

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The Main Aim**

The main aim of this dissertation is to identify and describe the bases of Anderson's core philosophical position, that is, his empiricism-realism-pluralism-determinism (and necessarily concentrates upon empiricism), so that his position can be seen as a systematic, non-metaphysical and comprehensive one; so that it can be appreciated by contemporary philosophers whose assumptions are so far removed from his; thus to show (a) that the problems with which he was concerned have not been solved -- have hardly been recognised -- by contemporary philosophers; (b) that these problems and the solutions Anderson offered are still quite relevant today. However, the problems confronting such a task are very considerable, and must be identified and dealt with if the stated aim is to be achieved.

### **The Paradox of Anderson's Fame and Present Obscurity**

During his lifetime in Australia, John Anderson gained an outstanding reputation as a philosopher, academic, teacher, controversialist and critic. According to Mackie "Anderson was the most important philosopher who has worked in Australia" and "he was the most distinguished academic figure that we have had in Sydney, or are likely to have for a long time" [1962a, p.124 and 126, respectively]. According to O'Neil "He was probably the most original philosopher ever to have worked in Australia" [1979, p.57]. Passmore paid him a great complement as a teacher:

As a result of a series of chances, I have come to know a good many of the better-known philosophers of our century, and at more than the level of mere acquaintance. ... But I have never for a moment wished that they rather than Anderson had been my teacher. He opened up my mind as no one else could have done. That fifty years ago, he left Scotland for Australia is, in my judgment, the greatest single piece of intellectual good fortune our country has ever experienced. [1977, p.53].

Partridge attempted to identify what made Anderson "a great teacher" (in the 1930's), spoke of his conception of the relatedness of all the branches of culture, and said that "Anderson's students learned from the example of his lectures (and, in the thirties, could not have learned this lesson as well from any other teacher) what critical thought is: its power when brought to bear upon fundamental conceptions and beliefs" [1958, p.50]. Mackie's opening remarks in the obituary already cited, are worth quoting at some length:

It is as a freethinker that John Anderson is most widely known in Australia, as an uncompromising critic of religion and an enemy of all forms of censorship. And indeed it is this part of his

achievement that is least open to question. Generations of students were profoundly influenced not only by his ideas but also by the vehemence of his personality. He successfully defied, at different times, the Senate of the University of Sydney and the state parliament of New South Wales when they attempted to suppress his criticisms of patriotism and religion. He was always ready to hit back against attacks upon his influence as an educator, and his opponents regularly had the worst of the ensuing controversy. There can be no doubt that he did more for intellectual freedom, by his constant practice and defence of it, than any other one man in Australia.

Nevertheless, this activity was only an offshoot from his philosophy. [op. cit., p.124]

It is important to recognise that (as Mackie indicated in the last sentence quoted), while some philosophers have entered into public prominence on special issues that happened to interest them outside their special field, when Anderson entered into public controversies it was, as he saw it, in defence of his special field -- the academic life, philosophy and education -- and because of views directly related to his philosophical position. Anderson's ventures into public controversy were, therefore, no accident and not attributable to publicity-seeking or a discontented character. Indeed, he saw the role of the academic as that of a critic, and as one which, inevitably, will sometimes be unpopular and contrary to prevailing opinions; and the academic cannot shrink from this. In 1960, just two years before he died, in a considered yet passionate article, he opened by stating just this sort of view --

**The work of the academic, qua academic, is criticism; and, whatever his special field may be, his development of independent views will bring him into conflict with prevailing opinions and customary attitudes in the public arena and not merely among his fellow-professionals. [Anderson, 1960, p.5; my emphasis.]**

This dissertation is therefore concerned with Anderson as an important critical philosopher, but also as an academic who accepted the more public role of social critic, or "gadfly", when that was appropriate. It will be argued here that many of the principles he enunciated in his role, and in defence of his role, as social critic illuminate his philosophical method as well, so that there is a unity between both; that he did not become involved in controversy around fringe issues in which he also happened to be interested, but did so because he was defending what he believed to be central to the academic life, the educated or cultured life, the philosophical life, or the critical inquiring life. Nevertheless, these principles are never expounded in a systematic way, but arise incidentally in both his

philosophical articles and his role as a controversialist and spokesperson for the academic viewpoint.

It is paradoxical that while during his lifetime he was the most famous and distinguished philosopher and academic in Australia, and wished to establish a realist school of philosophy [Mackie, 1962a, p.125] , his work has fallen into almost total obscurity. Other commentators have suggested possible reasons for this lack of understanding and interest [Mackie, op. cit., p.125; Quinton, in Baker, 1986, p.xi; Baker, 1986, p.xv,f]. One major reason is that Anderson did not write a systematic treatise [Janet Anderson, 1982, p.3] but only disconnected articles. Another is that, subsequent to Russell and Wittgenstein, Anglo-American philosophy has taken a direction which has widened the gap between Anderson and other philosophers. However, it will be argued here that an important part of the reason why Anderson is not well understood rests in the fact that there are inherent difficulties and unsolved problems within his own stated position.

### **The Problem of Expounding Anderson's Work as Systematic**

A number of important commentators have referred to Anderson's philosophical thought as systematic [Passmore, 1977; Mackie, 1962b, p.165; Quinton, in Baker, 1986, p.xviii], but none has explained precisely in what sense it is systematic, and despite Baker's two very clear books, none has shown how it is systematic. Anderson wrote no systematic exposition of his central views -- his empiricism, realism, pluralism and determinism, only articles which have now been compiled in several collections [Anderson, 1931; Anderson, 1962; D.Z.Phillips (ed.), 1980; Anderson, Callum and Lykos 1982; Dialectic, 1977] but which do not present a systematic exposition [c.f. Mackie, 1962a, p.125].

It is difficult, if not impossible, to summarise Anderson's principal doctrines without great risk of misunderstanding. Mackie attempted such a summary, which is quoted at some length here:

His central doctrine is that there is only one way of being, that of ordinary things in space and time, and that every question is a simple issue of truth or falsity, that there are no different degrees or kinds of truth. His propositional view of reality implies that things are irreducibly complex, that we can never arrive at simple elements in any field. Anderson rejects systematically the notion of entities that are constituted, wholly or partly, by their relations: there can be no ideas or *sensa* whose nature it is to be known or perceived, no consciousness whose nature it is to know, no values whose nature it is to be ends or to direct action. Knowledge is a matter of finding what is

objectively the case; all knowledge depends on observation and is fallible; we do not build up the knowledge of facts or laws out of any more immediate or more reliable items. Ethics is a study of the qualities of human activities; there can be no science of what is right or obligatory, and the study of moral judgements would belong to sociology, not to ethics. Similarly aesthetics can only be a study of the characteristics of beautiful things, not a study of feelings or judgements and not a source of directives for artists. Minds, like anything else, are complex spatio-temporal things; they are societies of motives or feelings, and there is no ultimate self to which the motives belong. Similarly, a society is a complex of movements which both co-operate and compete; it has no inclusive social purpose, but neither is it reducible to its individual members. And all things have their regular causal ways of working. [1962b, p.265-6].

Although Mackie's summary is sound, it does not elucidate any relationships between those numerous doctrines, and certainly none between Anderson's central doctrine of one way of being and the others. In short, it does not reveal that, or in what way (if at all), Anderson's philosophical position was systematic. Mackie recognised this and went on to add:

But while it is easy thus to sum up Anderson's philosophical position, it is a more difficult and much more complicated task to show how these principles are established or supported, how they are worked out in detail, and how they would be defended against objections and criticisms. [Ibid, p.266]

The problems involved in systematically expounding Anderson's core philosophical position are of two kinds. The first concerns the audience of non-Andersonian philosophers. All readers of Anderson will bring some assumptions to the task of understanding his work, and many assumptions brought by contemporary philosophers are antithetical to Anderson's thought: a positive hindrance to understanding him. Some attempt must be made to remedy this. The second kind concerns problems created by Anderson himself.

#### **Different assumptions made by Anderson and twentieth-century philosophers**

If there are difficulties, as it were, on Anderson's side which impede exposition of his work, there are also considerable difficulties in understanding it due to assumptions brought into that process by contemporary philosophers themselves. If any progress is to be made bridging the enormous gulf between Anderson's conception of philosophy, logic and inquiry and current conceptions, some attempt must be made, firstly, to identify these differences and secondly, if possible, to discover their bases. Outstanding

amongst the features of Anderson's philosophy which will be unfamiliar to many contemporary philosophers are the following ten points.

1. Anderson was implacably opposed to all manifestations of rationalism as he understood it, and his conception of rationalism is different from the traditional one [c.f., Mackie, 1965, p.3]. This meant that he rejected all attempts to point to divisions in reality, all dualisms, all suggestions that there are different ways or kinds of being, different kinds or degrees of truth [SIEP, p.3] (necessary and contingent, analytic and synthetic), different ways of knowing (*a priori* and *a posteriori*); any attempted distinctions between facts and principles or facts and values [S/p.14], or anything superior to facts; all suggestions that there are ultimates or ultimate elements of any kind [S/p.43].
2. Consistent with the foregoing, he took a purely empiricist view of mathematics [S/p.6ff].
3. He criticised and rejected the notion of (definition by) constitutive relations [S/p.29ff] especially in relation to the notions of mind as consciousness, and ideas (see 5 and 6 below); and rejected relativism in all its forms: relative truth, ethical relativism, and many relativist terms [see Mackie, 1962b, p.266ff].
4. Following the New Realists, he took knowing to be a relation between the knower and what is known, and took that doctrine to its logical conclusion, or -- by contemporary standards -- to its extreme.
5. He rejected the Cartesian notion of mind as a non-extended, thinking thing or consciousness [S/p.31ff] and positively rejected any view of mind as an utterly simple thing [S/p.32] or as having no characteristics [S/p.38].
6. He rejected all notions of ideas, concepts, *sensa*, sense-data, percepts, etc. [S/p.32], the Socratic notion of knowledge [S/p.213], the notion of experience [S/p.4] and all mental entities of any kind [Passmore in S/p.xiii].
7. He rejected representationism in all its forms, [see e.g., S/p.169].
8. Directly connected with his rejection of the Cartesian view of mind, and the notions of ideas and concepts,
  - (i) he showed no interest in questions of --
    - (a) epistemology [S/p.86], and regarded "the problem of knowledge" as a form of "scientific defeatism" [S/p.82],
    - (b) meaning [c.f., Mackie, 1962b, p.279];
  - (ii) he was almost contemptuous of --
    - (a) conceptual analysis [S/p.181]

- (b) "'ordinary language' philosophy of every sort" [Passmore, in S/p.xi] (Commenting upon Ryle's criticisms of Anderson, Mackie pointed out that "Ryle is concerned with linguistic analysis whereas Anderson is concerned with the features of things talked about"; 1951, p.110).

9. He rejected the standard correspondence and coherence theories of truth [S/p.21] and showed no interest in formulating any theory of truth [S/p.21; see Mackie, 1962b, p.279].

10. Whatever Anderson's view of logic was it does not conform to what most philosophers today think of as logic: a calculus [Passmore, 1962, p.xv]. He developed his own distinctive version of the traditional logic of four categorical forms of propositions, and adhered to it in preference to Russell's logic. Anderson's view of logic is discussed at considerable length in Part V, below.

Taken singly, most of these doctrines would distinguish Anderson from the majority of twentieth century philosophers; taken collectively, they indicate some radical difference between his views and mainstream twentieth century philosophy. It is important, therefore, if possible, to identify and elucidate the basis of this radical difference. And if Anderson was a systematic philosopher, as Passmore and others claim, it would seem that there must be some fundamental difference between Anderson's approach to or conception of philosophy, and that of others today: some underlying principle or assumption, which explains these major differences. Any illuminating account of Anderson's philosophical position, as a systematic one will not only recognise these differences, but go some way towards explaining them. That becomes one of the aims of the present thesis.

#### **Problems in the statement of Anderson's core position**

Mackie recognised that Anderson did not expound his own position systematically, and that any attempt to do so would (a) "start with a full account of his logic", and (b) "would have to rely at crucial points on unpublished material or hearsay evidence" [1962b, p.266]. The latter point indicates that there are important gaps in Anderson's exposition of his own position. Baker goes further and claims that there is at least one very serious problem within Anderson's position "about which Anderson himself worried" [1986, p.106]: this concerns Anderson's attempt to develop a theory of categories and involves the use of what Baker calls "universal terms" -- terms which apply to anything. So, in addition to those problems involved in

expounding Anderson's views to contemporary philosophers unfamiliar with it, there are unresolved problems within Anderson's stated views. Before they can be resolved, they must be identified. Some of the more important are the following:

1. Anderson repeatedly used certain terms in his own characteristic way, but which he did not define. Some of these, which are central to understanding his views, are logic, criticism, inquiry, discourse, propositions, the conditions of existence, "things", relativism.

2. Furthermore, as Mackie pointed out:

... except in his earliest articles, Anderson does not so much argue to his position as argue *from* it: he takes for granted what are at once his most characteristic and most controversial views, and castigates in his own terms the errors of his opponents. [1962a, p.125]

This means that we do not always find an argument detailed at the place it is adverted to or assumed by Anderson, but have to search for it in an earlier article or passage.

3. While the doctrine of one way of being may be taken as Anderson's "central doctrine" [Mackie, cited p.3 above], there are great difficulties in interpreting it, and in understanding what its status is. Mackie said Anderson's philosophical system "depends on a complete identification of logic with ontology which is, to say the least, very hard to defend and which ... cannot in the end be defended." [1962a, p.266]. We might well ask what logic could be, and what ontology could be, if they were the same. But this was Mackie's way of putting the matter. Anderson's doctrine of one way of being was examined in considerable detail by the present writer [Wild, 1993].

4. It is not clear in what relation Anderson's other main doctrines (his realism, pluralism and determinism) stand to the doctrine of one way of being. They do not appear to be deduced from it. Their exact statement and status is also unclear [Ibid].

5. Anderson's empiricism, realism, pluralism and determinism make very general sorts of claims, expressed for the most part in terms of "things" [see Part I, below]; they do not appear to be ordinary empirical claims, but ontological or possibly metaphysical. Whatever their status is, it is not at all clear that claims of that generality are compatible with empiricism.

6. At times Anderson spoke of the conditions of existence [S/p.5, 86, 91, 99f, 122f, 303f] but he gave no account of what that means. Clearly, any such view would have to be related to his doctrine of one way of being, and to the problem of the categories referred to previously. In Part I, it will be shown

that the doctrine of one way of being and the notion of the conditions of existence are intimately linked to Anderson's claims about (or in terms of) "things". All of these claims appear to be ontological and metaphysical. But evidence will be provided to show (a) that we simply cannot understand some of these claims, or on what they could be based if they are interpreted at face value, and (b) that they are associated with inconsistencies [see Part I, below].

These difficulties constitute major obstacles for any attempt to systematically expound or interpret Anderson's stated views, and constitute the basic problems with which this dissertation is concerned. The most serious of these difficulties are discussed in Parts I, IV and V. It is a vital contention of this thesis that any attempt at a systematic exposition of Anderson's core philosophical views must recognise these difficulties, attempt to fill these gaps, and deal with these inconsistencies within the broad framework and "spirit" of Anderson's stated views. That is to say, such an account must be interpretative: must both **add** material to what Anderson actually said and, in resolving the inconsistencies, reject some things he actually said. That is to say, any systematic interpretation of Anderson's views which resolves the difficulties identified **must be in conflict** with some of Anderson's stated views or assumptions. It cannot be timid or *ad hoc* in its approach.

#### The problems Anderson was concerned with

It is important, both for the purposes of making Anderson's position clear to those not familiar with it, and also in order to guide the interpretative process just discussed, to outline the broad range of problems with which his philosophical position is concerned: that is, to identify the broad context within which Anderson developed his views. So it will be worthwhile attempting to identify, in the briefest and most general terms, the kinds of problems Anderson was grappling with, as a way of bringing out the interrelatedness, or systematic character, of his views.

At Glasgow University, Anderson was trained in Absolute Idealism but, influenced by William James, Moore, Russell, the American "new realists", and especially Samuel Alexander whose Gifford Lectures he attended, Anderson turned to the newly emerging philosophy of realism [Passmore, 1972, p.120; Kennedy, 1995, p.47]. His philosophical position and work was affected at almost every turn by the closely related oppositions between rationalism and



empiricism, idealism and realism. It is possible, for the present purpose, to limit the focus of this opposition to three central or crucial questions:

- (i) *What is the nature of knowledge?*
- (ii) *What is the nature of mind?*
- (iii) *What is the nature of what minds know?*

These questions [which were raised in Wild, 1993, p.145ff] cover a large part of the field central to philosophy, and it is not unreasonable to assume that any systematic philosophical position, including rationalism, idealism, empiricism and realism, will attempt to deal with each of the broad problems they raise. At any rate, we can gain a reasonably rounded view of the basic issues that concerned Anderson in his struggle with rationalism and idealism, by considering them.

We may take one of Anderson's main points of departure from rationalism-idealism to be his acceptance of a realist theory of relations, and the realist contention that knowing is a relation [S/p.27ff]. On the basis of that theory of relations, he argued that nothing can be constituted solely by its relations to anything else, and therefore no thing can be constituted solely by the relation of knowing, and no thing can be constituted solely by the relation of being known. (An account of this argument may be found on p.103ff, below.) By means of this argument he rejected both Descartes' argument for the notion of mind as that "whose whole essence consists in thinking" [S/p.31], and Berkeley's theory of ideas as entities "whose whole nature is to be known" [S/p.29]. Anderson's argument may be briefly summarised as follows: if something X is constituted solely by a relation, say being on the table, then by definition as it were, X has no characteristics, so there is nothing X to have that or any other relation to the table or anything else. He concluded this argument by saying: "Arguing then, as realists, that no thing or quality of a thing is constituted by the thing's relations, we have to assert that nothing is constituted by knowing and nothing by being known" [S/p.29].

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this argument in the development of Anderson's views, and some attention must be paid to its ramifications. Firstly, it is, of course, an argument against constitutive relations (anything being constituted by a relation); and reliance upon this argument, which Anderson directed against what he more typically called relativism, became one of his "most characteristic moves in controversy"

[Mackie, 1962a, p.266]. But secondly, it is an argument against any view which implies there are two ways of being; against anything (in particular, ideas) having a "relative existence" or an existence dependent upon minds [S/p.33] which have a superior existence. So it is, effectively, an argument for one way of being. Thirdly, it constitutes an argument against the rationalist (Cartesian) view of mind; and fourthly, against the notion of ideas. Fifthly, it led Anderson to maintain, in opposition to rationalists, idealists and the British empiricists, that what we know are never *ideas* "but always independent things, or rather states of affairs" [S/p.32; my emphasis]. Sixthly, it led Anderson to state a very general principle in terms of *things*: "no thing or quality of a thing is constituted by the thing's relations ... " [see above]. Seventhly, it led Anderson to put minds on precisely the same plane (the one way of being) as everything else. Minds, as kinds of things, like all other kinds of things, must have characteristics of their own: " ... in general, in saying of any two related things that they are distinct, we must suppose each to have some character, or certain qualities, of its own" [S/p.28]; so, "Unless ... mind can be contemplated by mind and found to have certain qualities, we cannot know minds at all or speak of their knowing" [S/p.38].

In the briefest possible summary, then, Anderson's answers to the three fundamental questions are:

(i) *What is the nature of knowledge?*

Knowing is a relation between knowers and things known; there is no such thing as knowledge: "there is no place for the Socratic 'knowledge'" [S/p.213]. We may take Anderson to mean that the notion of knowledge is a rationalist one, and presupposes that the question of truth has been settled for all time. This notion is incompatible with the empirical method of being prepared to doubt, re-examine or test any proposition, belief, assumption, axiom or observation, a view which is fundamental to Anderson's empiricism [c.f. S/p.5].

(ii) *What is the nature of mind?*

Whatever minds are, they are of the same order as the things that minds know. Like all things, minds must have characteristics of their own, act in regular ways, and be known in the same way that other things are known. That is to say, Anderson would answer the second and third questions, in principle, in the same very general way, allowing that minds must have some characteristics that distinguish them from non-minds.

(iii) *What is the nature of what minds know?*

What we know are **things**, not ideas: "... we never know 'ideas' but always independent things, or rather states of affairs" [S/p.32]. This all too brief analysis of the opposition between Anderson's answers to the three crucial questions and the rationalist-idealist answers serves at least to identify the context of Anderson's views, and gives some indication of the radical direction of his empiricism-realism. As noted, the term "things" creates difficulties in the statement of Anderson's position [see Part I, below]. However, attention to the way Anderson approached and answered these three questions overlooks a fourth component in his core position: that is the component of empirical method or logic in a broad sense. All of Anderson's arguments imply there is some empirical method of testing, establishing (the truth of), proving or disproving propositions, a method which he himself used; and he appears to imply that this method (even though it is fallible or subject to error [S/p.21]) is appropriate to all inquiry, all science -- physical, biological, behavioral, human and social [see p.192 below]. The discussion of Anderson's conception of logic and empirical method forms the major part of Part V of this dissertation.

### Assumptions and Procedure

This thesis is based on the assumption that Anderson was a very significant philosopher, that his work contains important and distinctive features which distinguish it from that of all other philosophers; yet these features are implicit rather than explicit, hidden from most philosophers who did not belong to a circle of students and colleagues; which hidden or implicit features -- whatever they are -- are what made Anderson a unique and systematic philosopher. That is to say, it is not so much Anderson's distinctive doctrines -- those listed by Mackie [see p.3 above] -- which are central and distinctive in his work, but something which underpins them. This implicit or core feature of Anderson's work relates to logic, or the method of argument which Anderson employed. It is employed in his treatment of all subjects: in general philosophy, philosophy of mind, ethics, aesthetics, social theory, education. It is for that reason that the present thesis pays very little attention to those specialist areas of Anderson's work and concentrates on the areas more central to philosophy: logic and general philosophy or, to use a term that hardly seems appropriate, metaphysics.

The main steps followed in this dissertation fall into three main kinds: *firstly*, criticisms of aspects of Anderson's stated views; *secondly*, an independent analysis of rationalism which aims to clarify Anderson's

empiricism; *thirdly*, attempts to address and rectify the problems identified, while retaining the main lines, "spirit" or "thrust" of Anderson's philosophical position.

On the basis of previous work [Wild, 1993], it is assumed Anderson made a fundamental mistake when he formulated the doctrine of one way of being, and that this error is responsible for others in his stated views, and also for the appearance of metaphysics in his basic doctrines, or logical views: the doctrine mentioned, the notions of the conditions of existence and the categories, and his repeated reliance on the notion of things. Because of this, the doctrine of one way of being should be re-examined, along with its relationship of opposition (contradiction, contrariety?) to rationalism. If rationalism and empiricism are opposed, the precise identification of rationalism should assist the precise identification of empiricism and their opposition. So in Part II, a long analysis of rationalism is undertaken, and it results in one of the more radical findings of this dissertation, namely, that the notions of soul or mind are specifically rationalist notions: fundamental to the classical rationalist duo of mind and ideas, and fundamental to all the dichotomies (dualisms, divisions in reality) against which Anderson's doctrine of one way of being is directed.

This conclusion leads to a major dilemma because Anderson adhered to the notion of mind, propounding what many would regard as his most unique theory: the theory of mind as feeling. So it becomes necessary to examine why Anderson adopted what, on the basis of the earlier finding, appears to be a rationalist notion. It is argued that although Anderson rejected the Cartesian (rationalist) notion of mind, there is no evidence that he ever seriously questioned the existence of minds. It is shown that, on the contrary, he assumed that minds exist, and on that **assumption**, formulated the theory of mind as feeling. After further analysis and argument, it is concluded that, as an empiricist, Anderson should have rejected the notion of mind as a rationalist one and that, on the basis of his own explicit views and methods, he would have been more consistent had he done so. It is for these reasons that the word *Radical* appears in the title.

This claim about Anderson's theory of mind merely identifies an aberration in Anderson's thinking; it does not explain what his empiricism is. Analysis of Anderson's views on logic, inquiry, criticism and the proposition result in

the view that what Anderson meant by logic is a dialectical method of critical inquiry, a conception thoroughly opposed to the rationalist conception of logic as the science of reasoning and the Russellian conception of logic as a calculus or deductive system. It concludes that Anderson's empiricism is a **method**, not a doctrine; a method based on observing, criticism and argument, and this method is the method employed in all the sciences: is scientific method. It will be noted that this theory of empiricism is not unlike the now-accepted view (that all knowledge is based in experience), nor is the finding that it underpins science at odds with a widespread intuitive assumption.

## PART I : PROBLEMS WITHIN ANDERSON'S STATED POSITION

### Ch.1: Problems Within Anderson's Stated Position

#### §1 The Appearance of Metaphysics in Anderson's Core Position

As just noted there are major problems in Anderson's stated position: in the exact meaning of his doctrine of one way of being, the precise statement of his realism, pluralism and determinism, which all appear to be metaphysical claims; what he meant by logic; and in his doctrine of the proposition.

If any one doctrine is essential to an understanding of Anderson's core position, that would be what Mackie called his central doctrine: the doctrine of one way of being, which is also Anderson's account of empiricism. But the precise significance of that doctrine is not at all clear, and requires clarification. Wild [1993] examined this doctrine in considerable detail, and attempted to represent it as a non-metaphysical doctrine (consistent with empiricism and Anderson's anti-metaphysical views), treating it as a somewhat disguised methodological principle [Ibid, p.142]. The present thesis follows essentially the same lines. However, the purpose of examining that doctrine in this Part is not to expound it, but to criticise it in the form in which it was stated by Anderson and is usually stated by others. In order to do so, it will be necessary to quote the doctrine from *Empiricism*, the principle article in which it is stated. There Anderson took empiricism to be central to a position that may embrace, or is related to, realism, naturalism, materialism, pluralism, determinism and positivism, but he asserted that the issue which empiricism "raises and which it disputes with rationalism, is fundamental to logic, being concerned with truth itself" [SIEP, p.3]. It is in this very broad context that he stated the doctrine of one way of being: "empiricism as a philosophy ... maintains that there is only one way of being" [Ibid]. Hereafter, this is referred to as Anderson's **formal** account of rationalism and empiricism, and it is clear that Anderson stated the doctrine in direct opposition to rationalism which, according to Anderson, contends "that there are different kinds or degrees of truth and reality". Empiricism denies this and maintains "that there is only one way of being" [c.f., Wild, op. cit., p.173ff]. In this article Anderson said he would discuss the opposition between rationalism and empiricism and defend empiricism [S/p.3]. He claimed that these alternative positions identify the **opposition** -- we might say: the **heart of the opposition** -- between rationalism and empiricism. But

irrespective of whether this claim is true or not, it appears that at this point Anderson did not describe in detail, or identify precisely, what rationalism is (as a philosophical movement or "whole outlook" [c.f. S/p.3]), nor what empiricism is. What he appears to be saying, in effect, is that no matter what rationalism is, or what forms it takes, and no matter what empiricism is, or what forms it takes, the key to the dispute between the two hinges on this issue which "is fundamental to logic" and "concerned with truth itself". If that is a correct reading of Anderson's claims at this point, the character of rationalism and empiricism as "whole outlooks", or as historical, philosophical movements, has not been identified or described.

However, this doctrine, as stated above, creates a number of problems within Anderson's core philosophical position (some of which were raised briefly in Wild, 1993, p.176ff and 211), specifically within his own logic, and it is necessary to identify them. *Firstly*, "there is only one way of being" does not appear to be a categorical proposition, but an existential one. As such, it would have no place in Anderson's logic of four categorical forms. *Secondly*, this formulation suggests "ways of being" is a term. However it is difficult to see what a way of being could possibly be, and how such a term could possibly have a logical opposite, a requirement of "genuine" terms according to Anderson [see Baker, 1986, p.83f]. *Thirdly*, this doctrine does not appear to be an empirical one, but metaphysical, and therefore incompatible with empiricism. *Fourthly*, if the doctrine is taken to "define" empiricism, it is impossible to see any direct connection between it and the more traditional view of empiricism as "all knowledge is derived from experience", re-stated by Anderson as "whatever we know we learn" [S/p.162; c.f. Wild, op. cit., p.188ff]. *Fifthly*, as stated by Anderson, the opposition between rationalism and empiricism, and hence the statement of the doctrine of one way of being, involves an ambiguous conjunction or disjunction which can be brought out by re-stating his claims more explicitly thus:

- (1) Rationalism contends --
  - (a) there are different kinds or degrees of truth, and/or
  - (b) there are different kinds or degrees of reality.
- (2) Empiricism denies this (these?) and contends --
  - (a) there are no degrees or kinds of truth; and/or
  - (b) there are no degrees or different kinds of being;
  - (c) there is only one kind of truth;
  - (d) there is only one way of being.

The ambiguity is due to the fact that "truth" and "being" are not identical. It is not clear precisely what the relationship is between them, but if Anderson's formula is to work as a "net" to embrace or ensnare all the forms of rationalism he wished to encompass, it must cover both sorts of claims: about "being" and "truth". At any rate, the upshot is that the nature of the opposition between rationalism and empiricism is ambiguous on this formulation. This is hardly helpful in stating such a crucial issue, or in stating one's "central doctrine".

These five problems appear to be insuperable -- unless the doctrine of one way of being is interpreted in some other, radically different, way. But apart from this statement of the doctrine of one way of being, there are strong indications that Anderson ventured into metaphysics. Three additional matters warrant close scrutiny. These are the matters of the categories, Anderson's use of "things" as a term, and the notion of the conditions of existence [mentioned on p.7, above].

Alexander's view of the fundamental place of Space-Time was related to his theory of the Categories [Alexander, op.cit., Vol.1, Book II, Ch.1] and it appears Anderson attempted to work out a theory of categories [see Baker, 1986, Ch.7] even though there is very little evidence of this in SIEP. However, as Baker points out, this created a problem within Anderson's logic "about which Anderson himself worried" because Space, Time and the categories cannot be terms within Anderson's logic for the reason already noted: they cannot have logical opposites [Baker, op. cit., p.106ff].

## **§2 "Things" in the Exposition of Anderson's Core Position**

Even if it could be successfully argued that there is a way of interpreting the doctrine of one way of being which overcomes the difficulties raised, there is another closely related problem which cannot be readily dismissed. This concerns the way Anderson expressed fundamental points of his core position or method in terms of "things". In order to reinforce that point, a large number of Anderson's remarks which involve "things" has been compiled in Appendix B. There, they are loosely grouped as relating to the statement of Anderson's empiricism, realism, pluralism, determinism and criticisms of relativism, etc. These passages establish not only how frequently Anderson used "things" as a term, but how much he depended upon it in order to state the full range of his central and distinctive doctrines. We could say that the



statement of Anderson's core position not only depends upon the notion of "things", but is unified around it. A much shorter compilation of these passages, based on Appendix B, follows shortly below.

The main objection being raised here is that "things" cannot be a term in Anderson's logic since it cannot have a logical opposite as required [see Baker, 1986, p.79]; there cannot be a real term "non-things". However, if "things" cannot be a term in Anderson's logic, none of the very important logical or methodological claims he made in this way can actually be made. If this criticism of the term "things" is valid, either Anderson's core position collapses, or we must find some alternative way of expressing these principles. It must be understood that the abbreviated compilation of passages which follows is drawn from numerous articles and disconnected remarks in SIEP; Anderson never wrote a continuous exposition on "things" in any way comparable to this compilation.

#### A. *"Things" in the statement of Anderson's empiricism-realism*

It is important to recognise that when Anderson emphasised talking about "things" he was contrasting his view with that of rationalism and idealism (and also British empiricism) which emphasised the role of ideas in thought and perception. So he said: "According to realism, ... we never know 'ideas' but always independent THINGS, or rather states of affairs" [S/p.32; my emphases throughout these passages]; and "At no time in the process of making our observations more precise, ... do we suppose that we are not observing the THINGS themselves ... : at no time do we distinguish a 'datum' or 'sensus' from a THING" [S/p.37].

His opposition to any theory of ideas also involved the rejection of representationism: "We cannot, then, make any such distinction as that between 'THINGS as we know them' and 'THINGS themselves'. Unless the former are THINGS themselves, we are not entitled to speak of THINGS (and hence to speak) at all" [S/p.13].

So for Anderson it is "things", not ideas, which constitute the basis of all inquiry: "The above remarks suggest a less direct treatment of logical problems, viz., by considering what is involved in the recognition of a THING as a subject of investigation. -- more generally, in the very possibility of 'discourse'" [S/p.123].

It is significant that Anderson did not follow his own principles, or methodology, with "things" and say what they are. The closest he came to giving a general account or definition of "things" is as, roughly, **the subjects of possible propositions** -- a very curious, relational description: "Taking 'THINGS' roughly in the sense of subjects of possible propositions, it may be said that we can select those THINGS we wish to speak about; but what we say about them will be either true or false" [S/p.18]. Contrary to what many other philosophers have maintained, the objects of perception and inquiry, "things", are of sorts or kinds, or general:

Accordingly, we do not require to introduce repetition in order to understand a THING's being of a certain sort; a single proposition tells us that, and we have no occasion to think of the "sort" as a peculiar kind of "recurrent" entity. But there is no more difficulty about having propositions which tell us that the THING is of other sorts or has other characters. Any occurrence is the occurrence of a certain sort of THING; that is already indicated in the inter-relation of the constituents of any one proposition. [S/p.119]

That does not prevent any "thing" being both general and particular: "But if all objectives are of the propositional order, having both particularity and universality in that a certain THING is taken to be of a certain sort, then we can have contradiction and conflict" [S/p.219].

Anderson did not draw any real distinction between "things", situations, states of affairs or propositions: "And, in general, it cannot be maintained either that the proposition is our way of understanding THINGS which in themselves are not propositional, or that we have further ways of understanding the proposition which is in itself defective" [S/p.4; see also p.13]; and: "... what we know consists not of THINGS simply but of states of affairs (or propositions)" [SIEP, p.32].

"Things" are spatio-temporal and interact with one another: "But 'absolute' Space-Time is simply that in which THINGS 'absolutely' exist, ..." [SIEP, p.33]; "... we know THINGS only as having specific characters and as occupying Space and Time" [SIEP, p.40]. The claims about the spatio-temporality of "things" are, of course, part of Anderson's doctrine of one way of being; but there is also a plurality of things, as opposed to monism: "... and the only resort is the assertion of a thorough-going pluralism, the denial of a "universe" or totality of THINGS, and the recognition of the existence anywhere and at any time of a heterogeneity of THINGS, THINGS of various

characters of which "materiality", if it is a character at all (i.e., if it does mean more than existence), is only one" [S/p.306].

Thus there is an "equal reality of all existing THINGS" [SIEP, p.187], or one way of being.

*B. "Things" in the statement of Anderson's realism*

Anderson's realism, in opposition to idealism, is an admixture of claims about the independence of "things" : their independence of minds and their having independent qualities [see Wild, 1993, p.82ff]. Any "existence or quality, though it might not have been but for [some] other THING, is independent in the sense of being distinct and having a character of its own" [SIEP, p.33]; "According to the realist theory 'the known' consists of independent THINGS in space" [S/p.40]; " ... we know THINGS only as having specific characters and as occupying Space and Time" [S/p.40]; "THINGS are known only by their characters, ... " [S/p.218]; "... we must be able to describe THINGS independently of their being known or of their being known in some particular way ..." [S/p.29]; and "the various THINGS that are said to be perceived cannot have their whole nature constituted by being perceived. ... It would, on the contrary, be true to say that we know THINGS as independent of being known, since we can only know them as existing and having characters of their own" [S/p.30].

As part of this doctrine of the independence of things, Anderson claimed they have both characters and relations: he said that even if we talk about knowing within the context of people pursuing things or states of affairs, or being satisfied by them, this "... is still being stated in terms of the relations of two complex THINGS, and leaves 'subject' and 'object' perfectly distinct and independent" [S/p.40]; "The point is that we are always confronted simultaneously with questions of relations and questions of qualities, that relations and qualities are linked in the recognition, as in the existence of any situation, ... " [S/p.161].

While "things" are related, they are nevertheless distinct, or independent: "Mind is not required to relate THINGS, because THINGS are given as related just as much as they are given as distinguished" [S/p.12]; "But if we say that two THINGS are connected, we imply that they are distinct and can be directly spoken of. And when we speak of one such THING, we are perfectly aware that it has connections with, as well as distinctions from, other THINGS, ... "

[S/p.18]; and relations "can hold only between two THINGS, each having characters of its own, ... " [S/p.49].

*C. "Things" in the statement of Anderson's pluralism*

It is a necessary consequence of the independence of "things", of their having characters of their own, that they must be complex; thus realism "proposes as the formal solution of any problem the interaction of complex THINGS" [S/p.59]; and "Thus our recognition of distinct complex THINGS is not accounted for at all by "collections of ideas" ... but is intelligible only as a recognition of complex situations ... -- in other words, of infinite complexity ... in place of the simplicity which cannot be squared with any complexity or combination" [S/p.164].

*D. "Things" in the statement of Anderson's determinism*

"Things" are not only independent and complex, but they have regular ways of working under certain conditions: "Since, in fact, to have a character is itself to have a complex way of working, there will be no line of demarcation between the inquiry into differences and the inquiry into causes ..." [S/p.135]; "We must be able to say: 'This is the sort of THING which under certain circumstances will act in such and such a way, and under other circumstances will act in a different way" [S/p.13]; "... a THING as spatio-temporal exhibits a certain character, e.g., that it occupies a definite place in a regular sequence of a certain type" [S/p.119]; "The recognition of a single logic of events, of complex THINGS, interacting in Space and Time, disposes at once of the logic and of the psychology of 'thought'" [S/p.86].

Anderson regarded humans (and minds; see p.9 above) as of the same sort or order as other "things": "... we ourselves are also such THINGS, existing under the same spatio-temporal conditions as other THINGS, and, under these conditions, entering into relations with them ... " [S/p.83]; and "So long as we do not set anything above criticism, we can make progress; but we do so not by having any higher kind of knowledge, but by having opinions and acting on them, that is by reacting on THINGS which are as historical as ourselves" [S/p.213].

Things condition one another: "This does not mean that THINGS do not condition one another" [S/p.18] -- they do.

E. *"Things" in the statement of relativism*

"Things" was an essential "term" in Anderson's description and criticism of relativism. In making the thing/quality and the quality/relation distinctions he said:

In fact, unless THINGS had qualities of their own, there would be nothing to have relations to other THINGS. What I have in effect maintained is that even those who support other views, do unwittingly concede, in the language they employ, the distinction between relations which hold between two THINGS and qualities which belong to a THING itself. ... [Men] do not possess the THINGS they know as qualities; yet if the relation were part of what a man is, the THINGS related to him would also have to be part of what he is. [S/p.43]

Perhaps the best summation of Anderson's views on "things" in his own words is the following passage:

As regards direct argument, one may attempt to show, in the manner of Alexander (largely following Kant), that a THING as spatio-temporal exhibits a certain character, e.g., that it occupies a definite place in a regular sequence of a certain type. To speak of a THING, it may be said, is to speak of certain "ways of working", the continuance and the development of which are, of course, affected by the other ways of working by which the THING is surrounded. It would be argued, in this way, that it is a condition of a THING's existence that it determines and is determined by other THINGS, and that to investigate or "give an account of" it involves consideration of such determinations. [S/p.123]

\* \* \* \* \*

On the basis of the evidence provided, it would be impossible to deny that Anderson repeatedly, and typically, expressed his central and distinctive doctrines -- his realism, pluralism and determinism, etc. -- in terms of "things". While the previous compilation brings together a wide range of claims about "things" in a way Anderson did not, that compilation does not distort or misrepresent his position in any way. It may be taken to provide a fair, accurate, reasonably comprehensive, and coherent summary of Anderson's core position which is, significantly, closely related to his empiricism or doctrine of one way of being. Furthermore, it is not at all obvious how Anderson could have expressed these views in any other way, or with equal generality. So it would appear that the notion of "things" is absolutely fundamental to the exposition of Anderson's core philosophical position. However, if "things" cannot be a term in Anderson's logic, as suggested above, these central doctrines cannot be expressed within Anderson's own logic of

four categorical forms. Therefore, unless some alternative formulation of these doctrines can be found, compatible with Anderson's logic, his core position collapses.

### §3 Conditions of Existence

What Anderson said about the conditions of existence in SIEP is very brief, but sufficient to recognise a general direction. In several cases, the conditions of existence apply to "things": "the conditions of existence in general ... are not 'principles' but particular proceedings of particular things" [p.100]; "'phenomena' are things themselves and ... the conditions under which they fall are conditions of existence and not mere conditions of cognition" [p.304]. The conditions of existence apply to all things, without exception: "there is nothing which does not bear the same marks as borne by the productions of human contrivance, i.e., that what [Hume] regards as marks of contrivance are conditions of existence" [p.91]; "a theory of the conditions of existence, embodying a general theory of causality, will apply indifferently to men and any other existing things" [p.122]. i.e., the conditions of existence apply to all things, human or non-human alike. And what are the conditions of existence? "Space and Time" [p.86]; "the recognition of interaction" [p.99]; "it is a condition of a thing's existence that it determines and is determined by other things" [p.123]. Furthermore, the conditions of existence are somehow inherent in the ordinary "is" of discourse [p.5]. As will be argued later, this connection between the conditions of existence and the "is" of discourse is an attempt to link those conditions to categorical propositions whose copula is always a part of the verb "to be". So the notion of the conditions of existence is positively tied to the doctrine of one way of being.

It appears clear enough that, influenced by Alexander's view, Anderson wanted to say that all things fall under the conditions of existence -- Space, Time and the categories -- in the sense that any thing whatsoever falls under, or is affected by, space and time as well as by other things around it, and affects other things around it. And he particularly wanted to assert that these conditions apply irrespective of whether we are observing the things or not. However, these sorts of claims make the issue of the validity of the term "things" even more critical.

The notion of **conditions** of existence is a peculiar one. Anything whatsoever, or all things that exist, fall under them or "bear the same marks" [p.91]; which is to say, nothing whatsoever does not fall under them. These conditions (Space and Time, etc.) apply at all times and places without exception. They are quite unlike any other conditions which we speak of, specifically causal conditions, which apply at certain times and not at others. In fact, these conditions (Space and Time) will prevail when a specific "thing" exists, before it exists or comes into existence, and after it ceases to exist. They apply equally and indifferently whether a specific thing exists or does not exist. Therefore, they do not appear to be conditions of a thing's existence; they do not appear to be conditions at all.

One fatal problem with these claims about the conditions of existence and the categories is: In what way are "things" related to them? In what sense can we say (all) "things" are in space and time? In what sense can we say (all) "things" **come under** the categories? We cannot make any -- certainly not ordinary -- sense of these supposed relations.

On the basis of the very little which Anderson said about the conditions of existence in SIEP, it must be concluded that that notion does not make sense.

The difficulties concerning "things" are related to the other difficulties discussed concerning the exact meaning and status of the doctrine of one way of being, the claims about the conditions of existence, and the quest for the categories; and indeed all of these problems seem to be of a kind, raising the question how empiricism can be based upon a metaphysics.

With respect to all of these problems, three points must be emphasised. The *first* is that the problems that have been raised are potentially destructive of all of Anderson's core views. The *second* is that some remedy is absolutely essential if Anderson is to be regarded as an important and, especially, systematic philosopher. And the *third* is that, in view of the gravity and wide-ranging nature of the problem(s), it would appear that the solution, if there is to be one, must be a radical one, in the sense that it must go to the root of the problem and attend to it so that it corrects each and every manifestation of these problems. There is no place for half-measures or an *ad hoc* approach. If these problems are to be avoided, the solution, whatever it may be, must present Anderson's core views in a significantly different form.

These, then, are the problems with which this dissertation is primarily concerned: the correct interpretation of the doctrine one way of being, Anderson's empiricism, realism, pluralism, determinism and his notion of the conditions of existence; how empiricism could sustain a doctrine of categories and what they would be; what the real significance of Anderson's many claims about "things" could be. All of these appear to be connected, to be metaphysical, and to raise special difficulties within any form of empiricism, but especially in Anderson's. Ultimately this dissertation seeks to express these central and distinctive doctrines in an alternative form which both (a) preserves the "spirit" and main "thrust" of Anderson's position, and (b) removes all the appearance of metaphysics, and certain inconsistencies, from it.

The strategy adopted in this dissertation is to critically review both Anderson's characterisation of rationalism and empiricism (the doctrine of one way of being), and then to question the role of the notion of mind within Anderson's position. It begins with a re-examination of rationalism as an essential step in discovering the character of Anderson's empiricism.



## PART II : RATIONALISM

### Chapter 2: THE PLACE OF RATIONALISM IN ANDERSON'S THOUGHT

#### §1 Introduction

There can be little doubt that the most important and most frequently recurring theme in Anderson's published and unpublished material is the opposition between empiricism and rationalism [see Mackie, 1965, p.1] which is allied to the opposition between realism and idealism. So it is perfectly reasonable to suggest that in order to understand what is central and distinctive in Anderson's core philosophical position, or empiricism, one would have to have a sound understanding of his conception of rationalism and his criticisms of it -- along with his related criticisms of those problematic philosophical -isms: monism, dualism, atomism and representationism.

Anderson had his own unique views on the central features of rationalism and empiricism [see p.26 below], and made many additional claims about rationalism [see p.146 below]. However, while he took "rationalistic theories of all sorts (to be) distinguished from empiricism by the contention that there are different kinds or degrees of truth and reality" [SIEP, p.3], he did not show how rationalism constitutes a "whole outlook", or a continuous historical movement, nor how the other claims he made about rationalism [see p.152 below] stem from that basic contention. For various reasons, it is appropriate to begin here with a reasonably wide and careful examination of the commonly accepted views of rationalism and empiricism, as contrasted with Anderson's, and to seek a precise account of rationalism compatible with his. It is anticipated that a careful examination of rationalism will lead to a better understanding of Anderson's empiricism.

#### §2 A Commonly Accepted Distinction between Rationalism and Empiricism

Anderson maintained "It is recognised that there is a natural opposition between rationalism and empiricism" [SIEP, p.3], and this view is widely accepted [Urmson, 1967a, p.339; Reese, 1980, 14; Hamlyn in Edwards, 1972, Vol.2, p.499; Williams in Edwards, 1972, Vol.7, p.69; Speake, 1979, p.97; Cottingham, 1984, p.6] although some philosophers question or reject it [c.f. Scruton in Grayling, 1995, p.442; Cottingham, 1984, p.10]. Defining the two, and showing how they are opposed, is no simple task, and does not reside in the opposition of single doctrines [Cottingham, 1984, p.9].

One relatively common account of the two may be expressed thus: empiricism is "the thesis that all knowledge -- or at least all knowledge of matters of fact as distinct from that of purely logical relations between concepts -- is based on experience" [Speake, 1979, p.97], while rationalism "is the philosophical outlook or program which stresses the power of a *a priori* reason to grasp substantial truths about the world and correspondingly tends to regard natural science as a basically *a priori* enterprise" [Williams, in Edwards, 1972, Vol.7, p.69]. It is not clear precisely what the opposition is between these views, nor precisely what is involved in either. But anyone upholding these views is committed to such things as knowledge, matters of fact, concepts and logical relations between them, (sensory) experience, *reason*, *a priori* (and *a posteriori*) knowledge. In any case, such a view does not capture all the features of rationalism widely recognised, including, for instance, the notions of necessity and system.

### §3 Anderson's Account of Rationalism and Empiricism

Anderson's account of rationalism and empiricism is very different from the more commonly accepted views and, indeed, from any other philosopher's. He maintained that "Rationalistic theories of all sorts are distinguished from empiricism by the contention that there are different kinds or degrees of truth and reality. The distinguishing-mark of empiricism as a philosophy is that it denies this, that it maintains that there is only one way of being" [SIEP, p.3].

On the face of it, Anderson's account suggests the opposition between the two is a dispute -- a contradiction -- over one issue: whether there are two or more ways of being or just one. He goes on to say:

The issue has been confused in the past by a reference to knowledge. It was quite naturally maintained, by those who postulated different ways of being, that in relation to them different ways of knowing are required. Hence empiricism has been connected, in the history of philosophy, with the view that there is only one way of knowing, and particularly that that way is what was called "sense" in contrast to "reason"; or, rather differently, that sense is the only *originator* of knowledge. But fundamentally the issue is logical; the dispute is about ways of being or of truth, not about ways of knowing truths. It is only after it has been assumed that there are other truths than matters of fact, or that there are objects which "transcend" existence, that a special faculty has to be invented to know them. [SIEP, p.3-4]

According to Anderson, the dispute may centre around whether there are two or more ways of knowing or just one, but the issue about ways of being is fundamental, and the postulation of transcendent objects is basic to this. And so he maintains "It is because objects of 'higher reality' are supposed to transcend **experience** that the opposition to transcendentalism has the name **empiricism**" [Ibid, p.4]. For Anderson, then, eschewing as he did such notions as concepts [Ibid, p.32], experience [Ibid, p.4], knowledge [Ibid, p.213], ideal entities [Ibid, p.14], higher realities [Ibid, p.4-5], higher truths [Ibid, p.5], and maintaining that there is only one way of knowing [Ibid, p.13] (thereby rejecting the supposed distinction between knowing *a priori* and *a posteriori*) his account of rationalism and empiricism and the opposition between them could not be of the commonly accepted kind.

#### §4 A Brief Survey of the Common Characteristics of Rationalism

It is significant that amongst those philosophers who recognise two fundamentally opposed philosophical views of rationalism and empiricism, there are many varied accounts of the two; and it will be appropriate to show just how widely those views of rationalism vary.

Urmson maintains rationalism --

is the characteristic of a philosophical theory which claims that by pure reasoning, without appeal to any empirical premises we can arrive at substantial knowledge about the nature of the world ... Rationalism is opposed to **empiricism**, the doctrine that experience is a necessary basis to all our knowledge; but neither of these terms has a precise meaning. ... But most empiricists have admitted that mathematical truths are *a priori*; ... Leibniz is usually considered to be the most extreme of the rationalists because he claimed that in principle all truths could be known by pure reasoning, experience being but an inferior substitute for reason. [Urmson, 1967a, p.339]

Urmson points out that it is a feature of Descartes' rationalism that some propositions, such as the *cogito*, are indubitable. According to Reese, rationalism upholds the "principle that reason is to be granted the primary role in explanation" and points out that --

In the 19 [sic] century, largely due to the influence of Hegel ..., Rationalism came to be associated with philosophical Idealism ... Hegel identified the rational and the real in a manner reminiscent of Parmenides. It was largely among the 19th-century Idealists who succeeded Hegel that the Coherence Theory of Truth ... prospered. In this theory the marks of systematic unity, rather than mere correspondence to fact, become the test of truth. [Reese, 1980, p.479]

Runes maintains rationalism is a "method, or very broadly, a theory of philosophy, in which the criterion of truth is not sensory but intellectual and deductive. Usually associated with an attempt to introduce mathematical methods into philosophy, as in Descartes, Leibniz and Spinoza" [1960, p.263]. Speake says rationalism is --

In a narrow sense, the doctrines of a group of philosophers of the 17th and 18th centuries whose most important representatives are Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz. The characteristics of this kind of rationalism are: (a) the belief that it is possible to obtain by reason alone a knowledge of the nature of what exists; (b) the view that knowledge forms a single system, which (c) is deductive in character; (d) the belief that everything is explicable, that is, that everything can in principle be brought under the single system. [Speake, 1979, p.278]

A much fuller account of rationalism is given by Williams [in Edwards, 1972, Vol.7, pp.69-75] from which only a few salient points are noted here. He maintains the contrast between rationalism and empiricism is based on that "between reason and experience" [p.69]. He points out that Descartes distinguished three kinds of ideas: adventitious, factitious and innate, and "The first type came to the mind from experience, the second were constructed by the mind's own activity, and the third were created by God together with the mind or soul itself" [Ibid]. There is a difficulty in the exposition of rationalism as to whether it is based in innate ideas (as Descartes maintained), on innate principles or logical truths, or both as Leibniz maintained: "if there were no innate and unlearned propositions, we could learn no propositions at all -- at least not by way of logical deduction" [Ibid, p.70]. It is worth noting that, as Williams points out, it is to a large extent because Locke argued against Descartes' doctrine of innate ideas that he is regarded as an empiricist [Ibid]. Williams draws attention to the importance of theological elements in Cartesianism [Ibid, p.72], the rationalist conception of "a completed science as a complete deductive system" [Ibid, p.73], and the importance of the notion of substance [Ibid, p.74].

Doniela suggests that the central core of philosophical rationalism consists of two claims: (i) human cognitive powers consist of two faculties reason and the senses, and (ii) that reason is superior to the senses [1984, p.12]. He also stresses the importance of ideal entities in science [Ibid, p.13] as against the particular and changing [Ibid, p.14]; and he points out the importance of mathematics for rationalists as a model for knowledge (and science), and their quest for certainty and necessary truth [Ibid, p.16-18].

Boas says:

Roughly speaking, very roughly, there are two sources of knowledge: perception and inference. Perception is supposed to give us the facts, the qualities of things and the spatiotemporal relationships between things and events. ... But since all perception is of particular, localized, and dated things and events, no act of perception can give one a general law. And general laws are what is wanted in science and philosophy. [1961, p.viii]

Boas implies that perception is not sufficient to establish scientific laws. Later he asserts that "rationalism is always an opponent of superstition, magic, sacrifice, and prayer" [Ibid, p.x]; but this claim in no way distinguishes rationalism from empiricism.

Cottingham accepts that the broad or general notion of rationalism "implies a commitment to the standards of rationality" [1984, p.5] but distinguishes that general sense from a more technical sense of rationalist/rationalism. In this more restricted sense, rationalism is contrasted with empiricism; in this sense rationalists "stress the role played by reason as opposed to the senses in the acquisition of knowledge" and "Some rationalists condemn the senses as an inherently suspect and unreliable basis for knowledge"; however "All rationalists characteristically maintain the possibility of a priori knowledge" [Ibid, p.6]. Cottingham adds that "rationalists make the striking claim that by the light of reason we can, independently of experience, come to know certain important and substantive truths about reality, about the nature of human mind and about the nature of the universe and what it contains" [Ibid, p.7].

In order to make clear the variety and breadth of claims made about rationalism, these views have been compiled in summary form in Table 1 [Appendix A, pp.264-5 below]. It is clear from Table 1 that the characteristics attributed to rationalism are quite numerous and varied. They include doctrines (or theories) about mind, knowledge, ways of knowing, truth, mathematics, philosophy and science. It is clear there is no one agreed account of the fundamental doctrines or characteristics of rationalism. However, a number of problems can be raised about them. Firstly, these many claims do not appear to be self-evident, necessary, or known *a priori*; secondly, they do not appear to form a deductive system as we might expect of rationalist principles.

Furthermore, there are crucial differences between the claims attributed to rationalists and empiricists. If rationalists maintain (i) that **some** knowledge of the world is derived by pure reasoning without appeal to experience [c.f. Table 1, #12] (and some is *a posteriori*), and empiricists uphold (ii) that **some** knowledge is derived from experience and **some** is not, that is, that some knowledge (especially mathematical knowledge) is *a priori* [c.f. Urmson, 1967, p.339; Hamlyn, in Edwards, 1972, Vol.2, p.503], there is no conflict between the two. Conflict arises only if rationalists uphold (iii) that **all** knowledge of the world is derived by pure reasoning without appeal to experience [c.f. Table 1, #13], or empiricists uphold (iv) that **all** knowledge is derived from experience, and no knowledge is *a priori* [c.f. Table 1, #3]. If any progress is to be made, these issues must be clarified.

However, the purpose here is not to criticise rationalism, but to discover its central tenets or characteristics. What is quite apparent is that we are faced with a wide variety of claims, which do not appear to be (a) *a priori* or necessary, or (b) deducible from any one or limited number of basic *a priori* truths or principles, which rationalism suggests. So far, it has not been possible to find any basic unity in these characteristics or tenets.

## \$5 Rationalist Accounts of Rationalism and Empiricism vs. Empiricist Accounts of them

The foregoing preliminary discussion suggests that rationalist accounts of rationalism, empiricism and the opposition between the two, will be radically different from empiricist accounts of rationalism, empiricism and the opposition between them. And that is not surprising if the two are fundamentally different and opposed philosophical outlooks. Anderson said that the basis of the opposition between the two "remains obscure or is wrongly stated" [SIEP, p.3], and we may assume the radical difference between the two positions is at least part of the problem. So it is reasonable to view his account of them as an attempt at a consistently empiricist view. The general point must be stated quite unequivocally: It is appropriate and essential for rationalists to describe or define, in rationalist terms, rationalism, empiricism and the opposition between the two; and it is equally appropriate and essential for empiricists to describe or define, in empiricist terms, these three. Once we recognise this distinction in viewpoints, we can inquire into how rationalist accounts of rationalism, empiricism and their opposition might differ from empiricist accounts of them.

It is being argued here that these "isms", and the opposition between them, are most frequently understood and stated, quite uncritically, in rationalist terms -- as if there was no such problem as that just suggested; and furthermore, that this rationalist statement of the case is absolutely incompatible with empiricism. These claims are supported by the examination of a number of commonly accepted views which follows. Following Kant (who, although he may be said to have attempted a reconciliation between empiricism and rationalism, cannot be called an empiricist) it is commonplace to base the distinction between rationalism and empiricism on the former's upholding, the latter's denial of, *a priori* reason. But the notion of *a priori* knowledge makes sense only in the context of its contrast: *a posteriori* knowledge, which involves the acceptance of the notion of two ways of knowing, and this is clearly a rationalist view. While Kant, and many others since, maintained that some propositions are synthetic and *a priori*, consistent empiricists maintain that nothing is known *a priori*, and so must maintain not that no propositions are synthetic *a priori* propositions, but that there are no such things as synthetic *a priori* propositions. The nature of the opposition between rationalism and empiricism with respect to the issue of synthetic *a priori* propositions must be fully appreciated. It is not one of assertion and denial, expressed as two contradictory propositions, but the assertion of a proposition containing a term that empiricists say does not exist. It cannot be stated as the opposition of --

- (i) Some propositions are synthetic and *a priori*.
- (ii) No propositions are synthetic and *a priori*.

It is more appropriate as the opposition of (i) and (iii):

- (iii) There are no such things as synthetic *a priori* propositions, or synthetic *a priori* propositions do not exist.

A different example may make the point a little clearer: If someone asserted

- (iv) Some X's are angelic unicorns,

it would be inappropriate to "deny" this by asserting

- (v) No X's are angelic unicorns,

for (v) implies something or other is an angelic unicorn, whereas what we want to say is that angelic unicorns do not exist. The point is that the "denial" of (iv) by (v) involves committing the fallacy of complex question. Returning

to the main issue, then, to present the dispute about *a priori* propositions in terms of (i) and (ii) is not only to present it in a rationalist way, but involves empiricists in arguing to a wrong conclusion by committing the fallacy of complex question.

It is clear that to speak of *a priori* and *a posteriori* knowledge, or two kinds of truths, implies two ways of knowing, and all of these ways of speaking are equally rationalist. Similarly, the postulation of analytic truths or "necessary truths" (which appear to be "truths of reason" by another name) are simply variations of this rationalist theme. The principle can be stated quite generally thus: Anyone who enters into a dispute of the following kinds, with **any** of the terms listed thereafter, has already accepted rationalist terms, and is arguing the issue on rationalist grounds, not in empiricist terms:

1.     Some propositions are [synthetic and *a priori*]  
        No propositions are [synthetic and *a priori*]  
               [*a posteriori*, necessary, contingent]
2.     Some events are [necessary]  
        No events are [necessary]  
               [necessitated, pre-determined or chance events]
3.     All or some mental events are free or undetermined.  
        No mental events are free or undetermined.

All of these are rationalist divisions, and to argue the issues in these terms is to argue them on rationalist, not empiricist, grounds. Consistent empiricists will not affirm or deny such propositions, but totally reject (the "existence" of) the postulates involved. For empiricists, as for Anderson the Realist, "facts are good enough" [SIEP, p.59]; they will refuse to appeal to "ultimates", or to "higher truths than those of fact" [Ibid, p.5].

Turning to the popular "definitions" of empiricism, we find them equally uncritically rationalist. The now commonplace view of empiricism is that it "is the doctrine that the course of all knowledge is to be found in experience" or "derived from experience" [Reese, 1980, p.146; c.f. Urmson, 1967, p.122]. In order to understand this definition, we must know what knowledge is, what experience is, and how knowledge is derived from experience, but each of these is extremely problematical. While we know what people mean when they speak about their (an) experience(s), we cannot understand what could possibly be meant by experience in this case, and there are two good reasons for saying that:



- (a) Experience in this instance specifically excludes knowing, for if it was "knowledgeable" or knowing-experience, the definition of empiricism -- knowledge is derived from, or caused by experience -- would be unnecessary, and virtually tautologous.
- (b) We may say (in some sense) that our waking experience is continuous over periods of time, and greatly varied and complex. It makes no sense to say that one specific item of knowledge or numerous discrete and discontinuous items of knowledge, are derived from continuous, complex and varied experience.

**Secondly**, we do not know what "derived from" means in this case; it is a "metaphorical" relation [Speake, 1979, p.97]. **Thirdly**, and most importantly, the term "knowledge" is quite ambiguous. In one quite innocuous, general sense, it may mean what people -- individually, or "collectively" -- know. But in the rationalist sense, it means something quite different, the details of which must be spelled out:

- (i) for Socrates, knowledge is qualitatively different from opinion, and associated with two faculties of mind;
- (ii) for modern rationalists, items of knowledge are **mental entities** which are contained wholly within "**the**" mind, or minds;
- (iii) to be **knowledge**, these propositional judgments must not only be **true**, but true for all time.

Three major reasons have been given why empiricists should reject the rationalist view of empiricism as the theory that all knowledge is derived from experience. Other apparently equivalent formulations of empiricism support the contention that this so-called definition is rationalist. The view that empiricism "is the theory that experience rather than reason is the source of knowledge" [Edwards, 1972, Vol.2, p.499] clearly involves the rationalist presumption that "**the**" mind consists of two quite distinct faculties: sense (from which comes "experience") and reason. Empiricists must reject that presumption, which also clearly involves the view that there are two ways of knowing.

Empiricists who took seriously Anderson's criticisms of the notions of experience [SIEP, p.4], and knowledge [SIEP, p.213], his rejection of the

theory of ideas and concepts [SIEP p.32], and thus of knowledge as mental entities contained wholly within minds, would reject the definition of empiricism under consideration as a rationalist one. Such empiricists would uphold the view that there is no such thing as "knowledge" or mental entities, and that knowing is a "relation" of some kind between knower and what is known, and that what is known (or, preferably, believed) is not mental, but expressible in propositional form.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is being argued that rationalism, empiricism, and the opposition between the two can be described in rationalist terms or empiricist terms, but the opposition between the two is so fundamental that they cannot reach common ground; that no account of this opposition from a rationalist position is acceptable to empiricists, and vice versa. That is to say, there is not, and cannot be, a philosophically neutral way of describing rationalism, empiricism, and the opposition between them; that to describe the nature of this opposition, one has to adopt a rationalist or an empiricist stance, or simply describe both from both points of view, without making any judgment about that conflict. But the latter approach, of course, does not find common ground; does not find definitions of empiricism, rationalism, and the opposition between them, in terms acceptable to rationalists and empiricists.

The position may be summed up by saying rationalists are required to state, and defend against criticism, the rationalist view of these three, just as empiricists are required to state and defend the empiricist view of them; but rationalists are not required to accept the empiricist definitions of rationalism, empiricism, and the nature of the conflict between them, any more than empiricists are required to accept the rationalist definitions of this triad. It will facilitate discussion of these difficult issues to recognise these radical differences, or "incommensurability"; and it will confound discussion to ignore it. Whether or how these difficulties might be resolved is a considerable problem; but philosophers need to recognise the kind of problem it is, and avoid glib essentially rationalist, formulations of it. We can agree with Anderson that "... if anything could alleviate [the kind of misunderstanding this opposition creates], it would be a resolute attempt to define exactly the issue or issues between [the two] different views" [SIEP, p.3].

If the foregoing argument is sound, it is essential that a consistently empiricist account of empiricism, rationalism, and the opposition between them be stated clearly. Then, and only then, can we consider what methodology is appropriate to this radical type of dispute. That is a principal concern of the present work.

The empiricist account adopted here of (a) rationalism, is to be found in the Conclusions to Part II; (b) the opposition between rationalism and empiricism, at the beginning of Chapter 8; (c) empiricism, in Chapter 9 [c.f. Appendix E].

## §6 The Quest for an Empiricist Account of Rationalism

Cottingham maintains that philosophers cannot be neatly compartmentalised into rationalists and empiricists: "In the first place, 'rationalism' does not denote one simple doctrine 'R', such that we can define rationalists as all and only those philosophers who subscribe to 'R'. Such exactness is seldom obtainable even in the case of more concrete concepts." [1984, p.9].

He goes on to say:

A second caveat is that the labels 'rationalism' and 'empiricism' should not be regarded as marking out two precise areas of mutually exclusive territory. Often there will be a considerable degree of overlap, so that while a given philosopher matches the paradigm of rationalism in one respect, there may be other strands in his thought which are symptomatic of a more empiricist outlook. [Ibid, p.9-10]

In short, Cottingham maintains the notion of rationalism/ist is a "cluster concept" involving a cluster of features some of which various rationalist philosophers adhere to or do not; or adhere to more or less.

We can accept that individual philosophers may accept certain rationalist doctrines and not others, and the cluster of rationalist doctrines adopted by any one philosopher may be different from the cluster adopted by others. We can also accept that some philosophers may (inconsistently) adopt some combination of rationalist and empiricist doctrines. Indeed, Anderson maintained that certain doctrines adopted by the British Empiricists were actually rationalist ones, and that their work was only "very slightly empirical" [SIEP, p.12]. But we cannot say any of these things if we cannot recognise what are and are not rationalist (or empiricist) doctrines. Part of what Cottingham says -- suggests, rather than explicitly states -- would make these claims impossible. Cottingham sums up his view by saying: "Labels can be useful and informative, provided we remember that what is involved is not a

single, fixed 'essence' but, as Ludwig Wittgenstein put it, 'a complicated network of overlapping and criss-crossing similarities'" [Ibid, p.10; c.f. Wittgenstein, 1974, §67ff]. When this is taken in conjunction with an earlier passage, the possibility of identifying or defining rationalism evaporates: "... there are many other criss-crossing strands in what we call the 'rationalist' tradition. The emphasis will vary from philosopher to philosopher, and the features that make us inclined to classify a thinker as belonging to the rationalist tradition will not always be the same in every case" [Ibid, p.9].

While the recognition of variability within rationalism is important, as is the variability in the adherence of various individual philosophers to a range of rationalist (and empiricist) tenets, rationalism itself cannot be variable in the way Cottingham suggests. A simple illustration will suffice to make the point. Let it be assumed philosopher A upholds tenets 1, 2 and 3; philosopher B tenets 2, 3 and 4; C: 3, 4 and 5; D: 4, 5 and 6. While there are "family resemblances" between A and B, B and C, C and D, there are no common characteristics between A and D. If we admit this degree of looseness to our definitions, we can only distinguish between rationalism and empiricism by drawing arbitrary distinctions; or, worse still, we will allow that some rationalists are empiricists, which is contrary to the long philosophical tradition and destroys the distinction altogether. It is maintained here, therefore, that there is an important need to identify what is central and distinctive in both rationalism and empiricism. In fact, a most important part of the aim of this thesis is to identify Anderson's empiricism, and to distinguish it from rationalism.

If rationalism is a genuine philosophical position or viewpoint, it must have certain definite features. That is to say, if we are to speak meaningfully of rationalism (not in a confused way), and if we are to refer to something definite when we speak of rationalism (not just indicate a vague area, or any selection of a loosely related array of doctrines), there must be some definite, recognisable set of characteristics which underpin rationalism -- and the alternative is to perpetuate confusion. If there are such things as rationalism and empiricism, and a real opposition between them as Anderson (along with many other philosophers) believed, it would seem that we have to explore and analyse these opposed views more deeply in order to uncover their central doctrines and methods, and in precisely what way they are opposed.

Any thoroughgoing attempt to identify and define rationalism will take into account its major phases: Greek, Jewish medieval, and seventeenth-century classical rationalism. Such a task is beyond the scope of this work, but an attempt is made to identify some of the most important features of rationalism evident in the first and third of these; and later, on the basis of this analysis, an attempt is made not only to define what is central to rationalism, but to elucidate how the major features and tenets of rationalism relate to one another as a reasonably logical view given certain assumptions.

The following two chapters attempt to discover the common characteristics of Greek and Classical Rationalism. Although they involve some critical comment, they are not intended to be critiques of rationalism, but an attempt to discover and **describe** the central features of rationalism. If it is possible to give an historically correct account of rationalism, one that accommodates both Greek and classical, seventeenth century rationalism, and one that is not inconsistent with Anderson's view of it, it is reasonable to conclude that is what he was referring to as rationalism.

It is elementary that when people adopt a complex point of view involving numerous assumptions, what "comes out" of that position is relative to what is assumed. It will be argued that rationalism was founded in theological assumptions, central amongst which was the notion of soul or mind, and that once these notions are adopted, certain "outcomes" necessarily follow.

### Chapter 3 : GREEK RATIONALISM

#### §1 Introduction

It is generally accepted that rationalism began with Greek philosophers: the Eleatics, Pythagoreans and Plato [Funes, 1972, p.263]. However, the present discussion concentrates almost solely on views developed in Plato's dialogues, along with certain influences upon them.

It cannot be seriously doubted that Socrates was a deeply religious man or that he placed great emphasis upon the soul, yet neither of these features of his thought is generally linked to Greek rationalism. It will be argued here that both are fundamental to it; that the notion of the soul is a pre-existing, religious notion; that with Socrates it becomes associated with, if not identical with, the mind; that it is fundamental to his view of knowledge, and the recognisably rationalist doctrines of (a) the distinction between ways of knowing, or the division into faculties of reason and sense; and (b) the downgrading of sense. The present study begins, therefore, with a brief examination of Socrates' religious views, and is followed by a somewhat longer examination of the notion of the soul.

#### §2 Socrates' Religious Views

It is probable that Socrates was initiated into the Orphic religion as a child "and permanently impressed by it" [Taylor, 1951, p.53]. Although by Plato's time this religion had degenerated [Ibid, p.52], the "Socrates of the Platonic dialogues frequently refers to the dogmas of the Orphic religion as supporting his own convictions about the immortality of the soul and the importance of the life to come" [Ibid, p.51-2]. Burnet argues that any doubts Socrates may have had about Orphic practices was not inconsistent with the conviction that it "contained, in however dim a form, a great truth not to be found in the ordinary religion of the state" [Burnet, 1950, p.131]. Two features of Socrates' personality suggest he was something of a visionary [Taylor, 1951, p.46]: he claimed to hear a voice, and he was liable to "sudden fits of absorption and abstraction, amounting at times to actual trance or 'ecstasy'" [Ibid]; and he believed he had a divine mission. Socrates refers to this "voice" in the *Apology*: "This sign, which is a kind of voice, first began to come to me when I was a child from time to time it forbids me to do something which I am going to do, but never commands anything" [Plato, *Apology*, 31d; c.f. *Phaedrus*, 242b-c, and Burnet, 1950, p.129f, p.183ff).

Two separate instances of the trance-like state are described in the *Symposium* (175a and 220c-d). Socrates describes his mission in the *Apology*. Relatively early in his life, his life-long friend and admirer Chaerephon "went to Delphi and boldly asked the oracle to tell him ... whether anyone was wiser than" Socrates, and the answer was "that there was no man wiser" [*Apology*, 21a]. Puzzled by this, Socrates set about testing this divine claim, believing that a divine obligation was now upon him [*Apology*, 21c], and said: "And so I go about the world, obedient to the god, and search and make inquiry into the wisdom of anyone, whether citizen or stranger, who appears to be wise; and if he is not wise, then in vindication of the oracle I show him that he is not wise; ... I am in utter poverty by reason of my devotion to the god" [*Apology*, 23b].

Burnet [1950, p.136-7] had no doubts about Socrates' religious sincerity, and if Plato's account in the *Apology* is correct, there can be no reason to doubt it, for during his trial he defended this belief in the face of a very serious threat: a threat of death, as it transpired. He said it would be strange if, having risked death on the command of the generals, he failed to obey God now [*Apology*, 28e]. Recognising the possibility of the penalty of death, he said: "Men of Athens, I honour and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you, and while I have life and strength I shall never cease from the practice and teaching of philosophy ..." [*Ibid*, 30a]; "understand that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times" [*Ibid*, 30b]; he maintained this position even after the death penalty was pronounced [*Ibid*, 38c,ff].

The number of times Socrates refers to gods or God is very considerable. Some, in the *Apology*, have already been noted. But there are a number of significant references to God or deity in the *Republic*, where Socrates is attempting to work out a theory of knowledge and a program of education. In attempting to describe philosophers, he suggests they have a "longing after the whole of things both divine and human" [*Republic*, 486a]; and later, philosophers "shall be compelled by a superior power to have the charge of the State" [*Ibid*, 499d]. A philosopher "holding converse with the divine order, becomes orderly and divine as far as the nature of man allows;" [*Ibid*, 500d]. In Book VII, Socrates introduced the Allegory of the Cave and went on to say that the Idea of good is the last thing to be seen, and is seen only with great effort; nevertheless, when the Idea of good is apprehended: "... it is inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of

the lord of light in the visible world, and the immediate and supreme source of reason and truth in the intellectual;" [Ibid, 517b-c].

According to Socrates there is nothing surprising in the philosopher's appearing "grotesque and ridiculous" when he returns to the affairs of the evil state of humans after such "divine contemplations" [Ibid, 517d]; and wisdom "contains a divine element which never loses its power" [Ibid, 518e]. Speaking of astronomers, he clearly implies that the heavens were created by God or some supernatural power and astronomers might think "that heaven and the things in heaven are framed by the Craftsman who made them in the most perfect manner in which such things can be framed?" [Ibid, 530a].

There can be little doubt that we must understand Socrates' views and Plato's influence on later philosophy within this religious framework. And of course, the Socratic-Platonic view of the soul is an important, perhaps the key, element in this "spiritual" philosophy.

### §3 The Soul

The Socratic view of the soul has been so influential in western thought, especially in later classical rationalism, and raises such extraordinary issues, that it warrants intensive scrutiny. It should also be recognised that it had a long history before Socrates took it up. Despite its long history, and its acceptance by many eminent scholars, the notion of the soul is not a scientific one, but a religious one going back into pre-history.

The pre-Socratic, or early Greek notion of the soul has been studied in some detail by Bremmer [1983], who takes up Arberman's distinction between the concepts of body souls and free souls, which are both to be distinguished from the notion of a unitary soul tied to a body in a one-to-one relation, in which the eschatological and psychological attributes are merged [Bremmer, 1983, p.9]. Bremmer's survey reveals a great variety of conceptions of spiritual partners to or elements of human bodies, and only some significant points will be mentioned here.

Leaving to one side the questions of souls in plants and animals, Bremmer's main discussion divides into matters concerning the souls of the living, and then those of the dead. And her discussion of the souls of the living is



divided into that of "free souls" and "body souls". Very briefly, Arbman's distinction between these two main conceptions is:

- (i) Body souls endow the body with life and consciousness. They are active during the waking life of the living individual. Body souls, or several of their parts, represent the inner self of the individual. Usually, body souls are conceived of as having two parts: "the life soul frequently identified with the breath, the life principle" and the ego soul.
- (ii) Free souls are unencumbered souls representing the individual personality. Free souls are active during unconsciousness, and passive during consciousness when the conscious individual replaces it. It is not clear where the free soul is supposed to reside in the body [Bremmer, 1983, p.9].

Bremmer points out that Homer uses four terms which might be related to the notion of "soul", yet all are intended to refer to different aspects of humans. Using Arbman's categories, the psyche in Homer can be connected with the free soul. Three other notions -- those of thymos, noos, and menos -- are related to the body soul [Ibid, p.11].

If we attempt to synthesise these "Homeric" views, we may say in summary that when a person is awake, it is assumed to be under the influence of body souls or the breath soul, but the activity of body souls and free (or psychic) souls vary inversely: "the psyche is most active when the body is asleep or, as Aristotle added, when it lies at the point of death. That is, the free soul becomes active during unconsciousness, and at the moment of death" [Dodds' view, cited in Bremmer, Ibid, p.52] "It is the free soul, in the form of the psyche that becomes identified as the soul of the dead" [Ibid, p.73]; yet "without a psyche a person cannot survive" [Ibid, p.14]. The free soul is always active outside the body and is not bound to it like the body souls [Ibid, p.18].

#### **\$4 Views of Soul known to Socrates**

Socrates was undoubtedly acquainted with the Homeric view of soul or psyche which, by classical times had come to mean "breath of life" [Burnet, 1916, p.245]. It was "not identified with whatever it is in us that feels and wills

during our waking life. That was generally supposed to be blood and not breath." [Ibid, p.246]. "Departed souls are witless and feeble things" [Ibid]. Death does not rob the psyche of consciousness, for it never had anything to do with consciousness in life [Ibid]; "the prevailing notion in the time of Socrates certainly was that the souls of the dead were absorbed by the upper air, just as their bodies were by the earth." [Ibid, p.248].

There was speculation about soul amongst philosophers prior to Socrates, and two relatively late religious movements, Orphicism and Pythagoreanism, placed considerable emphasis upon soul. It can be assumed Socrates knew of all these views, and that he was greatly influenced by the religious doctrines.

### §5 Philosophical Speculations and Soul

Earlier Greek philosophers had postulated a role for soul in their cosmologies, although precisely what was meant is extremely difficult to determine. For Anaximenes, the underlying or fundamental substance was Air, and "Just as ... our soul, being air, holds us together, so do breath and air encompass the whole world" [Burnet, 1948, p.73]. There is a parallel between the relation of the primary substance to (a) the world and (b) humans [Ibid, p.75]; and "this Air he spoke of as a 'god'" [Burnet, 1950, p.25]. Alcmaeon of Croton said that "soul was immortal because it resembled immortal things, and was always in motion like the heavenly bodies" [Ibid, p.195; see Barnes, 1987, p.89]. Heraclitus shared with the religious teachers of his time an insistence on the importance of Soul, and for him, like Anaximenes, there were parallels between its operation on the cosmic and personal scales. For Heraclitus "the soul was no longer a feeble ghost or shade, but the most real thing of all, and its most important attribute was thought ... or wisdom ... " [Burnet, 1950, p.59]. He said: "You cannot find out the boundaries of soul; so deep a measure hath it" [Ibid; c.f. Fr.71, Diels-Krantz in Burnet, 1948, p.138; Barnes, 1987, p.106]. Burnet interprets Heraclitus' view as based in a series of oppositions: at the personal level, of sleeping, waking, life and death; at the macro level, of night and day, summer and winter, which related to the traditional Milesian problem of opposites: hot cold, wet and dry [Burnet, 1950, p.59-60]. Diogenes of Apollonia also said the primary substance was a 'god', followed Anaximenes in holding it was air, but identified it with Mind [Burnet, 1950, p.123].

## §6 The Orphic View of Soul

Burnet points out that the cult of Dionysus received a new impulse from Asia Minor which brought "an entirely different view of the soul and its relation to the body from that we find in Homer, and this was propagated by the Orphic religion" which spread in all directions [Burnet, 1950, p.31]:

The Orphics taught ... that, though men were certainly fallen, they were yet akin to the gods and might rise again by a system of "purifications" ...; they might win "redemption" ... from sin and death, and dwell with the gods for evermore. For the soul of the Orphic "saint" ... was immortal; it had existed before his birth, and would exist after his death. Indeed, these words are improperly used. What men call life is really death, and the body is the tomb of the soul ..., which is imprisoned successively in animal, and even in vegetable bodies, until its final purification liberates it from the "wheel of birth." [Ibid].

## §7 The Pythagorean View of Soul

According to Guthrie --

... the core of Pythagoreanism was a belief in the immortality of the human soul, and its progress through a series of incarnations not only as man but also in the bodies of other creatures. ... They believed indeed that the Universe as a whole was a living creature. In this they agreed with the Ionians, but they saw implications in it which were foreign to Anaximander or Anaximenes and came rather from mystical religious than from rational sources. The cosmos, they held, is surrounded with a boundless quantity of air or breath, which permeates and gives life to the whole. It is the same thing which gives life to individual living creatures. From this relic of popular belief, rationalized as we saw by Anaximenes, a religious lesson was now drawn. The breath or life of man and the breath or life of the infinite and divine Universe were essentially the same. The Universe was one, eternal and divine. Men were many and divided, and were mortal. But the essential part of man, his soul, was not mortal, and owed its immortality to this fact, that it was a fragment or spark of the divine soul, cut off and imprisoned in a mortal body. [Guthrie, 1956, p.34-36]

Pythagoreanism seems to have been divided between religious and scientific interests:

In the fourth century the Pythagorean scientific school expired and its place was taken by the Academy; the Pythagorist religion, on the other hand, maintained its existence even later, as we know from the fragments of the comic poets. [Burnet, 1950, p.38]

## §8 Socrates' View of the Soul

Taylor [1951] recognises the Homeric view of the soul as a kind of ghost: "It is something which is present in a man so long as he lives, and leaves him at

death. It is, in fact, the 'ghost' which the dying man 'gives up'" [p.141]. It has nothing to do with a person's mental life, and "the psyche which has left the body has no consciousness whatsoever" [Ibid, p.142]. He also recognises the Orphic view, according to which there is really no personal immortality; and neither intelligence nor character belong to the psyche [Ibid, p.144]. But with Socrates, Taylor argues, a new view of soul emerges:

Now the remarkable thing is that we find this conception of the soul as the seat of normal intelligence and character current in the literature of the generation immediately subsequent to the death of Socrates; it is common ground to Isocrates, Plato, and Xenophon, and thus cannot be the discovery of any one of them. But it is wholly, or all but wholly, absent from the literature of earlier times. It must thus have originated with some contemporary of Socrates, and we know of no contemporary thinker to whom it can be attributed other than Socrates himself, who is consistently made to teach it in the pages of both Plato and Xenophon. [Ibid, p.140-141]

Taylor places the "tendance of the soul" first amongst all of Socrates' moral teachings, and he explains why:

A man, in fact, is a "soul using a body" (this is the standing Academic definition of "man"). Hence the first condition of enjoying real good and making a real success of life is that a man's soul should be in a good or healthy state. And the good or healthy state of the soul is just the wisdom or knowledge (sophia, phronesis) which ensures that a man shall make the right use of his body and of everything else which is his. Hence the first duty of every man who means to enjoy good or happiness is to "tend his soul," "to see to it that the soul is as good as it possibly can be," that is, to get the knowledge or insight which ensures his using everything rightly. And before a man can develop this quality of soul, he must be brought to "know himself," that is, to recognize the imperative need of moral wisdom and the dreadfulness of his present state of ignorance. [Taylor, 1955, p.27-28; and Ibid, p.52, 65-6, 128, 145, 154, 401-2; Also Taylor, 1951, p.146].

Socrates makes it plain in the Apology that he takes it as his mission to draw the attention of his fellow Athenians to the importance of attending to their souls: "For know that this is the command of God; and I believe that no greater good has ever happened in the state than my service to the God. For I do nothing but go about persuading you all, old and young alike, not to take thought for your persons or your properties, but first and chiefly to care about the greatest improvement of the soul" [Apology, 30a].

## §9 Socrates and Plato on the Soul

The soul is discussed at some length in several places in the Platonic dialogues. However, we cannot assume that these various passages were intended to provide, or could give us, a coherent theory of the soul. Firstly, there is the question of whose views they represent. The views expressed on the soul in the *Timaeus* are Pythagorean, and cannot be attributed to Socrates or Plato without further evidence. And we should be prepared to distinguish Socrates' view from Plato's if the evidence permits. Secondly, in attempting to convey his view of the soul, Socrates resorts to myth or allegory in the two most important passages dealing with it, and this is a certain indication that he could not, and knew he could not, give a theoretical account of the soul where it is most needed. In the *Phaedo*, after all the argument, and after a mythical account of the soul's journeyings, Socrates said: "A man of sense ought not to assert that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true. But I do say that, inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true" [*Phaedo*, 114d].

A number of major passages will be reviewed separately, beginning with the *Timaeus* partly because it is not represented as Socrates' view, but is Pythagorean; and partly because it provides a wider cosmological context for the notion of the personal soul.

### *Timaeus*

Timaeus, a Pythagorean, purports to give an account of God's creation of the universe, which is not a creation of things out of nothing, but the creation of order out of chaos. At that time nothing was as we know it: there was not even earth, air, fire or water: "All these the creator first set in order, and out of them he constructed the universe, which was a single animal comprehending in itself all other animals, mortal and immortal" [Plato, *Timaeus*, 69b-c; Lee translates "creature" for "animal" in Jowett]. This God "... spake, and once more into the cup in which he had previously mingled the soul of the universe he poured the remains of the elements, and mingled them in much the same manner; they were not, however, pure as before, but diluted to the second and third degree. And having made it he divided the whole mixture into souls equal in number to the stars, and assigned each soul to a star;" [Ibid, 41d].

These souls would be implanted in human bodies [Ibid, 42b]. He created the divine and immortal, but he assigned the creation of the mortal to his

offspring; and "... they, imitating him, received from him the immortal principle of the soul; and around this they proceeded to fashion a mortal body, and made it to be the vehicle of the soul, and constructed within the body a soul of another nature which was mortal, ... " [Ibid, 69c]. The mortal soul was subject to all the passions and irrationality of the body and senses. The divine soul was located in the head, the mortal soul, which has two parts, was located in the torso: the part associated with courage, passion and ambition, they located in the chest, nearer to the commands of reason [70a]; the other part of the mortal soul associated with bodily appetites they located below the diaphragm [70d-e]. Each of the souls which was allotted to stars, will be born in a mortal human male, and each of these would have a "faculty of sensation, arising out of irresistible impressions; ... love, in which pleasure and pain mingle; also fear and anger". If they overcame these, they would live righteously, and if not, unrighteously; and "He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence". But those who failed this test underwent a cycle of transmigrations: descent into a woman, and then beasts, until reason triumphed over the irrational [Ibid, 42a-d].

The foregoing is, of course, the briefest summary of the account of the soul given in the *Timaeus*. But several points may be made. The *Timaeus* attempts to give a complete, rounded cosmogony and cosmology, depicting humans, and the soul, as part of a wider, integrated system. It portrays the universe as moulded by God, as an organic whole (animal or creature) throughout which divine elements are evenly spread, and mixed with the mortal; and this divine element which constitutes the immortal soul appears to be a "physical" substance. The soul of humans is complex, composed of a divine, immortal part (which is reason), and mortal, sensuous and passionate parts. Associated with the complex nature of individual souls, the mixture of the divine and sensual, there is a "moral" component in this system which involves either endless cycles of birth and rebirth, or purification and arrival at one's appointed destiny. These bear a very close resemblance to Socrates' views expressed elsewhere, and have clear affinities with rationalism as widely understood.

#### *Meno*

In the *Meno*, Socrates put forward the view that the soul of humans is immortal, is re-born, and never destroyed. But he also put forward the very special doctrine that knowledge is recollection. He said priests, priestesses and poets say:

... mark, now, and see whether their words are true -- they say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end, which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. ... The souls, then, as being immortal and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all; and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue, and about everything, for as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is not difficulty in a man eliciting out of a single recollection all the rest -- the process generally called 'learning' -- if he is strenuous and does not faint; for all inquiry and all learning is but recollection. [*Meno*, 81b-d]

### *Phaedo*

In the *Phaedo*, on the very day he drank the hemlock, Socrates outlined, and argued for, his own view of the soul. He made a very clear distinction between the life of philosophers and others who are more devoted to bodily pleasures, and the account given here recognises that distinction. What Socrates said about the soul is divided into four categories below: (i) positive descriptions of the soul, (ii) souls in various general processes, (iii) the soul of the lover of sense, bodily pleasures, and so on, and (iv) the souls of philosophers.

In attempting to describe the soul, Socrates said that the soul commands, the body serves [80a]; "the soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal, and rational, and uniform, and indissoluble, and unchangeable; and that the body is in the very likeness of the human, and mortal, and irrational and multiform, and dissoluble, and changeable" [80b]; the soul is almost if not quite indissoluble [80b]; is invisible and incorporeal, therefore immortal, and prior to the body [86]; has an eye [100]. Life is an inseparable attribute of the soul, and thus excludes death [105].

He claimed the soul is involved in various processes: death is the separation of soul and body [64]; there is a fear that when the soul has been released from the body it will disperse and vanish away into nothingness [70a, c.f. 77d-e]; the souls of the living come from the souls of the dead in the world below [70]; and if the "living come from the dead, then our souls must exist in the other world" [70c]; and the circle of nature is not complete unless the living come from the dead as well as pass to them [72].

He contrasted the soul of the lover of sense and that of the philosopher or pure soul:

But the soul which has been polluted, and is impure at the time of her departure, and is the companion and servant of the body always, and is in love with and bewitched by the body and by the desires and pleasures of the body, until she is led to believe that the truth only exists in a bodily form, which a man may touch and see, and drink and eat, and use for the purposes of his lusts, -- the soul, I mean, accustomed to hate and fear and avoid that which to the bodily eye is dark and invisible, ... [81b]

And the souls "not of the good, but of the evil, ... are compelled to wander about such places in payment of the penalty of their former evil way of life; and they continue to wander until through the craving after their constant associate, the corporeal, they are imprisoned finally in another body" [81d-e] [i.e., into animals]; " ... each pleasure and pain is a sort of nail which nails and rivets the soul to the body, until she becomes like the body" [83d].

The philosopher, on the other hand despises bodily needs [64d-e]; the body and senses are a hindrance to inquiry [65a-b], and deceive us [65b]; true reality is revealed in thought, if at all [65c]; "it is characteristic of the philosopher to despise the body; his soul runs away from his body and desires to be alone and by herself?" [65c-d]. Also, "he who has got rid, as far as he can, of eyes and ears and, so to speak of the whole body, these being in his opinion distracting elements which when they associate with the soul hinder her from acquiring truth and knowledge" [66a]. He went on to say:

... while the soul is mixed with the evils of the body, our desire will not be satisfied? ... and our desire is of the truth. For the body is a source of countless distractions by reason of the mere requirement of food, and is liable also to diseases which overtake and impede us in the pursuit of truth: it fills us full of loves, and lusts, and fears, and fancies of all kinds, and endless foolery, and in very truth, as men say takes away from us the power of thinking at all [66b-c].

And he said: "It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body -- the soul by herself must behold things by themselves" [66d-e];

One doctrine of the *Phaedo* is very clear: the body, the senses and those things which appeal to the body and the senses are polluted, and corrupt the soul; those individuals who are corrupted in this way pay a penalty in a later life; the truths we think we learn through the senses are illusory; we can arrive at knowledge or an understanding of true reality only through the soul, or the eye of the soul, or through thought free of the body and the senses. It



is clear that this view is partly derived from earlier religious beliefs, but it contains an element that is more intellectual, or rationalistic: the view that true reality is viewed through the eye of the soul [*Phaedo*, 99d-100a], or that knowledge is attained by the soul's reflections free of the encumbrances of the senses or the body. Here is the basis of those rationalist dichotomies: opinion and knowledge, sense and intellect, appearance and reality. As introduced by Socrates, these divisions are completely dependent upon the notion of soul.

The doctrine that learning is simply recollection (outlined in the *Meno*) occurs also in the *Phaedo* as confirmation of the pre-existence of the soul [72e]. Here, however, it is used to explain certain "abstract" notions. In actual (sensual) experience, we do not find any two things exactly equal. From unequals we cannot obtain the notion of equality; therefore "*we must have acquired the knowledge of equality at some previous time? ... before we were born, I suppose?*" [74c-75c]. But this must apply not only to equality, but beauty, goodness, justice, holiness; "*Of all this we affirm with certainty that we acquired the knowledge before birth?*" [75d]. Here, then, inextricably related to the notion of the soul, is the basis of a distinctive rationalist view: (a) that each person is born with innate knowledge, and (b) that this knowledge is of a special kind, distinct from what we learn through sense experience: it is of abstract things, such as "absolute equality", beauty, etc.

Space does not permit an examination of other Socratic doctrines of the soul, such as those from the *Phaedrus* where (i) the soul is taken to be the source of motion: "what moves itself" [245e; c.f. Burnet, 1950, p.333; Taylor, 1955, p.306, n2]; that is, an active agent; (ii) the soul is likened to a charioteer struggling to control two winged steeds: "honour or mettle" (reason) and "appetite" (sense) [246ff; c.f. Taylor, 1955, p.307]. However, it must be pointed out that at this vital point too, instead of describing the soul, Socrates resorts to allegory.

The *Republic* also develops important rationalist doctrines in association with the notion of the soul. Only two major passages are discussed here.

### *The Republic*

In Book IV of the *Republic*, Socrates is inquiring into what justice is. His view of justice applies equally to the state and to individuals, and to make the two parallel, he has to show that there are three parts to the soul. In the state, "the meaner desires of the many" (women, children, servants, and lower class workers) "are held down by the desires and wisdom of the more virtuous few" [431c]. In the ideal state, the three main components or classes are traders, auxiliaries, and guardians, and when each attends to its proper business, that state is in a condition of justice [434c], but when one class attempts to take over the role of another, the state is brought into chaos [434a-c]. Temperance, then, appears to be that unity of mind found in both states and individuals, which is a kind of agreement that the naturally superior should rule [432a]. Socrates proceeds to apply this view to the individual [434e], so "we may assume that [an individual] has the same three principles in his soul which are found in the State;" [435b-c] -- but he warns that "the present methods of argument are not at all adequate to the accurate solution of this question" [435d]. In the individual, the three comparable parts of the soul are reason, spirit and appetite, and the predominance of any one of these amongst the people of any state, gives that state its distinctive character [435e-436a]. Socrates then goes on to argue that each of these three parts of the soul is different. So Socrates concludes the argument has found that the same three principles which exist in the state exist in the individual soul. Christopher Janaway, in A.C. Grayling [1996, p.372] points out that in Book X of the *Republic*, Plato uses the idea of the divided soul, but there "abandons the three parts and talks instead of a 'superior' and an 'inferior' part [602c-606d]").

In Book VI of the *Republic*, Socrates turned to the question of who are best able to act as guardians of the laws and institutions of the state, and he set out to show that since "philosophers only are able to grasp the eternal and unchangeable" [484b], they alone are suitable as guardians. He goes on to say that just as painters are able to look at both the original and the image of things, the philosopher-guardians must be able to look at the absolute truth in order to frame laws [484c-d]. In this passage Socrates again set up that dichotomy between the intellectual and sensory, and went on to extend it to a division between an eternal and unchangeable reality and the world of generation and decay [485a-b].

Towards the end of Book VI, Socrates worked towards the Analogy of the Divided Line, and he did so by raising further dichotomies: the first was that of the One and the many: "The many, as we say, are seen but not known, and the Ideas are known but not seen" [507b], a view intended to reinforce the division between intellect and sense. He then introduced an analogy between the Idea of the good in relation to knowledge, and the sun to sight. He called the sun -- "... the child of the good, whom the good begat in his own likeness, to be in the visible world, in relation to sight and the things of sight, what the good is in the intellectual world in relation to mind and the things of the mind: ..." [508b-c].

In this analogy, the soul is likened to the eye: "And the soul is like the eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul perceives and understands, and is radiant with intelligence; but when turned towards the twilight and to those things which come into being and perish, then she has opinion only, and goes blinking about, and is first of one opinion and then of another, and seems to have no intelligence?" [508d].

The final complex analogy is that of sight, eyes, object seen, light sun; knowledge, soul, form? Idea of the good [see 508d-509a]. The important elements here are the dichotomies of knowledge and opinion, the one and the many, the soul or intellect and the eyes, the noblest of the senses [508a]; the world of permanent form versus the changing world; the world of intellect (or mind) and that of sense; things of sight - things of the mind.

The principal point is that Socrates could not make these dichotomies plausible, in fact he could not make them at all without postulating the soul as the connecting link with the dichotomies and the transcendental elements of his view. If we can contemplate the thesis that there is no such thing as the soul, then neither Socrates nor anyone else could make out a case for those dichotomies which Anderson took to be the mark of rationalism.

A subsequent passage is crucial: "You have to imagine, then, that there are two ruling powers, and that one of them is set over the intellectual world, the other over the visible. ... May I suppose that you have this distinction of the visible and intelligible fixed in your mind?" [509d; my emphasis].

Socrates then related these divisions to a divided line. The main division is that between the realms of the sun and the Idea of the good: the worlds of sight and things seen versus the world of mind and things thought; the realms of opinion and knowledge; the changing world of the senses and the unchanging eternal world of the forms [see Rouse, 1963, p.309]. And each of these two parts is divided: the first is divided into the realms of images, shadows and reflections on the one hand and objects on the other. The second is divided into thought images such as ideal squares and cubes, and on the other hand major forms or ideals such as those of perfect beauty, justice and goodness. In order to convey this model, Socrates had to draw an analogy with a concrete image of a divided line -- a curious sort of analogy in view of the transcendental message; and he had to ask his listeners to *imagine* two ruling powers, which he relates to the two divisions of the line. How does he make such a curious and highly questionable analogy plausible? He does so not by justifying what he has asked us to imagine, but by **assuming** this very framework and suggesting how **the soul** (or our thinking) progresses through these various stages of thought [see 510b].

When Socrates' first attempt at explanation failed to convince Glaucon, he said:

Then I will try again; you will understand me better when I have made some preliminary remarks. You are aware that students of geometry, arithmetic, and the kindred sciences assume the odd and the even and the figures; and three kind of angles and the like in their several branches of science; these are their hypotheses, which they and everybody are supposed to know, and therefore they do not deign to give any account of them either to themselves or others; but they begin with them, and go on until they arrive at last, and in a consistent manner, at the solution which they set out to find?

Yes, he said, I know.

And do you not know also that although they make use of the visible forms and reason about them, **they are thinking not of these, but of the ideals; which they resemble:** not of the figures which they drawn, but of the absolute square and the absolute diameter, and so on -- the forms which they draw or make, and which themselves have shadows and reflections in water, are in turn converted by them into images; for they are really seeking to behold the things themselves, **which can only be seen with the eye of the mind?** [510c-e, p.373-4; my emphases]

It is necessary to repeat the claim, made previously, and strengthen it. It was not possible for Socrates to even suggest those dichotomies at all,

without the notion of the soul. Even so, he can only make out a case on the basis of two very curious analogies: the sun to sign, the Idea of good to knowledge; the divided line, etc.; and he could only make this model appear plausible by assuming it, and claiming to describe certain thought processes in terms of it, supported by the apparently false assumption that the mind has, and perceives by means of, its own eye.

The Myth of the Cave, which follows in Book VII, is a further, more poetic attempt to develop the same thesis. We are asked to believe, on the basis of another analogy, that attaining real knowledge -- knowledge of the highest forms, of the good, etc. -- is comparable to the shocks the chained occupants of the cave would have when passing firstly from the shadows of things seen on the wall of the cave to the things themselves; secondly when passing from the firelight of the cave to the brilliant light of the sun. But in order to make the next step of the analogy -- passing from acquaintance with things in the world of sense to the forms -- again Socrates must depend upon the notion of the soul, or the intellect, or the eye of the soul. That is to say, for the Myth of the Cave to have any significance -- for the dichotomies it postulates to make sense; for the rationalist divisions to have any plausibility -- it must import and depend upon the notions of the soul and eye of the soul.

#### **§10 The Key Role of the Soul in Greek Rationalism**

In attempting to identify the main characteristics of Greek rationalism as manifested in the Platonic dialogues, it has been argued that Socrates' views were certainly founded in prevailing religious beliefs, that central amongst those is his notion of the soul, and that the notion of the soul was absolutely essential to the dichotomies of rationalism evident in the dialogues. Considerable evidence has been brought forward in support of these claims, and it is appropriate now to summarise and clarify this argument.

It has been shown that there were several Homeric notions that are akin to the notion of soul; that there were several notions of soul ambient in the Greek world prior to, or coinciding with, the emergence of Greek philosophy and science; that these notions of soul were religious rather than scientific or theoretical; and that they were anything but precise or clear. The Orphic view was widespread, and the Pythagorean well established in some circles. Several pre-Socratic philosophers embraced the notion of soul, and gave it a special place in the structure of the universe. One aspect of such views was of an

entirely individual nature; another involved belief in something like a world soul which is not personal. Although it is difficult for us to comprehend the significance of these early views, some at least appear to postulate some kind of anima within or behind things, alongside and distinct from a personal soul. In fact, it appears to be commonplace in pre-Socratic Greek thinking generally, and philosophy, to give (unspecified) gods a place in the cosmological order [Guthrie, 1950, p.32], and "the recognition" of soul appears to be an integral part of this supernatural view. At any rate, there was not one conception, but numerous conceptions of soul prior to Socrates' view.

As has been shown, there is not just one view (theory) of soul expounded or maintained in the Platonic dialogues. Rather, in those dialogues, there is a variety of doctrines and claims about the soul (often supplemented by allegory) which views cannot all be true together. It is very significant, then, that nowhere in the dialogues (a) is there an attempt to expound a new, precisely formulated theory of (the) soul, which would amend or replace earlier views, as we might expect if it was a scientific or theoretical conception; (b) is the notion of the soul subjected to the searching examination or criticism Socrates applied to other notions, as we might expect of a theoretical notion. If we can speak of the Socratic-Platonic conception of (the) soul, it must be said that it is not a precise view, and not a theoretical one; rather, it is a fundamentally religious or mystical view taken over from earlier beliefs without critical examination or theoretical modification. It seems indisputable that Socrates adopted the main features of the Orphic-Pythagorean view of the soul, in particular, the notions of transmigration, of the soul being imprisoned in the body, of a series of lives for better or for worse, and of moral responsibility, punishments and rewards. And it must be assumed, therefore, that there was historical continuity between the Homeric, Orphic, Pythagorean and Socratic-Platonic views of the soul, despite important differences between them.

There can be no real doubt about the importance of the notion of the soul in Socrates' philosophical thinking. It has been shown that it is fundamental to his principal moral concerns, and may be taken to be a primarily moral-theological notion. However, it also plays a vital role in his conception of education, which could also be construed as religious: functioning to develop "good", pious citizens according to some hellenic ideal. But its major

importance in the present context is that it is associated with a conception of knowledge: a conception which has far-reaching and surprising consequences; a conception which is developed and depended upon in the Platonic dialogues, but the bases and justification of which are never set out or discussed.

While the Socratic view of soul is not historically discontinuous with earlier views, it does appear to have some new features or emphases. With Socrates, the soul seems to have become the seat of knowledge [Phaedo, 75d]; it contains knowledge from previous experience which we can recollect [Phaedo, 72e; Meno, 81b-c]. One of the principal features of this new conception of soul is its division into faculties; of reason [Republic, 435e-436a] and sense. It is an "active" agent which moves itself, and is the source of movement of other things, presumably, including the body. In the Theaetetus [184d], the mind is either identified with the soul or a part of it: while the "senses are the instruments of the soul"; "the mind by a power of her own, contemplates" universal, non-sensual qualities [185d-e]. And in the Phaedrus, Socrates refers to the mind as "the pilot of the soul" [247c-d]. Several factors, then, appear to have been relatively new, and subsequently influential, in Socrates' view of (the) soul:

- (i) The individual soul was taken to be the seat of intelligence [see Taylor, 1951, p.140, cited p.44 above]; it becomes or includes what we might call "mind".
- (ii) It was linked to the notion of knowledge in both a cognitive and moral context. It is likened to a threefold unit of charioteer controlling two steeds: one disciplined and one tempestuous: or, reason and the passions.
- (iii) On the cognitive side, the soul provided individuals (who cared to exploit it) with a window into a privileged kind of knowledge superior to sense; a window into the divine order of the universe.
- (iv) On the moral side, moral responsibility was linked to knowledge, and both were related to the doctrine of the tending of the soul which implies it is both possible, and a personal responsibility, for a human to do something about the soul's condition.

- (v) It becomes an "active" agent or force which moves itself and is the source of all movement.

What is of major significance here is that this view of knowledge, tied to and arising out of the notion of mind, is central to Socratic-Platonic rationalism, and gives rise to those distinctively rationalist dichotomies and doctrines (especially those of innate knowledge and innate conceptions) associated with the assumption that there are two ways of knowing. The notion of the soul underpins, and is absolutely indispensable to these views.

Socrates implies there are (at least) two ways of knowing when, having suggested the division of a line into proportions of opinion and knowledge, he agrees with Glaucon that there are objects "of such a kind that they must be viewed by the understanding" and cannot be viewed by the senses [*Republic*, 511c-d]. It is very positively implied in the allegory of the cave. And this view is positively promoted when he speaks, as he does frequently, of "the eye of the soul".

He says: "the soul is like the eye: when resting upon that on which truth and being shine, the soul **perceives** and understands" [*Republic*, 508d; my emphasis]. In other words, apart from perceiving by way of the senses, we (our soul) can perceive some other way. This sort of claim made in relation to mathematicians [see p.52 above] makes clear the link between rationalism and mathematics. According to this view, mathematical knowledge is achieved not through the senses -- not by looking at geometrical diagrams (in the sensible world) with our eyes -- but by contemplating some kind of transcendental objects with the eye of the mind. Socrates admitted "that it is by no means easy to believe that in every man there is an eye of the soul ... " by which "alone is truth seen" [*Republic*, 527e]. But there are too many references to the eye of the soul for this one qualification to diminish its importance. [See *Phaedo*, 99d; *Republic*, 533c-d, 540a; *Phaedrus*, 247c-d, 255c; *Laws*, 898d-e.]

Socrates presumes a positive distinction between knowledge and opinion in the *Meno* [97a-98a], *Republic* at 476d-479c, in the analogy of the divided line [*Republic*, 509d, ff]; and in the *Theaetetus* [200b-201d]. He proposes a distinction between faculties of the soul, specifically the faculties of



knowledge and opinion at *Republic* 477-478. Faculties, he says, "are powers in us ... by which we do as we do. Sight and hearing, for example, I should call faculties" [477e]. But faculties do not have characteristics like common objects: "I do not perceive that a faculty has colour or figure, or any of those marks which enable me, in numerous cases, to differentiate one thing from another. In speaking of a faculty I think only of its sphere and its result; and that which has the same sphere and the same result I call the same faculty, but that which has another sphere and another result I call different" [*Republic*, 477c-d].

Mathematical reasoning is accorded a special place in Socrates' thinking. In the educational program for the guardians outlined in the *Republic*, arithmetic and geometry are discussed after gymnastic and music. The two latter are involved in training the body, and making people harmonious and rhythmical. But music does not train the intellect [c.f., *Republic*, 522a]. What is required is a training that will bring the trainee guardians "from darkness to light" [*Republic*, 521c]: "The process ... is not the turning over of an oyster-shell, but the turning round of a soul passing from a day which is little better than night to the true day; an ascent towards reality, ... " [*Republic*, 521c]

The study of arithmetic "has a strong tendency to draw the soul towards being" [523a]. The study of **unity** or the one "has a power of drawing and converting the mind to the contemplation of true being" [525a], and the study of arithmetic and calculation "appear to lead the mind towards truth" [525b]. These, then, are appropriate studies for the guardians, and they lead the trained student to "view the nature of numbers with the unaided mind" [525c; or "thought alone", Rouse translation]. Geometry, too, if taught wisely, may play a vital role in the education of the guardians, and the development of their soul. There is a question whether advanced geometry "tends in any degree to make more easy the vision of the Idea of good; and thither, as I was saying, all things tend which compel the soul to turn her gaze towards that place where is the full perfection of being, which she ought, by all means, to behold" [*Republic*, 526d-e; my emphasis].

The study of astronomy, too, "compels the soul to look upwards and leads us from this world to another" [*Republic* 529a; my emphasis]. On the Socratic

view, education is a kind of enlightenment of the soul, and the study of arithmetic and geometry are vital steps in that process.

The claim that reason is superior to sense is an integral part of the wider Orphic, ascetic view, possibly developed by Socrates, which is partly outlined in the *Republic*, but most clearly in the *Phaedo*. The philosopher despises the costly adornments of the body [*Phaedo*, 64d]; "He would like, as far as he can, to get away from the body and to turn to the soul" [*Ibid*, 64e]. The body, in fact, is a hindrance to the philosopher: a hindrance to inquiry, and deceives the soul [*Ibid*, 65a-b]; the philosopher despises the body, and the philosophical soul desires to be free of it [*Ibid*, 65c-d]; he wishes to be free from eyes and ears or the whole body [*Ibid*, 66a], and from its evils and lusts [66b-c]. So "even if the body allows us leisure and we betake ourselves to some speculation, it is always breaking in upon us, causing turmoil and confusion in our inquiries, and so amazing us that we are prevented from seeing the truth. It has been proved to us by experience that if we would have pure knowledge of anything we must be quit of the body -- the soul by herself must behold things by themselves: ..." [*Phaedo*, 66d-e].

And so philosophers are different from all those sight-loving, art-loving people of the practical class [*Republic*, 476a]; they are concerned with what is divine [*Republic*, 517c-d] unchanging and eternal, or a quite different world from the world of sense. Of the guardians selected for the highest training, in dialectic, the most capable will be selected on the basis of "which of them is able to give up the use of sight and the other senses, and in company with truth ... attain absolute being" [*Republic*, 537d].

The assumption of a difference between appearance and reality runs through a great deal of pre-Socratic philosophy, but such a view does not necessarily imply a division between two quite distinct realms. It is reasonable to say that things are not always what they appear to be without implying that there is a fundamental difference between how any particular thing, quality or process appears to us, and how it "really" is. But with Socrates there is such a division. There can be no doubt that the Platonic Socrates implies a separate realm of forms that humans, by some special kind of discipline, may aspire to discover and study: and that it is from a contemplation of these forms that (true) knowledge is attained. The world of sense, of "hair, mud and

dirt" [*Parmenides*, 130c] is an inferior reality. Socrates made a positive distinction between "the visible and the intelligible" [*Republic* 524c].

Throughout all this, Socrates implies that there are two ways of discovering truths: the methods of sense (i.e., ordinary observation), and another superior way -- the contemplation of forms or the intelligible world, as against the world of sense. But he never explains what this method is. Rather, it is alluded to through allegory and metaphor, especially the metaphor of the eye of the soul or mind. Thus some other **method** of discovering truths is implied, but never described.

The foregoing account of Socratic rationalism has brought out a number of dichotomies; the dichotomies of --

- (i) two ways of knowing
- (ii) knowledge and opinion
- (iii) two faculties of soul: reason and sense, sense being an inferior way of knowing to reason
- (iv) the world of sense and the intelligible world, or "mud, hair and dirt" and the forms
- (v) two methods of establishing truths.

It is not possible to find in the Platonic dialogues any precise account of how these dichotomies are related (nor for that matter, any justification of these postulates and presumptions). Is the soul divided into two faculties because it is assumed there are two kinds of worlds? Or is it postulated that there are two kinds of worlds because there are two faculties of the soul? Is it claimed that there are two faculties of soul because it is claimed there are two ways of knowing? Or is it claimed there are two ways of knowing because there are two faculties of soul? There is no explanation of how these conceptions are arrived at; they are simply assumed.

## §11 Conclusions

In this chapter evidence has been provided to show that ancient Greek thought generally, and that of Socrates and Plato in particular, was infused with religious or theological presumptions of a universe behind or within which supernatural forces operated. Evidence has also been provided to show that the notion of soul went back into pre-history, infused early Greek philosophy,

underwent important changes in Orphic and Pythagorean thought, was taken over and developed by Socrates, and was absolutely central to his views on knowledge, education and morals. There can hardly be any serious doubt of the importance of these theological views and the notion of the soul in Greek and Socratic thought. It must be reiterated that Socrates never subjected these theological presumptions or the notion of soul to the sort of critical examination for which he is rightly famous, nor did he clearly expound any theory of soul, setting out what propositions he accepted and which he rejected; so that the notion of "soul" in the Platonic dialogues is an uncriticised and vague one. It is clear on any direct reading of the dialogues, that the Socratic notion of the soul is inextricably bound up with theological assumptions. It might also be pointed out that although many claims are made about the soul in the dialogues, the characteristics of the soul are never described. To say that the soul is immortal, indissoluble, unchangeable or divine, or that it commands, does not describe it or say what it is.

It is not appropriate here to subject the Socratic-Platonic view of the soul to critical examination, since the aim is to give a correct empiricist account (description) of Greek rationalism. However, it is appropriate to reiterate one or two points.

Without the notion of soul, it would be impossible for Socrates or Plato to intimate that we know or learn anything of a transcendental nature, or know in two different ways. Without the device of the "eye of the soul", or the soul's "perceiving", the claims to a special kind of knowing or knowledge cannot be made. Without the notion of the soul, it would have been impossible for Socrates (or Plato) to denigrate the body, downplay the importance of sense in inquiry, and suggest there was some other method of inquiry, of ascertaining truths, or studying things apart from observing.

Without the notion of the soul it would have been impossible for Socrates to make out any plausible claims for the dichotomies discussed above. And so it must be recognised that the notion of the soul is an integral and indispensable component of Greek rationalism.

What is of major importance in the present empiricist description of rationalism, and distinguishes it from now-traditional rationalist accounts, is the claim that, not only was the notion of the soul fundamental to

Socrates' general position, it was also fundamental to his and Plato's brand of rationalism. So the present empiricist description of Greek rationalism emphasises --

- (i) the importance of both (a) theological, religious or supernatural presumptions, and (b) the notion of the soul (or mind), and
- (ii) that the notion of soul is indispensable to the rationalist dichotomies of knowledge and opinion, reason and sense, the intelligible and sensible worlds, etc.

A strong case has therefore been made out for the view that those features listed in Table 2, Appendix A, p.266 below are central to Greek rationalism.