This stress on the methodological aspect of knowledge culminated in German Idealism, where in the philosophy of Hegel the method of philosophy was provided in terms of the dialectic which was held to be identical with the content of philosophy as the 'Absolute Idea'.

c. The Philosophy of Hegel

In the introduction to the Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel criticised Schelling's conception of the 'Absolute' as a 'drab, monochromatic formalism', an identity which did not allow for differentiation and which lacked a method of proof.² Hegel argued that Schelling was correct in his recognition of the status of the Absolute was neither subjective nor objective, but criticised his intuitive method as being 'unscientific'.³ On the other hand, Hegel argued that Kant's conception of the dialectic had become in the hands of Fichte and Schelling, a 'lifeless schemata' which lacked inner necessity.⁴ Hegel sought to reconcile these competing ideas in the notion of the Absolute Idea. Hegel argued that the 'scientific' procedure for the Absolute Idea was the dialectical method itself which, in overcoming the opposition between the subject and object, produced the conception of the 'Idea' as Absolute and therefore provided the inner necessity of the dialectic which was absent in Kant's philosophy.⁵ Hegel's Idealism can therefore be understood as the identity of the content of thought understood as the Absolute Idea, with the method of thought understood as the dialectic. In the philosophy of Hegel, the modern period of philosophy attained its speculative high point, not simply as a theory of knowledge, but as a systematic and historical conception of all the activities of human endeavour including ethics, religion, art, politics and history.⁶ Although it is impossible to do

1 Hegel, G.W.F. The Phenomenology of Spirit Oxford, 1970, p 9

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 10 ff

4 ibid p 29 ff

5 ibid p 40

6 There is a vast literature on Hegel and his philosophy but for a general and sympathetic introduction see: Marius, J. History of Philosophy pp 317 - 329; Caponigri, R. A History of Western Philosophy Vol 4. Notre Dame, 1971, pp 518 - 573; Hoffding, H. A History of Modern Philosophy London, 1915, pp 174 - 192; Falckenburg op cit pp 487 - 504; Lowith, K. From Hegel to Nietzsche London, 1965, pp 31 - 52; Kaufman, W. Hegel: A Reinterpretation New York, 1966; Mure, G.R.C. An Introduction to Hegel Oxford, 1940; Wallace, W. Prolegomena to the Study of Hegel's Philosophy Oxford, 1894; Findlay, J.N. Hegel. A Re-examination London, 1958; Caird, E. Hegel Edinburgh, 1891; Croce, B. What is Living and What is Dead of the Philosophy of Hegel New York, 1915.

justice to the complexity of Hegel's philosophy in a brief summary, it is necessary to have some understanding of the general features of the Hegelian philosophy to appreciate the subsequent influence of Hegel's philosophy in Britain during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The standard work used for the general exposition of the Hegelian philosophy is the Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences which is divided into the three general areas of Logic, the Philosophy of Nature and the Philosophy of Spirit.¹

In his Science of Logic, Hegel presented the logical development of the epistemological issues in the Phenomenology into the logical or 'scientific' issues of the system presented in its whole.² This system as a whole is the *logos* which is neither sensuously intuited nor represented in thinking, but is thinking in its own content and form.³ Hegel argued that Logic must not borrow its method from some other special science, but must find its own method which cannot be different to its content, for the content of logic is nothing else than the movement of the dialectic itself.⁴ This method of dialectic proceeds by affirmation and negation, the result of which produces a 'higher, richer content' than that which preceded it and it is this recognition of the 'unity of opposites' as speculative knowledge which is the most important, and most difficult, aspect of Hegel's theory of dialectic.⁵ The moments of the dialectic are the moments of alternation between the concept of reality or being and the concept of essence as existing for itself and these two concepts comprise the two basic doctrines of the Science of Logic.⁶ Firstly, the Doctrine of Being is the affirmation of the immediacy of things in thought which yields the three primary categories of Quality, Quantity and Measure.⁷ Secondly, the Doctrine of Essence is the negation of the doctrine of Being and thus affirms the mediation of thinking onto things.⁸ Essence is therefore indeterminate and shows itself in categorial form as Essence as reflection into self, Appearance and Actuality.⁹ The negation of the doctrine of Essence - the negation of the negation - produces (*aufheben*) the doctrine of the Notion which is the truth and foundation of Being and Essence.¹⁰ The dialectical movement within the doctrine of the Notion begins with Subjectivity as an

1 For the translation of the various aspects of the Encyclopedia see Wallace, W. The Logic of Hegel London 1892, Hegel's Philosophy of Mind Oxford 1894 and Miller, A.V. Hegel's Philosophy of Nature Oxford 1970. For an exposition of Hegel's philosophy in terms of the Encyclopedia see Stace, W. The Philosophy of Hegel London, 1955, pp 123 - 518.

2 Hegel, G.W.F. The Science of Logic Vol. 1, London, 1929, p 36 ff

3 ibid Vol. 1 p 47 ff

4 ibid Vol. 1 p 64 ff

5 loc cit

6 ibid Vol. 1 p 71 ff

7 ibid Vol. 1 pp 93 - 404

8 ibid Vol. 2 pp 15 - 205

9 ibid Vol. 2 p 16 ff

10 ibid Vol. 2 p 230 ff

exposition of the logical doctrines of the Notion, the Judgement and the Syllogism.¹ This doctrine is opposed by that of Objectivity as the exposition of the physical doctrines of Mechanism, Chemism and Teleology.² The tension between subjectivity and objectivity is resolved in the notion of the Idea itself, which cognises the objective world in its subjectivity and its subjectivity into the objective world. As such, the notion of the Idea moves from the conception of Life to the Idea of Cognition and culminates in the Absolute Idea itself.³ In the Encyclopedia, Logic is followed by the Philosophy of Nature, which is commonly regarded as one of the most irrelevant, but yet most essential, aspects of the Hegelian system. Although the Philosophy of Nature is regarded as irrelevant because most of Hegel's observations on eighteenth century scientific theory are largely outdated today, it is also regarded as one of the most essential aspects of his philosophy, for the movement of the Idea as outlined in his Logic must, according to Hegel, externalise itself in the material world.⁴ The transition from Mechanics to Physics and then to Organics is clearly intended to convey the movement from 'empty' Space and Time through to motion and thence through the various moments of creation of physical matter, chemical processes, vegetative life and concluding in the animal organism. Such a progression must, if the dialectic is to be extended into nature, be a dialectical progression which demonstrates the necessity of its operation in the world. Finally, in the Encyclopedia, the philosophy of Spirit follows that of Nature and articulates the journey of spiritual consciousness through its subjective and objective moments culminating in Absolute Spirit. The Subjective Spirit traces the moments of individual consciousness through anthropology, phenomenology and psychology while the Objective Spirit is the consideration of the broader issues of right, morality and social ethic. Finally the Absolute Spirit traces the movement of spirit through its higher cultural moments of art, religion and philosophy.

However Hegel's conception of philosophy was not only a systematic conception of philosophy, but was also a historical conception involving both a philosophy of history and a history of philosophy. In his philosophy of history, Hegel distinguished between original, reflective and philosophical histories and while the triadic structure of the dialectic is apparently retained, within reflective history it is not so closely followed with the distinction between universal, pragmatic, critical and specialised history.⁵ All these conceptions distinguish between the author and his culture and it is only in philosophical history that spirit returns to itself and presents itself in its entirety. However it is in the history of philosophy where the

1 ibid Vol. 2 pp 233 - 341

2 ibid Vol. 2 pp 343 - 393

3 ibid Vol. 2 pp 395 - 486

4 Stace op.cit pp 297 ff

5 Hegel, G.W.F. The Philosophy of History. New York, 1965, pp 1 - 11

historical presentation of the dialectic most clearly presented. Although the history of philosophy began with Oriental 'philosophy', Hegel argued that it was only in Greece where philosophy truly originated.¹ Hegel undoubtedly regarded Greek philosophy as the most significant period in the history of philosophy devoting almost half of his history to an examination of Greek philosophy.² In contrast, he regarded the period of medieval philosophy as the least significant period, treating it as merely a transitional period from the classical to the modern age.³ However it was in modern German philosophy that Hegel believed that philosophy had returned to itself and reached its culmination or 'end' in Hegel's own philosophy, where the content of the Absolute Idea was identified with the method of the dialectic.⁴

This identification of the content and method of Hegel's philosophy is at the basis of his unified conception of philosophy and the *denial* of this identity best explains the subsequent development of the Hegelian philosophy. As Caponigri argues, the two key components of the Hegelian system are the substantive propositions in which the content or doctrine of his philosophy was expressed as the Absolute Idea and the method of the dialectic by which the substantive propositions are achieved, formulated and maintained and the integrity of these key components of the Hegelian philosophy - its content and method - could not be held together by anything less than the personality of Hegel himself.⁵ Hence following Hegel's death, German Hegelianism entered a period of dissension and division which was marked by the fragmentation of the Hegelian school into the 'right' and 'left' wings and with this fragmentation, there occurred a gradual disintegration and deformation of the Hegelian philosophy with the separation of the method of the dialectic from the content of the Absolute.⁶ However the major factor in the fragmentation of the Hegelian philosophy came not from outside the school but from within it, with the 1835 publication of Strauss's Life of Jesus which questioned the orthodox view of the older or 'right' Hegelians' such as Erdmann, Goschel, Gabler, Hinrichs and Schaller who advocated the compatibility of Hegelian philosophy with Christianity. Strauss argued that the portrait of Christ presented in the gospels was not historically accurate, but was a mythological 'Christ of faith'. This mythological portrait attempted to invest the speculative idea of incarnation not merely into Christ but into humanity as a whole and this humanistic interpretation of Hegel became popular with the so-called younger or 'left' Hegelians such as Feuerbach, Marx, Bauer and Ruge who maintained that Hegelianism and Christianity were fundamentally

1 Hegel, G.W.F. Lectures on the History of Philosophy Vol. 1, London, 1892, pp 119 - 148

2 ibid Vol. 1 - 2

3 ibid Vol. 3 Part 2

4 ibid Vol. 3 Part 3 Section 3

5 Caponigri op cit p 126

6 ibid pp 125 - 135. For the social and political background of Neo-Hegelianism see Toews, J.E. Hegelianism Cambridge, 1980, pp 203 -243.

opposed, for only philosophy could transform religious dogma into speculative truth.¹ With this process of the disintegration of the Hegelian system having begun, it followed the tension between content and method, with the 'right' Hegelian's holding that the doctrine of the Hegelian system was the more important, possessed of truth independent of the method while the 'left' Hegelian's held that the method of dialectic did not necessarily imply the truth of the propositions of the Hegelian doctrine.² The 'right' Hegelian's held that Hegel's doctrine of the Absolute Idea was the most important aspect of the system, possessed of truth independent of the method and elevated this conception of the Absolute into a spiritual totality and the dialectic into a spiritual process, defending the compatibility of Hegelianism with Christianity and a conservative theory of the state.³ In contrast, the 'left' Hegelians held that the dialectic was a powerful method which did not necessarily imply the propositions of the Hegelian doctrine and denied the logical or spiritual importance of the Absolute, thereby reducing the dialectic to a natural, historical process. They therefore criticised the 'right' Hegelian conservative defence of the state and the supposed consistency of Christianity with the Hegelian philosophy. This secular interpretation of the dialectic was an important stage in the development of the 'left' Hegelians critique of the conservatism of the 'right' Hegelians who retreated into an academic 'Hegelian scholasticism'⁴ However typically overlooked in most accounts of neo-Hegelianism is the existence of a so-called 'centre', comprised of figures such as Rosenkranz and Michelet who above all else sought to maintain the integrity of the Hegelian philosophy.⁵

The origin and development of the philosophy of Hegel lies not merely in the 'Idealism' of the British Empiricists' or the German Idealism of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, but is steeped in the history of philosophy and culture. It was Hegel's achievement that he presented a systematic and historical philosophy which was based on the distinction between content and method - of the Absolute Idea and the dialectic - and which encompassed every field of human endeavour. Hegel's philosophy can therefore be interpreted in at least four distinct ways. Firstly it may be interpreted naturalistically where the 'Absolute' is conceived as a material entity and in which things have a dialectical character. Secondly it may be interpreted spiritually where the 'Absolute' is a spiritual monism within which all material things are included and, in having a dialectical character, are realised in God. Thirdly it may be regarded logically, where the Absolute is the content of philosophy as the unity of the subject and object of knowledge and the dialectic is the method of logic as the unity of the subject and predicate of the proposition. However on any

1 Falckenberg *op cit* p 588 ff

2 Caponigri *op cit* p 125-6

3 Toews *op cit* p 203 - 5.

4 Caponigri *op cit* p 128

5 *ibid* p 127-8. See also Toews *op cit* p 206.

comprehensive treatment of Hegel's philosophy, these three aspects of his philosophy must be regarded as different aspects of a general theory of philosophy which emphasises the unified and 'ideal' nature of the traditional philosophical forms of truth, goodness and beauty. The boldest speculative interpretation of Hegel's philosophy is where the Absolute Idea understood as the totality of existence is identical with the movement of the dialectic through the world in all its forms. From the abstract realm of logic, the dialectic moves into nature, the development of which leads to the human concerns contained in the philosophy of spirit. In this sense the content of the Absolute Idea is identical with the method of the dialectic understood in its broadest possible sense.

d. The fall of the Absolute

Between 1800 and 1835, German Idealism in general and Hegelian philosophy in particular, infiltrated slowly into British intellectual life, with the transmission of Hegel's philosophy occurring through the influence of the 'right' Hegelians and their defence of the truth of the content of the Hegelian philosophy. However this emphasis on the 'Absolute' as a rational, spiritual monism was counter-acted to some degree by a diluted 'left Hegelianism', in the form of the social and political theories of Marx and Engels which were also beginning to have an impact in British intellectual life.¹ This period of transmission of German Idealism had been initiated by Coleridge who had studied Kant and Fichte in Germany in the last years of the eighteenth century and later studied Schelling and Hegel as well.² However Coleridge's interests were more literary than philosophic and he was more interested in the major figures of German Romanticism than with German Idealism, with his research having little impact on a philosophy dominated by J. S. Mill and William Hamilton.³ However during the thirty years from 1835 to 1865, German

¹ Surprisingly, there have been few critical histories of British Hegelianism. Of those which exist, the work of Metz, R. A Hundred Years of British Philosophy London, 1938, is valuable for its historical data, while G. Ruggiero's work, Modern Philosophy London, 1921, is more critically appreciative. Within the British Idealist tradition itself, the best account is R. Mackintosh's Hegel and Hegelianism Edinburgh, 1903, while J. Muirhead's The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy London, 1931, is an account of the Platonic emphasis in British neo-Hegelianism. H. Haldar's Neo-Hegelianism, London, 1927, while sufficiently detailed appears to suffer from the lack of a sufficiently objective and critical standpoint. The history of British Marxism has been documented in several places. For a philosophical assessment of Engel's 'Dialectical Materialism' see Caponigri op cit Vol V, p 79 ff and on Marx's 'Historical Materialism' see Caponigri op cit Vol. V pp 74-78. For a good assessment of both Marx and Engels from within the British Idealist tradition see Bonar, J. Philosophy and Political Economy New York, 1893, pp 327 - 354.

² Metz op cit p 240. There are several studies on Coleridge as a philosopher and of his relation to German Idealism and Romanticism including Muirhead, J. Coleridge as a Philosopher New York, 1930; Orsini, G.N.G. Coleridge and German Idealism Carbondale, 1969 and Kipperman, M. Beyond Enchantment - German Idealism and English Romantic Poetry Philadelphia, 1986.

³ Metz op cit pp 239 - 40; Ruggiero op cit p 254

idealism began to permeate more permanently into British intellectual life under the influence of thinkers such as Thomas Carlyle, John Grote and James Ferrier, although one of the most important mediums of Hegelianism during this period was the classical education given at Oxford by Benjamin Jowett.¹ Jowett had studied in Germany between 1844 - 5 where he met Schelling and Erdmann and although influenced by the Hegelian philosophy, never regarded himself as a Hegelian.² Jowett's most lasting intellectual contribution was the transmission of an interpretation of Hegel through his translations of Plato's dialogues, which became one of the key texts in the provision of a classical education at British universities during the nineteenth century.³ As holder of the Chair of Greek from 1855 to 1893 and as tutor and then Master of Balliol College from 1842 to 1893, Jowett exercised an enormous influence as an educator on a generation of students, most notably T.H. Green and Edward Caird, introducing them to the broad outline and spirit of the Hegelian philosophy.⁴ Jowett's Hegelianism was strongly influenced by his contact with the 'right' Hegelians and as Metz notes, his interest in Hegel seemed primarily theological.⁵ However the Hegelian philosophy was to receive its most significant and enduring transmission into British intellectual life from a non-academic, the Scotch doctor Hutchison Stirling.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, philosophy and religion had an easy co-existence in British intellectual life, but with the emergence of the sciences and particularly the Darwinian theory of evolution, orthodox Christianity and its philosophical manifestations were increasingly threatened.⁶ Stirling, like Jowett, was particularly motivated by theological considerations and he believed that he had found in Hegel's method of dialectic, the 'secret' relationship between evolutionary theory and Christianity. Accepting the view of the 'right' Hegelians that Christianity is the only true revealed religion and stressing the religious motivation of both Kant and Hegel, Stirling in his The Secret of Hegel, proclaimed triumphantly that the Hegelian philosophy supported and gave effect to every claim of Christianity.⁷ Stirling argued that Kant's universality of thought could never be reconciled with the particularity of sensation and the resolution of this difficulty lay in the Hegelian

1 1836 may be the more appropriate division here with the death of Coleridge and Hamilton successful in gaining the Professorship in Logic and Metaphysics at Edinburgh University, both occurring in that year. For more on this early period of British Hegelianism see Passmore, J. A Hundred Years of Philosophy Harmondsworth, 1966, Ch 3 and Metz op cit p 33 ff and pp 242 - 46. For more information on Carlyle, Grote and Ferrier see Metz op cit pp 242 - 3; pp 245-6; pp 246-8 respectively.

2 Metz op cit p 251

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 252-3

5 ibid p 250

6 ibid p 249

7 ibid p 267

conception of the 'concrete universal'.¹ In such a conception, Stirling argued, could be found both the dialectical movement of the elements and their relatedness to the whole of knowledge. However as Ruggerio comments, "Hegel's greatness consists for Stirling in having discovered that Christianity is the only true revealed religion, in having rescued it no less from the contingency and externality of history than from the contradictions and discrepancies of the understanding and from the vulgarity of material sensation, and in having restored it to a spiritual reality."² Such an interpretation Ruggerio goes on to claim, was the germ of the whole theological school of Idealism which was to follow Stirling.³ In both Jowett and Stirling then, there is a common theological interest in Hegel which influenced the shape of British Hegelian Idealism for the next fifty years, although Jowett was also influential in promoting a Platonic interpretation of Hegel.

From the 1865 publication of The Secret of Hegel to the 1883 publication of Essays in Philosophic Criticism, British Hegelianism developed rapidly, although the common theological basis laid down by Jowett and Stirling came to reflect quite different aspects of the Hegelian philosophy.⁴ Two of Jowett's most famous students, T.H. Green and Edward Caird felt it their duty to bring German Idealism into direct contrast with the empiricism and utilitarianism which was dominant in British universities at this time, but in doing so laid the foundations for two quite distinct philosophical schools of Idealism to emerge.⁵ As Ruggerio argues, British Hegelianism began to divide into two distinctive schools, analogous to the division of the Hegelian school after Hegel's death.⁶ Hence within the overall orientation of the 'right' Hegelian emphasis on the *content* of Hegel's philosophy, the 'right' British Hegelians were inspired by the doctrine of the Absolute Idea and re-interpreted Hegelianism as a form of Platonism. On this interpretation of Hegel's philosophy, the dialectical method becomes a transitional process of thought in pursuit of the motionless and eternal idea and this characterisation is typical of the Oxford school of Idealism headed by T.H. Green.⁷ On the other hand, Ruggerio's 'left' British Hegelians were more inspired by Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit and took the dialectic to be more lively, understanding the Absolute not as an 'end' outside of or beyond the process of spirit, but inhering in the

1 ibid p 263-6

2 Ruggerio op cit p 264

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 282 ff. 1865 was also important for the publication of Grote's Exploratio Philosophica and Mill's An Examination of the Philosophy of Sir William Hamilton making it a year which heralded a general change of orientation in British philosophy. Often overlooked in histories of British philosophy is the fact that Stirling also published Sir William Hamilton, being the philosophy of perception in this year as well as his Secret of Hegel.

5 MacKenzie, J.S. 'Edward Caird as a Philosophical Teacher' Mind Vol. XVIII, 1909, p 516

6 Ruggerio op cit p 282

7 ibid p 267 ff

process of spirit itself, a view which was typical of the Glasgow school of Hegelianism.¹ This tension between the 'right' and 'left' British Hegelian Idealism found its expression in their concern with different aspects of Hegel's philosophy. Hence the 'right' Hegelian's with their interest in a Platonic treatment of Hegel's philosophy were more interested in the logical and epistemological issues of his philosophy, while the 'left' Hegelian's with their interest in a Christian interpretation of Hegel's philosophy, were more interested in the 'spiritual' aspects of his philosophy. After 1883 the Idealist movement flourished for the next twenty five years with the school of English Idealism centred on Oxford and that of Scottish Hegelianism centred on Glasgow and the general Hegelian movement spreading to Cambridge and Edinburgh, as well as to the furthest outposts of the British Empire such as Canada, India, South Africa and Australia.² However it must not be supposed, as it commonly appears to be supposed, that Hegel's philosophy held sway and dominated only at Oxford at the hands of Bradley and at Cambridge, with Bosanquet and later McTaggart.³ In Scotland, Hegelianism under the leadership of Edward Caird at Glasgow, extended its influence throughout the Scottish universities and remained the last surviving outpost of Hegelian studies in British philosophy into the twentieth century.⁴ However the differing tendencies which had been implicit in the work of Caird and Green in the early years of the Idealist movement, became more accentuated by the turn of the century.

At Oxford, T.H. Green, enjoined his fellow countrymen to 'close their Mill and Spencer and open their Kant and Hegel', an injunction which was to set the philosophical agenda in Britain for the next half century.⁵ However Green's injunction was not only intellectual, but also moral and political and as Anthony Quinton notes, philosophy under Green was also a practical training for public life.⁶ Green's influence on the philosophers of his days was so significant, that by the time of his premature death in 1883, Metz claims English Idealism had reached its high point.⁷ Be that as it may, what the publication of Essays in Philosophic Criticism, to commemorate Green's death, does demonstrate, is the pervasive influence of the

1 loc cit

2 To cite just a few examples of this spread of Idealism, we can mention J.S. MacKenzie, John Watson to Canada, R.F.A. Hoernle to South Africa, and in Australia, William Mitchell, Francis Anderson and Henry Laurie.

3 Many of the histories of British Absolute Idealism tend to ignore the Scottish contribution to the Idealist movement, whereas for the purposes of this study an understanding of them is essential to an understanding of the philosophy of John Anderson.

4 See for example, Sprigge, T.L.S. The Vindication of Absolute Idealism Edinburgh, 1983.

5 For a general outline of Green's philosophy see Ruggerio op cit pp 269-72, Metz op cit pp 268-285

6 Quinton, A. 'Absolute Idealism' Proceedings of the British Academy Vol. IVII, 1971 p 312. For the political background and theories of the British Idealist's see Vincent, A. and Plant, R. Philosophy, Politics and Citizenship Oxford, 1984; Kelly, G.A. Idealism, Politics and History London 1969; Milne, A. .M. The Social Philosophy of English Idealism London 1962

7 Mackintosh op cit p 114

Scottish philosophers at this time, with every contributor except for one being a product of the Scottish philosophical tradition.¹ In his 'Introduction' to Hume, Green developed a Kantian critique of Hume's subjective Idealism, which sought to re-instate necessity and objectivity into the notion of the 'idea'. Green argued that Hume's conception of ideas as 'simple sensations' were not 'fictions' of the mind, but were, in exhibiting the basic features of existence, that which determined reality itself.² To think of 'sensations', he argued, implies that in the activity of thinking them, they cease being 'sensations' and become 'ideas' or thought relations such as causality, identity or substance.³ These 'ideas' are derived from and unified by 'consciousness' as the relating activity of the mind, which implied that these 'ideas' are internally related to the mind. This subjectivist interpretation of internal relations implied that things in the 'natural world' are only intelligible in terms of these relations of the mind and to remove these relations, was for Green, to remove the reality of the things themselves.⁴ Further Green argued that just as the conception of 'Time' presupposed the conception of the 'Timeless', then so too did this activity of 'consciousness' presuppose a principle of 'eternal consciousness' which was itself not material, but yet which provided for the objectivity of the material world.⁵ 'Reality', therefore, was the product of the activity of this divine and eternal consciousness understood as 'God', 'Spirit' or the 'Absolute'.⁶ This conception of an 'eternal consciousness' was something prior to and independent of the world process and Green's philosophy can therefore be regarded as typical of Ruggiero's conception of 'right' British Hegelianism, with its emphasis on an 'Absolute' above and beyond the process of the dialectic, such a theory being a variation of Plato's theory of forms, the substance of which Green had derived from Benjamin Jowett.

After the death of Green in 1883, the leadership of the Idealist movement at Oxford was taken up by F.H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet. Oxford Idealism became concerned with the 'Absolute' status of the 'idea' and regarding it monistically, denied any real power to speculative thought and proceeded in an excessively analytical style.⁷ There was no substantial difference between the views of Bradley and Bosanquet but whereas Bradley's philosophical interests were narrow, Bosanquet's were wide, covering areas such as aesthetics, political theory, history as well as logic.⁸ Both rejected Green's earlier subjectivist interpretation of the 'Absolute' and replaced it with an objectivist interpretation of the 'idea' which

1 loc cit

2 Ruggiero op cit p 271

3 Metz op cit p 274

4 ibid p 275

5 Ruggiero op cit p 269

6 ibid p 270

7 ibid p 266

8 For a list of Bosanquet's writing see Metz op cit p 345

stressed that relations were constituted by the object and not the subject. Bradley in particular articulated this doctrine of relations into an epistemological dualism between appearance and reality and almost all twentieth century Anglo-Saxon philosophy can be seen as a response to the Absolute Idealism, not of Hegel, but of Bradley. Bradley was the first British Idealist to attempt to develop an independent version of Absolute Idealism that was free of explicit references to Hegel, but which ultimately resembled Hegel's Absolute Idealism only slightly.¹ His first work, Ethical Studies published in 1876, was a rejection of hedonistic, utilitarian and Kantian ethical theories on the ground that they could not provide a complete ethical theory in themselves. Bradley proposed that the individual must realise himself as a social being, the ethic of sociality being grounded in an ideal morality where values such as truth and beauty are sought for their own sake. This ideal morality is the Absolute where the individual is realised and fulfilled as a universal. As Metz points out, in the completion of Bradley's ethics lay in the metaphysics of the 'Absolute' which he was later to develop more fully.²

In his The Principles of Logic, Bradley criticised the psychological basis of the empiricist logic of Mill, arguing that the doctrine of 'association' cannot be a linking together of mental items or 'ideas' which are atomic in nature, for this would assume that there is no continuity between these isolated and fleeting 'ideas'.³ Rejecting the empiricist conception of the 'idea' as a mental image and the formalistic conception of it as a symbol, Bradley argued that the 'idea' is a universal, logical meaning.⁴ This logical idea however cannot be part of the natural order of things for it is "...ideal content, essence, the universal meaning as distinguished from fact or event".⁵ Every mental event is particular, unique and existent whilst the meaning of an 'idea' is universal, ideal and non-existent.⁶ Hence to provide for continuity between 'ideas', Bradley argued that 'association' must be between universals and that this logical relation is the synthetic activity of reason understood as inference.⁷ The 'idea' as a universal meaning is therefore part of the content of logic and more specifically is part of the content of the judgement. The judgement is not concerned with the connection of an 'idea' to a sensation or to another 'idea' as this would again reduce logic to psychology, but is rather an ideal or logical relation between ideas, with the ideal content of the idea being its universal meaning, which remains

1 For a fuller outline of Bradley's philosophy Wollheim, R. F.H. Bradley Harmondsworth, 1959; Saxena, S.K. Studies in the Metaphysics of Bradley New York, 1967; Muirhead The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy Pt. 2 Ch. V - IX; see also Metz op cit pp 322-345; Passmore op cit pp 60 - 71 157 - 166

2 Metz op cit p 326

3 loc cit

4 Bradley, F.H. The Principles of Logic London, 1950, pp 2 - 7

5 Metz op cit p 334; Bradley op cit, p 11

6 Metz op cit p 332

7 ibid p 333

constant in the face of changing sensory data.¹ As he stated, "Judgement proper is the act which refers an ideal content to a reality beyond the act", adding that this ideal content is the logical idea, the idea as a universal meaning.² Every judgement therefore necessarily includes such a relation and every relation presupposes a unity that holds its elements together. Hence in response to Green's subjectivist interpretation of internal relations which held that relations constitute things as real, Bradley advocated an objectivist interpretation of internal relations where things constitute their relations.³ From this doctrine of the judgement, Bradley argued that all judgements are related together in an ideal theory of the 'Absolute'. This system of judgements, in being based on an objectivist interpretation of internal relations, implied that the judgement was both a relation or activity of synthetic thinking, i.e. judging, that unified subject and object *and* was a thing which was true or false, i.e. a judgement, which unified the subject and predicate of the proposition. Hence Bradley held that the truth or falsity of judgements are determined by the context of the 'Absolute' with every judgement having the form 'Reality is such that S is P'.⁴ On such an account of judgement Bradley rejected the traditional Aristotelian logic of propositions as based on the distinction between subject, predicate and copula and argued that these judgements were ultimately concerned with the 'ideals' of truth, beauty and goodness which were realised dialectically.⁵ This argument, defending the reality of the judgement in the face of the changing nature of sensory experience and the transitory nature of the dialectic towards the 'Absolute', was further developed in Appearance and Reality where Bradley argued that the dualism between 'appearance' and 'reality' can only be reconciled in terms of the 'Absolute' understood as a theory of judgement.

With the appearance of Appearance and Reality in 1892, British Absolute Idealism achieved its pinnacle of achievement as an independent speculative philosophy, although as Metz notes, the responses to it "...show every variation from unmeasured praise through stupid indifference to bitter ridicule and downright contempt"⁶ This complex work was intended to be both a sceptical and speculative investigation of first principles in philosophy, with its sceptical side being the search for reality as distinct from appearance, while its speculative side was the attempt to conceive of reality or the universe as a whole. Bradley's sceptical procedure, as exemplified in Book 1, was concerned to demonstrate the unintelligibility of a dialectical or relational form of thinking, which treats relations and qualities as distinct or separate. Hence he argued that the experience of error and illusion demonstrates

1 ibid p 331

2 Bradley op.cit p 10

3 Metz op.cit p 336; Saxena op.cit p 151; Wollheim op.cit pp 104 - 122

4 Bradley op.cit p 623

5 Wollheim op.cit p 72 ff

6 Metz op.cit p 334

that the notion of secondary qualities reveals mere 'appearance', for there must be a contradiction between what is perceived and what exists.¹ However the attempt to give an account of reality in terms of primary qualities is no more successful for they must either depend of the relational view of secondary qualities or else be nothing at all and hence must also be mere 'appearance'.² Similarly, in terms of the logical distinction between substantive and adjective, the multiplicity of predicates that can apply to a subject demonstrates that a thing cannot be simply a multiplicity of any of its qualities, for such predication would not be stating what the subject in fact is. As he stated, " ..if you predicate what is different, you ascribe to the subject what it is *not* ; and if you predicate what is *not* different, you say nothing at all."³ This difficulty, he argued, depends of the confusion between quality and relation, a confusion which can only be resolved by arguing, as he does, that qualities and relations presuppose each other.⁴ Neither qualities without relations nor qualities with relations are intelligible, for both exhibit a relational form of thinking, which forces thought into inconsistencies and contradictions and which therefore reveals 'appearance' and not 'reality'.⁵ "The conclusion to which I am brought" he argued, "is that a relational way of thought - any one that moves by the machinery of terms and relations - must give appearance, and not truth."⁶ Having established the logical foundation of his metaphysics, Bradley then proceeded with an extended examination of the nature of Space and Time, motion, causation, activity and the self, the details of which need not concern us, save to remark that all of these, in being treated in terms of the relational way of thinking, reveal 'appearance' and not 'reality'.⁷ However there is one feature of his diatribe against 'appearances' in this part of the book which is of some importance and that is his account of pre-relational experience in his chapter of the 'self', an account which can be fairly regarded as the foundation of his epistemological theory. In everyday or common perception, Bradley argued that the world is perceived as a unity in terms of 'feeling' or 'felt experience'.⁸ As he asserted, "Nothing in the end is real but what is felt, and for me nothing in the end is real but that which I feel....The real, to be real, must be felt."⁹ Such an experience, he later argued, was an experience where there is no distinction between my awareness and the object of my awareness; "We have experience ... in which there is no distinction between my experience and that of which it is aware. There is an immediate feeling, a knowing and being in one, with which knowledge begins; and

1 Bradley, F. H. Appearance and Reality London, 1883, pp 9 - 11

2 ibid p 12

3 ibid p 17 (his emphasis)

4 ibid p 21

5 ibid p 21 ff

6 ibid p 28

7 ibid Ch. 4 - 12

8 ibid pp 79 - 80, 90 - 92, 141

9 Bradley quoted in Metz op.cit p 340

though this in a manner is transcended, it nevertheless remains throughout as the present foundation of my known world."¹ This insistence of 'felt experience' has been criticised by some authors as itself illusory, although Bradley himself maintained that the state of psychological research at that time supported his view.² However, the importance of this theory lies in its resuscitation in his later chapters as the basis for the knowledge of the 'Absolute'.

In Book 2 of Appearance and Reality, Bradley moved on to his speculative account of the nature of 'Reality', where he argued that 'Reality' is to be conceived of as a 'unity' which avoids the contradictory errors of 'appearance'.³ Bradley's view of the nature of 'Reality' was made quite clear when he argued,

Hence to think is to judge, and to judge is to criticise, and to criticise is to use a criterion of reality. And surely to doubt this would be mere blindness or confused self-deception. But, if so, it is clear in rejecting the inconsistent as appearance, we are applying a positive knowledge of the ultimate reality of things. Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion. And it is proved absolute by the fact that, either in endeavouring to deny it, or even in attempting to doubt it, we tacitly assume its validity.⁴

'Reality' then, cannot be contradictory and must be conceived of as a single, unified system of things, with plurality and relatedness being aspects of this unity and any attempt to maintain the 'mere' externality of relations being doomed to failure.⁵ However simply to characterise the 'Absolute' as a single, harmonious and all-comprehending system, leaves it as a formal and abstract theory and Bradley imparts this system with the positive content of 'sentient experience'.⁶ In a statement which makes clear his theoretical intentions, he argued

And in asserting that the reality is experience, I rest throughout on this foundation. You cannot find fact unless in unity with sentience, and one cannot in the end be divided from the other, either actually or in idea. But to be utterly indivisible from feeling or perception, to be an integral element in a whole which is experienced, this surely is to *be* experience. Being and reality are, in brief, one thing with sentience; they can neither be opposed to, nor even in the end

1 Bradley quoted in Passmore op.cit p 62

2 See Passmore op.cit p 63 fn

3 Bradley: op.cit Ch. 13 - 27

4 ibid p 120

5 ibid p 124 - 5.

6 ibid p 127 ff.

distinguished from it...Our conclusion, so far, will be this, that the Absolute is one system, and that its contents are nothing but sentient experience. It will hence be a single and all-inclusive experience, which embraces every partial diversity in concord.¹

The only consistent unity and the direction to which a relational theory of thought points is that of the 'Absolute', in which all things, including the unified forms of truth, goodness and beauty, are included. As he argued,

It (the relational form) implies a substantial totality beyond relations and above them, a whole endeavouring without success to realise itself in their detail. Further, the ideas of goodness, and of the beautiful, suggest in different ways the same result. They more or less involve the experience of a whole beyond relations though full of diversity.²

The transitory path to this conception of the 'Absolute' is the logical doctrine of the judgement, the key elements of which Bradley had presented earlier in The Principles of Logic. Judgement, he argued, is always 'hypothetical' and is based on the relational distinction between a subject and predicate, which it seeks to transcend, but does so only at the cost of its own intelligibility.³ To seek to move beyond the relational form of thought characteristic of judgement, requires that thought commit 'suicide', in being absorbed into a fuller experience of 'thought', for "when thought begins to be more than relational, it ceases being mere thinking".⁴ 'Thought' then, will be present as a 'higher intuition' of the 'Absolute', as a transmutation of the 'feeling' which we experienced in pre-relational experience, but now in a superior form where the divisions of the relational form of thinking are 'healed'.⁵ However the harmonious nature of the 'Absolute' cannot be based on the doctrine of external relations and the relations between the various aspects of the 'Absolute' must be 'intrinsic', where the relation penetrates the 'inner being of its terms'.⁶ Although this view of relations was to become the most contentious aspect of Bradley's metaphysics, it is important to note that Bradley did not deny the

1 ibid p 129 (his emphasis)

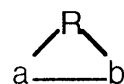
2 ibid p 141; See also Passmore op.cit p 69 - 70

3 ibid p 148 ff. On the hypothetical nature of judgement see Wollheim op.cit p 51, 63.

4 ibid p 151

5 ibid p 152

6 ibid p 201. In Appearance and Reality Bradley speaks only of 'intrinsic' relations, although in The Principles of Logic he defined an *internal* relation as one where the element in the relation is qualified by the relation. op.cit p 127 fn 14. On p 126 fn 5 of the same work, Bradley gives a schematic representation of an object as internally related thus:



existence of external relations as such, but only the view that relations are 'merely' external and as several commentators have observed, Bradley's view was that relations are both internal *and* external.¹ However this doctrine of the 'intrinsic' nature of relations was apart from being the foundation of his metaphysical theory, also the foundation of his coherence theory of truth. Truth, he argued, in exhibiting internal harmony, was primarily a question of degree.² The intrinsic nature of relations, where the relation passes into the 'being of the terms', implies that the element of truth contains within itself its own nature and increasingly forms an inclusive and harmonious system.³ Further, just as truth is a question of degree and one aspect of the 'Absolute', so too is goodness a question of degree and an aspect of the 'Absolute'.⁴ Goodness is an 'end' or ideal standard of perfection, which individuals progressively realise but which is itself ultimately transcended in the 'Absolute'.⁵ Similarly beauty is also characterised by internal relations and like truth and goodness, is no more than one aspect of the 'Absolute'.⁶ Bradley's 'Absolute' then is the totality of all experience as one unified system of Reality, which hovers like some Platonic form above all existence, is known by an immediately felt experience and which cannot be related to anything else outside of itself, for there can be nothing else outside of it.⁷

In this work then, Bradley defended a metaphysical monism based on the distinction between 'appearance' and 'reality', with 'appearance' or what is perceived, being partial, relative and fragmentary while 'Reality' is the identity between what is thought and what exists, for that which is thought is whole, Absolute and eternal. Bradley's philosophical system can be seen then, to be three tiered.⁸ Firstly, the lowest realm is that of immediate feeling, the pre-relational experience of undivided and undifferentiated wholeness; secondly, there is the realm of thought or dialectic, in which the original unity of feeling is broken up by relations and hence things are appearances but not real, and thirdly there is the realm of reality or the 'Absolute', in which the unity and wholeness lost in the second stage are re-constituted in a higher synthesis. Of this last level, Metz says "Thought, however, must undergo a profound metamorphosis: it will be present as a higher intuition and thus lose its distinctive character, devouring itself in the attainment of its ideal, itself transcended in the finding of that transcendence the search for which is its very

1 On the question of the internality and externality of relations in Bradley's theory see Saxena op.cit p 169 and Wollheim op.cit pp 104 - 22, 179 - 80, 191 - 3, 199 - 201

2 Bradley op.cit p 319 ff

3 ibid p 322, 347

4 ibid p 364

5 ibid pp 367 ff

6 ibid pp 410 ff

7 ibid p 459 ff

8 Metz op.cit p 334 - 339

essence" but goes on to add that "had he but expanded this narrow and one-sided conception of thought (relational thinking) in the direction of Hegel's Idea, he would have found what here he is seeking in vain."¹ However despite his intention to separate logic from psychology Bradley's introduction of the *act* of judging into logic, re-introduces the mental aspect to logic that cannot be distinguished from the truth claim of what the judgement is about. Since Bradley had previously held that there is no experience by which we can directly apprehend the Absolute, he must introduce the notion of immediate, pure undifferentiated feeling of which there is a lower form that is common and a higher form that is related to the Absolute. Since everything, including the self, is partial, incomplete and fragmentary, they must be aspects of the Absolute and therefore cannot know the Absolute itself. As Metz concluded "...by denying the unity of self-consciousness, he equated the self with the sum of its experiences instead of with the unity of these, and thus ended with the view that it is simply a bundle of discrepancies, thereby approximating closely to the Humean theory which he had expressly pronounced to be unsatisfactory".² In Bradley's philosophy then, the method of the dialectic becomes no more than a transition phase towards the 'Absolute', with such a view being typical of Ruggerio's classification of 'right' British Hegelianism.

In contrast to Green's philosophy at Oxford, Edward Caird at Glasgow University developed a school of Scottish Hegelianism which was to exert perhaps even greater influence than Green's school at Oxford. Caird was more explicitly Hegelian than Green, although he refrained from expounding the Hegelian system in detail, preferring instead to 'saturate himself with its spirit', although he believed that his general conception of Idealism was identical to that of Hegel.³ In many ways, Caird completed the work begun by Stirling, not only in terms of stressing the importance of Kant in understanding Hegel, but also in terms of the theological interpretation of Hegel's philosophy.⁴ Green had assumed that the 'eternal consciousness' was something prior to and independent of the world process through which it is revealed and Caird opposed this view arguing that the dialectical process of spirit inhered in the process of nature itself.⁵ The 'universe', as Caird conceived it, "...is an organic system developing towards the complete and self-conscious expression of that which is first implied within it".⁶ Reality then, is to be thought of as an 'eternal

1 ibid p 341-2

2 ibid p 338

3 MacKenzie op cit p 516. For a general outline of Caird's philosophy see Metz op cit p 286-93. For a more detailed account see Muirhead, J. & Jones, H. The Life and Philosophy of Edward Caird Glasgow, 1921, pp 245-369. For an interesting defence of Caird's Idealism from the 'Radical Empiricism' of William James see Watson, J. 'The Idealism of Edward Caird' Mind Vol. XVIII, 1908, pp 265 ff

4 Mackintosh op cit p 96

5 MacKenzie op cit p 526

6 ibid p 522

divine principle' which is not temporally prior to the world process, but is identical to the evolution of the world in time.¹ It is, in other words, a universe which "...comes to the consciousness of itself in spirit".² This process of 'realisation' must treat the objective world as the 'other' of spirit and is the supreme instance of "self-realisation through self-sacrifice"³ This opposition or 'otherness' of the world and spirit can only be overcome in terms of the Divine Being or God. "Only in the Divine Being do finite things attain true reality and significance as elements in the revelation and self-realisation of the supreme principle".⁴ However the importance of Caird's Idealism lay not only in a spiritual interpretation of 'Reality' which harmonised with the Christian religion, but more importantly with the adoption of Darwinian evolutionary theory to his interpretation of Hegel and particularly the Hegelian notion of dialectic. Although Caird had initially regarded Darwinian evolutionary theory as a 'hypothesis', by 1875 he had moved from this treatment of it to a plain 'statement of fact'.⁵ Hence Caird's Idealist philosophy, and the Glasgow school of Hegelianism influenced by him, sought to reconcile Christianity with Darwinian evolutionary theory, regarding the dialectic as 'ideal evolution' and God as the highest conception of speculative philosophy and the principle of reality.⁶ The 'Idealism' of Caird's philosophy, as the view that 'Reality is Spiritual', rested on the premise that the 'esse' of things is not 'percipi' as Berkeley had held, but was 'intelligi' where the world was intelligible and rational through and through.⁷ This supposition implied however, that the only intelligible world was one which was a spiritual process, a process which was dialectical in nature.⁸ This 'spiritual' interpretation of Idealism was one which distinguished it from the more 'logical' interpretation of Idealism which became predominant at Oxford and Caird's treatment of dialectic as a spiritual process which was identical with the Absolute and not a mere transition to it. was an interpretation which was distinctive of Ruggiero's 'left' Hegelian classification of British Idealism.

Caird dominated the Scottish school of Hegelianism until his move to Oxford in 1893, a year which in many ways can be regarded as the culmination of Scottish Hegelianism, for apart from Caird's own succession to Jowett's position of Master of Balliol College, there was also the publication in that year of his The Evolution of Natural Religion, Mackenzie's Manual of Ethics and Bonar's Philosophy and Political

1 loc cit

2 loc cit

3 ibid p 526.

4 Caird quoted in Metz op cit p 292.

5 Mackintosh op cit p 107 fn 1.

6 See for example Watson, J. Christianity and Idealism New York, 1896; Ritchie, D.G. Darwin and Hegel London, 1893.

7 Mackenzie op cit p 521

8 loc cit

Economy. Caird's professorship at Glasgow was taken up by Henry Jones, who along with other students of Caird developed the 'spiritual' interpretation of Hegel into an explicit 'Christian' Idealism. Although Jones whole-heartedly accepted the main tenets of Caird's Idealism, his own philosophical development was not immune to other influences and as early as 1893, his philosophy was showing the impact of the new Realism, stimulated in part by the work of the Scottish logician Robert Adamson and the American empiricist William James.¹ In his work on Lotze, Jones argued that it is not thought that determines reality, but reality which determines thought, claiming that this Idealist position is "...as frankly realistic as is ordinary consciousness or materialism; and without hesitation, it conceives that in all his thinking, however inadequate it may be, man thinks of objects."² However Jones goes on to add that such a position "...refuses to define these objects in such a manner as to make the problem of thinking them insoluble; that is to say, it denies the ordinary assumption that reality implies the exclusion of the ideal. It finds that knowledge is the self-revelation of reality in thought, and that our thought is the instrument of that self-revelation."³ Like Caird, Jones rejected Bradley's conception of a 'block universe' and argued that the universe is organic and develops according to spiritual process. This 'Absolute', understood as the God of Christianity, is a complete, self-consistent and self-sustaining reality within which every particular thing exists and every particular experience occurs and which is in the act of self-externalisation into the world of Space and Time.⁴ Jones also rejected Bradley's view in the Principles of Logic that 'ideas' as 'psychical states' are to be distinguished in terms of their 'existence' and 'content', arguing such a distinction threatened the restoration of subjectivist entities intervening between the mind and its objects.⁵ Any sense of the 'meaning' of an idea insofar as it means something, is already objective content and even though it may be 'subjective' in the sense of being part of the history of an individual mind, this would still provide no warrant for claiming that it is not 'objective'.⁶ Jones argued that the mind is the process of interpreting the world, with 'ideas' being those acts of interpretation and the 'world of knowledge' is therefore simply the system of related acts of knowing, in the continuous act of interpreting the world.⁷ In a passage which clearly indicates his rejection of 'Idealism' and his, partial, acceptance of a Realist epistemology, he argued

1 Hetherington, H. The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Jones London, 1924, pp 66. For a general account of Jones' philosophy see Metz op cit p 301-5. For information on Adamson see Metz op cit p 495 ff and Passmore op cit pp 281-3

2 Jones quoted in Hetherington op cit p 66

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 159

5 ibid p 67

6 loc cit

7 loc cit

There never was and never will be a 'world of ideas' or a system of mental entities, other than, though somehow true of the world of facts and events.... I doubt if there ever was a more persistent or widespread error which gives philosophers more trouble than this reification of ideas. Ideas are not like, nor are they in any way symbolic of, nor do they correspond or in any way point to objects. They don't exist. There are minds which in relation to objects carry on a process called knowing and there are objects which guide and control and inspire their operations. But there is no third world of entities.¹

However if Jones was at the fore in anticipating the development of subsequent Realist epistemological theory, his Idealism was never far from the core of his philosophy. The analysis of knowledge, he argued, shows that there is a subject which knows and an object that is known and that they are related because they are qualitatively similar.² However he concluded, since the subject is rational and spiritual, then this similarity implied that the object was also rational and spiritual.³ The subject and the object are correlative terms and their apparent difference is reconciled in the act of judgement as a unity-in-difference. As he argued, "If the world is rational then it is also a unity-in-difference. Its apparent infinite variety, its innumerable constituents must be systematically interrelated. Otherwise it would be an irrational and chaotic world."⁴ This mutual implication of thought and reality - 'the real is the rational and the rational is the real' - implied that any attempted rejection of this relation of mutual interdependence was self-contradictory, for any recognised contradiction is not 'Ideality', but only a partial and limited form of it.⁵ As Hetherington argued,

The validity of every form of human experience, therefore, requires the conception of an Absolute, a complete self-consistent and self-sustaining reality within which falls every particular fact and experience, and of which all these are partial manifestations. ...Moreover, since the most adequate manifestation of reality is mind, the Absolute is rightly conceived as Spirit, and its being, as Hegel expressed it, is an act of self-externalisation in the world of space and time, and 'of coming to itself' in the ascent of life through its various forms to the level of self-conscious mind.⁶

1 ibid p 68

2 Morris-Jones, H. Henry Jones Cardiff, 1953, p 10

3 loc cit

4 ibid p 11

5 Hetherington op cit p 158-9

6 ibid p 159

However this 'self-externalisation of the Absolute' is not the operation of a logical principle, but since the Absolute is identified with 'Spirit', it is the work of the God of Christianity.¹ The true object of Idealist philosophy for Jones, is not the Absolute as a logical entity as Bradley had assumed, but possesses a theological character in the form of God. The philosophy of Henry Jones, like that of Caird before him, was typical of Ruggerio's conception of 'left' British Hegelianism where the Absolute understood as Spirit, inheres in the very activity of nature itself. However equally important in Scottish philosophical history at this time was the philosophic tradition which concentrated on historical studies in philosophy, established at Edinburgh by Sir William Hamilton and following him, A.C. Fraser and Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison. Hence Hamilton was one of the first British philosophers to read Kant seriously, while Fraser was responsible for 're-discovering' Berkeley and Seth Pringle-Pattison produced several works of the historical development of Idealism.² Both the Glasgow and Edinburgh philosophical traditions emphasised a systematic and historical conception of philosophy, which drew its inspiration from German Idealism and this philosophic tendency was complemented by an educational philosophy and practice which has been termed by George Davie, the 'democratic intellect'. This tradition stressed an intellectualism in education which was fostered by the democratic nature of student participation within the classes, guided by the Professor and his staff.³ This educational tradition was undoubtedly important in the transmission of Hegelian philosophy into the Scottish universities during the early years of the twentieth century.

By the end of the nineteenth century, British Hegelianism had developed into two distinct philosophical schools. The 'right' British Hegelians, based primarily at Oxford, developed a logical theory of the Absolute Idea which was similar in many respects to the Platonic philosophy and to which the method of dialectic was a transitional process. On the other hand, the 'left' British Hegelians based at Glasgow, developed a spiritual interpretation of the dialectic into a 'Christian' Idealism, whereby the dialectic inhered in the nature of the universe itself. However these interests were not definitive of either 'school' and there was a large degree of overlap and common concern between the two. Both of these 'schools' of Hegelian Idealism can be regarded as sharing the common assumption that 'Reality' can only be understood in terms of 'experience', albeit 'sentient' experience, as A.E. Taylor, the Professor of Metaphysics at Edinburgh, held and who was singled out by G.E. Moore as typical of those 'Idealist's' who identify 'Reality' with 'Experience'.

1 Jones, H. A Faith that Inquires London, 1922, pp 314 ff

2 For a general account of Pringle-Pattison's views see Metz op.cit pp 380 - 389

3 Davie, G. The Democratic Intellect Edinburgh, 1961.

e. The Doctrines of Idealism

The emergence of Idealism in modern philosophy was of a form which was quite distinct from the Platonic tradition in philosophy. The subjective Idealism of the British Empiricists' emphasised an epistemological conception of philosophy which was to be important as a stimulus to subsequent German Idealism. However although Kant and Fichte were primarily concerned with defending a conception of philosophy which recognised the transcendent nature of knowledge and the objectivity of nature, they lapsed back into subjectivism in their theories of the origin of nature in the activity of the transcendental ego. The overcoming of the dualism between the subject and object was partially developed in Schelling's conception of the 'Absolute' and was completed in the philosophy of Hegel. Hegel's philosophy was based on the identity of the content and method of philosophy as the unity of the Absolute and the dialectic and Hegel developed these conceptions into a systematic and historical conception of philosophy and culture. After the death of Hegel, the Hegelian 'school' split into the 'right' and the 'left' wings based on this distinction between content and method. Hence the 'right' Hegelian's emphasised the truth of the positive content of Hegel's philosophy while the 'left' Hegelian's defended the application of the dialectical method, regardless of the specific content of the Hegelian system. The transmission of Hegel's philosophy into Britain was strongly influenced by the 'right' Hegelians, although in their hands the Hegelian identification of the content and method of philosophy was denied. Hence the Hegelian philosophy suffered a deformation of the conception of the Absolute into a logical or Platonic 'form' by the English Idealists and the collapse of his method of dialectic into a spiritual process by the Scottish Hegelians. However the common content of British Idealist philosophy can be said to the proposition 'Esse is Percipi', which is a necessary synthetic proposition that asserts the identity of 'Reality' and 'Experience'. This definition was based upon the doctrine of internal relations which treated the terms of a relation as 'internal' or 'intrinsic' to the relation and therefore identified the qualities of objects with the relations between them. The metaphysical doctrines that were derived from this definition of Idealism can be best illustrated by reference to the philosophy of Bradley. Bradley's Idealism is firstly an ontological monism understood as the view that since the Absolute is the unity of the subject and object, then only this 'unity' or 'totality' is real or true. Secondly Bradley's Idealism is an epistemological rationalism understood as the view that since the world of experience is fragmentary and illusory, then 'Reality' or the 'Absolute' can only be known through the synthetic activity of reason. Finally Bradley's Idealism is an 'Absolutism', understood as the view that since the 'Absolute' is comprised of judgements created by the synthetic activity of reason, then this 'Absolute' is a system of necessary synthetic judgements. In terms of the method of Idealism, the 'dialectical' method of Hegel was interpreted by Bradley to be the view that the context of the judgement as Reality determined the truth or falsity of the

judgement, which as necessary synthetic propositions implied the identity of the subject and the predicate of the proposition. However in contrast to this 'Absolutist' character of English Idealism, Scottish Hegelianism can be said to be 'relativistic', where the universe advances necessarily, each phase making up one part of a progressive unity. One important consequence of this doctrine of internal relations was the view that qualities and relations presuppose each other and that the categories of philosophy - truth, goodness and beauty - are to be understood as *relational*. There was perhaps no greater issue of dispute between the Hegelian Idealist's and the new Realist philosophers than the conflict between the interpretation of qualities and relations and this conflict was of especial importance to the 'systematic' Realist's such as Alexander and Anderson with their view that the categories of philosophy were to be treated as *qualities* of things.