

9. BEYOND REALISM AND IDEALISM

a. John Anderson and Twentieth Century Philosophy

One of the prevailing assumptions of twentieth century Realist philosophy has been that Realism and Idealism are contradictory philosophical positions and that on the basis of Moore's 'refutation of Idealism', Idealism had been 'refuted' and Realism therefore proven to be true. Although John Anderson in his early years had been an important defender of this Realist conception of philosophy, as twentieth century Realist philosophy became increasingly analytical in character, Anderson remained firmly within the tradition of a systematic conception of philosophy.¹ As John Passmore notes, although Anderson was concerned with many issues that are typically discussed in the British empiricist tradition, he had little interest in the analytic style of philosophising preferring to discuss the 'larger issues' which is typically a characteristic of continental philosophy.

Like his continental contemporaries, he (Anderson) wants to discuss large issues, but critically, analytically. A common presumption of our time is that this cannot be done; in England, that large issues either fall within the province of a particular science, or else are matters of decision, not of argument; on the Continent, that large issues certainly belong to philosophy, but that careful analysis, close criticising, has no place there.²

Anderson's unique place in the history of twentieth century philosophy is therefore determined by his emphasis on Realism as the content of philosophy which clearly demonstrates his continuity with twentieth century British and American Realist philosophy, although his systematic development of these Realist principles produced a philosophy which in its comprehensiveness indicates his consonance with the so-called 'continental' tradition of philosophy, as does his interest in thinkers as varied as Sorel, Freud, Marx, Hegel and Vico. Indeed Anderson's mature philosophical interests clearly demonstrate that his place in twentieth century philosophy is more within the 'Idealist' tradition of Hegel, Croce, and Vico than within the 'analytic' tradition of Moore, Russell and Ryle. For example, when Bertrand Russell visited Australia in 1954 to attend a conference on 'Logical Atomism', Anderson attended the conference, made notes on Russell's paper, but never published any response to the paper, being preoccupied with writing a review

1 For a full discussion of Anderson's place in twentieth century philosophy see Passmore, J. 'John Anderson and Twentieth Century Philosophy' in Studies in Empirical Philosophy pp ix - xxiv

2 ibid p xxiv

of Croce's Politics and Morals.¹ Again in the year that Moore published his Philosophical Papers which Anderson could have reviewed to express his objections to the analytic style of philosophising, his main philosophic interest was writing a review of Croce's My Philosophy and Other Essays. Indeed even Anderson's reply to Ryle's criticisms in 'Empiricism and Logic' makes clear his distaste of the analytic conception of philosophy - he refers to the 'egoistic rumblings of the analytic machine' - and it is significant that apart from this reference to Ryle there are, in his later years, *no* references to any philosopher in the mainstream analytic or Realist tradition in Anglo-Saxon philosophy. In contrast, during this period Anderson was continually discussing issues and problems raised by 'Idealists' such as Croce, Vico, and Hegel and he particularly praised Hegel as one of the most significant philosophers of the modern period of philosophy. However the previous conclusion that Anderson's philosophy was both a Realist and Idealist conception of philosophy may be thought to be solely the result of his *systematic* conception of Realism and that an *analytic* conception of Realism might avoid the difficulties that Anderson's philosophy encounters in terms of the conflict between form and quality. Hence to demonstrate that an analytic conception of Realism or indeed that *any* conception of Realism cannot avoid being also an Idealist philosophy, it is necessary to re-examine Moore's 'refutation of Idealism' and to critically assess the claim that is common to almost all twentieth century Realism, that the relationship between Realism and Idealism is one of contradiction.

b. The Refutation of Realism

Twentieth century Realism is commonly assumed to be *logically* based on Moore's 'refutation of Idealism' where it was argued that Idealism had been demonstrated to be false. However on the assumption that Realism and Idealism are contradictory propositions, if Idealism has been shown to be false then it follows that Realism has been demonstrated or proven to be true. That is to say, if a proposition is meaningful then it must have a contradictory which is also meaningful and therefore if the Idealist assertion 'Esse is Percipi' is false, then its Realist contradictory, 'Esse is not Percipi', *must* be true. In his 'refutation' Moore distinguished between the refutation of Idealism in terms of the proposition 'Esse is Percipi' and his epistemological refutation of Idealism in terms of the independence of the object from the subject of knowledge and following Moore's own procedure, we can distinguish between these same aspects in Realist philosophy.

In his propositional refutation of Idealism Moore argued that Idealism defined as 'esse is percipi', can have three possible meanings. Firstly it may mean that 'esse'

¹ Anderson's notes on the 'Logical Atomism' conference are held in the Anderson Archives at Sydney University.

and 'percipi' are synonymous in which case Idealism is simply a statement of identity. Secondly it may mean that 'percipi' is part of the meaning of 'esse' which may be true although the only important sense that it can have is the third meaning of Idealism where 'esse' and 'percipi' are necessarily connected and Idealism is a necessary synthetic proposition which he states cannot be refuted. 'Esse is percipi', he concluded, can either be a synthetic contingent proposition or an analytic proposition which is based on the law of contradiction alone. If it is the latter then Idealism is based on two contradictory propositions and this is false because self-contradictory, while if it is the former then Moore asserts that it simply does not appear to be true to him. However it is important to note an important ambiguity in Moore's argument here. If Moore is arguing, as the title of his paper indicates, that he is presenting a *refutation* of Idealism, then this refutation will be either a logical or an empirical refutation. Certainly Moore argued that 'Esse is percipi' as a contingent, synthetic proposition does not appear to be true to him and presumably the falsity of Idealism in this sense is demonstrated by empirical means. However even though Moore argued that 'Esse is percipi' as a necessary, synthetic proposition cannot be refuted, he does argue that it is the more important sense of Idealism and if this sense of Idealism is not refuted, then surely this more substantial meaning of Idealism remains unaffected by his argument. That Moore does believe that this sense of Idealism has been refuted, can be shown by his insistence that a necessary, synthetic proposition *identifies* two distinct, synthetic terms which is therefore false because self-contradictory. Moore can therefore be held to be refuting Idealism in both senses, as a contingent proposition which is empirically false and a necessary proposition which is false because self-contradictory. However on either account, if Idealism defined as 'Esse is percipi' is false, then Realism defined as 'Esse is not percipi' must be true.

However if Realism, defined as 'Esse is not percipi', is true then there is the question of what such a proposition could mean. Although 'Esse is not percipi' could be interpreted in its literal sense to mean 'to be is not to be perceived', its more positive statement is that 'the object exists independently of the experiences of mind'. However there is a certain ambiguity in his notion of 'esse', for it could be taken to mean either a particular thing or class of things or as the universal class of things constituting 'reality' itself. To clarify this ambiguity, there are two possible interpretations which can be given to this definition of Realism. Firstly 'Esse is not Percipi' might be thought to be a necessary synthetic proposition, but clearly this cannot be the case for if it is held to be so, then such a proposition clearly contradicts Moore's 'refutation of Idealism' which held there can be no necessary, synthetic propositions. Secondly 'Esse is not Percipi' might be held to be simply a synthetic, contingent proposition known through experience and if Realism is defined in this sense then, corresponding to the two senses of 'esse' mentioned above, there are two possible senses such a proposition may have.

In the first sense, if Moore is arguing that he is only concerned with the particular proposition that *some* objects are independent from certain acts of being known or experienced, then if this is true, it would have no implication for the existence of *all* things independently of any experience and as such would be of little *philosophical* importance. Hence if such an interpretation is true, then it is trivial in the same sense that Moore had described Idealism as trivial, for the claim that some objects exist independently of experience is quite consistent with the claim that some objects do not exist independently from experience and such a proposition could in no way be held to 'refute' Idealism. That this is Moore's own view is supported by his (in)famous 'proof of the external world' where by putting his hands in front of his face, Moore believed that he demonstrated that the 'external world' existed independently of his knowledge of it. Moore's 'refutation' is similar to, and in a sense weaker than, Dr. Johnson's 'refutation' of Berkeley, for at least Dr. Johnson's 'refutation' had the advantage of *coming into contact* with the 'external world' Moore's 'proof of the external world' on the other hand, is merely the assertion that he *sees* that his hands are independent by his experience of them and concludes that on the basis of this and other similar experiences, that the 'external world' exists independently of his experiences. However to claim to have an *experience* of the independence of objects from our experience of them is, in an important sense, to beg the question against Idealism. There is no experience which could either demonstrate the falsity of Idealism or prove the truth of Realism as an *epistemological* thesis and an idealist wit could reply to Moore's 'proof' that all he 'sees' in such a demonstration is himself, a conclusion few Idealist's may not wish to disagree with. Moore's claim for the truth of Realism then would be true but trivial and could be claimed by Idealist and Realist alike, for an Idealist could consistently claim that the objects of the everyday world exist independently of our perceptions but also argue that our knowledge of their formal or categorical nature is only known dependent on our conceiving or thinking of them.

Secondly the assertion of 'Esse is not Percipi' as a synthetic, contingent proposition could be held to assert the universal proposition that *all* things exist independently of our experience. However if this is the case then if the proposition 'Esse is Percipi' is expressed as a universal, contingent proposition, then although such a proposition would be sufficient to *refute* Idealism, since it is a *contingent* proposition, the possibility of its truth must be consistent with the possibility of its falsity. However since this proposition is one which concerns our epistemological relationship to *all* things, it is *impossible* to establish the truth or falsity of such a proposition by any *empirical* means. Clearly if 'Esse is not percipi' is a universal, contingent and empirical proposition, then there must be *some* experience to show that it could be false, but if there is such an experience (or even the *possibility* of such an experience) then such an experience (or its possibility) would effectively refute the

contention that *all* things exist independently of experience. For example, although a biologist might attempt to falsify the proposition 'all swans are white' by searching for a swan which is not white (and finding a swan which is black for example, could only be done in terms of *experience*), it does not appear possible that a Realist could go in search of an object which did not exist independently of experience. If it was believed that there could be an object which did not exist independently of experience, then there would be no grounds for believing that *all* objects exist independently of experience, while if it were believed that there could be *no* experience which could falsify the claim that all objects exist independently of experience, then such a proposition could no longer be merely a contingent proposition and would appear to be a necessary synthetic proposition, which would of course, be inconsistent with the 'refutation of Idealism'. Similarly if it was argued that the independence of particular objects from particular experiences *implies* that all objects are independent of all experience, then, apart from the error of arguing from the truth of particular propositions to the truth of universal propositions, such an empirical, universal proposition would still appear to be a necessary, synthetic truth and hence inconsistent with the 'refutation of Idealism'.

Although John Anderson never discussed Moore's 'refutation' in detail, his criticism of Idealism assumes the force of such a 'refutation'. As Anderson argued, "For Idealism, which makes the settling of every issue depend on the settling on every other, no issue can ever be settled - *and thus Idealism itself cannot be upheld*. ...Speaking as a realist, I find myself bound to assert that Idealism, so far from being competent philosophy, is not philosophy at all."¹ Anderson's 'propositional' refutation of Idealism then consists of the assertion that Idealism "...cannot even be consistently stated, because it is contrary to the fact of independence which we have all in some measure to recognise in our discussions".² Anderson's argument therefore is that Idealism defined as 'Esse is percipi' is not a 'proposition', that it is 'unspeakable', and therefore assumes the force of Moore's refutation where Idealism was held to be self-contradictory. However Anderson recognised the difficulty involved in the assertion of 'self-contradictory' propositions, when he argued against the Marxist view of 'self-contradictory' propositions where "...those who contend that a 'self-contradictory' proposition must be rejected as false, and thus its contradictory accepted as true and certain, do not observe that, since it is its own contradictory, its contradictory also must be false".³ However it is interesting to note that Anderson's view of self-contradictory propositions has been overlooked by those defenders of his notion of the 'unspeakable' such as Sandy Anderson, who has argued that "This particular criticism ('unspeakability') is, of course, to be understood as

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

2 ibid p 46

3 ibid p 103

'shorthand' for a more detailed argument that the position criticised is *self-contradictory* - that in order to propound it, you must use material that implies it contradictory."¹ For example, a typically Andersonian criticism of scepticism is to claim that it is equivalent to the proposition 'there is no objective truth'. However such a claim is said to be 'unspeakable', for in presenting such a claim as an objective truth, it effectively *contradicts* the truth of its own claim that there is no objective truth. Hence if 'unspeakability' is the assertion of false self-contradictory propositions, then on Anderson's account, since it is its own contradictory, its contradictory - the 'speakable' or propositional - must also be false. However such a view may be said to misrepresent Anderson's real view of contradiction which he held only occurs *between* propositions - "any proposition which we believe has a formal contradictory"² - and if two propositions contradict one another, then this indicates that "...one of the two is false, that in one of them what is asserted *is not the case*".³ However if Anderson had applied this logic to the general question of Realism and Idealism, he would have concluded that Realism and Idealism are contradictory propositions and therefore have the same logical status as contingent propositions, although such a conclusion would have been at variance with his assessment that Idealism cannot even be 'upheld', that it is in some sense 'unintelligible' or 'unspeakable', for such a claim would imply that they have a different logical status. Such a claim of 'unintelligibility' or 'unspeakability' would only have force if Idealism defined as 'Esse is percipi' was a necessary synthetic proposition, which could mean that 'Esse' is *necessarily* 'Percipi'. On Anderson's logic, such a statement is one that can be intelligibly contradicted and on this account it may appear that the *denial* of 'Esse is necessarily percipi' implies the proposition 'Esse is necessarily not percipi'. However Anderson denied that such an implication was valid when he argued that to deny that 'X is necessarily Y' does not imply the assertion that 'X is necessarily not Y', but implies the proposition 'X is possibly not Y' - which he argued was identical with the proposition 'X is not necessarily Y'⁴ - a proposition which could only be taken to mean that 'X is contingently Y'. Therefore to deny the proposition "Esse is necessarily percipi" implies that "Esse is contingently percipi", although on such an account the inclusion of 'contingently' is redundant, for the copula 'is', in being the copula of existence, is intended to convey precisely this sense of contingency. Anderson was insistent that the copula of the proposition was the unambiguous 'is' of existence and if this is taken to mean that it is the copula of contingency, then the reintroduction of 'contingency' into the proposition can serve no logical purpose at all. Such an ambiguity in terms of the copula is indicative of the difficulty which Anderson only

1 Anderson, A.J. 'Following John Anderson' *op cit* p 133 (my emphasis)

2 Anderson 'The Western Intellectual Tradition' *op cit* p 280

3 Anderson *Studies in Empirical Philosophy* p 306

4 *ibid* pp 175 - 6

implicitly recognised in attempting to provide a thorough-going defence of Realism and refutation of Idealism.

Anderson's 'propositional' refutation of Idealism therefore fails for the same reasons as Moore's 'refutation' fails. Either the Idealist assertion 'Esse is percipi' is a contingent proposition which implies the Realist contradictory 'Esse is not percipi', with the truth of either determined in terms of experience or the Idealist assertion 'Esse is necessarily percipi' is a proposition which is 'unintelligible' or 'unspeakable' and implies that the Realist assertion 'Esse is not necessarily Percipi' is a contingent proposition, but which is also the logical condition of 'intelligible discourse' or 'speakability'. However if this definition of Realism is a universal contingent proposition then the question is raised of what experience could determine the truth or falsity of such a proposition. It appears to be mystery how the truth of such a *universal* proposition - covering the nature of *all* existing things - could be established empirically, for there is no experience which could be used to prove the truth of such a proposition, and perhaps more importantly, there is no experience which could be provided to *falsify* such a proposition. However if Realism is not a contingent proposition and is a *necessary* condition for propositional discourse then it must be a necessary, synthetic proposition, which is precisely what is denied by Realists such as Moore and Anderson. Realism, despite Anderson's own beliefs to the contrary, is not a doctrine which refutes or demonstrates the 'unintelligibility' of Idealism, without lapsing into 'unintelligibility' itself.

However Moore's 'refutation of Idealism' was also held to turn on the question of relations. Absolute Idealists such as Bradley had argued that each thing is only 'partially' real in being part of the content of the 'Absolute' as a systematic conception of the categorical nature of reality. In particular Bradley argued that the terms of a relationship are internal to the relation which implied that there is no distinction between qualities and relations, assuming that there was one, ultimate universal in which all things are contained and are no more than partial and contradictory 'appearances' of the Absolute. In reaction to this theory of Absolute Idealism, Moore argued that the definition of Idealism as 'Esse is percipi' implied that there are three possible interpretations that can be given in terms of the experience of an object. Taking the example of a blue object, he argued that firstly it may be thought that blue alone exists, but this he regards as unproblematic for if this is the case then 'consciousness', as that which experiences the blue object, must also exist. Secondly, as on the Idealist view, he argued that it could be held that consciousness alone exists and in this case the object is regarded as the content or 'mental image' of a sensation which is in a necessary relationship with the sensation. However Moore argued that this view denies the independent existence of the object and its qualities and therefore there is no reason to believe that such 'images' do in fact exist. Finally such a definition may be taken to mean that both consciousness and blue exist and

this he regards as the true and correct analysis of a sensation. That is, a sensation is really a case of knowing or experiencing and the relation between consciousness and its object must be an external and contingent relation. However while there is little doubt that Moore has provided a refutation of subjective Idealism where all objects are no more than 'images' or 'ideas' of certain sensations, it is questionable whether he has provided a thorough refutation of Absolute Idealism, for there is no reason to believe that an Absolute Idealist is necessarily committed to the representationalist theory of knowledge which Moore assumes they have. It would be quite consistent for an Absolute Idealist such as Henry Jones to argue that objects exist independently of our perceptions of them but still maintain that what they have in common are categorical forms such as causality, universality, particularity, etc. However it is these categorical forms or 'ideas' which are the main concern of the Absolute Idealist and the Realist, emphasis on the objective existence of qualities in no way 'refutes' the Idealist characterisation of the logical or 'Ideal' status of the categories. Moore's 'argument' then, consists of assuming that all Idealism is necessarily subjective idealism and that a sufficient refutation of it would involve no more than pointing to the obvious fact that the object exists independently of our experience of it. However as Samuel Alexander observed, the 'naive' Realist's postulation or assumption of the independent objectivity of things is merely an evasion or escape from the belief that all we know is ideas.¹

The logical defence of Moore's account of external relations was concisely presented by Russell in his theory of 'logical atomism' where he argued that any fact has the logical form $x/R/y$ with x and y not being reducible to or inferable from the relation R . Although such a view was an explicit statement of the Realist doctrine of external relations, Russell added the significant proviso that $x/R/y$ is also a 'unity' which can only be known through analysis. Although Russell believed that such a view was a sufficient refutation of Bradley's doctrine of internal relations, on the basis of this view Russell was forced to accept a theory of 'pure particulars' which were as 'ultimate' as Bradley's conception of the Absolute. Russell argued that these 'particulars' are not known through experience, but are only known *inferentially* as the limits of analysis, which is remarkably similar, although opposed to, Bradley's view that the Absolute is only known inferentially by the method of synthesis. Bradley was correct then in detecting an inconsistency in Russell's account of external relations, for on Bradley's account the terms in a relationship are internal to the relation only when the relation is a categorical 'idea'. However Russell's doctrine of external relations implied that no term in a relationship can be known in terms of its categorical or universal features, for any account of the categorical features of things could only be known through the Idealist method of synthesis and the denial of the possibility of such categorical features of things would imply the

¹ Alexander 'The Basis of Realism' *op cit* p 286

return to a Humean scepticism. As argued above, both Bradley and Russell assume a conception of 'ultimacy' in their conception of particularity or universality as logical entities which were, in different ways, the foundations for their respective theories. Although it has been a distinctive feature of twentieth century analytic philosophy that it has been opposed to *any* form of systematic philosophy, it is clear that whatever reasons may be expoused for rejecting such an enterprise, in terms of the atomistic interpretation of external relations, there can be no *logical* justification for such a rejection.

However Russell's atomistic account of external relations was not the only view of external relations presented at this time and John Anderson accepted the pluralistic doctrine of external relations articulated by the American New Realists who simply argued that in any relationship $a/R/b$, the terms a and b exist independently of each other and of the relation R . On Anderson's view, the logical form $a/R/b$ did not simply constitute a 'unity' which is then known through analysis as Russell had argued, but constituted both the universality of a thing where any object is comprised of other independent things in relation to each other and the particularity of a thing where any object stands in certain spatio-temporal relations to other objects. For Anderson, the whole dispute between Realism and Idealism turned on the issue of relations and he argued that Idealism failed because of the doctrine of constitutive or internal relations.¹ Anderson argued that the doctrine of internal relations implied the identification of qualities and relations and the rejection of this view could only be demonstrated by the defence of the doctrine of external relations and the distinction between relations and qualities. However much of Anderson's, and Alexander's, philosophical Realism was a systematic and formal description of reality and if such an account implies the doctrine of internal relations, then there may be some truth in Alexander's view that relations are both internal and external, although this was explicitly rejected by Anderson in his defence of Realism. As argued above, if objects have a categorical or formal nature, then there must be a relation between these objects and their categories. However if this relation is an external relation then these categorical forms must be held in some sense to *exist*. Such an assertion is not only inconsistent with Anderson's claim that the notion of *form* is non-material, but the treatment of categories as *existing* implies that they occupy their own particular 'realm of existence' which re-introduces the traditional problems of Plato's 'objective' Idealism. Alternatively to treat categories as *qualities* of things would appear to imply that they are merely contingent features of things and not as the necessary and *a priori* features of things which they appear to be. The only alternative to this dilemma is to treat the relations between the categorical forms and the things that they are categories of, as *internal* relations. Although such a conclusion is inconsistent with Anderson's view

¹ Anderson *op.cit* p 42

that all relations are external, it is ironic that such a thorough logician as Anderson overlooked the obvious error that even if Idealism and its associated doctrine of internal relations had been 'refuted', the conclusion which he and other Realist's drew, that all relations are external, is simply an invalid inference. To deny 'All X are Y' does not imply that 'No X are Y', for it is still possible that 'Some X are Y' is true and the falsity of the proposition that 'All relations are internal' is quite consistent with the truth of the proposition that 'Some relations are internal'. It is a significant feature of Anderson's philosophy that while in some areas he was rigorous in the application of his logical theories, he never turned his logical acumen on the very foundations of that logic.

The only consistent conclusion to the 'refutation of Idealism' where 'Esse is percipi' is held to be false either empirically or because it is self-contradictory is that Realism defined as the proposition 'Esse is not percipi' is either a contingent, synthetic proposition or a necessary, synthetic proposition. If it is the latter then it clearly contradicts Moore's own refutation of Idealism which asserted that there can be no such propositions, while if it is the former then there are only two possible meanings that it can have. If it is simply a particular proposition then if it is true, it is trivial because it admits the possibility of the truth of its contradictory and therefore does not *refute* Idealism. Alternatively, if it is a universal proposition then either it has a contradictory as a matter of empirical fact which would be unknowable in terms of experience or it does not have an intelligible contradictory in which case it must be a necessary synthetic proposition and therefore inconsistent with the 'refutation of Idealism'. Any Realism which is based on Moore's 'refutation' or similar considerations must be rejected as either trivial, unknowable or inconsistent with the refutation of Idealism and therefore the relationship between Realism and Idealism cannot be one of contradiction. If then, 'refutations' in philosophy do not function the way that Moore and other Realist's believe, it is perhaps worth noting Hegel's own sentiments on the nature of 'refutation'.

...a so-called basic proposition or principle of philosophy, if true, is also false, just because it is *only* a principle. It is, therefore, easy to refute it. The refutation consists in pointing out its defect; and it is defective because it is only the universal or principle, is only the beginning. If the refutation is thorough, it is derived and developed from the principle itself, not accomplished by counter-assertions and random thoughts from outside.¹

A 'refutation', according to Hegel, consists in the demonstration of the deficiency of a general proposition or principle and such a demonstration is straight forward

¹ Hegel, G.W.F. The Phenomenology of Spirit Oxford 1977 p 13

enough. It is achieved by the postulation of its negative or contradictory and this is precisely the method Moore adopts. However the more thorough 'refutation' is achieved by the development of the principle itself which completes this deficiency, where the errors of a principle become explicit and this is the contribution which John Anderson makes to the logical history of Realism. While Moore was content with merely 'refuting' Idealism by positing its Realist counter-assertion, Anderson attempted to extend and develop Realism as a logical principle based on the doctrine of external relations, where it comes to have the appearance of a complete and self-sufficient theory. However Anderson's Realism was neither complete nor self-sufficient and the *development* of his philosophy, in extending the implications of certain critical difficulties of his philosophy, leads away from his Realist principles and towards the Absolute Idealism of his youth.

c. Beyond Realism and Idealism

If the relationship between Realism and Idealism is not one of contradiction, then the content of philosophy is neither Realist nor Idealist but is a conception which is both Realist and Idealist. When Idealism is defined as 'Esse is Percipi', it was commonly held to be a necessary synthetic proposition which identified the subject and the predicate of the proposition and was based on the doctrine of internal relations where relations are internal to, or dependent upon, their terms. This definition of Idealism was commonly assumed to be contradicted and refuted by the definition of Realism as 'Esse is not Percipi' which was held to be a contingent, synthetic proposition, which distinguished between the subject and predicate of the proposition and was based on the doctrine of external relations where relations are external to, or independent from, their terms. However Realism itself suffers from its own 'refutation', for it can be shown to be either trivial, unknowable or inconsistent with the 'refutation of Idealism' and thus provides no logical or empirical grounds for believing it to be true. Therefore if neither Realism nor Idealism are true universal propositions, then they must both be particular propositions and since both purport to describe the universal nature of reality, there must be some other universal proposition which is true and is 'beyond' the doctrinal attitudes of Realism and Idealism. To elucidate the nature of this proposition it is necessary to re-examine the logical basis of both Realism and Idealism in terms of the question of relations.

The issue of relations has been the stumbling block for both Realist and Idealist accounts of philosophy, for Idealist's had held that a relation must be internal to its terms if it is to 'relate' the terms while the Realist's held that a relation must be external to its terms if there is to be a real difference between the terms and if the relation itself is to be real. However if Realism and Idealism are not contradictory positions, then it is quite consistent for both positions to be true and the basis for the

resolution of this conflict lies in the meaning of 'terms' involved in the relationship. If the term in a relation is held to be an existent object with its associated contingent qualities, then the relation between the terms must be an external relation. The relation between 'blue' and the 'flower' or between 'me' and the 'blue flower' must, if there is to be any account of the objectivity of things, be an external and contingent relation. However if the term in a relation is a formal category, then the relation between the terms must be internal. The relations between an object and a category or between the categories themselves cannot be external relations for if so, then the categories must 'exist', which is to deny their *formal* characterisation and hence relapse into Platonic objective idealism with its associated difficulties of the 'third man' argument. Hence the relations between universality and particularity or between Space and Time cannot be external relations and must therefore be internal relations. Therefore there is no inconsistency in arguing that relations are external when they are between things but are internal when they are between formal categories. The consistent and systematic development of this view of relations implies metaphysical, ethical and aesthetic theories which are 'beyond' the common doctrinal attitudes of Realism and Idealism, a consideration of which illuminates the question of the place of John Anderson in the history of philosophy. In considering this issue, it will be argued that while there are certain criticisms to be made of Anderson's philosophical theories, the systematic working out of the implications of these criticisms indicate directions in which Anderson's philosophy can be fully developed. Although such developments may at times appear to be inconsistent with some of Anderson's expressed pronouncements to the contrary, they are nonetheless consistent with the previous criticisms of Anderson's philosophy and are attempts to resolve the difficulties involved in these criticisms in a manner consistent with Anderson's conception of a systematic and historical conception of philosophy.

The issue of a metaphysical theory whose content is 'beyond' Realism and Idealism involves the distinct consideration of the three major aspects of that theory as involving epistemology, ontology and logic. Epistemology has traditionally been concerned with the issue of how we know - whether by reason or experience - with Empiricism being the Realist epistemology of knowing as sensory and Rationalism being the Idealist epistemology of knowing as rational or conceptual. Hence the empiricist typically regards knowledge as being 'built up' out of sensory atoms, eg *sensa*, while the rationalist regards knowledge as being logically based on some firm and indubitable foundation such as the 'cogito' of Descartes or the 'Absolute' of the British Idealists. Anderson sought to avoid both of these errors by arguing that 'knowledge' is simply a question of the direct relation to things which are both simple and complex and which have formal categorical features. However it has been argued that Anderson's Realist epistemological theory is inconsistent with his empiricist ontology and a fully developed epistemological theory which is consistent with his empiricist ontological theory and which the difficulties of traditional

empiricism and rationalism, must be a dualist theory. One candidate for this dualist theory of epistemology is the phenomenological theory of Edmund Husserl and one curious effect of Anderson's rejection of different ways of knowing was his *ignoring* of Husserl's phenomenology. Given that there is at least a *prima facie* case for a theoretical consistency between realism and phenomenology, it is curious that although Anderson must have known of Husserl's work from as early as 1934 when there was an extended examination of Husserl's phenomenology in the A.I.P.P. by Professor MacKellar Stewart at Adelaide, Anderson never mentioned Husserl's work even though there is a fleeting reference to Husserl's notion of *erlebinis* in Anderson's 1934 article, 'Mind as Feeling'.¹ Although there is no *logical* reason why Anderson should have considered Husserl's work in the development of his own philosophy, the fact that Anderson chose to *ignore* Husserl's work is indicative of his narrow conception of epistemology and is illustrative of a serious defect in his philosophy - one might call it a 'phenomenological blindness' - whereby if he did not understand a certain view, he would simply pay no attention to it. W.R. Boyce Gibson gave a clear outline of Husserl's phenomenology in his 1923 article 'The Problem of the Real and the Ideal in the Phenomenology of Husserl'.² Boyce Gibson argued that Husserl's central contention is that the two main orders of 'real fact' and 'ideal essence' are intrinsically separate and that Phenomenology has no interest with existing reality, but is exclusively concerned with the realm of 'pure essence'.

Phenomenology is exclusively concerned with pure essences, more particularly with the essential nature of that unreal form of Being he calls Pure Consciousness. These essences are, however, on his view, quite genuine objects, perceivable through a special kind of Intuition, which Husserl, in opposition to Sensory Intuition, calls Essential or Categorical Intuition, a form of intuition peculiar to Phenomenology.³

Setting aside Anderson's criticisms of the notion of a 'pure consciousness' or the separation of reality into two separate realms, it is important to recognise that Husserl's phenomenology is primarily a theory of the knowledge of the categories which was one of the main difficulties for Anderson's Realist epistemological theory. If, as argued above, a dualist epistemological theory does not need to be based on a 'faculty' view of consciousness or an ontological dualism, then it may be that

¹ McKellar Stewart, J. 'Husserl's Phenomenology' A.I.P.P. XI, 1933, pp 221 - 231 and 'Husserl's Phenomenological Method' A.I.P.P. XII, 1934, pp 62 - 72; Anderson op cit p 74; For the *prima facie* case of a conceptual relationship between Realism and Phenomenology see Chisholm, R. (ed) Realism and the background to Phenomenology London, 1960.

² Boyce Gibson, W.R. 'The Problem of Real and Ideal in the Phenomenology of Husserl' Mind XXXIV, (N.S.), 1925, pp 311 - 333

³ ibid pp 313 - 314

Husserl's phenomenology provides the means for resolving the difficulties of Anderson's epistemological Realism. Husserl's method for knowing this 'realm' of categorial essences is that of *reduction* and as Boyce Gibson argues this method does not imply the negation or doubting of the natural world, but is simply a 'bracketing' or 'setting aside' of the natural world for the purposes of the phenomenological study of the ideal essences.

The main reduction or purification of phenomena is that which brackets or suspends the whole world of nature. The bracketing, as we have just said, does not imply any denial of the world nor any doubt as to its existence. It simply suspends as irrelevant to our phenomenological purpose every judgement concerning existence in time and space, and all the findings of Natural Science.¹

This 'bracketing' or 'suspension' of the natural world is important in ensuring that the considerations of the natural world, including *my* place in that world, play no role into the phenomenological investigation of the ideal or categorial essences and it is one of the foundations of Husserl's theory of phenomenology that no account of the 'phenomenology of ideas' can be undertaken in terms of what he described as the 'natural stand-point': "from the natural stand-point nothing can be known but the natural world".² The importance of Husserl's phenomenological theory for Anderson's Realism is that this 'natural stand-point' can be regarded as a Realist account of things which are considered solely in terms of the distinction between qualities and relations. However Anderson's Realist philosophy was not merely a consideration of the objective nature of things, but was also a detailed consideration of the categorial account of reality in terms of Space-Time, the *formal* nature of which Anderson insisted could not be explained in terms of material things. The similarity of Anderson's view to Husserl's position should not be overlooked here, for while both insist on the importance of an objective view of things, they both also recognise that a formal or categorial account of things cannot be given in terms of things themselves. However the difference between Anderson and Husserl should not be overlooked either for, as argued above, it is a *criticism* of Anderson's ontological theory that it implies an epistemological dualism, whereas in the case of Husserl his phenomenology is based on the assumption of such a dualism. The relevance of Husserl's phenomenology to Anderson's Realist philosophy is that Anderson's primary logical categories of Place and Time can be interpreted as phenomenological modes of experience in a manner which is illustrative of the way that Anderson's philosophy can be further extended.³ While such a treatment could

1 *ibid* p 318

2 Husserl quoted in McKellar Stewart 'Husserl's Phenomenology' *op cit* pp 223 - 224

3 In this section I draw on the recent work of Dr. B.C. Birchall of the Philosophy Department of the University of New England. Although having published little in recent years, Dr.

be regarded as a departure from Anderson's trenchant criticisms of 'rationalism', it is a departure which has been made necessary by certain inconsistencies in Anderson's own theories, the resolution of which may be regarded as a *development* of his philosophy. Dr. Birchall has expressed the tension between Anderson's epistemological and ontological theories and the relevance of phenomenology to the resolution of this difficulty in a particularly clear fashion.

Anderson's empiricism is clear and unambiguous - or is it? There is only one way of *knowing* the world: as spatio-temporal and in propositional form. But is knowing the world, as Anderson defines it, the only way phenomenologically? We can agree that in so far as a person relates *to* the world in the form a/R/b, then he relates to the world as spatio-temporal and 'knows' it in the form of the proposition. That may well be the only way of relating to, but is relating to the only way? Curiously, Anderson does not address this question.¹

Anderson's empiricism as an epistemology of belief, is clearly a way of 'relating to' the world as spatio-temporal, although it is questionable whether it is the *only* way of knowing the world, for as argued above, Anderson's epistemological theory rather than refuting the possibility of a dualist theory of knowledge, in fact presupposes such a theory.

In the modality of believing, we talk about the world, understand it *in terms of* form. In the modality of knowing, however, we do not so much talk about as talk *with* the world, where content functions as form... As long as Anderson takes believing that X is or is not Y to be the only way of *knowing* he has no place in his epistemology for anything other than what can be talked *about* or described. He has no place, in other words, for definition and thus knowledge or form... Knowing, as the way of relating *with* the world, which is to say, experience as formed and forming, is not another way of relating *to* the world, nor does it imply another *kind* of being. All that it implies is that believing or relating to the world is not the only account to be offered of *episteme*.²

Birchall has written several hundred conceptual sketches or 'ideograms', some of which deal directly with the development of Anderson's philosophy in various areas. As these 'ideograms' are not widely available, I have attached some of the more relevant ones in Appendix 2.

1 Birchall, B.C. 'Ways of Knowing' p 1

2 ibid p 3 - 4

This epistemological distinction between 'relating to' and 'relating with' therefore provides the means for understanding reality *in terms of* form and for understanding reality *as* form. On such an account 'relating to' the world can be regarded as equivalent to Husserl's 'natural stand-point' and Anderson's Realist epistemology where the object is known independently of the subject and of the relation between the two. However such a 'stand-point' cannot provide an account of how the categorical or formal nature of reality is known, a difficulty which can be resolved in terms of what Husserl describes as the 'phenomenology of ideas' and Birchall describes as 'relating with' the object. Although Anderson would argue that such a rationalist or dualist theory would imply the existence of the 'essence' of things which cannot be known, Birchall argues that this rejection of distinct ways of knowing is only valid if 'essence' is assumed to be a thing, but not if it is merely another way of knowing the same thing.

Knowing something to be the case is the only way of knowing, however, only if *Essence* cannot be grasped as a distinct way of knowing, but must be grasped as something known, i.e., as a distinct being. How does Anderson show that *Essence* cannot be grasped as a distinct way of knowing? By his argument that distinct ways of knowing imply the incoherent 'rationalism' of distinct ways of being. But this implication only holds if *Essence* is taken to be something known or a distinct thing, i.e., only if it is assumed, from the outset, that there is only one way of knowing and that is knowing something to be the case.¹

Anderson's rejection of the rationalist conception of 'essence' can itself be rejected as a failure to recognise that if this notion of 'essence' is equivalent to the notion of a categorical form, then Anderson's empiricism as a theory of Space-Time and categories must likewise be rejected as 'rationalistic'. Although this is an expressed departure from Anderson's defence of empiricism and criticism of rationalism, it cannot be assumed that we must reject Anderson's views *in toto*, but rather that we can recognise that rationalism and empiricism are 'moments' in the thematic definition of philosophy. In an important development of Anderson's philosophy, Birchall argues that this phenomenological distinction between 'relating to' and 'relating with' can be clarified in terms of Anderson's logical distinction between Place and Time.

In respect of the philosophical, empiricism emphasises the phenomenology of Being or Place whereas rationalism emphasises the phenomenology of Essence or Time. The empiricist emphasis is the

¹ Birchall, B.C. 'Whats wrong with Rationalism' p 2

claim that there is only one way of knowing that something is the case... The rationalist emphasis is the claim that there are distinct ways of knowing and that knowing something to be the case is only one way of knowing. ...Once *Being* and *Essence* or *Place* and *Time* are appreciated and acknowledged as phenomenological modes or modes of experience (as Kant stressed in his *Transcendental Aesthetic*), the one-sidedness vanishes. Empiricism and Rationalism no longer appear as conflicting doctrines, but appear as phases or moments in the exposition or definition of the philosophical.¹

On this phenomenological account of epistemology, empiricism is 'relating to' the object in terms of the phenomenology of *Place* which emphasises that there is only one way of knowing something *to be the case*, while rationalism is 'relating with' the object in terms of the phenomenology of *Time* which emphasises that knowing something to be the case is only *one* way of knowing. Hence the two errors of empiricism and rationalism as the attempt to reduce knowledge to either the logically perceived or the logically conceived, are resolved in the recognition of the universality of knowing as a relating which is not reducible to either the relater or the related.

Once we move to the modality of *Time*, the distinction between believer and believed, and the pre-eminence of the *issue*, fade away. Taking the place of the issue, you could say is the *theme* or *definition*: that whose nature it is to be known. Anderson, needless to say, would have no truck with anything whose nature it is to be known, accusing it of relativism; of defining something in terms of its relations. But that is to beg the phenomenological question. Relativism is a confusion, but only in the modality of believing or relating to. It cannot be used as a test, in other words, of knowing or relating *with*, without assuming that believing or relating to is the only way of *episteme*.²

When epistemology is conceived in this way, the opposition between the subject and object, the knower and the known, important as it is for the understanding of the object qua object, is reconciled in terms of the process of *knowing* as the unity of both in the understanding of the object as categorical or formal. Hence insofar as Idealism is conceived as a theory of categories or 'ideal essences', then the conceiving of these 'ideas' is a relating *with* the 'idea' which is internal to the mind, while insofar as Realism is conceived as a theory of objects or 'real existence', then

1 loc cit

2 Birchall, B.C. 'Ways of Knowing' p 4

this theory is relating *to* objects, the relations between which would be external and contingent.

Ontology has been traditionally defined as a theory of Being and Anderson's empiricist ontology can be regarded as a significant contribution to this tradition. The great strength of Anderson's empiricism as an ontological theory was his insistence on 'one way of being' as a formal or categorical theory of things, which implied the rejection of any ontological 'dualism' or 'naturalistic' interpretation of the dialectic. As Anderson argued, any theory of reality which holds that there is more than one way of existing or being must give an account of the relation between these 'realities' and in so doing admits that there is in fact only one way of existing or being. Anderson's ontological theory is also a systematic eradication of Alexander's 'dialectical' interpretation of nature as 'emergent' and a defence of his theory of a universe of Space-Time governed by contingent causal laws. Hence any account of a 'dialectical' process in nature must demonstrate how such natural processes proceed by *contradiction* rather than by the operation of contingent and deterministic laws. Although Anderson's determinist, pluralist and objective account of ontology can be retained without difficulty, his empiricist account of the formal nature of the categories is inconsistent with his acceptance of the Realist doctrine of external relations. However if Anderson's view that all relations are external is false, then there is no difficulty in providing an account of the relations between the categories in terms of internal relations and the adoption of a phenomenological theory of distinct ways of knowing can provide the basis for such an account. The phenomenology of Time is an account of the investigation of the categories as 'ideal essences' and such an account, as a 'relating with' the object, can be provided in terms of internal relations. This account of the phenomenology of Time must be distinguished from the 'natural stand-point' and the phenomenology of Place provides an account of objects as 'real facts' and such an account, as a 'relating to' the object, can be provided in terms of external relations. However the existence of this epistemological dualism does not imply the existence of an ontological dualism and Anderson's empiricist ontology remains unaffected by criticisms of dualism or relativism.

The conflict between Realism and Idealism found its *logical* expression in the opposition between Anderson's Positivism as a Realist logic of propositions and Bradley's Absolutism as an Idealist logic of 'Ideas'. However Anderson's real philosophical and logical opponent of the modern period of philosophy is not Bradley but Hegel, and certainly Anderson did devote a not insubstantial amount of effort into meeting the theories of Hegel from a Realist and objectivist standpoint, although eventually appreciating him as the only philosopher of the modern period to oppose the eclecticism and subjectivism typical of modern philosophy. However Anderson's own positivist theory has been seen to require two logical modifications -

the definitional copula and the thematic predicate - the adoption of which solves the problems of the 'false proposition' and the 'unspeakability of the categories', but yet which resembles the Hegelian method of dialectic closely. Firstly a predicate was said to be thematic when the terms in the predicate are universal terms which defines the subject of the proposition. Hence when the meaning of the terms in a proposition are referential in their meaning then the proposition is a contingent and empirical proposition. However when the meaning of the terms are formal categories, then their meaning cannot be given in terms of explicit reference to *things* for to do so would be to deny their *formal* or non-material nature. As Baker argued, the account of the meaning of such terms must be in terms of their universal meaning which, it has been argued, can only be provided in terms of the doctrine of internal relations. For example the meaning of 'universality' can only be given in terms of its relation to the meaning of 'particularity', with the meaning of both given in terms of their place in the category of quantity. However since such categories are formal or non-material features of things, such relations cannot be external relations and must be internal. Therefore if the thematic predicate defines the phases or moments of the thematic structure of a thing and the terms in such predicates are categories which are internally related to other categories, then thematic predicates must be relational predicates which express the moments or phases in the definition of the categories. If this account is correct then it appears to be little different to Hegel's account of the dialectic as the logical method for discussing the categories. In the Phenomenology of Spirit Hegel argued that in argumentative or representational thinking, the subject of the proposition is fixed and unmoving and the predicates are related to the subjects by mere chance or accident. However this 'propositional' form of argumentation cannot provide the means for the understanding of the Notion or Concept for Hegel argued that on such an account, when the subject moves into the predicate it suffers a 'counter-thrust' back into the subject. As he argued, "...the general nature of the judgement or proposition, which involves the distinction of the subject and predicate, is destroyed by the speculative proposition, and the proposition of identity which the former becomes contains the counter-thrust against that subject-predicate relation."¹ In the speculative proposition then, the distinction between the subject and the predicate is 'destroyed' in an identity which is not a destruction of their difference, but is a unity which emerges as a harmony. What is significant about Hegel's account of the dialectic is that it addresses one of the issues that is so problematic for Anderson's positivism, namely the unspeakability of the categories.² The *counterthrust* that the contingent proposition undergoes, occurs precisely because a

¹ Hegel The Phenomenology of Spirit p 38

² For a fuller discussion of the relation between Anderson and Hegel in terms of the question of form see Birchall, B.C. 'The Problem of Form' International Studies in Philosophy 15, 1, 1983, pp 15 - 40 which is discussed in detail in my M.A. thesis 'The Logical Structure of Realism', University of New England.

'propositional' account of reality where the subject and predicate are related by *accident*, is inadequate to account for the discourse of these categorical concepts. The categories are not *things* which are opposed in terms of logical contradiction and separated by the subject and predicate functions of the proposition and the copula of existence, but are relational meanings which move from the subject into the predicate and then back into the subject again. Hence to define particularity in terms of universality in terms of their relational meanings, implies that the predicate of universality can also be defined in terms of particularity and therefore undergoes a 'counterthrust' back to the subject.

However this analysis, if correct, raises the second problem of an adequate account of propositional discourse about the categories, that of the copula. The traditional dispute between Realism and Idealism centred on the opposition between the copula of identity and the copula of difference with the Idealist asserting that 'esse' is identical with 'percipi' while the Realist denied this and asserted that 'esse' is different to 'percipi'. On Anderson's account, the copula of a proposition is a contingent copula, for the only intelligible form of discourse is the contingent or empirical proposition which has the form 'S is or is not P'. However the Idealist was also accused by the Realist of upholding both the copula of identity and the copula of necessity, with little attention being paid to the copula of definition, which Anderson supported and interpreted in terms of the 'as'. However the definitional copula can relate the subject with the predicate without asserting identity. For example the assertion 'Man is a rational animal' can be taken to mean 'Man is defined as a rational animal'. (The 'is' in the proposition simply means that you can have other definitions of 'man' while the 'as' means that it is in terms of 'rational animal' that man is said to be defined). However we can contrast this definition with an assertion of identity such as 'The morning star is the evening star'. This cannot be taken to mean that the 'morning star' is *defined* as the 'evening star' for this definition would imply that the 'evening star' is defined as the 'morning star' and would therefore be tautological and meaningless. What is being asserted is not a definition, but is an assertion of ordinary identity. The only meaningful definition of either is to say that both are identical with Venus and that this can be *defined* as the second planet in the solar system, which, as it happens, appears at different places and times from the perspective of the earth. Hence the 'is' of identity differs from the 'as' of definition for the 'is' of identity implies that there can be no relation of difference between the subject and the predicate of the proposition while the 'as' of definition implies that there is at least the difference of genus and species terms. However there remains the question of what difference there is between necessary propositions and definitional propositions. A necessary proposition which is also synthetic was held by Realists to identify two distinct synthetic terms which was held to be self-contradictory as it denied the objectivity of the terms. However the empirical propositions of the Realist philosopher are incapable of providing an

account of the relation between the categories, for to attempt to treat the categories as related by existence is to treat them as existing things and this is inconsistent with their formal nature. However if necessity is not taken to imply identity but is understood in terms of the *a priori* features of things, then the issue is more complicated. Hence to assert that there are *a priori* or categorical features of objects does not imply that the categories are to be identified with their objects and even if they were, then this would not imply a denial of the objectivity of things. The *a priori* or categorical features of objects are those features of objects which are involved in the definition of objects qua objects and if this is the case then we can have *a priori* or necessary synthetic propositions understood as propositions of definition but which do not assert the identity of the subject and the predicate. To be able to 'speak about' the categories, the copula of the proposition must be the definitional copula, 'as' and this copula is *necessary* insofar as it relates the universal meanings of the categories with other categorical concepts, but does not *identify* the meaning of the terms involved.¹

This conclusion has special importance in terms of the general question of the relation between Realism and Idealism. In respect of this dispute, it has been argued that the Idealist identification of 'esse' and 'percipi' as a necessary synthetic proposition was *not* refuted by the Realist insistence on the separation of 'esse' and 'percipi' in terms of the empirical or contingent copula. Hence Anderson's account of the form of empirical propositions as 'S is or is not P' while being an adequate form for discussing the objective existence of things, is incapable of providing a logical account of categorical discourse. However once the terms in the proposition are categorical or universal terms, the copula of existence is no longer relevant and can be replaced with the copula of definition. The traditional opposition between 'Esse *is* percipi' and 'Esse *is not* percipi' can now be resolved in terms of the 'as' of definition and the proposition 'Esse *as* Percipi' asserts a necessary connection between 'being' and 'being thought' without asserting an identity between the two. That such a position is implicit of Anderson's own position can be demonstrated by a consideration of the proposition 'Situations are propositional' which either asserts an Idealist identification between 'being' (as a situational account of things) and 'being thought' (as a propositional account of things) or asserts a *necessary definition* of situations as propositional. Anderson has the alternative of either admitting that such a fundamental statement of his own philosophy is in fact an

¹ In discussing this notion of the definitional 'as' with Dr. Birchall, he has insisted that the correct form of a definitional proposition is 'X conceives [S as P]'. Although such a form may be thought to suggest either subjectivism or relativism, Dr. Birchall denies this arguing that the form 'S as P' is only intelligible in terms of the conceiving of it, which does not reduce the truth of the definition to the subject which defines it. Indeed one important reason for making this qualification is to reinstate the phenomenological distinction between perceiving that S is or is not P and conceiving S as P. However the subtleties involved in the thorough explication of this argument would lead away from the main argument of this section.

assertion of Idealism or arguing that such a proposition is in fact a definition which asserts a necessary connection between the subject and predicate, without asserting identity. Such an account is neither Realist nor Idealist but retains the Idealist insistence on necessity and is consistent with, and a development from, the Realist insistence of the copula of contingency.

In terms of aesthetics, the traditional conflict between Realism and Idealism turned on the issue of whether beauty was a relation or a quality and with the rejection of the contradictory nature between Realism and Idealism, this issue can be re-examined in greater detail. In his writings on aesthetics Anderson rejected relativism and subjectivism, and treated beauty as both a quality of things and a thematic form. However Anderson's notion of theme has been criticised as relativistic and the resolution of this difficulty involves the phenomenological theory of distinct ways of knowing referred to earlier. Whether Anderson is supporting Joyce's presentation of an 'eternal essence' or criticising Bennett's conception of *Ulysses* being 'about' Hell, he is insisting that works of art are not to be understood as objective content, but are to be experienced as aesthetic theme or form. Re-inforcing his earlier argument that Anderson's epistemological theory needs to be interpreted phenomenologically, Dr. Birchall has argued that Anderson's aesthetic theory of 'essences' is in complete contrast to his propositional or empiricist view of 'being' where there is only one way of knowing and that is believing something to be the case.

In Art and Reality, he (Anderson) says of aesthetic contemplation that it "might be considered as the finding in the instance of A what is involved in Xness (whatness)". Now aesthetic contemplation is, at the very least, a way of experiencing. But it's not an experience in the category of *Being* where we're concerned with questions of existence and non-existence. It's an experience in the category of *Essence* where we're concerned with questions of whatness, theme or definition. Aesthetic contemplation is a thematic as distinct from a propositional experience. Even though Anderson stresses the uniqueness of aesthetic contemplation, he fails to acknowledge the apparent conflict between that view and his empiricist position. Distinct ways of knowing has to be denied. Yet distinct ways of knowing has to be adopted if we're to explain Art and aesthetic contemplation! ¹

This theory of distinct ways of knowing, as suggested earlier, is a phenomenological theory based on the distinction between Place and Time. The phenomenology of

¹ Birchall, B.C. 'Whats Wrong With Rationalism' p 1

Place emphasises the objective content of a work of art, its arrangement of certain colours, sounds or shapes, with an emphasis on the distinct relation between the perceiver and the perceived. However within the phenomenology of Time, the importance of this distinction between the subject and the object fades and the experiencing of the work of art as *thematic* is pre-eminent in articulating the development of the 'phases' or 'moments' of the work of art.

To speak of 'moments' or 'leading features' of wrath is not to speak of characteristics or properties of wrath. It's to speak of wrath as composed of these 'moments' or 'leading features'. And if we're to avoid mere juxtaposition and make sense of composition, we have no option, I would suggest, but to move to the phenomenology of Time and an investigation of ways or forms of experiencing.¹

Such a phenomenological distinction also makes possible a better understanding of meaning in aesthetics and particularly the meaning of metaphor. As argued earlier, the meaning of a metaphor is not something that can be described or explained in terms of its reference or place, for such an interpretation misses the important point that a metaphor is not *about* anything. The appreciation of the meaning of a metaphor, in other words, can only be found in terms of the phenomenological experiencing of its thematic meaning as a movement from the literal to the metaphorical.

The literal or mundane is the phenomenology of propositional reference and description. Here we are dealing entirely with things-in-the-world; ...Such a modality is relating to the world, where the world appears in its real otherness. ...The meta-phor takes us beyond (or is at the same time the 'taking beyond') such a referential and descriptive world of otherness. The meta-phor or extra-mundane is the phenomenology of meaningful realisation or revelation. Here we are not dealing entirely with things-in-the-world ...but are treating various features of the world as a notation to be *per-formed* or *enacted*.²

This phenomenological theory of Place and Time therefore provides the means for resolving the major difficulties of Anderson's aesthetic theory and on such an account, aesthetics is not an objective study of the beautiful as a characteristic or

¹ Birchall, B.C. 'Art and Ideality' 3

² Birchall, B.C. 'The Untranslatability of Metaphor' (his emphasis)

quality of things as Anderson had believed, but is an objective study of the beautiful as "...the *form* of certain experiences or per-formances".¹

Similarly in ethical theory, the traditional conflict between Realism and Idealism centred on the interpretation of goodness as either a relation or a quality. In his own ethical theory Anderson rejected relativist and subjectivist theories of ethics, although he was ambiguous as to the precise nature of goodness and again this confusion can be explained in terms of the phenomenological distinction between Place and Time. When goodness is conceived of as the quality of production it can be regarded scientifically in terms of the phenomenology of Place. However when goodness is conceived of as the relation of liberty it can be regarded historically in terms of the phenomenology of Time. History then, understood as an art rather than a science, defends the inter-relatedness of the themes of history and particularly the history of philosophy and it is in this sense that Anderson's objection to the Hegelian dialectic can be criticised. Anderson's objection to Hegel's method of dialectic was that one could not specify how any 'phase' or 'moment' of the dialectic is a phase of its movement. However in his aesthetic writings Anderson argued that the 'phases' or 'moments' of a work of art can be explained in terms of its thematic development or structure. Clearly Anderson must either give up his own positive theory of aesthetic form as the development of the phases of a theme or recognise that it is possible to give an account of the dialectic in terms of the passage of its 'moments' or 'phases' in terms of the *structure* of the dialectic itself and given that Anderson's notion of theme is central to his aesthetic theory, he would therefore need to reject his criticism of Hegel's dialectic. This defence of the dialectic as a social and historical force has particular implications for Anderson's rejection of Hegel's theory of a dialectical evolution of social and political institutions, for if such institutions can be interpreted thematically (and as human creations there is no reason to assume that they cannot be so interpreted) then there is no inconsistency in arguing that they develop according to their own dialectical 'phases of development'. Similarly Anderson's rejection of an Idealist view of history as a concern with its 'ends' or 'purposes' can be questioned in terms of its adequacy as a thorough-going account of history. For example John Passmore in discussing the role of social institutions in history has argued in a typically Andersonian manner. "Thus we ought not to ask of a social institution: 'What end or purpose does it serve?' but rather: of what conflicts is it the scene?"² While not wishing to deny this Heraclitean emphasis on conflict in human affairs, it is arguable that in understanding a certain social institution it *is* important to ask 'What end or purpose does it serve?'. Given that social institutions are the scenes of human conflict, it is arguable that it is only in terms of the 'ends' or 'purposes' which they strive after

¹ Birchall, B.C. 'Art and Ideality' p 4 (my emphasis)

² Passmore op cit p xxii

that an intelligible account can be given of how such conflicts are dealt with and therefore how such institutions in fact maintain their continuity through time. For example, the Catholic church is a social institution which has been riddled with conflict throughout its history, although such conflicts have not led to its disappearance as a social institution. To account for its continued existence, it would appear necessary to consider the 'ends' or 'purposes' that it strives after and how it deals with conflicts in terms of these ends and purposes when they do arise. The consideration of such issues not only makes intelligible the continued existence of the Catholic church itself, but also makes intelligible the creation of other social institutions such as the Protestant church when they adapt different 'ends' or 'purposes' to the ones which were initially accepted as universal. Indeed it may in fact be the case that the Hegelian theory of the dialectic, understood as a historical force, is the most suitable theory for understanding the continued existence of social institutions.

These considerations also apply in relation to Hegel's dialectical treatment of the history of philosophy for although Anderson defended *objectivity* as a theme of philosophic history, there is no inconsistency in arguing that the 'Absolute Idea' can also be a theme in the history of philosophy and it is important to note that the difference between Anderson's account of 'objective form' and Hegel's account of the 'Absolute' as constituting the theme of philosophic history is in terms of philosophic *content*. However even Anderson's account of objective form presupposes rather than denies, that form must be understood in terms of a logical or Absolute conception, for if form is held to be non-material then it cannot be understood in terms of its content. Anderson must provide *other* reasons why 'objectivity' is a better account of the theme of philosophic history than Hegel's notion of the 'Absolute', although the *thematic* nature of history implies, rather than denies, that the Hegelian method of dialectic can give an account of the history of philosophy in terms of the 'phases' or 'moments' of the 'Absolute Idea'. This tension between form and content is also central to understanding Anderson's unified conception of philosophy, for the distinction between form and content is the basis of his distinction between philosophy on the one hand and history, science and art on the other. This tension in Anderson's empiricist ontology has been succinctly summarised by Dr. Birchall.

Anderson says that Philosophy, unlike Science, is *concerned with form*. But what is it to be 'concerned with' form? Is it to know form, *as distinct from content*? If so, then surely its own form, as knowledge, would not be that of Science? Is the form of the spatio-temporal, for example, to be represented in the form of its content-particular spatio-temporal situations? Anderson has no option but to admit either that Philosophy *is* Science, that there can be no

knowledge of form and thus no form, only content, or cling to knowledge and thus existence of form, but at the cost of incorporating in his philosophy the notion of an "ultimate content" by means of which all other contents are governed. An unhappy choice, but unavoidable for the empiricist who insists that relating to the world, as spatio-temporal and in propositional form, is the only way.¹

Hence if form is to be distinct from content then it cannot be explained in terms of content, but if so, then form cannot be known in the same way as content. Alternatively if form and content are known in the same way then there can be no logical distinction between the two. Although this notion of form was important as the unifying concept in Anderson's mature philosophy, it is a notion which cannot be understood in terms of his own Realist and Empiricist suppositions. Anderson's philosophical theories cannot be fully understood in terms of a Realist and Empiricist conception of philosophy and are only intelligible as being a contribution to a conception of philosophy which is both Realist and Idealist.

d. Conclusion

The rejection of both Realism and Idealism as self-sufficient accounts of the content of philosophy implies a conception of the content of philosophy as 'beyond' Realism and Idealism and this conception of the content of philosophy is based on the rejection of the view that relations are exclusively external or internal. Relations can be regarded as external when the term in the relation is a thing or object, but can also be regarded as internal when the term in the relation is an 'idea' or form. This view of relations can be clarified by a phenomenological theory of knowledge, for the phenomenology of Place treats relations as external to their real and existing terms, while the phenomenology of Time treats relations as internal to their ideal and essential terms. However an Empiricist theory of ontology as a formal or categorical theory of reality is correct in defending the objective, determined and complex nature of things and rejecting a dualist conception of ontology and a theory of things as 'emergent' or dialectical'. In terms of logical theory, Anderson was correct in asserting that the 'proposition' is the only way in which things are discussed scientifically, but was in error in assuming that this is the only way in which things are discussed philosophically. In contrast the Hegelian dialectic is not a natural or physical process as the Scottish Hegelians believed, but can be regarded as the logical method of discussing the forms or categories, the meaning of which are internally related to each other. Similarly the Hegelian theory of the 'Absolute' is not to be understood as a logical or spiritual 'entity' as the English Idealists believed, but is the unity of the subject and object of knowledge as a relational

¹ Birchall, B.C. Ways of Knowing pp 1-2 (his emphasis)

knowing. The logical relationship between Realism and Idealism is not one of contradiction and therefore the exclusive use of the copula of existence and the copula of identity is to be rejected and the relationship between 'esse' and 'percipi' is to be expressed in terms of the copula of definition as 'Esse as Percipi', which is a development, though not a repudiation, of Anderson's conception of the copula of existence. The tension between form and quality in Anderson's aesthetic and ethical theories can be resolved by the adoption of a phenomenological epistemology of distinct ways of knowing and this theory also resolves the tension in Anderson's historical theory as both a scientific and artistic account of history. This tension between form and quality runs throughout Anderson's philosophical theories and, as was the case with Alexander, such a distinction is indicative of both Realism and Idealism in Anderson's philosophy. Although Anderson despaired at the 'epistemological' tendency of modern philosophy, he recognised Hegel as a significant contributor to a classical and objectivist conception of philosophy and who opposed the 'dualist' tendency of much modern philosophy. Anderson's philosophy, in both its scope and its detail, was in large part a reaction to the problems set by Hegel, although he was in agreement with Hegel's conception of philosophy as a systematic and historical enterprise. This similarity between Hegel and Anderson is problematic only insofar as they are regarded as either 'Idealist' or 'Realist' and while these may correct descriptions of the *doctrines* of their philosophy, an over emphasis on such doctrines may obscure their concern with a common theme in the history of philosophy. Realism and Idealism are not one-sided and opposing doctrines but are moments or phases in the definition of the content of philosophy in dealing with a common problem - that of form or *eidōs* - which is a systematic and historical theory of reality where thought and things coincide. It is in terms of this conception of philosophy that Anderson, in his explicit defence of Realism as the content of philosophy and in his defence of the notion of form as the unifying concept of philosophy, a notion which can be regarded as Idealist in its presuppositions, made a positive contribution to the history of philosophy.

10. THE PLACE OF JOHN ANDERSON IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

The answer to the issue of the place of John Anderson in the history of philosophy can now be presented in both its historical and philosophical terms. The historical issue of Anderson's place in the history of philosophy was said to be concerned with the general issue of philosophic history as the place of John Anderson *in the history of philosophy* and the particular issue of philosophic biography as the place of *John Anderson* in the history of philosophy. The philosophical issue of Anderson's place in the history of philosophy was said to be concerned with the particular issue of a critical and systematic exposition of Anderson's philosophy as a Realist philosophy and with the general issue of the development of Anderson's philosophy in terms of the general issue of Realism vis-a-vis Idealism. It is in terms of answers to both these questions that Anderson's place in the history of philosophy can be assessed.

Regarding the issue of philosophical history, the theme of this history was said to be the conflict between Realism and Idealism. The high point of philosophical Idealism was reached in the philosophy of Hegel who defended the identity of the content and method of philosophy as the identity of the Absolute Idea with the dialectic. The dissolution of Hegel's philosophy by the 'Hegelian school' was marked by a denial of this identity of content and method of philosophy with the 'right' Hegelians defending the truth of the content of the Absolute Idea, while the 'left' Hegelians defended the primacy of the method of dialectic. The transition of the philosophy of Hegel into British philosophical life was strongly influenced by the 'right' Hegelians but was characterised by a deformation of the conception of the 'Absolute Idea' into an objective Idealism - the conception of the Absolute as a 'thing' - by the Oxford Idealists Bradley and Bosanquet and by a 'naturalisation' of the dialectic - the conception of the dialectic as a physical process - by the Glasgow Hegelians. Hence the Oxford Idealist's defended the doctrine of internal relations where all things were internally related to, and mere appearances of, the 'Absolute' which was the only true reality or knowledge while the Glasgow Hegelians defended a dialectical interpretation of nature which was ultimately 'realised' in terms of God. However both conception shared the common definition of reality as rational or spiritual and this definition was held to imply the associated doctrines of monism, rationalism and relativism.

The reaction to both these forms of Idealism by the Realist's Moore and Russell was in terms of the 'refutation of Idealism' and on the basis of the assumption of the contradictory nature between Realism and Idealism, it was concluded that Realism had been proven. This conflict between Realism and Idealism was based on the issue of relations and with the denial of the Idealist doctrine of internal relations, it was assumed that the only adequate account of relations could be in terms of their externality. However Moore and Russell assumed an atomistic account of external

relations and the subsequent development of twentieth century analytic philosophy was much influenced by this account of relations. This account of relations was qualified by the 'New Realist' account of relations and on the basis of this account the systematic conception of Realism was defended by Samuel Alexander in his empiricist ontological theory. Alexander argued that all objects exist in the 'stuff' of Space and Time and have certain categorical forms which are features or qualities of objects themselves. However the epistemological basis of his theory lay in his analysis of the act of knowing as involving both contemplation and enjoyment which he believed was the basis for an account of relations as 'compresent'. These 'rationalist' tendencies in Alexander's philosophy were corrected and developed by John Anderson in his 'positive' conception of philosophy. Both Alexander and Anderson extended their Realist philosophy into the traditional subjects of logic, aesthetics and ethics, treating truth, goodness and beauty as qualities of things, and presented in terms of a systematic and unified conception of philosophy.

The adoption of a biographical approach to Anderson's philosophical theories demonstrates that his philosophical development passed through several distinctive periods where he was concerned with the traditional subjects of philosophy. Hence from 1927 to 1932, Anderson was primarily concerned with a *doctrinal* conception of philosophy which defended Realism and the doctrine of external relations and which he developed into a Realist metaphysical theory concerned with epistemology, ontology and logic. Anderson's epistemological theory was based on the doctrine of external relations and upheld the view that the subject and object of knowledge are in no way constituted by each other or by the relation between them. However Anderson's epistemology formed part of a broader empiricist ontology which was derived in large part from Samuel Alexander. Anderson rejected Alexander's 'stuff' theory of Space and Time and his epistemological dualism between contemplation and enjoyment, arguing that Space-Time is a medium in which things exist and that there is only one way of knowing, that of contemplation. However the most significant feature of Anderson's metaphysical theory was his positivist theory of logic and he argued that intelligible discourse can only be in terms of the 'proposition' which involved the distinction between the subject and the predicate functions and the copula of existence and was the basis of a syllogistic logic of events. During the nineteen thirties, Anderson's treatment of metaphysical issues was increasingly expressed in terms of the history of philosophy which was consistent with his thematic conception of art which became his predominant philosophical interest during this period. Anderson's Realist aesthetic theory treated beauty as a formal quality of things, with the formal nature of beauty being the thematic structure of a work of art which exhibited the 'phases' or 'moments' in the development of a theme. Anderson argued that the qualitative nature of beauty consisted of human emotions in social situations, although he regarded the classical theme of aesthetics as the enslavement of the individual to the nightmare of history

and the hell of society and redemption from which was achieved by participation in artistic movements.

During the nineteen forties Anderson's philosophic interest was primarily with questions in ethics and he defended a Realist ethical theory which treated goodness as a formal quality of things. The formal nature of goodness was exhibited in 'movements' or 'forms of activity', with such movements being bearers of 'ways of life' which can neither be reduced to psychological processes nor elevated to social institutions. The qualitative nature of goodness was that of production which emphasised the disinterestedness of artistic, scientific and productive activity. However Anderson also defended a relational account of goodness when he argued that goodness only existed in opposition to evils, although when he spoke of goodness in this sense he primarily referred to it as liberty. Finally in the mature period of his philosophical development, Anderson was concerned with issues in history and he defended an artistic and scientific conception of history as both thematic and determined. Further Anderson argued that the theme of philosophical history was objectivism as a theory of 'form', which was the unifying concept of his logical, aesthetic and ethical theories. This notion of form was particularly prominent in his empiricist ontology with the categories being the forms of situations and which were articulated in terms of the forms of the proposition. Anderson's philosophy was therefore a systematic and historical conception of philosophy, which was presented as a classical theory of culture and philosophy. The pre-eminent classical period of objective philosophy was that of philosophical Hellenism and in the modern period of philosophy Anderson particularly praised Hegel as a defender of a classical and objective conception of philosophy.

Having examined Anderson's place in the general philosophical context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and of his own philosophical development during his lifetime, the philosophical answer to his place in the history of philosophy can now be considered. This question was held to involve the particular issue of a critical and systematic exposition of Anderson's philosophy as a Realist philosophy and the general issue of the development of Anderson's philosophical theories in terms of the logical relation between Realism and Idealism. The systematic exposition of Anderson's Realist philosophy as involving his metaphysical, aesthetic, ethical, historical and general philosophical theories demonstrated that his philosophical theories faced certain critical difficulties. In terms of his metaphysical theory, Anderson's Realist epistemological theory as one way of knowing was shown to be inconsistent with his empiricist ontology as a formal or categorical theory of reality which implied that any epistemological theory which is consistent with his empiricism, must be a theory of distinct ways of knowing. However Anderson's empiricist ontology is unproblematic as a theory of existence and he is correct in his rejection of dualist and dialectical interpretations

of nature. Anderson's logical theory was based on the treatment of truth as both formal and as a quality and this theory is commonly held to face the difficulties of the 'false proposition' and the 'unspeakability of the categories'. The resolution of these difficulties implies the necessity for a thematic predicate to account for relational or universal terms and a copula of definition to explain the relation between the subject and the predicate in the proposition when the terms are categorical. Anderson's Realist aesthetic theory was based on the treatment of beauty as a formal quality of things and his account of form as thematic faced the criticism that the notion of theme is relativistic. Further his neglect of the question of meaning is a serious difficulty for his aesthetic theory and the resolution of these difficulties can only be provided in terms of an epistemological theory of distinct ways of knowing. Anderson's ethical theory treated goodness as a formal quality of things although it was in his treatment of goodness as both a relation and a quality that his ethical theory is open to the criticism of relativism and the resolution of this difficulty is again in terms of an epistemological theory of distinct ways of knowing. Anderson's historical theory was complementary to his ethical theory and his account of history as both artistic and scientific again presupposed an epistemological dualism. Anderson's account of the history of philosophy was articulated in terms of the *theme* of philosophy and as in his aesthetic theory this conception of theme can be criticised as relativistic. Finally Anderson's systematic conception of philosophy was based on a non-material conception of form and although this concept unified his metaphysical, aesthetic and ethical theories it is a concept which is indicative of the Idealism implicit in Anderson's philosophy. The tension between quality and form that persists throughout all of Anderson's philosophical theories demonstrates the tension between the Realist and Idealist elements in Anderson's philosophy, which implies that while his philosophy can be regarded as Realist in terms of its content, it is Idealist in terms of form.

In terms of the general issue of the development of Anderson's philosophy in terms of the logical relation between Realism and Idealism, Anderson's contribution to twentieth century Realism was in terms of a systematic development of the Realist principle of external relations into the traditional domains of philosophy. However the distinctive feature of Anderson's philosophy was that while it was Realist in terms of philosophic content, it was also Idealist in terms of the concept of form and such a conception placed him in opposition to the 'analytic' movement which has been dominant in twentieth century Anglo-Saxon philosophy. However the assessment of Anderson as both a Realist and an Idealist may be thought to be due solely to his systematic conception of philosophy and to demonstrate that this is not the case it was necessary to re-examine the general philosophical question of the logical relation between Realism and Idealism. Although a common assumption of twentieth century Realist philosophy has been that the relation between Realism and Idealism is one of contradiction, the 'refutation of Realism' demonstrated that

any Realism which is based on a 'refutation' of Idealism implies that Realism is either a necessary synthetic proposition which is inconsistent with the refutation of Idealism or is a contingent synthetic proposition which as a particular proposition is trivial or as a universal proposition is unknowable in terms of experience. This conclusion implies that the relationship between Realism and Idealism is not one of contradiction and that there must be another conception of philosophy which is 'beyond' the doctrinal attitudes of Realism and Idealism. On this conception of the content of philosophy, relations are neither exclusively internal or external but are both, depending on the nature of the terms involved. The systematic development of this conclusion to Anderson's metaphysical theories implies that the dualist epistemological theory that is necessary for his philosophy can be explicated in terms of a phenomenological distinction between Place and Time, that his empiricist ontological theory is consistent with this phenomenological theory and that his logical theory of propositions requires the supplementation of the Hegelian theory of dialectic. Similarly Anderson's aesthetic and ethical theories can be elaborated in terms of this phenomenological theory of epistemology and his historical theory can also be shown to be positively developed in terms of the theory of dialectic. Finally Anderson's systematic and historical conception of philosophy demonstrates his continuity with the Hegelian tradition of Idealist philosophy as a concern with the problem of form or *eidōs*.

The place of John Anderson in the history of philosophy can therefore be assessed both historically and philosophically. When Anderson's philosophy is regarded as a doctrinal conception of philosophy which defends Realism and rejects Idealism, it is opposed to the Absolute Idealist tradition of philosophy, which for Hegel was the history of philosophy itself, and Anderson's place in the history of philosophy is the rather limited one of contributing to the systematic development of Realism during the twentieth century. However when Anderson's philosophy is regarded as a thematic conception of philosophy as a concern with the notion of form, Anderson's philosophy forms part of a much broader philosophical perspective which is not necessarily opposed to Absolute Idealism. Although Anderson opposed the epistemological tendency of much of modern philosophy, he recognised in Hegel a significant contributor to an objectivist and classical conception of philosophy and on such a thematic account of philosophy, Anderson can be recognised as participating in, and contributing to, the philosophical tradition of Absolute Idealism as a systematic and historical conception of philosophy. However it is also significant that both Anderson and Hegel turned to the classical period of philosophy for inspiration and both found in the classical period, important preliminary statements of their conceptions of philosophy as philosophies of *form*, as the conception of the real as ideal. It is this concern with a continuing *theme* in the history of philosophy and not an adherence to any particular doctrines of

philosophy, which determines Anderson's place as a systematic and historical philosopher in the history of philosophy.