

"THE HISTORICITY OF THINGS"

A Study in the Philosophy of

Samuel Alexander.

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by

JACOB JOSHUA ROSS.

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## PREFACE

In his obituary notice in MIND ( vol. 49, 1940, p. 126), Prof. G.F. Stout has said of Alexander that "he has so formulated the main problems in their essential interconnexion that serious criticism of his work can hardly remain merely negative, but must become constructive. The critic in finding reasons to reject Alexander's answers to the questions he raises is led to appreciate more deeply the nature and importance of the questions themselves and is stimulated and helped to find alternative answers for himself."

Elsewhere in the same volume ( in the first of his articles on "The Philosophy of Samuel Alexander" ) he tells us that Alexander regarded his philosophy as the "philosophy of the future", and comments "... I cannot myself admit that Alexander's system will be, or, at any rate, ought to be the philosophy of the future. There seem to me to be flaws in it fatal to any such claim. None the less, I feel that the most promising path to this philosophy of the future is to be found in a critical reconstruction of Alexander's work, with the aim of correcting its defects while retaining its systematic character. He has asked the right questions and answered them in such a way that even where he is wrong his errors are most instructive. In discovering how he has gone astray we are guided to a more satisfactory positive solution of the problems with which he deals." And Stout concludes by recommending this reconstruction "as a promising venture for younger men."

Comment of this sort is praise indeed, and, I think, just praise for Alexander, although we ought not to forget that Stout was a life-long personal friend of his. And I have no doubt, too, that the reconstruction of Alexander's system is a worthwhile task. Such a reconstruction would, however, be beyond the scope of any such thesis as this. My task in this thesis is far more humble, since I intend to deal with only one aspect of Alexander's philosophy; and even with regard to this one aspect, it is not my intention to reconstruct, but merely to examine critically.

Nevertheless, I am encouraged by the above-quoted remark of Prof. Stout that "serious criticism of his work can hardly remain merely negative, but must become constructive", to think that the examination of even one aspect of Alexander's thought may be fruitful in yielding a balanced orientation towards his system as a whole.

Nor should it be forgotten that what Alexander calls "the historicity of things" is an important element in his thought, as I shall attempt to show. One is disposed to go even so far as to say that the invocation to "take time seriously" is the most important lesson that Alexander's system has in the realm of ontology, although, as I shall argue, we need not take time quite so seriously as Alexander asks of us.

It is a matter of surprise to me that the aspect of Alexander's thought with which I am here concerned has not received the attention it deserves. As far as I know, until recently, the only one who drew any proper attention to it was the late R.G. Collingwood in his posthumous books "The Idea of Nature" and (especially) "The Idea of History". Since then Prof. Dorothy Emmet has mentioned it in passing in an article entitled "Time is the Mind of Space" in this year's July issue of PHILOSOPHY (vo. XXV, no. 94). I am in agreement with the general line of criticism taken up there, although I have approached the matter here from a somewhat different angle.

It remains merely to record my indebtedness to the relevant articles of Prof. C.D. Broad, and of Prof. G.F. Stout, which have greatly assisted me in formulating my approach to Alexander's philosophy.

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1.

## INTRODUCTION

There is no part of Alexander's system which he anywhere explicitly characterises as a "philosophy of history". And we might at first wonder at this, seeing that he has such a definite view about the "historicity of things". But the truth is that Alexander apparently thinks that when we normally speak of a "philosophy of history", we have in mind something other than a view about the "historicity of things". For him, "philosophy of history" may legitimately be applied to any formulation of a highly comprehensive nature made by the historian. Thus he tells us that Hegel's attempt to exhibit the growth and change of the conception of the State in universal history may legitimately claim to be a "philosophy of history", not because it is philosophy, but because it is so comprehensive.<sup>1.</sup>

And this explains why I have not claimed this thesis to be concerned with Alexander's "philosophy of history", although it is a study of certain matters in his philosophy which would generally be thought classifiable under that somewhat vague heading. Instead, I have been content to call it after the title of one of his last papers.

This thesis, then, will concern itself largely with what Alexander has to say about the "historicity of things". What this intriguing phrase means will be explained in a moment. Let us, however, first say something about the relevant literature in Alexander, on the subject of the "historicity of things". One could say that everything he wrote fell in this category; for the systematic character of his thinking brings it about that almost every point in his philosophy is connected with almost every other point. But such an answer, though true, is irrelevant. More correctly, there are passages which are directly, indirectly, and very indirectly, connected with this conception. The first type

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1. "Space, Time, and Deity", vol. I, pp. 2-3

needs no explanation; by the second, I mean passages containing points which are plainly due to, or the result of this conception; by the third type, passages containing points which could be shown to be connected with this doctrine. I suppose it is theoretically possible that every point in Alexander's philosophy could be shown to be so connected, but such a task would surely be a waste of time. We concern ourselves, here, with passages dealing directly with the "historicity of things", and with passages containing points that are plainly due to this conception.

Of the first type there are comparatively few. Besides the paper of this name <sup>2</sup>, there are a handful of passages in Alexander's monumental work "Space, Time, and Deity" <sup>3</sup>, and a few pages of interesting comment in Alexander's last book "Beauty, and Other Forms of Value" <sup>4</sup>. As regards the second type, passages of this sort are numerous, but not worth listing, since, although many of them will be referred to in the course of the thesis, we are not really concerned with the passages themselves but with the points they contain.

We turn now to the meaning of the phrase "the Historicity of things". There are two distinct senses in which A. uses the phrase in HT. It means either (a) those characteristics of a thing which make it historical, (this will become clearer in the course of the thesis), or (b) the fact that there are such characteristics. A. does not appear to have realized that he was using the phrase ambiguously, and this serves to confuse somewhat the line of argument in HT. I ought to explain that A. invented the phrase for the first time in the title of HT, but he invented it to describe an aspect of his thought that had already been recognized, although not

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2. "The Historicity of Things" (henceforth to be referred to as "HT"); this paper is included in a book of essays entitled "Philosophy and History: essays presented to Ernst Cassirer; edited by Raymond Klibansky and H.J. Paton", Oxford, Clarendon Press. Page references are to pages in that book.

3. The Gifford Lectures 1916-1918, in two volumes. 1st ed. 1920, MacMillan and Co., London. To be henceforth referred to as "STD": 'Alexander' will be abbreviated to "A".

4. MacMillan and Co., London. 1st ed. 1933. To be referred to as "Beauty."



stressed, in STD.

The phrase "historicity of things", in its second meaning, that is, when it indicates the fact that there are characteristics in things which make them historical, is for A. closely bound up (in fact, almost synonymous) with the endeavour to "take Time seriously". It may be remarked that this concentration on Time is one of the most significant aspects of modern thought. A. himself puts this very well, when he says, <sup>5</sup> "If I were asked to name the most characteristic feature of the thought of the last twenty-five years, I should answer, the discovery of Time. I do not mean that we have waited until today to become familiar with Time; I mean that we have only just begun, in our speculation, to take Time seriously, and to realize that in some way or other Time is an essential ingredient in the constitution of things." A. is here referring to the modern speculative movement in which the names of Bergson, Whitehead, and, to a lesser extent, General Smuts find their place. In this movement A. played his own very important part.

A. gives a helpful pictorial representation of "taking Time seriously" when he criticizes the common personification of Time in the figure of a scythe-man mowing down the old to make room for the young. He complains that this represents the transitoriness of things rather than the real nature of Time, and adds that "it forgets that the same Time which mows down the grass produces the new crop; and indeed when the simile, not intended to be pressed, is pressed, it seems to imply that conception of the world as a series of present instants, perpetually recreated, which as we have often urged would destroy history and make even the present moment unintelligible. Time is in truth the abiding principle of impermanence which is the real creator .... it is a kind of cosmic "gendarme" who makes stagnation impossible, and at once creates the movements

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5. in "Spinoza and Time", a lecture delivered in 1921. It is in A.'s posthumous book "Philosophical and Literary Pieces", MacMillan, 1939.

which constitute things and keep things in movement. 'Circulez, Messieurs.'" 6

This passage is worth remembering, because it brings out clearly a few of the points I shall make in the thesis. It shows what A. means by "taking Time seriously", and its connection with "historicity", besides emphasizing something which Whitehead has called "breativity" and which A. calls "self-creativity".

It will be found that both in HT, where A. is specifically concerned in pointing out the aspect of historicity in his thought, and in the rest of his works, A. implicitly distinguishes between the historical reality and the historical knowledge of it. Thus, in HT he is busy tracing out the thesis that all things are historical, that the world is a "world of events".<sup>7</sup> But in the end he asserts that "History", that is, the body of knowledge, is "but one of the sciences which arise from the facts and happenings of the world."<sup>8</sup> As Prof. W.G. de Burgh has pointed out <sup>in</sup> his review of "Philosophy and History" in MIND, this distinction corresponds to the Realist distinction between the object known and the knowing of it.

Thus we have on the one hand the historical reality, and, on the other, what A. calls the "Science of History", but which we prefer to call simply "History" (with a capital "H"). But we have still to point out that for A. the proper historical reality with which History deals is human history. Thus we must now distinguish between three separate things:- the totality of things as Timeful or "historical", which we might call "the total historical reality"; that historical reality which is the subject-matter of History, which we might call "the human historical reality"; and, finally, that body of knowledge which describes "the human historical reality", which we have agreed to call "History". These three things must provisionally be kept very carefully apart.

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6. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. IIB, p. 48.

7. HT, p. 11.

8. HT, p. 25.

Before proceeding with the argument, let us say something about HT. As I have already mentioned, this was one of the last papers that A. wrote. Laird, in his excellent "Memoir" on A. which forms the introduction to "Philosophical and Literary Pieces", tells us that A. called HT "minor stuff" and thought the name was the best thing about it; Laird's comment to this is, "But if it is 'minor', it is not in the least senile."<sup>9</sup> Another commentator, T.E. Jessop, affirms, perhaps with more justice, that HT is a sure-footed sketch of A.'s system.<sup>10</sup>

I do not share Laird's apparently high opinion of HT. While I should not go so far as to say that it was "senile", at the same time, there seem to me to be weaknesses of construction and argument which are not at all characteristic of A. at his best, and which enable us at least to understand why the charge of senility could be brought against it.

I think that the title is a misnomer and does not adequately describe the contents. Thus one of A.'s main objects in HT is to pronounce judgement on some of the latest developments of atomic physics (in his day) in the light of his system. And I find that in sketching his metaphysics and commenting on atomic physics, A. loses track of his subject "The Historicity of Things", and it is only by a conscious effort (and no little ingenuity) that he gets back to it.

But in spite of these faults, I think that HT can help us greatly in tracing out A.'s conception of the "historicity of things", provided that this aspect is considered clearly, and independently of such irrelevancies as atomic physics. The paper consists of an introduction and five sections; the introduction starts off with a reference to Space - Time as opposed to Space and Time, and then

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9. p. 89.

10. His actual words are :- "A.'s summary of his own philosophy is delightful, whimsical but sure-footed."

goes on to speak of "the new attitude to history", mentioning Hegel and Darwin; now comes the proposal to sit at the feet of history; In section I, A. deals with historicity as "time entering the constitution of things", in which A. discusses such things as universals and particulars, the categories, eternity and timelessness, the emerging deity and value; In section II, A. deals with history as "the record of changes in the growth of events", in which he discusses emergence, freedom and determinism, and predictability; section III deals with the 'lesson' from history "not to take a thing for more than it is"; In section IV he deals with the 'lesson' "not to take a thing for less than it is", in which he speaks of the importance of appealing to our experience of ourselves; Finally, in section V, he generalizes about "history" and "mathematics", where "history" is taken to represent what he calls the "brute given-ness" of things.

All these topics will be dealt with in the course of this thesis, although some will be stressed more than others. But my purpose here is different from that of A. in HT: he is giving a sketch of his system to try and show that the world is historical, that Time must be taken seriously and is so taken in his system; my purpose is to examine this notion of the "historicity of things" and see what it involves with respect to (a) what I have called "the total historical reality", (b) "the human historical reality", and (c) with respect to History. Thus my order of treatment of the various topics will not always be the same as that of A. in HT.

Moreover, we must bear in mind the two different senses which we have shown to adhere to the phrase "the historicity of things", and our presentation will be affected by this concern. The second sense, that is, the fact that there are characteristics in things which make them historical, will be left over for discussion to the concluding section, where I will discuss the whole concept of "sitting at the feet of history".

In connection with the first sense of the "historicity of things", more must now be said. We said that the phrase stands

for those characteristics of a thing which make it historical, and the question now arises, what are these characteristics?

There may be many: A. indicates and stresses two. The characteristics are (i) process, and (ii) actuality. Thus, to recognize the "historicity of things" is to "take time seriously" in our description of the universe, and this involves :-

- (i) (emphasis being laid on process, as opposed to the stationary.)
- (ii) (emphasis being laid on the actual, or concrete, as opposed to the necessary.)

Bearing in mind all the above distinctions (not all of which may be clear at this stage, but which will be discussed more fully at a later stage,) we can now go on to explain the plan of this thesis.

To recapitulate, our aim will be to examine that aspect of A.'s philosophy which he has designated "the historicity" of things", and we shall examine this aspect in three stages:-

PART ONE, we shall attempt to draw out the "historicity of things" in connection with what we have called the "total historical reality". In PART TWO, chapter six will attempt to show what this doctrine involves for the "human historical reality", that is to say, we shall be concerned to describe how A. regards the object of the "science of History". And in Chapter seven, we shall attempt to delineate A.'s view of the problems which face the Historian, and his estimate of the place of History among the sciences and arts.

Thus, in PART ONE we ask ourselves the question, "in what sense, for A., is the totality of things historical?", and in answering this, we shall make a sketch of certain points in A.'s system in order to exhibit the emphases on "process" or "movement", and on "actuality", the possession of which two characteristics makes the totality of things "historical".

Having shown in what sense A. speaks of the total reality as "historical", we go on to show what consequences this conception has, first of all, (in chapter six,) for the human historical reality which is the subject-matter of History, and secondly, (in chapter seven), for the method of History itself.

After this, in the final chapter, we shall be able to undertake a critical re-examination of the notions involved in and connected with the "historicity of things".

Please notice that my purpose in the thesis is to criticise primarily the notion of the "historicity of things". Thus any criticisms offered anywhere else than in the final chapter are meant to be merely comments by the way in order to indicate the special weaknesses in A.'s argument on those points, and I do not claim any originality for these comments. My purpose is not to criticise any specific point in A.'s metaphysics, but merely to analyse critically some points involved in the notion of the "historicity of things". This purpose is humble, but I believe it to provide a not unfruitful field for research, and one which, in any case, I am fairly confident to be within my powers.

PART ONE.SECTION A: "PROCESS."CHAPTER ONE: "SPACE-TIME".(1) Introductory Remarks.

It is a matter for speculation why, in sketching the main points of his system in HT, A. was satisfied with a mere perfunctory mention of his fundamental doctrine of the inter-connection of Space and Time. For he gives us but the barest of hints at this doctrine when he says that "It has become a commonplace to say that the world and everything in it is historical ..... Instead of space and time, we have space-time, time entering into the very constitution of things: a four-dimensional and no longer a three-dimensional world".<sup>1</sup>

And the difficulty assumes more importance when we realise that "taking Time seriously" undoubtedly involves for him the ultimate inter-connection of space and time; and so this metaphysical doctrine should, for him, be bound up with the "historicity of things".

Perhaps, knowing that his argument for the interconnection of space and time had been subjected to so much criticism, he left out the doctrine in this sketch, thinking that the doctrine of the "historicity of things" might fruitfully be discussed without reference to this ultimate metaphysical basis. I prefer to think, however, that A. left it out because he thought that the idea that space and time were so intimately connected had become a commonplace. This is not immediately apparent from his own words in HT, because there he says only that "It has become a commonplace to say that the world and everything in it is historical" and the rest of his remarks might be thought merely an explanation of what he thought this involved, and not what he thought commonplace. But, if these remarks are interpreted in the way I suggest, we have a ready

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1. HT, p. 11.

explanation why A. does not say more about space-time, and I therefore prefer to think that my interpretation is correct, although the question would then arise if it was true that it had become a commonplace to speak of space-time, rather than space and time.

(11) Space-Time.

Leaving this matter aside, however, let us go on to give what needs must be a very brief account of A.'s conception of the interconnection of space and time; for despite A.'s omission in HT, I think any sketch of A.'s system would be incomplete if it did not say something about this conception. And A. himself elsewhere professed to admit that all the vital problems of philosophy depend on the solution of the problem of Space and Time.<sup>2</sup>

In STD, Bk. I Ch. I, where A. considers the matter, he follows his usual empirical method of assuming their reality and asking of what sort it is. He speaks of physical Space and Time first. We become aware of the whole of Space and the whole of Time by a mode of apprehension which A. calls "intuition".<sup>3</sup> A. considers the usual relational view of Space and Time according to which "the ordinary mind, impressed with things and events, naively thinks of Space and Time as if they were a sort of receptacle or framework in which things or events are found," and objects that this view "seems clearly not to represent our direct experience of Space or Time".<sup>4</sup> Instead, A. suggests his own famous view: as regards things or events, "Space and Time are not merely the order of their co-existence or succession, but are, as it were, the stuff or matrix (or matrices) out of which things or events are made, the medium in which they are precipitated and crystallised; that the finites are in some sense complexes of space and time."<sup>5</sup>

2. STD, vol. 1, Bk. I, Ch. I, opening sentence, p. 35.

3. STD, vol. 2, Bk. III, Ch. VI, pp. 144-8. Since the matter of "intuition" does not concern us here at all, I do not discuss it. I would, however, agree in general with Stout's criticism. (Cf. "The Phil. of Samuel Alexander II" MIND vol. 49, 1940, pp. 143-5)

4. & 5. STD, vol 1, Bk. I, Ch. I, p. 38. I follow A. (though not very strictly) in using capitals for Space and Time when speaking of them as wholes, and small letters for any portion of them.



A. also maintains that there is such a thing as "mental Time" and "mental Space", and goes on to show that mental Time is part of the same Time as physical Time, and mental Space and physical Space belong to the same Space. As to locating the mind and its enjoyed Space and Time in the whole of Space and Time, A. answers by reference to the body. We begin, in the process whereby we become aware of ourselves as a union of body and mind, by locating the mind roughly within the body, and end by the more accurate correlation of mental with physiological processes within the central nervous system.<sup>6</sup>

It should be pointed out that on A.'s view, relations in Space and Time are themselves spaces and times; relations in space are not mere concepts by which we somehow connect bits of space together, and the same applies to Time. Now this involves a notion of Space-Time as a stuff, an entity within which there are spatio-temporal relations. But at the present time, as A. himself points out, the more comprehensive theorems of speculative mathematics do not proceed on this conception; for their view Space and Time are nothing but systems of relations between entities which are not themselves intrinsically spatio-temporal. "In the simplest form of the doctrine, they are relations between material points. They may be, as in some sense with Leibniz, relations between monads. But in every case, the presupposition is of entities, which, when the relations are introduced may then be said to be in Space and Time."<sup>7</sup> A. suggests that this view can give no satisfactory account of relations.

Thus the conception of the intimate connection of Space and Time involves for A. the hypothesis of Space-Time as a primal stuff. He suggests that this hypothesis has something in common with Plato's similar doctrine in the "Timaeus"<sup>8</sup>, and also with the

6. STD, vol. 1, Bk. I, Ch. III, pp. 106-8. This is very interesting, and probably has profound consequences for Psychology. Unfortunately I am unable to pursue the subject any further here.

7. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. VI, p. 168.

8. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. VI, p. 173; Cf also "Spinoza and Time" in "Phil. and Literary Pieces", p. 361.

conception reviewed recently in modern physics by Osborne Reynolds,<sup>9</sup> that matter is comparable to a strain or geological fault in a homogeneous medium which is Space.

This is what A. wishes to maintain. But in order to see how A. proposes to "prove" this hypothesis, we must discuss another point in his philosophy, the conceptions of "point" and "instant". A. thinks that we reach "points" and "instants" in the same way as we reach Space and Time, but by travelling in different directions.

But in speaking of Space and Time as continuous wholes which are divisible into points and instants, we are using "intellectual constructs." "Nor," A. hastens to add, "is there any reason, supposing the idea to be well chosen, why we should not do so. For the simplest objects of our experience are full of our ideas. A thing of a certain sensible colour and shape is seen as a man. Half the object is ideal, due to our interpretation of what we see."<sup>10</sup> But to repeat, we travel in a different direction when we speak of Space and Time as infinite wholes on the one hand, and points and instants on the other. For in the first case, we can see and touch only limited spaces, but we can see that one space is continuous with another, or included in another, and thus we can think of Space or Time as continuous infinite wholes. In the second case, we start with durations and extents, but we discover in experience that these admit division continually; hence we construct the idea of a point or instant in a way in reverse of that in which we construct an infinite Space or Time. We start with a finite extent or duration, we imagine it divided, and then we interpret this imagination by the concept that there is no end to the division: the point (or instant) is thus the element out of an infinitude of which an extent is made. But, A. stresses again, "Such an intellectual construction ... is legitimate, provided at least we make no assumption that the point or instant can be isolated from other points or instants", and warns us

9. Rede Lecture: "On an Inversion of Ideas as to the Structure of the Universe", Cambridge, 1903.

10. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. 1, pp. 40-1.

that "we must not imagine that the elements are unreal because they are ideal constructions ... For sense has no monopoly of reality. We reach reality by all our powers. All we have to be sure of is that we use them rightly ... " 11 Points and instants are thus not made by our thought, but discovered by it. 12

Having explained what he means by "point" and "instant", A.'s argument for the intimate interconnection of Space and Time is easily understood. He argues, in effect, that if Time existed in its own right, there could be no continuity in it. For the essence of Time in its purely temporal character is that the past or the earlier is over before the later or present. The past instant is no longer present, but is dead and gone. Thus "if it were nothing more than bare Time it would consist of perishing instants. Instead of a continuous Time, there would be nothing more than an instant, a now, which was perpetually being renewed." 13 And this, of course, would not be taking Time seriously. Thus, if the past instant is not to be lost, there needs must be some continuum other than Time which can secure and sustain the togetherness of past and present. This other form of being is Space, and Space thus saves Time from being a mere "now". The same conclusion follows if, for instance, we substitute points.

And, of course, A.'s method does not allow him to say that since the continuity of Time and its Successiveness are contradictory, Time is therefore not real but only appearance. So, therefore, the contradiction must be removed with the recognition of the necessity of Space to the existence of Time. The contradiction would then be due to considering Time apart from Space and Space apart from Time. The only other way of evading the force of this analysis is on the relational view of Time, where an instant is defined by events in relation. But this method is contrary to A.'s hypothesis, and so he does not consider it.

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11. Ibid., pp. 41-2.

12. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. V, p. 151.

13. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. I, p. 45.

The conclusion thus follows that "there is no instant in Time without a position in Space, and no point of Space without an instant of Time ... There are no such things as points or instants by themselves. There are only point-instants, or pure events ... In like manner there is no mere Space or mere Time but only Space-Time or Time-Space. Space and Time are by themselves abstractions from Space-Time, and if they are taken to exist in their own right without the tacit assumption of the other, they are illegitimate abstractions ... The real existence is Space-Time, the continuum of point-instants or pure events." 14

Of course, A. himself realized that this so-called "proof" was no proof at all. Thus he says that when he said that in order to supply continuity to the successive there must be a non-successive continuum, he only meant that the continuity is, as a matter of fact, supplied by the connection of Time with the other continuum Space. "The apparent 'demonstration' was a piece of analysis of an entity given in experience," 15 and no "proof" at all."

#### (111) Pictorial Representations.

The interesting thing about Space-Time is the way we are to represent it to ourselves. Formally, and strictly correctly, Space-Time consists of what A. calls "lines of advance" connected into a whole system: in a line of advance C, B, A, we have the displacement of the present from C, through B, to A, so that A becomes present while B becomes past and C still further past. The present is the point of reference and in terms of "earlier" and "later", B having been later and C earlier, A becomes later and CB earlier. "Now", remarks A., "this is the meaning of motion .... Thus Space-Time is a system of motions, and we might call Space-Time by the name of "Motion" were it not for the fact that in common speech motion is merely the general name for particular motions, whereas Space, easily, and Time, less easily, is readily seen to

15. STD, vol. 1, Bk. I, Ch. I, p. 47. This is a good example of A.'s emphasis on the actual. Cf. Chapter four of the thesis.

14. Ibid., p. 48.

be a whole of which spaces and times are fragments." <sup>16</sup> But this formal representation, though strictly correct, is very difficult to conceive, and so A. suggests some ways in which we may represent Space-Time to ourselves pictorially. The picture of an advancing column is useful, but false since it only represents a "section" of Space-Time. Other pictures are those of a disturbed ant-heap, or rotten cheese seen under a microscope, or gas in a closed vessel, conceived according to the kinetic theory of gases. But the best picture is that of the condition of a growing organism such as a tree, where we find a perpetual alteration or redistribution among the cells of distance from maturity; some being mature (the present), some moribund, in different stages of senescence, and still others adolescent. "In this way we conceive of growth in Time, or the history of the universe as a whole, or any part of it, as a continuous redistribution of instants of Time among points of Space. There is no new Space to be generated as Time goes on, but within the whole of Space or the part of it, the instants of Time are differently arranged, so that points become different point-instants and instants also become different point-instants. I believe this very abstract (I mean very simple, yet highly concrete) conception lies, in fact, very near to our common notions of a growing world." <sup>17</sup>

(iv) Perspectives and Sections.

This last picture is very important, for it brings us on to the notion of a "perspective" of Space-Time which is closely bound up with the conception of the total reality as "historical". For if we now turn to ask how this abstruse metaphysical view of a matrix Space-Time is relevant to the notion of the "historicity of things", then the answer is not difficult to find. A. neatly summarises his view of the inter-relation of Space and Time when he says that "the physical universe is thus through and through historical, the scene of motion" <sup>18</sup>; from which we can see that the

16. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. 1, p. 61.

17. Ibid., p. 63.

18. STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. II, p. 65.

"historicity of things" follows immediately from the relationship between Space and Time.

But if we now consider the problem as to how we are going to divide this one Motion, or matrix of Space-Time into its phases, then A. bids us to pay careful attention to the distinction he draws between a "section" and a "perspective". "With this conception of the whole Space-Time", he says, "... let us ask what the universe is at any moment of its history ... the emphasis rests upon the word history. Space-Time or the universe in its simplest terms is a growing universe and is through and through historical. If we resolve it into its phases, those phases must express its real life ... must be phases which of themselves grow each into the next."

Here then is where the distinction between a "section" and a "perspective" comes in. "... The section ... does not represent what Space-Time is at any moment of its history ... But there is a kind of section which does represent Space-Time at any historical moment of its continuous history ... a 'perspective'." 19

If we take an instant which occupies a point, and take a section of Space-Time through that point-instant in respect of its space or time, then, to a hypothetical observer outside the universe, the time-section would seem to consist of the whole of Space as occupied in every point by events occurring at that moment, and the space-section of the whole of Time as in every instant occupying one place. Accordingly it would seem that at any moment (or at any point), a section of the universe would be nothing other than the whole of Space (or Time), and Space could then be described as the assemblage of events occurring at the same moment of Time, (and Time as the succession of all events occupying one place.) This assertion, A. asserts, is under certain conditions a legitimate selection from the whole of Space-Time; but it does not represent what Space-Time is at any moment of its history. The universe cannot be composed in reality of such sections, and an integration

of such sections does not represent the history of the world, since the world would need to be recreated at every moment; in other words, we have not taken Time seriously.

A illustrates the difference between a perspective and a section by pictorial illustrations. The first is that "at any moment of a man's history, his body is a perspective at that instant of his whole life ... it consists of cells at all degrees of maturity ... his space is of different dates of maturity. We might, on the one hand, think of his space as occupied with cells of the same maturity, and we should have the same space, and it would all be of the same date, but it would not be the man's body as it is at any moment whatever, but a selection from various stages of his history." The second illustration is that of a section of a tree. For the carpenter the concentric rings are simultaneous: this is to look at it as an artificial section. For the botanist they are of different dates, carrying with them the history of the tree. Thus a perspective is a historical phase of the process of nature, ordered with reference to some event as centre, and integrating into the perspective all other events which are in some way related to the event from which the perspective is developed. <sup>20</sup>

A perspective thus contains different dates. If we illustrate this by taking as the point of reference a human percipient, we may say that Space at any moment is full of memory and expectation. Thus, for example, in our apprehension of Sirius and its place in the sky, by means of the light from it which reaches the eye some 9 years after the event, what I see is an event which happened 9 years ago at the place where I see it. In the same way I apprehend in imagination a later event which in reference to now is future: 9 years hence I may apprehend what is taking place at Sirius at this moment if Sirius now exists. The same thing applies to any sense perception. For Space as apprehended through the senses is not

presented to us as simultaneous; what we see is anterior to our act of sensing it, because of the time it takes the physical event to stimulate our organs. And different points of space are at very different distances from the eye, and the light reaches it from them in different times, however slight the difference of distance from the eye may be, and therefore distant points must in general have occurred earlier than nearer ones, in order that my acts of seeing the various sets may occur at the same moments.

A. stresses the fact that a perspective from an instant of time and one from a point of space are different perspectives, and cannot be combined into a single perspective. A perspective from an instant gives us a picture of Space; a perspective from a point gives us a picture of Time. But Space-Time considered in reference to a point-instant, from the point of view both of the point and the instant is nothing but Space-Time. "The mere fact that each perspective is from the beginning a selection from a whole, and not a construction by the centre to which it is referred, is enough to show that the perspectives are in their own nature united, and need no combining hand. It is in this sense that the whole of Space-Time is the synthesis of partial space-times or perspectives."<sup>21</sup> Thus to say that "total Space-Time is a synthesis of all perspectives" is only another way of saying that the perspectives are real perspectives of it or are its historical phases."

There are many interesting points in A.'s discussion of "Space-Time" and perspectives that we have had to omit altogether from our discussion in this chapter. But it must be remembered that our aim is to point out the metaphysical background (or part of it, at any rate, since other parts, though perhaps less fundamentally important parts, will be described in the following four chapters), to A.'s conception of the "historicity of things", and I think we have done this adequately enough for our purposes.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 80



(v) Comments.

In concluding this chapter I should like to indicate shortly some of the more important criticisms that could be urged against the metaphysical doctrines expounded thus far:-

- (1) When A. talks of the conception of the growth in Time, the history of the universe, as being very near to our "common notions of a growing world", <sup>22</sup> who is the "we" to whom he here refers? If we reflect on this, we shall see that this is perhaps the weakest point in his philosophy, namely, his uncritical acceptance of the Nineteenth-Century assumption of "growth". This assumption seems for A. intimately bound up with "the historicity of things". <sup>23</sup> But we must ask ourselves the question: is Motion, that is, the historical reality Space-Time, necessarily "growth" or "progress"? There seems no reason why it should be. This criticism is fundamental and I shall refer to it again in the course of the thesis.
- (2) But then what of the notion of the one Motion itself? Is that entirely free from criticism? Motion for A., as we have seen, does not imply something that moves; it is anterior to things and is the stuff out of which they are made. We leave aside the question whether this is not merely an illegitimate abstraction to be considered in chapter two. But in asking us to take pure motions as fundamental and to analyse space and time out of them, A., it should be pointed out, is asking us to reverse our normal procedure; the onus of proof then rests on him. But has he discharged this onus? Is there any necessity for us to regard Space-Time as a "matrix" and to give up our common-sense relational view? If there is, then A. has not demonstrated it; all that he has done is to adopt the one hypothesis rather than the other, as I have pointed out in my exposition.
- (3) And again, is A. himself quite clear as to the conception of this one Motion out of which Space and Time are to be analysed? The multiplicity of expressions he uses to describe it seem to

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22. Ibid., Ch. 1, p. 63.

23. Cf. examples A. uses to represent "perspective" on p. 17 of thesis.

suggest that A. is not clear what exactly he means by the one Motion. <sup>24</sup> But if A. admitted any obscurity at all in these expressions, he would probably assign it to the fact that we are unaccustomed to regard Motion in this light: we are simply not used to describing it properly.

(4) I find A.'s conception of the "point-instant" very difficult to understand. Despite A.'s protestations, I still cannot see how an "intellectual construction" can be as real as A. wants the "point-instant" to be. There is surely a world of difference between an "intellectual construction" like a "point-instant" and the sort of "intellectual construction" involved in the element of interpretation which must necessarily inhere in even in the simplest objects of our experience. How can A. compare the two? <sup>25</sup>

(vi) Note on a Problem of Interpretation.

In the first paragraph of HT, A. mentions a possible objection to the notion of Space-Time. He says, "It might be urged that though all things are in time, the universe itself is not. As a whole it is timeless; time is in it, and not it in time." To this objection A. immediately replies, "I have not succeeded in understanding this plea. It implies a completed or bounded universe. If the universe is timeful how should it not always be occurring? True, time may have neither beginning nor end, may be an endless string, but the string goes on in an endless motion like a revolving band or an escalator."

I find A's reply still more difficult to understand than the question to which he is replying. I have found this criticism,

24. Thus (to choose phrases at random), he says "Space and Time are in their indissoluble union the ultimate reals in their simplest and lowest form", Space-Time is the "primary reality", the "lowest of all stages", the "bare elements of the world", the "universe in its primordial form". On the other hand, it is the "experiential absolute", the "totality of all substances", it is "all existence and all substance", the "all-embracing stuff". All existents are "pieces" of Space-Time, or "bits", or "modes", or "specifications" of Space-Time. Or they are just so many "space-times".

25. Inxx Cf p. 12 of thesis.

(or at any rate, a similar one) in only one critic, Edmond Holmes,<sup>26</sup> who puts it this way: "We are met at the outset by an obstacle which cannot be surmounted. We can think of time as succession in space. And we can think of space as enduring through time. But we cannot think of Space-Time as either in space or in time. A compound which is presumably indissoluble, and which is presented to us as all-embracing, cannot have its being within one of its own component parts. Can an apple-dumpling, in its indissoluble unity, get inside its own crust? Can Space-Time, in its indissoluble unity, have location in space or movement in time?"

Now if this is the objection which A. is trying to answer, then surely he is going to unnecessary trouble in answering it; for it seems to be a matter of words. If one chooses to mean by being "in time" only the manner in which points may be said to be in time, or the manner in which instants may be said to be "in Time", then it is obvious that "Space-Time" can be "in time" (or "in Time") in neither of these two senses. And Holmes would be so far right in his objection.

But from A.'s reply it seems, rather, that what was worrying him here again was the problem of perspectives (which allow for continuity) and sections (which do not). It seemed to him that the objection to the universe as a whole being in time (whatever that meant) "implied a bounded universe", or a universe that was not in the process of becoming, but was given complete and merely recreated from instant to instant. Thus he retorts "If the universe is timeful, how should it not always be occurring?"<sup>27</sup>; in other words, if you seriously want to maintain that time is real, then surely you must say the universe is always occurring, i.e., is continuously recurring, and does not have to be created anew every instant. And he goes on "true, time may have neither beginning nor end, may be an endless string, but the string goes on in an endless

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26. In his article "A Critique of the New Realism as expounded by S. Alexander", *Hibbert Journal*, vol. XXVIII, Oct. 1929, p. 55.

27. A sentence which, I am not ashamed to say, took me 6 months to understand, if I do understand it now.

motion, like a revolving band or an escalator"; in other words, you are perfectly correct in saying that the universe is not "in time" if by that you mean that it is not bound by time, is in fact "endless". But you must not forget that though endless, it carries on in an endless motion, is continuous, like a revolving band. In that sense it is "in time". 28

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28. It should be understood that I offer this last comment not as a criticism of A., but as an attempt at an interpretation of what I have found to be a difficult passage. The interpretation I have offered above seems to me plausible, and I can back it up with a passage elsewhere (STD, vol. 1, Bk. 1, Ch. II, p. 68) where A. says something similar. There, however, he speaks not of the universe, (Space-Time) but of Space. The weakness of the interpretation is that it does not explain what A. means by "imply" in the phrase, "it implies a completed or bounded universe"; for if my interpretation is right, then it must be understood to mean merely "the expression 'though all things are in time the universe itself is not' can mean a completed, etc". But I have an idea that A. means more by "imply" here. (Cf. in addition STD, vol. 1, Bk. II, Ch. X, p. 342)

CHAPTER TWO : "THE QUALITIES".(1) Process and the Stationary

We saw in the Introduction that the "historicity of things" involved an emphasis being put on "process" or "movement". This is not surprising, for movement is inextricably bound up with time, and so to "take Time seriously" is to throw an emphasis on movement. But, as we have seen in the previous chapter, A.'s emphasis on process has a characteristic which distinguishes him from such thinkers as Heraclitus of old, and Bergson in our day. According to the latter, change is the stuff of things; "For Heraclitus, of whom Mr. Bergson is the modern representative, as for the other Ionians, there was a stuff in which change occurred or which embodied change and it was fire." But, A. argues, "bare change cannot take the place of fire. On the other hand, bare motion or Space-Time can, and change is an empirical form of that stuff." <sup>1</sup> What A. here accuses Bergson of, is the inadequacy of the conception of "change": he maintains that "change" always implies movement and is thus an alteration in something else, namely, movement. Thus "change" cannot be the stuff of things, whereas "movement" is.

The primary problem raised by this emphasis on "movement" or "process" is that of the status of non-moving things. Are they to be considered unreal or illusory? A. Deals with this problem in passages scattered throughout his works; but everywhere the solution turns on the distinction between what is timeless and what is free from the lapse of time. Thus, for example, he says, "if everything is historical . . . , it follows that we can no longer interpret eternity as timelessness. To be out of relation to time can belong to no character of things . . . . To pass to the eternal

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1. STD, vol. 1, Bk. II, Ch. IX, pp. 329-30. However A. agrees with Bergson that Time is not "given together". That concept would "fail to take Time seriously" (Ibid, p. 339).

must, it would seem, be a change of quality, as is maintained by those who contrast the life eternal with the mundane life, and refuse to identify it with the everlasting or sempiternal. It would be better to avoid altogether the word eternal, which raises notions of time; but regarded as a name for that element which is distinct from lapse of time, eternal may be applied to the qualities, colour or taste or life or consciousness, which are the surd or irreducible or unexplainable characters of things. We cannot ask why things have their qualities, why, for instance, a certain complexity of chemical and physical process possesses life. We accept these qualities. In this sense we may accept Mr. Whitehead's designation of them as eternal objects." <sup>2</sup>

It is fairly clear what A. means by the distinction between what is timeless and what is independent of any particular time, or lapse of time. In the first case whatever we are speaking about has nothing to do with time, is outside it, whereas in the second case, the thing is in time, but independent of any particular time. In criticism it might be urged that the difference (if there is a real difference) is a matter of degree; but as can be seen from the above-quoted passage, A. insists that it is a difference of kind.

(ii) Emergence.

A. says that one of the things which can be called "eternal" is the type of reality he calls "qualities". But what is the relation between these qualities and the one Process (Space-Time) in which they occur? Here we come to one of the most fundamental of A.'s doctrines, the doctrine of "emergence". A. confesses that what brought him to this conception was the consideration of the problem of the relation between mind and body. <sup>3</sup> He came to the

<sup>2</sup> HT, p. 15, Cf. also STD, vol. 1, Bk. II, Ch. VI B, pp. 296-7  
 "The preference in question depends on the confusion of what is timeless with what is independent of any particular time, as all universals are."

<sup>3</sup> STD, vol. II, Bk. III, p. 3.

conclusion that mind is an "emergent" from life, and life an "emergent" from a lower physico-chemical level of existence. He took the word "emergence" from Lloyd Morgan, who had used it to mark the novelty which mind possesses, while still stressing that mind remains equivalent to a certain neural constellation.<sup>4</sup>

For A. this conception of "emergence" was the clue to the relation between the various qualities and Space-Time. He expresses this in the formula that "Time is the mind of Space", which means that "Time as a whole and its parts bears to Space as a whole and its corresponding parts a relation analogous to the relation of mind to its equivalent bodily or nervous basis."<sup>5</sup> Qualities are thus seen to be the special form which on each successive level of existence the mind element assumes. But unlike the body, Space does not exist of its own right and therefore Time is not a new quality which emerges from Space; however the analogy between body and mind and Space and Time is helpful because it expresses the truth that in the matrix of all existence, Space-Time, there is an element Time which performs the same function in respect of the other element Space as mind performs in respect of its bodily nature. Alike in this matrix and in all finite things there is something of which, on the highest level we know of finite existents, mind is the counterpart; on the bare level of Space-Time, it is Time. Thus the formula "Time is the mind of Space" is just another way of expressing the relation of "emergence", and the "mind" element of anything is the emerging element.

When we examine the order of finites with their distinct empirical qualities, we discover that empirical things are groupings of Space-Time, that is, complexes of motions in various degrees of complexity. How do they get their qualities? "The facts," says A., "can be described as follows. New orders of finites come into existence in Time; the world actually or historically develops from its first or elementary condition of Space-Time, which possesses no

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4. Ibid., p. 14.

5. Ibid., p. 38.

quality except what we agreed to call the spatio-temporal quality of motion. But as in the course of Time new complexity of motions comes into existence, a new quality emerges, that is, a new complex possesses as a matter of observed empirical fact a new or emergent quality ... The emergence of a new quality from any level of existence means that at that level there comes into being a certain constellation or collocation of the motions belonging to that level, and possessing the quality appropriate to it, and this collocation possesses a new quality distinctive of the higher complex. The quality and the constellation to which it belongs are at once new and expressible without residue in terms of the processes proper to the level from which they emerge." <sup>6</sup>

Thus the thing which is based on the constellation of 'a' processes has an emergent quality B., whose behaviour consists in 'ab' processes; and though 'ab' processes are also 'a' processes, they are not merely such, and are on a different level from the processes which are sufficiently distinguished from other forms of existence as being merely 'a' processes. But we must remember that the existence of emergent qualities thus described is something to be noted, under the compulsion of brute empirical fact, or, less harshly, to be accepted with the "natural piety" <sup>7</sup> of the investigator. It admits no explanation.

### (iii) The Order of Qualities.

The qualities emerge in a serial order, so that the earlier pre-condition the occurrence of the later. What this order is, A. conceives to be the business of the scientist and not of the philosopher to examine. <sup>8</sup> But A. ventures a rough classification; the different levels of existence which are most obviously distinguishable are motions, matter as physical (or mechanical), matter with secondary qualities, life, and mind. He

6. Ibid., pp. 45-6.

7. Cf. chapter four of the thesis.

8. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. II B, p. 52, "It is not indeed the business of the philosopher, but that of the man of science, to trace the history of things." Cf. also Ibid., p. 61.



registers a doubt, however, as to whether matter with its chemical properties is not a distinct level from physical matter; and again, he is by no means clear that matter is the next level to qualityless motion, for the dissolution of the atom into its elements in the electron theory shows physical matter to be immensely complicated, and it is therefore probable that there are levels intervening between motion and physical matter.<sup>9</sup> Thus a quality is something empirical, which in every case but that of motion is seen to emerge from a level of existence lower than itself; and as to motion, it is to be described indifferently as empirical or categorial,<sup>10</sup> for it is the meeting-point of the two. Mind is the last empirical quality of finites that we know (strictly speaking).

It should be noticed that in his enumeration of the different levels of qualities, A. distinguishes between matter as physical or mechanical, and matter with secondary qualities. Thus, he retains the distinction between primary and secondary qualities drawn by the classical exponents of what Whitehead has called the "bifurcation theory" of nature, although he expresses it in a vastly different form. The difficulty of accounting properly for "secondary" qualities has been acute for all who have held in any form this "mechanical" view of nature which has been prevalent among philosophers and scientists from the time of Galileo and Descartes to the present. The essence of the mechanical view is the assumption that such non-qualitative factors as local motion, position, mass and energy are alone operative in determining the course of events in the physical world. It followed that these "secondary" qualities either had no physical existence or that they were somehow derived from or produced by such non-qualitative factors. The second alternative seemed impossible to the classical exponents, so they fell back on the first alternative and denied that "secondary" qualities really belong to physical objects; they are perceived as qualifying the physical objects, but the perception is

9. Ibid., pp. 52-3.

10. The categories will be treated of in Ch. Five of thesis.

illusory. All that exists in the object is the power to produce such illusory ideas in us.

New A. attempts to solve the problem by maintaining the second alternative, namely, that "secondary" qualities are somehow derived from or produced by such non-qualitative factors. For him the secondary qualities of matter must be regarded as belonging to the thing itself.<sup>11</sup> It is no harder to think of a material process carrying the quality of colour, for example, than it is to think of a neural process as carrying the quality of mind<sup>12</sup>; indeed there is something unintelligible in the idea that out of heterogeneous material the mind could fabricate a colour or taste or smell.<sup>13</sup>

Moreover A. maintains that the "secondary" qualities are emergent from their material basis in exactly the same way as mind is emergent from its neural basis; the secondary quality is the "mind" of its primary substrate. As belonging to the thing itself, it may reflectively be regarded as corresponding to certain disturbances, of whatever kind, in or amongst the material particles, which disturbances are then notified to our senses by certain movements of the media, so that we apprehend the quality. And the quality is permanent in the sense that it is in its primary determinations such as to take on the secondary quality given the right conditions (a colour with the incidence of light for example).

A. also refers sometimes to the distinction between the empirical modes of pervasive (or "categorical") features, and the emergent qualities as a distinction between "primary" and "secondary" qualities,<sup>14</sup> but we must be careful not to confuse this distinction with the distinction between the "primary" and "secondary" qualities of matter. For in this new sense, "secondary" quality refers not only to the traditional secondary qualities of matter, but also to such qualities as life and mind (and even deity).

1. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. V, p. 138.

2. Ibid. p. 138; also Ibid. p.p. 142.

3. Ibid., p. 139.

4. STD, vol 1, Bk. II, Ch. 1, pp. 185-6; also Ibid., vol II, Bk. III, Ch. II B, pp. 55-6.

(iv) Nisus.

We may wish to ask A. why the qualities should emerge from Space-Time, but A. regards this as an unanswerable question. "That is not my business", he declares, "and further I don't see how it can be anybody's business, except to note the facts and be grateful to them, or at least put up with them. Many are quite content to say it is God's doing. I do not use their language, because I think it unscientific, but I agree with the spirit of it".<sup>15</sup> Elsewhere he calls this unexplainable tendency to emerge the "nisus". He already uses the word in STD<sup>16</sup>, but he only develops the conception fully later in his essay "Spinoza and Time"<sup>17</sup>, where he regards it as an improvement upon Spinoza's "conatus". The nisus is not an effort of the world to go beyond itself, (for we cannot think of an infinite stuff widening its limits, else it would not be infinite); but it goes beyond itself only by effecting fresh distributions of its motions into new complexes of motion. This "nisus" or effort of the world as a whole is felt by the individual forms in which it has resulted, and hence, out of these forms, out of one level in the hierarchy of levels of existence, a new level of existence is evolved. Thus the "nisus" of the world as a whole is reflected in the transformation of types which take place out of lower to higher levels.

"Moreover the nisus of the whole is shared at any moment by everything within it, though it is only in those things from which a new level not yet attained is to proceed that it is palpable. Life has been evolved and has been embodied in finite living things; and mind in sentient things. The nisus would seem to have done its work so far as the attainment of life or mind is concerned. Yet still material and living things are caught in the nisus, in virtue of which they sustain the level above them, without which that level

15. "Some Explanations", MIND, vol. XXX, 1921, p. 410.

16. Cf. STD, Vol. II, Bk. IV, Ch. I, "There is a nisus in Space-Time, which, as it has borne its creatures forward through matter and life to mind, will bear them forward to some higher level of existence" (p. 346); also p. 348.

17. "Spinoza and Time", reprinted in "Philosophical and Literary Pieces".

would disappear, and things would shrink back to a lower stage. And within the "minds" of these material or living things themselves the *nisus* is felt as a *nisus* towards something unattained, and they have the analogue of what religion is for us. The "mind" of the stone is a dim striving towards life, which for the stone is an unattained level of existence, although we who come later know that life has taken the realised form of finite living things." 18

The concept of "*nisus*" is closely bound up with A.'s conception of God, (about which I can only say a few words here), for if there is in Space-Time a "*nisus*" towards the emergence of new qualities, then there is no reason to suppose that the highest quality we know, mind, is the highest level of existence, for "there is an empirical quality which is to succeed the distinctive empirical quality of our level, and that new empirical quality is deity." 19 Deity is thus the quality following on mind which the universe is engaged in bringing to birth, and the sentiment of religion is that response to that *nisus* is the feeling of one-ness with the next higher type of quality which is to arise out of the level we or other minds have attained, 20 But what the quality of deity is we cannot strictly know, for we can neither enjoy nor still less contemplate it. "Our altars are still raised to the unknown God." 21 Thus "the historical conception of things rejects of necessity a creator of the world, while accepting creators and creation within the world. The world as a whole when viewed historically is self-creative ..... the creator is himself created along with his world. We are involved otherwise in all the mystery of a God who can foresee the history of the world, and this, if history is history, is self-contradictory." 22

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18. Ibid., pp. 381-2.

19. STD, vol II, Bk IV, Ch 1, p. 345.

20. "Spinoza and Time", p. 383.

21. STD, vol II, Bk IV, Ch 1, p. 347.

22. HT, p. 15.

When deity has been brought to birth, it is no longer God, but becomes embodied in numerous finite gods. Nor should it be supposed that the emergence of qualities stops after deity has emerged, for the "nissus" never stops. But to each level, the "nissus" towards the next level is its God.

A. also speaks of "tertiary qualities"; these are Beauty, Goodness and Truth, the three "values". The subject of "value" only touches on the notion of the "historicity of things" in two respects;- Firstly, value can only be "eternal" in the sense described at the beginning of this chapter; thus it is as eternal as colour but no more so. <sup>23</sup> Secondly, value is a transferable characteristic <sup>24</sup> and in its ubiquitous form turns out to be merely "the satisfaction of certain desires on our part" which conception when transferred to all things, "reveals itself as another side of the holizing character". <sup>25</sup> The conclusion is that "There is accordingly, on the historical view, less affinity between value as a fundamental feature of things and the human values we treat as sacred than with the elementary idea of valency as used by the chemists, where atoms of different character enter into combination because each "satisfies" the other. The satisfaction is, as this example shows, selective. "Not everything completes the nature of everything else, but only certain things." <sup>26</sup>

(v) Comments.

As at the end of the last chapter, I should like to end off by indicating some of the more important weaknesses in A.'s argument on points discussed in this chapter.

23. HT, p. 16.

24. Cf. HT, section III, pp. 19-22.

25. HT, p. 22; A. refers more explicitly to General Smuts' "holism" in HT, p. 20.

26. HT, p. 22.

(1) Broad has urged <sup>27</sup> that there is no very good reason for holding as A. does, that if a complex has the quality 'Qn', then it is always a specialised part of it that will possess the quality. Thus A. would hold that a coloured physical object must consist of specialised coloured motions dotted about within a contour among others that are merely mechanical. This may be so, but is there any good argument in favour of the possibility?

To this A. replies simply "that in place of 'must' and 'could not', we must read 'do' and 'do not'. It is all a matter of fact and description". <sup>28</sup> (Note again the emphasis on the actual).

(2) The "emergence" theory implies a view as to the relation of part and whole according to which the whole possesses a character that does not belong to any of the parts. But it may be argued that "the character of the whole is limited and conditioned by the nature of the parts. This follows from the very meaning of the term whole. For a whole is nothing else than all its parts as such." <sup>29</sup>

(3) The notion of "emergence" involves that at the beginning there shall have been pure Space-Time without qualities; but this (if we remember Berkeley's argument) is an impossible abstraction. <sup>30</sup>

A., however, does not accept Berkeley's argument. <sup>31</sup>

(4) Our experience teaches us that new qualities arise through changes in which the old cease to exist in the transition to the new; just as far as there is novelty, what previously existed vanishes, e.g., when red and yellow unite to form orange, the red and yellow as such cease to exist. But the contrary holds of "emergence", where the quality simply supervenes and adds itself to the process from which it is said to emerge; the process might as well continue its course without the quality. "If we supposed

27. "Prof. A.'s Gifford Lectures -II", pp. 144-5.

28. "Some Explanations", p. 427.

29. "The Phil. of S.A. -II", p. 146.

30. Thus Broad "The Mind and its Place in Nature", Kegan Paul, 1925, p. 649:- "it seems to me to be impossible for anything to have only spatio-temporal characteristics".

31. Cf. STD, vol. II, Bk III, Ch. VI, p 143; and also Ibid., Ch. IIB, p. 61.

that the original space-time process was all that originally existed, there is no reason why anything else would ever exist. If anything else does occur, it is a most misleading use of language to say that it emerges. All that one can say is that once it was not and now it is. But there is no process of change or transition through which it comes to be. In other words there is no process of emergence. But what is emergence if it is not a process? It can only be an absolute creation - a concept which we should leave to the theologians.<sup>32</sup>

And considered as a species of causation "emergence" is inadequate, because if something occurs under certain circumstances, without any reason why it should occur, there is no reason why it should occur again under similar circumstances in unobserved instances.

(5) In our analysis of A.'s distinction between the primary and secondary qualities of matter, we have shown that Galileo and Descartes accepted the first alternative, namely, that non-qualitative process could not produce quality, and they therefore held that the secondary qualities were illusory, while A. held the second alternative and maintained that secondary qualities were real, that non-qualitative process could produce secondary qualities, and that the way it produced them was by "emergence". But the original distinction between primary and secondary qualities of matter is at fault; this distinction is absurd (for the reasons which Berkeley urged), and against all empirical experience, which shows qualities everywhere and never mere extension, configuration and motion. The distinction assumes (even if only tacitly) that nothing but what lends itself to the purposes of physical science can be primary. But "there is no reason why the limitations of scientific method should coincide with the limits of real existence".<sup>33</sup>

(6) The word "quality" is used in different senses when we speak of life as a quality and redness as a quality. "By saying that a body

32. Stout, "The Phil. of S.A.-II", p. 149. The whole of comment (4) is summarised from Stout. A. could probably meet all the criticisms involved, on his own grounds.

33. Stout, "The Phil. of S.A.-II", p. 149. I must also acknowledge help from this quarter for the essential part of my analysis of A.'s distinction between primary and secondary qualities.

is living I just mean that its motions and other changes fit into each other and into the environment in certain characteristic ways. The statement is an analysis of its characteristic modes of change. By saying that a motion is red, I certainly do not mean that it is a vibration of such and such frequency... but (it) is the assertion that a property which is not analysable .... occupies the same contour as a certain set of motions." <sup>34</sup> Thus it is true that life can be expressed without remainder in physico-chemical terms, but not true in the same sense that redness could be so expressed.

(7) Prof. D. Emmet <sup>35</sup> thinks that A. oscillates between two not altogether reconcilable views. In one view Space-Time is something absolute, a kind of substance, in which motion simply means the redistribution of spatial outlines within the whole Space-Time. In the other view Time stands for what Whitehead calls the "advance into novelty".

I must repeat that I offer none of the above comments as valid criticisms; I am merely trying to illustrate the type of weaknesses that critics profess to find in A.'s argument.

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34. Broad, "Prof. A.'s Gifford Lectures - II", p. 145. However, I do not necessarily agree with A. and Broad that life can be expressed without remainder in physico-chemical terms.

35. "Time is the Mind of Space", PHILOSOPHY, vol. XXV, no. 94, 1950.



CHAPTER THREE : "FREEDOM".(1) Novelty and Causality.

The points dealt with in this chapter illustrate both A.'s emphasis on movement and on the actual; however, for purposes of exposition, I shall concentrate more particularly on the emphasis on movement.

Given the metaphysical background expounded in the last two chapters, according to which we have a matrix of Motion or Space-Time in which new qualities emerge, it is obvious that the notion of "novelty" must play an important part in A.'s philosophy. He puts this very well when he says "Novelty is the essence of history, and so it is of the world of things. Every event is, considered strictly, new; and there is in particular an "emergence" of novel characters in things. It is not novelty that calls for explanation so much as repetition, regularity, uniformity." <sup>1</sup> Every event, then, is new, because it is a link in the chain of a historical world. Events have their own particularising features, even if this is no more than their place and date; "no mere combination of universals explains individuality." <sup>2</sup>

And, given this total historical reality, "causality" (as we shall see later on) means merely the passage from one event (enjoyed or contemplated <sup>3</sup>) to another (enjoyed or contemplated). Causality is thus ubiquitous, and all that it means is that between certain events there is an intimacy of connection in fact. All that the enquirer into causal connection does is to establish this intimacy of connection by excluding the less intimate connections.

Thus the scientific rule that "every effect has a cause" is true and universally valid; but it is not at all incompatible

1. HT, p. 16.

2. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 323.

3. "... I am accustomed to say that the mind enjoys itself and contemplates its objects. The act of mind is an enjoyment, the object is contemplated." STD, vol I, Introduction, p. 12.

with the notion of novelty. It <sup>is</sup> valid because it is another way of expressing the truth that in actual fact things follow on one another; and it is consistent with novelty because novelty is the attribute of every event.

This conclusion is important because it has been commonly thought that the creation of "new" things is the prerogative of "free" action, which is exempt from the rule of causality. A. rejects that view: thus he must now explain what human freedom is. I say explain advisedly, because A.'s "realistic" or "actual" approach does not permit him to start off by saying that human freedom does not exist. <sup>4</sup> On the contrary it does: "Freedom is an experience; determinism and indeterminism are theories...". <sup>5</sup> But A. finds that determinism is verified by experience, whereas indeterminism is not verified by experience.

(11) Indeterminism and Choice.

A. rejects the theory of indeterminism according to which human actions are contingent, and for which the free act might have been different in spite of its antecedents. This theory, he argues, does not conform with the actual facts; it invokes a might or might not be, but "As there is no 'must' for science or philosophy, neither is there a 'might' or 'might not be'; science has to deal with what is. 'Might be' for it, means not variation from what it finds, but variation within limits where not all the conditions are known." <sup>6</sup> Moreover, indeterminism involves the so-called fiat of the will. But this, says A., is a misrepresentation of our experience of choice. For there is no power of choosing behind the choice itself, "no freedom of choice but only freedom experienced in choice." <sup>7</sup>

4. "No man, unless action is corrupted by morbid reflection, feels himself a jot less free even though he has convinced himself, as some persons mistakenly have, that the course of things is fixed once and for all." HT, p. 18.

5. Ibid., p.18. Cf. also Ibid., p. 17, where he says "everyone accepts the first part of Johnson's saying, 'Sir, we know we are free, and there's an end on't,' without necessarily accepting the second part. What does our freedom mean?"

6. STD, vol II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 330.

7. Ibid.

Thus A.'s conception of choice involves an emphasis on character; it means that it is we who choose, being the kind of men we are (whence we accept responsibility for we do.) "It does not mean that we have freedom to choose. The freedom lies in the choice and not in any capacity behind the choice to choose differently." <sup>8</sup>

Thus remorse does not mean that we were free to have chosen otherwise; all it implies is that if we had been different we would have chosen otherwise, and we add that we ought to have been different - we wish we had been better men, for then we would have chosen better. "Remorse is the awakening of my true character which had been partially lulled into oblivion, or the outgrowth of a more perfect character after the act which the new character condemns." <sup>9</sup>

(iii) What Determinism Does Not Mean.

A. believes that the theory of determinism explains our experience of freedom, but he rejects a number of formulations of what determinism means.

It does not mean a pre-arranged necessity, for "things do not admit necessity but only actual occurrence". <sup>10</sup> The only "necessity" that anything can be said to obey is the "necessity" of "causation" in A.'s own sense, where it means merely the actual passage from one event to another. Moreover, the notion of a pre-arrangement implies a world given at a moment as a whole (a 'tout donné' in Bergson's phrase), instead of a world engaged in its own process. It omits Time from the world; it does not take it seriously.

Again, as regards choice, determinism does not mean that in our choice we know ourselves to be determined or fettered by our characters or antecedents or the circumstances under which we act, in the same sense as we feel that it is we who choose. We do not,

8. HT, p. 17.

9. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 331.

10. HT, p. 19.

in general, think about the matter at all. We do not feel that we are the slaves of our characters; that is the language not of action but of reflection upon it.

(iv) Predictability.

Finally, determinism does not mean predictability. Of course, A. admits, human action is partially predictable; human intercourse implies it and is based on it <sup>11</sup>. But we know from our human intercourse that there are limits to predictability. "A skilled observer, knowing a person's general bodily condition, the latent tendencies in his bodily 'make-up', might ..... might go far towards predicting a revolution in his character under certain circumstances. But the observer could only do so on the basis of present knowledge of human tendencies, combined with tendencies suggested by the bodily condition. He could not foretell something outside of the range of past experience; though of course, after the event had happened, he could see the connection of the strange event with its conditions, which would then be seen to have determined it." <sup>12</sup>

The same thing, A. argues, applies to prediction in general. With the lapse of Time, the universe throws up new characters which can only be known to him who experiences them. There are therefore limits to prediction, and we can only discover certain things by getting the experience of them; in certain cases prediction would seem to be impossible, even on the supposition of the <sup>v</sup>fastest powers of calculation; in others, prediction is possible theoretically, though impossible practically, because of the coarseness of the calculating instrument.

Thus in a world of novel creation, where new characters emerge, complete knowledge of the present and the past could not predict the shape of the future, though possibly it might predict

11. Bradley makes the same point in his "Ethical Studies" (of. 1st essay "The Vulgar Notion of Responsibility", p. 16, Second Edition). In general, A.'s view of freedom is very similar to that held by Bradley.

12. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 324.

the future in its measurable characters.<sup>13</sup> Thus, A. maintains, determinism can not imply predictability. And so he is able to refute easily the argument put forward by some philosophers, that since the present state of an electron cannot be completely known because our observation interferes with the object observed, the universe cannot be completely deterministic. The reply is simply, "As determinism does <sup>not</sup> imply prediction, the matter is irrelevant."<sup>14</sup>

A. also puts the point this way: "a being who knew only mechanical and chemical action could not predict life; he must wait till life emerged with the course of Time. A being who knew only life could not predict mind, though he might predict that combination of vital actions which has mind."<sup>15</sup> And A. replies in the same sort of way to the problem of the Laplacean calculator (about which Bosanquet has spoken in "Individuality and Value", lecture iii), according to which it is urged that a person who knows the whole state of the universe at any moment can calculate the whole future. A. replies that it is true that "given the condition of the universe at a certain number of instants in terms of Space and Time, the whole future can be calculated in terms of Space and Time. But what it will be like, what qualities it shall have more than spatial and temporal ones, he cannot know unless he knows already, or unless he lives to see... if he is only present during the nebular period, he will never predict you and me, though he may predict the group of changes in Space and Time which go by the names of you and me ... Except in the limited sense described, the hypothesis of the calculator is absurd.... He stands in fact for little more than the proposition that at any moment in the world's existence, the future of the world 'will be what it will be'."<sup>16</sup>

Nor does it help to identify the calculator with God. For, says A., "whatever deity may be, it is not a merely infinite mind, if

<sup>13.</sup> HT, p. 18.

<sup>14.</sup> HT, p. 18.

<sup>15.</sup> STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 327.

<sup>16.</sup> Ibid., pp. 328-9.

that phrase has any meaning but something higher".<sup>17</sup> Again, the only sense in which God can predict the future, is that he knows that the future will be what it will be. In any case, on A.'s conception of God, there is one part of the universe that God cannot predict, and that is his own future. On the other hand, A. thinks that if we regard God as the Creator who foreknows or even predestines his universe, then we are faced with "all the mystery of a God who can foresee the history of the world, and this, if history is history, is self-contradictory."<sup>18</sup>

(v) Freedom.

Thus determinism, which A., as we have seen, holds to be the correct theory about the experience of human freedom, cannot mean either a pre-arranged necessity, or the feeling of ourselves to be fettered while we act, or predictability. What then does determinism mean?

A. maintains that it means that the action, the choice, is determined by all the ingredients, of which the principal and decisive one is our own selves, our character; it means that the free act has followed in fact from its antecedents, as they exist in the character of the agent and the circumstances which appeal to him for action. The data being what they are (and our own selves the principal among them), whatever happens happens definitely and could not be different.

And freedom is nothing but "the form which causal action assumes when both cause and effect are enjoyed; so that freedom is determination as enjoyed, or in enjoyment, and human freedom is a case of something universal which is found wherever the distinction of enjoyment and contemplation, in the widest sense of those terms, is found."<sup>19</sup> This is just another way, though more general, of expressing the familiar doctrine that freedom is self-determination.

17. Ibid., p. 329.

18. HT, p. 15.

19. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 315.

Like Bradley, A. tries to buttress his argument with an appeal to ordinary practical experience of freedom; he finds that this confirms his opinion that freedom is determination by character (or in enjoyment), and is compatible with responsibility. In fact, the more we feel ourselves determined by our enjoyed mental states, the keener the consciousness of freedom. Moreover, experience shows that complete determination by the personality on all its sides, is more attainable in the good man than in the bad one. "Hence the distinction of two senses of freedom, the one in which it means merely freedom from external determination, that is, it means determination by the man himself; and the other in which it is equivalent to goodness. In the first sense, the bad and the good are both free; in the second sense only he whose self is an exhibition of law is free, and badness is the slave of its passions." <sup>20</sup>

And again, A. points out that the fact of human choice does contradict the theory of self-determinism: it might be thought that in choosing between two alternatives, there is not only the question of the two physical pulls, but also the choosing in which we accept one and reject the other. But this again assumes the 'fiat' of the will which we have shown (Of this chapter, section (ii) ) A. to reject. And besides, there is not such a difference between mental beings and mechanical things in respect of choice as this objection supposes. The only difference is that the greater complexity in mind means that its response to stimuli is more plastic in character. "The relative simplicity of the physical body excludes preference of one stimulus to another; each exerts its effect and the two effects are combined in the resultant. Preference implies a greater complexity, but it does not begin with man, but with life. Lowly organisms like algae may exhibit preference, avoiding one form of stimulus and pursuing another." <sup>21</sup> Thus preference is found not only in man but in lower forms of being as well: only, in man there are more factors to be considered, and the action is more complex.

20. Ibid., p. 321.

21. Ibid., pp. 321-2

Freedom is determination in enjoyment, and it is enjoyment alone which distinguishes it from natural or physical action, which is contemplated. But when free action in turn becomes the object of contemplation, it falls into the class of determined natural action, and the god on the next level above man who sees the action as determined may know also that for us it is enjoyment and free, though he cannot enjoy our freedom but only knows that we feel it. Now we have already shown that for A. there is at every level of existence a "Mind" element and a "body" element, the former standing for the nisus towards the emergence of a new quality. Thus, extending the usage of enjoyment and contemplation, we can see that each contemplated thing enjoys its own particular level of existence, while it contemplates the levels below it. Hence the action of the plant which for us is natural determination is for the plant itself the enjoyment of its freedom. The stone which for us is compelled from our point of view is free in its internal actions for itself. It acts, in the Spinozistic phrase, from the necessity of its own nature. It is only to the higher level of creatures that free determinism or enjoyment in determination becomes mere determinism. Thus freedom in general is the experience which each thing has of the working of its own nature; and a distinction parallel to ours of freedom and unfreedom exists for the plant and for the stone or the atom." 22

(vi) Comment

I believe that the mention of Spinoza in this last-quoted passage is the clue to the proper understanding of A.'s conception of freedom. I find a remarkable similarity in A.'s view of human freedom as determination in enjoyment, and Spinoza's conception of man as a stone endowed with consciousness. But Spinoza stresses the idea of necessary determination, A., that of actual occurrence. I can only

22. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 333. Also of. HT, pp. 18-9. "The electron for aught that I can see is as much free and as much determined as a man or a tree or a rock. Its freedom differs from ours only in that presumably it is not 'aware' of its action and has not the experience of choice". I do not think this passage contradicts what A. has said in STD about enjoyment being found at every stage and choice or preference at every stage. What he means here, I think, is that it is not strictly speaking aware of its action and has not strictly speaking the experience of choice.



concede that A.' statement of the case is an improvement on Spinoza. It seems to me, nevertheless, that both Spinoza and A. are in error.

I agree with A.'s statement of the problem: freedom is an experience, determinism and indeterminism theories about the nature of that experience. I find, however, that determinism of any sort, even A.'s sort of self-determinism, makes that experience an illusion. If every level of existence sees the enjoyment of freedom of the previous level as determined, then surely each level has been the victim of an illusion which was shown to be illusory by further development? A.'s theory of self-determinism, I conclude therefore, does not conform to the possibility of the experience it tries to explain.

And I cannot see that indeterminism conforms any less with the facts than does self-determinism. It is obviously part of the truth that our characters shape our actions. But we must not forget that we play a part in the shaping of those very characters. Character indeed is a growing thing; but we play our part in helping it to grow. A.'s theory stresses the one aspect, indeterminism the other. Who will say that one conforms to the facts whereas the other does not?

What causes both Spinoza and A. to err, it seems to me, is the idea of a process in which the free action finds its place. In Spinoza it is a chain of necessary causes; in A. it is a chain of actual occurrences or causes. But in both it is a process given as a fact. But is that very idea of a process consistent with our experience of freedom? I admit that this is a very difficult question to answer. But if the answer is "no", then I think it is the idea of a process which must suffer and not our experience of freedom; and I would maintain that this conclusion is a legitimate extension of A.'s emphasis on facts.

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SECTION B : "THE ACTUAL"CHAPTER FOUR : "THE METHOD OF PHILOSOPHY"(1) Natural Piety.

The other chief consequence that the recognition of the "historicity of things" has for A., is that an emphasis is laid upon the actual as opposed to the necessary. He says that he rejoices to find himself in community with A.N. Whitehead in their "common devotion to the concrete." <sup>1</sup> What he means is that both Whitehead and he stress an acceptance of the facts. He says <sup>2</sup> "There is a mental disease known as the questioning or metaphysical mania, which cannot accept anything, even the most trivial, without demanding explanation. Why do I stand where I stand? Why is a glass a glass, a chair a chair? How is it that men are only of the size they are? Why not as big as houses? etc. (I quote from William James). Now the very life of knowledge depends on asking questions. Is it not called enquiry? And its considerations are not drawn by considerations of politeness or by shrinking from insanity. But it does recognise that, however far it may push its explanations, the world presents characters which must be accepted reverently as beyond explanation, though they do not pass understanding. And I call this habit of acceptance of nature by the name of natural piety, because simple-minded religion is accustomed to speak of events for which it can find no reason as the will of God." And he explains that this "natural piety" of which he speaks is "that of the scientific investigator, by which he accepts with loyalty the mysteries which he cannot explain in nature and has no right to try to explain. I may describe it as the habit of knowing when to stop asking questions of nature." <sup>3</sup>

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1. "Some Explanations", p. 416.

2. "Natural Piety", "Philosophical and Literary Pieces", p. 300.

3. Ibid., p. 299.

To sum up, then, "The mystery of facts, whether these facts are the individual facts of experience or the larger universal facts which are scientific laws, or such facts, more comprehensive still, as may be discovered by a prudent and scientific philosophy, is the last word of knowledge. The reverent temper which accepts them is the mood of natural piety."<sup>4</sup> It is no exaggeration to say that the essence of A.'s method of philosophising consists in the practice of "natural piety". His "Realism" is merely an application of this method.

(ii) Necessity and Contingency.

We have met the stress A. places on the actual incidentally in previous chapters. Thus we saw that A.'s 'proof' of the intimate connection of Space and Time he himself recognizes as no strict proof at all, but merely a description of a matter of fact. Again, the new qualities which emerged were "eternal objects" to be accepted with "natural piety". And finally, there was no answer to the question why qualities should emerge from Space-Time; the existence of this nisus was just a matter of fact.

Now this emphasis on "matters of fact" obviously involves a definite view of the relations between the contingent and the necessary, and I should like to indicate shortly what that relation is. Firstly we must distinguish between necessity of fact and necessity of reason<sup>5</sup>. The first is commonly held to be the chief characteristic which distinguishes the causal relation from the relation of mere contingency, and so A.'s treatment of the category of causality is of primary importance in determining his attitude to necessity of fact. We must, however, postpone discussion of A.'s treatment of causality till the next chapter, where we deal with the more important categories, and so it must suffice here if

4. Ibid., p. 315.

5. A. himself draws a similar distinction: "The only necessity which philosophy can recognize is that of inference. But there is no necessity in things except fact". "STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. VI B, p. 291.

7.

we give a short summary of his conclusion as to necessity of fact.

His answer to Hume's critique of causality shows, as we shall see, that for A. "necessity of fact" is only a special type of "contingency". Primarily what we have is what may be described as an "actual process", in which, strictly speaking, everything is contingent. Necessity is merely a certain intimacy of connection to be found between certain events in the process. Thus the necessary is merely a part of the actual; there is a distinction between the necessary and the contingent, but it is a distinction of degree, not of kind. So much for necessity of fact.

And necessity of reason or logical necessity does not fare much better at A.'s hands. For he maintains that truth follows the reality which is known, and is determined by it, though it is true on account of the mind which knows it. <sup>6</sup> A method of proof or reasoning means a certain relation among propositions themselves, as propositions with certain formal characters, in virtue of which, given certain propositions, other propositions may coherently be stated. But logic is neither a science of things, nor of mind but of things as possessed by mind; it is a subject-object science. However, "In constructing truth at the guidance of things we are piecing together by an act of will or judgement what we have unpieced by acts of will or judgement. Experiment is our control as to the material or empirical details. Logic controls us in the formal nature of this process, for it is concerned not directly with the empirical features of reality but with its categorial ones". <sup>7</sup>

And real grounds are therefore to be distinguished from logical grounds, though they may coincide. All manner of good reasons for a conclusion are different from the cause of the fact stated in the conclusion; the cause is always a reason, but a reason need not be the cause. And we are not free to regard the logical ground, because it is more formal, as superior to the relation of cause and effect in reality: "Truth is like a work of art and has

6. STD, vol II, Bk. III, Ch. IX B, p. 270.

7. Ibid., p. 271.

its own prescriptions, always dictated by reality. We go about to arrive at reality by methods proper to truth, and we are able to dispense in certain cases with direct reference to causal interrelation. But the ideals of logic cannot be used to depreciate the causal relation." <sup>8</sup>

A. even goes a step further and says that "philosophy proceeds by description; it only uses argument in order to help you to see the facts, just as a botanist uses a microscope." <sup>9</sup>

Thus logical necessity, when it yields truth, merely reflects actual conditions, and is therefore in the same predicament as necessity of fact. There is only an actual process, within which necessity of fact can be discriminated, and upon which logical necessity must depend, if it is to yield the truth. And we may therefore appropriately quote two sentences previously reproduced: "there is no room for "must" in philosophy or in science, but only for facts and the implications of them" <sup>10</sup>; nor even is there room for possibility: "as there is no "must" for science or philosophy, neither is there a "might" or "might not be"; science has to deal with what is." <sup>11</sup>

### (iii) The Method of Philosophy.

If the above is true, philosophy will differ from the special sciences not so much in its methods as in the nature of the subjects with which it deals: "They are of a peculiarly comprehensive kind, and are revealed to the most superficial glance cast at the things ... in the world. These things fall into groups distinguished from one another by specific characters which some have and others have not. Thus there are material bodies ... there are living things;

8. Ibid., p. 297. Cf. also STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. II, pp. 205-7. One should not forget, however, that what A. means by the causal relation is merely a special type of relation of actual contingency.

9. "Some Explanations", p. 423.

10. STD, vol I, Bk. I, Ch. I, p. 47.

11. STD, vol II, Bk. III, Ch. X, p. 330.

and there are beings with mind. What is the relation of these different orders of existence to one another? Is there any fundamental nature which they have in common, of which they are specific examples, and what meaning can we attach to such specification? What is the primary form of being, and how are different orders of being born of it? In the next place, alongside the diversity of kind amongst things, there are certain pervasive features, which, if they are not found in all things alike, have at least an extraordinary universality of range. Such are the permanence in change by virtue of which things are described as substances, quantity, spatial and temporal character, causality .... Metaphysics is thus an attempt to study these very comprehensive topics, to describe the ultimate nature of existence if it has any, and these pervasive characters of things, or categories. If we may neglect too nice particulars of interpretation, we may use the definition of Aristotle, the science of being as such and its essential attributes." 12 And since philosophy differs from the special sciences only in its subject-matter, its method will be, like theirs, empirical: it will proceed by reflective description and analysis of its subject-matter, use hypotheses by which to bring its data into verifiable connection; its certainty, like theirs, extends no further than its efficiency in providing a reasoned exhibition of such system as can be discovered in these data. But the word "empirical" must not be pressed too closely, for it is a description of method and not of subject-matter. If we distinguish the variable (called the empirical) from the pervasive (called the categorial or a priori) characters, then we can see that philosophy deals with the actual world, but the parts of it with which it deals empirically are categorial or non-empirical parts of that actual world, and so an empirical philosophy is not necessarily a sensationalistic one.

Thus philosophy consists for the most part, like other sciences, in applying a single principle of simple character to a variety of different topics and attempting to verify the possibility

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12. STD, vol I. Bk I, Ch. I, pp. 1-2.

of applying it to these topics. "It takes for its beginning some fundamental fact which, as Berkeley said long ago of the principle which he discovered, a man has only to open his eyes to see. The reasonings by which the philosopher sometimes supports the truth of the fundamental fact are, not so much arguments for what cannot in the nature of the case be proved, as contrivances for putting his readers into the right position for seeing. And the verification of it by applications or deductions is chiefly useful in so far as they are the means of persuading the reader of the initial principle from which they are deduced." 13

Such principles are the very principle of the empirical method itself (based as it is for A. with the distinction between "contemplation" and "enjoyment") and the principle (or rather the 'given fact') of the matrix of Space-Time. And the distinction between "contemplation" and "enjoyment" indicates that the mind is but one thing together with other things in the world, and so we may use our experience of one to understand the other; to understand objects we may examine ourselves, and vice-versa.

Finally, metaphysics differs from the other sciences in two ways:- "In the first place it is rather descriptive than explanatory, whereas they are explanatory rather than descriptive. This affords one reason why system in metaphysics repels many people, for so much of the system looks like ticketing a great mass of ideas, and arranging them in their places like specimens in a museum. And yet there is endless satisfaction in seeing how all these things illustrate the one principle which has to be found before the arrangement can be made; and the only danger to the metaphysician is that he should be so enamoured of his principle as to misdescribe the ideas he is arranging..." In the second place "metaphysics is the most concrete of all the sciences." What A. means by saying this is that "in metaphysics no conception is employed for which it is not pointed out directly or indirectly

13. "The Method of Metaphysics; and The Categories", MIND XXI, 1912, p. 1.

what is the correspondent feature in actual experience. In all other sciences, conceptions are used which are adopted without examination ... It is the special business to examine these conceptions which are taken for granted in the other sciences and to find them in experience itself." 14

(iv) "History" and "Mathematics".

Thus one aspect of the "historicity of things" is an emphasis on the contingent and concrete, the actual, and a philosophy which "takes Time seriously" and recognizes the "historicity of things" must, as A. has done, regard philosophy as empirical and as dealing with the concrete. A. stresses this so much that he comes to use the word "history" to stand for the fact, or brute givenness (and in much the same way we use the word "history" even in ordinary conversation to stand for any process). He reminds us that science is a highly artificial thing, which in pursuit of its purpose moves far away from its "historical" (i.e. actual or contingent) foundation. He rejects however the idea that science has but to construct a coherent system of symbols which stands for sensible experience and through it for the real things of the world of which we can know nothing directly, on the grounds that it is based on an erroneous epistemology. He maintains on the contrary that "what happens in science is comparable to what happens when we go up into the air and see the landscape below us, not in all its detail but in certain determining outlines. These are still the outlines of the same landscape out of which we rose ..."; and similarly he pleads that "in science the data remain still in view though reduced to a compendious form, and represented not by symbols, but, as it were, by delegates and plenipotentiaries." 15 He feels that this agrees both with the common notion that truth is accordance with fact, and with the philosophical view that it is coherence of science within itself.

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14. "Some Explanations", pp. 409-410.

15. HT, p. 24.



He concludes: "History can claim to be mistress of science, as much as mathematics, though in a different sense. They stand for the two vital elements in every science which cannot be separated, if they can be considered separately: the constructive process by which we discover by our thought the order inherent in things, and the raw material itself, the brute givenness... We proceed out of history into history again." 16

(v) Comment.

It is disingenuousness to pretend not to be impressed by something significant, and I am impressed with A.'s method of philosophy. This is not to say that I agree with everything he says (for example about necessity and contingency); but when for example A. says that "freedom is an experience; determinism and indeterminism are theories", I find myself readily assenting. And I find myself agreeing again when he uses the same approach to religion. In fact A. uses this approach throughout: there are certain facts which we must explain - what theories have we to offer? And as to the facts themselves, we must not argue; we must accept them with "natural piety".

Of course there are pitfalls for the unwary exponents of "natural piety". Thus, for example, Broad points out that orthodox chemists had to give up their "natural piety" in a specific case before chemistry could progress: "It was held that the characteristic differences between Oxygen and Hydrogen are due in no way to differences of structure or components, but must simply be accepted as ultimate facts." They had to give up this view when Atomic Physics entered the field. And it is quite true that, as Broad remarks, we could never be logically compelled to hold the "brute fact" point of view, since it is always open to us to suppose "that what is macroscopically homogeneous has a

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16. HT, p. 25. It may be remarked in passing that this distinction between "history" and "mathematics", seems to correspond with the distinction between the (logically) necessary and the actual.

17. /"The Mind and Its Place in Nature", pp. 44-5

complex microscopic structure which wholly or partly determines its characteristic macroscopic behaviour." Broad admits "Nevertheless it is perfectly possible that this hypothesis is not true in certain cases, and that there are ultimate differences, in the material world which must just be accepted as brute facts." 17 But this admission does not seem to me to go far enough: for the presuppositions of human discourse require that something must be taken as "given" as a "brute fact". There cannot even be argument unless there is agreement on some fundamental point. It is true that agreement on some fundamental point does not entail brute facts. But surely the necessity for such agreement makes it very likely that there is at least one brute fact, and probably a good deal more?

... of the world, and the world as we know it, is a world of brute facts. It is a world of facts which are not subject to any law, and which are not subject to any explanation. It is a world of facts which are not subject to any law, and which are not subject to any explanation. It is a world of facts which are not subject to any law, and which are not subject to any explanation.

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CHAPTER FIVE : "THE CATEGORIES".

(1) The Categories in General.

Where the emphasis on the actual is most to the fore, is in A.'s treatment of the categories. He devotes a large part of HT and a quarter of the whole of STD to these categories, which need not surprise us, for we must remember that A. maintained that the categories, that is, the pervasive complexities of motion in the ocean of reality, were the primary subject-matter of philosophy; and he said that his system ought to be judged by its account of the categories. <sup>1</sup>

Since this is so, however, I feel constrained to apologise in advance for the very brief treatment here. My excuse is that I am not making a thorough examination of A.'s philosophy, but merely highlighting a few points in the system in order to illustrate the emphases on process and actuality which constitute for him the recognition of the "historicity of things". And so I shall confine myself to those categories which A. himself singles out for discussion in HT. But first some general remarks.

We must clearly distinguish between the qualities and categories: qualities are "empirical" or non-pervasive, whereas categories are "a priori" or pervasive. If we bear the distinction between pervasive and "empirical" and mind, we will see that the categories are not imposed by the mind but found in reality; the pervasiveness of the categories is due to the fact that they are fundamental properties of Space-Time. Like the so-called "laws of nature", the categories are more than mere "compendious descriptions" but less than independent realities. <sup>2</sup> The burden of A.'s argument about categories is that they are features of

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1. Laird; Memoir, p. 63. In confirmation of this, of "Some Explanations", p. 410, "... what I have tried to do is, assuming Space-Time to be the foundation of the universe, to point out one by one what the experienced features of Space-Time are which are the categories"; and he goes on to criticize Broad and other critics because they do not appear to realize that for him "the doctrine of the categories, taken along with the notion of Space-Time is central.

2. HT, p. 13.

things themselves and not creations of the mind. The Kantian idea of categories as contributed to knowledge by mind must be rejected under the historical view, "for, to speak historically, nothing is real but what is given somehow in experience", where by experience, the emphasis is on concrete experience. We may therefore ask Kant how the mind lights upon these notions and then introduces them into experience; on his view "they are fictions introduced in order to account for the experience we actually have by introducing them into another fiction of an experience which awaits ordering by them," or as A. laughingly adds, a case of "one fiction helping out another." On the contrary, A. maintains that the experience we have is already ordered or it is nothing; apart from it, the categories "are taken from a nowhere which is for shortness called mind." They are not otherwise verifiable than by the real experience itself, and are names for certain elements verifiable within that experience.<sup>3</sup> Thus the categories are patterns found in things, and have no sanctity which makes them in any way different from the things of which they are patterns.

Since Kant, there has been a debate as to how we acquire "a priori" ideas, and Kant's attribution of the "a priori" categories to the mind must be held responsible for this debate. On A.'s own principles, the whole debate is, of course, superfluous, and so he is rather critical of the later development of this argument. He tells us that though Kant's solution of the problem was not psychological, it stimulated that form, and since then the problem has become almost entirely psychological:- Have we "a priori" ideas, and how do we come by them? A. maintains that the attempts that have been made to answer the question have been "psychologically unsuccessful, and metaphysically they have attained the failure to which .... they were foredoomed ... They could not be derived

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3. HT, p. 13. In STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. I, A, is far more sympathetic to Kant (of also HT, p. 13 14): "Leave out from Kant the objective mind ... and what he teaches us is mainly sound". (p. 191)

from the experience which the individual has of empirical things. For how could we gather number, for instance, if things were not already numerable?"<sup>4</sup>

And A. is again not satisfied with Spencer's biological answer that the categories are "a posteriori" for the race, but "a priori" for the individual who inherits the results of centuries of past experience; "the biology, legitimate at the time the theory was formulated has since become more than suspect. But even if it were correct, how could experiences which were not themselves spatial or numerical, no matter through how many generations they were inherited, come to feel or look like space or number?" And then, in reply to James who claimed that all "A priori" ideas come to us by the back-door method of cerebral disposition, and then by a fortunate variation a brain is born whose mind envisages the world causally or numerically, and being successful in its reactions, its kind prevails and peoples the earth; A.'s criticism is that this falls back into the arms of Kant.<sup>5</sup>

The whole argument falls away when it is realized that the categories already exist in things, and it is unnecessary to find what puts it there.

(11) Universals and Particulars.

A. contends that "the historical view means in philosophy first that the real world is made up of particulars, and that universals are but the pattern of their behaviour..... But these patterns belong to the events themselves in their grouping."<sup>6</sup> Thus universals are nothing but arrangements of events, or as A.

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4. STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. IX, p. 332.

5. Ibid., pp. 332-3.

6. HT, p. 12.

prefers, an "arrangability" in events: the actual arrangement is the work of the observer, yet there is something in the events which gives the excuse for such arrangement, and this something is the universal. The universals may be regarded as a higher order of existence than the historical events themselves, because they connect them together; but A. insists that "the patterns come into existence with the examples; the examples are not moulded, as it were, upon a given pattern. The universals are habits which are realized only in their exercise, and the exercise of them varies with the circumstance." 7

Thus we may picture a scale of such variations, with its uttermost end being known as a "law of nature" which occurs when the variation is so great "that the habit is no more than a statistical uniformity." This may seem cryptic, but A. explains that by "law of nature" he means "the arranging out of particular groups of events, which all differ from one another more or less." The sentence which seems to sum up the whole position is one which says that "unalterable laws are but a limit of real laws, which limit exists only in our desire." 8

This whole discussion will become clear if we understand what A. means by calling a universal a "habit". There are, he argues, certain dispositions of response to situations of a certain kind in our minds, whether it be an act of will like telling the truth when asked a question, or the simpler instinctive response to a perception like holding out our hands to catch a ball which is thrown to us; in all the variations of these particular responses there is no distortion of the pattern of response. These dispositions of response A. calls "habits" and they correspond to what he calls "mental universals". If we turn to the non-mental universals found in Space and Time, we discover, says A., that they too are "habits" of Space-Time; empirical universals like dog or

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7. HT, p. 12. What this obscure expression means we shall see in a moment.

8. HT, p. 13.

tree are possible because Space-Time is uniform and behaves therefore on plans which are undistorted by difference of place and time. Thus by speaking of universals as "habits", A. wishes to stress that they are "responses" in Space-Time to a given set of conditions: "Given the appropriate empirical conditions, a triangle or dog may be drawn anywhere according to their universal plan of configuration." <sup>9</sup>

A. rejects Bosanquet's notion of the "concrete" universal on the grounds that it mistakes universality for system; it combines two distinct notions, one being that of the union of different features into a plan which is realized with modifications in individual instances, and the other, that of the union into a system of different individuals in or by or under such a plan. Thus the relation between universal and particular (so A. claims), becomes for Bosanquet one between a thing and its predicate. <sup>10</sup>

But A., as we have seen, insists on the contrary that the "universals are habits which are realized only in their exercise, and the exercise of them varies with the circumstance". <sup>11</sup> Of course, what is at stake in this issue between Bosanquet and A., is their respective views of logic (and so A.'s emphasis on the actual or "historical"). For A. "logic is an empirical science which deals with the interconnection of isolated portions of our knowledge (that is, of reality) as presented in propositional form." <sup>12</sup>

In STD, A. attempts to express what a universal is in Space-Time terms. He finds that every finite possesses universality or identity of kind in so far as it admits without distortion of repetition in Space-Time, that is, can undergo change of place or time or both without alteration, or can be replaced by some other finite. Empirical universals are plans of configuration of

9. STD, vol. I, Bk. II, Ch. III, pp. 211-214.

10. "Mr. Bosanquet compares a universal in the mind to a habit, and so far I seem to be repeating his view of the universal. But a habit is surely not related to its realizations as a thing to its predicates". (Ibid., p. 235).

11. HT, p. 12.

12. STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. III, p. 237.

particulars which are identical in kind. They are essentially in their simplest terms spatio-temporal forms or shapes; and this is still more obviously true of the most comprehensive of all universals, the categories themselves, which are "a priori" plans of configuration. "Universality is thus the name of the constancy of any existent in Space-Time ... and this is equivalent to the uniformity of Space (or what is the same thing, Space-Time)... In a Space which is not uniform I do not see how there could be universals, for each plan would suffer distortion as it was transferred." 13

We can legitimately speak of universals as "subsisting" instead of existing, since it is free from limitation to one particular space and time; but if it is true that "particulars are complexes of Space-Time and belong therefore to the same order as the universals which are plans of Space-Time", then "subsistence" must not be understood to imply a neutral being which is distinct from the world of Space-Time

(iii) Relation.

The only respect in which the category of "relation" bears a direct relation to the "historicity of things", is in that it is empirical like the rest. 14 If it is to be used intelligibly, it must be experienced; we cannot say that space and time are relations between things, for example, till we say what relation is in experience. "Useless to say that before and after are relations of events. Of course they are, if you are already familiar with historical events. But the time itself is not a relation between the events; the relation of events is itself experienced as time slipping over from before to after. Relation is the verifiable experience that events in experience are, in experience, linked up with one another and experienced so." 15

13. Ibid., pp. 214-6.

14. "...even so wide a category as relation is empirical like the rest. I have never rid myself of the feeling that, like mind in other days, it is used to conjure with, even by the thinkers I most respect." HT, p. 14.

15. HT, p. 14.



According to A., relation among existents follows from the continuity of Space-Time, which continuity is primordial and given in experience. Thus relation is as elementary a feature of the universe as 'substantive' things; it can only be indicated by the finger as characteristic of Space-Time or described by conceptual terms which are later in the order of reality than itself. Empirical relations of Space-Time are themselves spaces and times, or are homogeneous with their terms, made of the same stuff.

Though every relation is a transaction between its terms, if the terms are transposed, they enter into a new relation which is of the same kind as before, but differs from it in 'sense' or direction. Primarily relations are between individual things; when we speak of a relation in which universals enter, then the relation is only indirect and through the particulars. Strictly, there is no relation between the universal itself and its particulars; ~~Strictly~~ it is more correctly "one between the particulars themselves in respect of the universal." But the important point is that "we shall not confuse the relation of subject to predicate in the ordinary categorical proposition which expresses the relation of substance to attribute with relations of space and time and quantity or quality, or the like, which are specifically relational, or express relation as such. No contortions of language, however ingeniously successful, will overcome the difference between an attribute which inheres in its substance and a relation like that of quantity which does not inhere and cannot therefore be regarded as an adjective in the proper sense." 16

Relations are real and <sup>the</sup> objects of thought; they are in no sense the work of mind. And as to whether relations are internal or external, A. replies that it all depends on what is meant by "internal" and "external": "Neither of the alternatives ... is true without qualification or in a valuable sense ... the world consists of

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16. STD, vol I. Bk. II, Ch. IV, p. 245.

things in their relations. Since this is the notion which is most obviously denied by the alleged externality of relations (let us call it the crude externality of relations), we may reject crude externality..." 17 The question, in any case, ceases to be of great importance.

(iv) Substance.

A. refuses to regard substance as an outworn notion. He claims that the revolt against<sup>ic</sup> is led by a misapprehension. If substance meant some basis of the coherence of things, then it would have to be rejected, because there is no such basis in experience. But "if it means the actual coherency among events which we know as a thing, you may expel it if you choose, 'tamen usque recurret'" 18 What substance really means, therefore, is that in the spatio-temporal world of things there are groupings of characters which retain their patterns in the shifts and changes of process. "We cannot do with less, and we do not want more. Such a category is historical both because it is verifiable in fact, and because it is itself, as all categories must be, a moving pattern of things, caught up in the eternal unrest. Assigned to the mind, it is turned into a mystery.." 19

Thus, substance (and other categories as well) are patterns found in things. "We do not feel our mind to be a substance, but our experience of our own coherence of various processes is how we know substance in a glaring instance. Substance and causality and continuity are not notions drawn from the void of our invention and found to be applicable or not to the world of things, but got from the world of things and most easily from ourselves." 20

Again in STD, he tries to show what substance is in terms of Space-Time, and I should like to quote the following passages to

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17. Ibid., p. 251.

18. HT, p. 14.

19. HT, p. 14.

20. HT, p. 23.

indicate how he proposes to do this:- He explains that "All existents, being complexes of space-time are substances, because any portion of Space is temporal or is in the theatre of succession ... In other words, spaces and durations are not themselves substances as if substance were a notion anterior to them and applied to them; but because Space-Time is what it is, and every space is a duration and every duration an extension in space, substance is a determination of all things which occupy Space and Time ..... any existent is a substance in this account of the matter." A thing or complex substance is "contour of space (i.e. a volume with a contour) within which take place the motions correlated to the qualities of the thing; and the complex substance or thing is the persistence in time of this spatial contour with its defining motions.... Within the contour the qualities are grouped together according to the law of the construction of the substance ... As Time moves on the substance may change in its characters or in the relation of them one to the other but always within the limits set by the law of its construction." <sup>21</sup> There is much more to be said about substance, but we have sufficiently indicated the "historical" elements in the category, and that is all we need here.

#### (v) Causality.

I consider A.'s treatment of causality to be the most important thing in his treatment of the categories, because it lies at the back of his whole method of philosophy, through its implications for necessity of fact, and illustrates admirably how far the "historical" method of philosophy (i.e., the philosophy that bears in mind the "historicity of things") takes him.

Atomic physics claims (or rather claimed in A.'s day) to have shattered the notion of "cause". But ordinary physics had already shattered the notion that the causal law was fixed and universal in its nature; it was recognized to be a generality rather

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21. STD, vol. I, Bk. II, Ch. VI, pp. 269-270.

than a law in the strict sense, and the notions of necessity and of force had been demolished by Hume. But A. thinks that Hume went too far and left the world in an atomic chaos; he betrayed his zeal in his break-down over volition, for he argued that there was nothing in the passage from a purpose to its execution by the bodily limbs to indicate the compulsion of necessity. A.'s reply to this (a reply which is for him the foundation of his own view of causality) is "Nor is there; but he forgot that we have direct experience of the passage, and it is this transition which is all that causality in this case means. The lesson to be learnt from mental causality, the simplest and most obvious opportunity to become acquainted with it, is that between events there is an intimacy of connexion, and that what the enquirer into causal connexion does is to establish this intimacy of connexion, by excluding the less intimate connexions. Perhaps the notion so understood is poor and thin and abstract. But what matters so long as it is real? There is a great partnership in which events and groups of them exist; but only certain of the partners deal directly with each other, and the one is called cause and the other effect." <sup>22</sup> Thus as we saw in the previous chapter already, the "necessary" is just a more intimate branch of contingent relations. Hume had denied "necessity" altogether; A. recognised that it was there, but it was only there as actual connection, not as compulsion in the connection.

Of course, this refutation of Hume turns on the distinction between "enjoyment" and "contemplation". For when we look at contemplated objects only, then causality and necessity seem to be undiscoverable except as uniform sequence, and so far Hume would seem to be right. But when we turn to our own minds in the experience of willing, then, as we saw in A.'s refutation of Hume's argument, we find continuity in succession and the outcome of the final process from its antecedent. This is the enjoyment of what we afterwards call power or necessity. "When we return with this experience to

external causality, we can now more easily discover in contemplated events the same features of continuity in definite order of succession, the continuous sequence of the falling of the chimney on the blowing of the wind." <sup>23</sup> Thus a certain enjoyed experience enables us the more easily to discover in external things a character which we call physical causality, and we can then go back and call that enjoyed experience causality also. And "it is notorious that we do thus use our internal and external experience to reinforce and elucidate each other. Consequently, if we have made an imperfect or erroneous analysis of the external relation, we transfer this error to our minds. Hume's error has been pointed out, when he criticised the doctrine of Locke that we most easily experience causality or power by observing the action of our wills either upon our bodies or the course of our ideas. He supposed that because we do not know the movements in our nerves which intermediate between our wills and our acts, we cannot therefore be aware of causality, overlooking this very experience of internal process which Locke had tried most imperfectly to describe. Hume looked for a contemplated object, where his attention had been directed to an enjoyment; and consequently he could find in mental action only the same sequence as he found in contemplated objects." <sup>24</sup>

And if we again express this category in terms of Space-Time, then we see that causation is the "continuity of existents within continuous Space-Time as subsisting between substances, which are themselves motions or groups of motions." <sup>25</sup>

Causality is nothing less than this fundamental relation between substance; but it is also nothing more. We can find no words to describe something so elementary as this primitive crude relation except we borrow from particular instances of it such as are implied by "transformation" or "passing into" or other such language. <sup>26</sup> Critics have diverted attention from the nature of causality itself

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23 & 24. "The Method of Metaphysics; and the Categories", op. cit. pp. 12-3.

25. STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. IV B, p. 284.

26. STD, vol I, Bk. II, Ch. VI B, p. 281.

to the nature of the conditions under which we can succeed in discovering causal laws; there is no event which is repeated, and the conception of causality which is nothing but the repetition of a pair of events would indeed be useless. The truth is that without repetition we should not discover the laws, and that at best owing to the great complexity of things and the great distance of actual repetition from mere repetition, we can only hope for approximations to certainty. <sup>27</sup>

Thus there is no reason to suppose that Atomic Physics has shattered the notion of cause, according to A., because all that we mean by cause is an actual intimacy of connection, and it is difficult to see how this conception could be dispensed with. Part of the business of science in its search for causes is to discover what precise causes are connected with what precise effects. "The task may be one of infinite difficulty and may at best lead only to probably<sup>e</sup> propositions. The rules of the logic of discovery are rules of procedure in this quest. Where the causal connexion can be established, it is done by an elaborate machinery of negative instances, by which the cause is narrowed down so as to contain only so much as is relevant to the effect." <sup>28</sup>

We may here take leave of the categories. To recapitulate, they are the pervasive features of the experienced world; everything exhibits categorial features. "To the question whether there are privileged or "a priori" parts of experience, the answer therefore is that there are. To the question whether these privileged elements are due to the mind... the answer is that they are not. On the contrary the categories enter into mind as they enter into the constitution of everything else... To the question whether the "a priori" characters of the world are derived in some manner from experience of things or are primordial and ultimate, the answer is primordial; they do not come into being otherwise than as all things

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27. Ibid. p. 294.

28. Ibid. pp. 288-9.

come into being and because things come into being. All things come into being endowed with the categories and with all of them. They are the determinations of all things which arise within Space-Time, which is the matrix of things, "the nurse of becoming". <sup>29</sup>

(vi) Comment

The weakness of A.'s treatment of the categories lies, it seems to me, in his attempted expression of them in terms of Space-Time. It must be admitted that he does this fairly well (I am talking here of the categories about which I have spoken in the previous pages). But nevertheless, if we cannot accept the idea of a matrix of Space-Time, then much of A.'s ingenuity has been wasted.

But leaving this aside, his position as to universals is clear if a little too sweeping, when he argues that universals are only possible in a uniformity of Space-Time. If this last assertion would be true, then the rejection of the matrix Space-Time might carry with it the collapse of all A.'s position on universals, (assuming it to be correct that we cannot really talk of a uniformity of Space and Time on the relational view, where Space and Time are merely relations between things); but I do not think that it is true, and so A.'s view of universals need not completely be rejected. In fact, if we subtract the notion of a matrix of Space-Time and the necessity of a uniformity of Space-Time, I think we will find that A.'s position has much in common with that of Whitehead.

I think that the same remarks can be said of his view of relation. I am not convinced that a relation in Space and Time must itself be made of Space and Time; this theory does not conform with ordinary common usage. It is possible but not likely.

And as regards causality, I think A. has taken Hume too seriously. If we look at the matter squarely, we will see that all that Hume has shown is that it is difficult to define the dominant characteristic of causality; he showed that causal necessity was

of a type that did not conform with any such necessity as physical compulsion, and he therefore rejected it. A. admits that the usual view of causal necessity does not conform with any such necessity as this, but asserts that that only means that the usual view of causal necessity must be given up. Causal necessity must therefore mean merely a more intimate type of contingent relation. But surely we may urge, it is obvious that the fact that we are unable to define our usual view of causal necessity in other terms need not mean that there is no such thing in our experience; on the contrary it may simply mean that causal necessity is one of its kind, a fact to be accepted with "natural piety"; in which case both Hume and A. would be wrong.

We have now come to the end of PART ONE of the thesis. In the past pages, I have attempted to give a little sketch of some of the main points in the metaphysical system of Samuel Alexander, in order to illustrate what form the emphasis on process and on the actual (which constitute those characteristics the possession of which makes a thing "historical") takes in his thought. To sum up, to recognise the "historicity of things" is to "take Time seriously" in our description of the universe, and this has two consequences:-

(a) emphasis must be laid on process as opposed to the stationary, and

(b) emphasis must be laid on the actual or concrete, as opposed to the necessary.

(a) If emphasis must be laid on process, then "eternity" cannot mean timelessness, but must indicate things free from the lapse of time, namely the categories, which are brute facts to be accepted with "natural piety"; the idea of a Creator outside the world must be abandoned, and the world recognised as self-creative, and God must be regarded as emerging with the world; novelty becomes the essence of the world of things, and it is uniformity that calls for explanation; there is an emergence of novel characters in things; freedom is our consciousness that we choose and of what we are



choosing; determinism is a theory about the nature of the actual process that has the evidence on its side; finally, that determinism would not mean predictability in a world where new qualities emerge.

(b) If emphasis must be laid on the actual, then the method of philosophy must be empirical and concrete; the necessary becomes merely a special part of the contingent; the categories must be sought in the actual, in the pervasive features of actual things; "laws of nature" become "compendious descriptions" but with a basis in the actual - they are more than arbitrary generalizations but less than independent realities; substance becomes a pattern found in things - it means actual coherency; relation is the verifiable experience that events in experience are, in experience, linked up with one another, and experienced so; causality becomes merely a more intimate type of actual contingency. 30

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30. Besides this central theme, HT contains the following subsidiary themes, upon some of which I have not touched in any detail in my sketch:-

1. The categories as applied to electrons.
2. The transferences of characters, valid and invalid, from one part of reality to another, e.g., organism or holism, enjoyment, 'value' or the satisfaction of desire, and the appealing to our experience of ourselves for the confirmation of the categories.
3. In the introduction, he shows the sources of this new attitude to history due to "taking Time seriously".
4. In the concluding section, he generalizes about "history" as the brute givenness in things, and "mathematics" as the artificial construction built on this givenness.

## PART TWO.

## CHAPTER VI : "HUMAN HISTORY".

(1) The One Process and Human History.

The whole of the previous part of this thesis has been an elucidation of the conception that the total reality, the world and everything in it, is a historical process, and we explained that it was a historical reality both because it was a process (Motion was primary; qualities emerged in it; its essence was "the advance into novelty") and because it was concrete or actual (it was given as a whole in intuition; its qualities were to be accepted with "natural piety"; and there was no must (or fact or logic) or might about it.) We must now ask ourselves the question, given that the totality of things is historical in the sense that it is an actual process, <sup>are</sup> what/we to say, firstly, about human history (which I have called the human historical reality), and, secondly, about the science of history (which I have called History)? We shall be concerned to answer these questions in this chapter and the next.

The first problem we must consider is this: what is the relation between the one process (the total reality as historical) and the human historical reality? Is the human historical reality merely a part of the one process?

It is very difficult to answer this apparently simple question on the basis of A.'s own statements. We must remember that from the point of view of the one process, the history of things is that process by which, at certain points, "finites assume new empirical qualities which are distinctive of levels of existence, primary qualities, matter, secondary qualities, life, mind ... The highest of these empirical qualities is mind or consciousness" <sup>1</sup>, and there is a nisus towards the emergence of still higher qualities.

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1. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch.X, p. 335

Is the human historical reality, therefore, merely the process by which deity and the higher qualities proceed from the mind? In other words, is the human historical reality merely a continuation of "natural history"? The answer seems to be that at any rate, it is not merely a part. What this means we shall now proceed to explain.

There is no doubt that A. considers human history a part of the one process in a certain sense. He concludes a passage on the ubiquity of Natural Selection in the world of things with the comment "If this were so, the history of life and mind, and we may add societies, would not be so isolated a feature of things as it seems" <sup>2</sup> And there is an undercurrent of suggestion in HT that the reason why we can "sit at the feet of History" is that human history is just a later appearance of something that occurs throughout things, that is, it is a continuation of natural process. <sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact R.G. Collingwood thinks that the merit of A. and of Whitehead is to have bridged the gap between "history" and "nature"; and A. himself admits that Darwinism (from which he confesses to have learnt much) is "an immense historical comprehension", "a great historical synthesis", in addition to offering in the notion of Natural Selection "a physical law regulating the historical procession". <sup>4</sup>

(ii) Moral Progress.

But A. makes it quite clear that the subject-matter of History (proper) is not the whole process of things, but merely the process of human things: that is why we have called it the human historical reality. When Historians speak about non-human process, they do so only in order to bring out aspects of human history; properly, History deals with conduct, and conduct is "not mere physical action, but action which comes from a mind". <sup>5</sup>

2. STD, vol II, Bk. III, Ch. II B, p. 55.

3. Cf for example "We cannot tell perhaps what the electron feels like to itself. For that we should have to be an electron, and we cannot remember our babyhood." HT, p. 21.

4. Beauty, p. 202.

5. Beauty, p. 137.

But conduct in this sense implies an order or plan of conduct, and this is what A. calls a 'moral ideal'. Thus A. comes to stress the close connection between morals and the human historical reality. According to him, "the course of morality will be found to represent the struggle between moral ideals, and the phenomena of the maintenance and growth of morality offers parallels to the history of natural forms."<sup>6</sup> A. strongly believes in a growth of morality, a "moral progress"<sup>7</sup>; it is possible to maintain that morality constantly advances, but claim that there is yet an ultimate ideal to which all our temporary standards are only approximations, though we may indeed never actually attain it. And if such an ideal is a valid conception, we can contemplate a theoretical stage at which process will cease altogether, when the human end has been completely secured. But A. goes still further, and asserts a perpetual impermanence in morality; according to him, the 'best' is not a fixed terminus ad quem beyond which there is no further progress. On the contrary he maintains that "the good is always ultimate, but that owing to the development of human nature, it is always in motion. There can therefore be no contrast of a 'good' and a 'best', but only of a 'good' and a 'better'." <sup>8</sup>

6. "Moral Order and Progress; An Analysis of Ethical Conceptions" by S. Alexander, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., (1st ed. 1889; 4th ed. 3rd impression 1906), p. 262. To be hereafter referred to as MOP; all page references are to the 4th ed., 3rd impression, 1906.
7. He says, "Probably few would be found at the present day to maintain that the moral law is unprogressive, and has been eternally the same in the obvious sense of those words. It is a part of the creed of the evolutionist to regard moral conduct as in the process of evolution from lower to higher, from less, to more definite. Even intuitionism, the most difficult of all theories to reconcile with actual historical growth, is compelled to accept the development of moral ideas as a fact, while denying the incompatibility of the fact with its theory." MOP, p. 264.
8. MOP, pp. 265-6. I am not sure whether A. maintains this doctrine in all its details in his later years. Laird tells us that already "by 1912 A. had altered his views so considerably that he wanted the book to die, and he said so in what may be called an official letter. He retained that attitude ... This verdict, on the whole would seem to be just ... A. remained an evolutionist in ethics to his last sagacious breath ... A.'s views about progress, about the place of ethics in a social bioplasm, about the sufficiency of Natural Selection, about a moving equilibrium as the arbiter of all value, could not satisfy his later self ... in the form in which he stated them in his first book." (Memoir pp. 20-1). I cannot myself see any marked change (at any rate as regards "moral progress") between A.'s early and late views; still, a Literary Executor's word must be accepted as law. But at the end of his discussion of

(111) Moral Progress and Nisus.

The question now arises, "how does the view of moral progress fit in with A.'s view of the emergence of higher qualities?" This question merely repeats in different words the question we asked before (whether human history is a part of the 'history of things'), but it states the issue more clearly. In order to answer the present question, we must examine more closely the notion of nisus. It will be remembered that "nisus" is a name for that tendency of Space-Time which causes it to sweep on to form ever new qualities. Thus it may be said that the history of Space-Time is the history of the nisus. And A. maintains that the dynamic of this history is the Darwinian notion of Natural Selection: 9 The "nisus" therefore progresses by 'the survival of the fittest'.

The connection between the nisus and moral progress may be brought out by showing the connection between Goodness and Natural Selection. A. rejects the charge that Darwinism is inimical to value; on the contrary, "it is in fact the history of how values come into existence in the world of life .... the doctrine ... not how types are generated, but how they come to have value ... For like our human values, value in the organism belongs not to the organism in itself, but in relation to the conditions of life, and accordingly a type which can persist under certain conditions may be unsuited to different circumstances ... The doctrine of natural selection gives us thus the natural history of values in the world of life, and we now see that it supplies equally that history in the world of mind."<sup>10</sup> The values strictly so-called (Beauty, Goodness, and Truth) are thus but the highest instance we know of a feature of things which extends over a much wider range. Goodness may thus be said to be the character of the permanent, the successful type which succeeds. And we may then say that "the universe works in experience so as to secure the survival of good, or rather, that which survives in the

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8. (Contd. from previous page) Ethics in STD (vol II, Bk. III, Ch. IX, p. 286 note) A. says "for the general conception of morality used in this section compare MOP". (emphasis in the last sentence is my own.)

9. Cf especially STD, vol II, Bk. III, Ch. II B, pp. 54-5.

10. STD, vol II, Bk. III, Ch. IX F, pp. 309-10.

long run in the contest establishes its value thereby and is good." 11

Thus morals must be treated as one part of a comprehensive view of the universe, in which a steady development may be observed from the lowest to the highest phenomena, and a development which follows the law of the survival of the fittest. Moral progress is thus explained by a struggle between ideals, in which the good ideal is victorious. Starting from a single ideal, the struggle of ideals leads to the development of many new ideals which rank together and and co-exist with lower ideals akin to stages though which the former have historically passed. By following the analogy of organic development, we can obtain a description of what seems to be the course of moral progress: "If we consider the history of animal development, we find that it issues in the end in the production of an animal species, namely, man himself, which either exterminates the other species or turns them to its own uses for food and service. To the extinction of the old species by a new one corresponds in the region of morality, not the destruction of those who have different institutions, but the growth of an ideal of life which shall supplant their former ideals, and shall therefore comprehend those different societies of mankind under one comprehensive law; and that not merely in the sense that every society should have a similar code, but that they should form one great society under one single code." 12

This was A.'s early opinion, when he had not yet conceived of the emergency of deity. But what happens to moral progress, on A.'s later view, when deity emerges? A. replies that "...If we apply to the new quality of deity what we learn from the succession of lower empirical qualities, we conclude by analogy that the process by which good overcomes evil in the region of the mind is one of the conditions for the emergence of deity; so far, that is, as human endeavour contributes to the generation of this quality.

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11. Ibid, Bk IV, Ch. III, p. 413.

12. MOP, p. 389.

Thus goodness or good will is the material on which deity is built, and deity is in the line of goodness, not of evil." 13

"If we consider deity in its relation to its immediately lower level of mental existence, we shall think of it as equivalent to some form of goodness (that is, of permanent mental, not necessarily human life) and sustained by other kinds of mental process, just as mind is equivalent to certain vital processes and is sustained by others. Thus the maintenance of the life of deity means also the death or discarding of certain parts of its basis, that is, certain forms of mental life." 14

But this is ambiguous. It could mean either that (i) moral progress stopped when deity emerged, in which case it would seem that man develops morally until the emergence of a race of angels, 15 after which he presumably dies off or stops progressing morally; or (ii) that moral progress continues but loses its importance in the scheme of things, much in the same way as an ape's values presumably progress, even after the emergence of man and mind. There might then be something on the level of deity to correspond with "moral progress", what one might call a "deistical progress". 16

A. does not, so far as I know, anywhere make the position clear. But in any case, we could tentatively sum up our discussion of the relations between "moral progress" and "deity", and between the one process and historical process, by saying that human history is indeed a part of the one process: but the Historian is concerned with it not as a part of that process, but as exhibiting moral growth. Humanity may be wiped out with the emergence of deity, or moral progress may stop.

But even if moral progress (or human history) does not end with the emergence of deity, in any case, a correspondingly higher type of value emerges and moral progress loses its importance.

13. STD, Vol. II, Bk. IV, Ch. III, pp. 413-4

14. Ibid., p. 415.

15. But not a race of "supermen"; Cf. Ibid., pp. 418-9.

16. Cf. however, Ibid., p. 416.

Human history is therefore a part of the history of things, in one sense, but in another sense, as studied by the Historian, it is not part of the history of things (at any rate, not studied as such). This is the interpretation of A.'s view of the relation between human history and the "history" of things that I offer; but I must stress that it is merely an interpretation, because A. is nowhere explicit on the point.

(iv) The Reality of Past and Future Stages.

The question is sometimes asked: in what sense are past and future time real? A. thinks that this difficulty is only apparent, and arises from taking reality as synonymous with present or actual existence; but, objects A., past time "does not exist now, but it did exist then, and its reality is to have existed then".<sup>17</sup> The same applies to future time. The objection thus fails to take Time seriously.

A. gives the same type of answer when replying to the objection that acts done according to an older moral code are not really good. He replies that "to be good is to be good, and though the goodness of one age may be inferior to the goodness of another age, and some part of goodness may lapse into evil, what is good once, like what is truth, remains good or true for the circumstances under which it was good or true."<sup>18</sup>

(v) The Shape of History.

It is commonly thought that the main job of a "philosophy of history" is to describe the "shape" of human history: "does Human history progress in a straight line?", "are there cycles in history?", and such kindred questions; these are thought by some to be the most important decisions the philosopher of human history

17. STD, vol. I, Bk. I, Ch. II, p. 71; cf also STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. V, p. 117.

18. STD, Vol. II, Vb. III, Ch. IX C, p. 282; cf also MOP, p. 292. But "though goodness does not differ in degree, it may differ in largeness or greatness ..... Aristotle's example was the little vase which a generous man would give to a child, while he would give a more splendid gift to an older person ...", Beauty, p. 261.



can make. Whether this common belief is true we leave for later discussion to decide. But A. too suggests that human history has a determinate shape.

He rejects the idea of a cycle in human history; "history, like morality never repeats itself." 19 Neither is the main course of progress linear, or in one continuous direction. But, on the other hand, "the comparison of history to a spiral applies to moral ideals as well as it does to all human development." 20 Human history constantly seems to revert to a former type; but the reversion is only apparent. The new type resembles the old, but it stands at a higher level; it runs a course parallel to the line of development of the former type, but it always preserves its essential differences. "the stream of history, like the St. Gothard tunnel, performs the seemingly impossible feat of not merely remounting to the region whence it began, but to one vertically above." 21

It is possible that A. considers the shape of the "history of things" as spiral too. A note in his first work suggests that the phenomenon of spiral cycles occurs in the organic world. 22 But A. does not develop this line of thought anywhere, and the only thing that can safely be said is that he holds that the history of the world is not cyclical.

The total reality as historical is one process, or as A. puts it, time is one-dimensional. Dream-time and story-time too fall within this one process; however, like universals, they have no determinate date. Nor can it be argued that since Time is infinite every type of existence must have existed in the past. This argument involves a mistake about infinity: "the infinite series of negative numbers which ends at -1 does not include the numbers 0 and 1..." 23. Again, the argument conceives of Time as given all at once as if it were a line. 24

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19. MOP, p. 215.

20. MOP, p. 385.

21. MOP, p. 385. A. gives examples from the history of philosophy, and the history of political ideas.

22. MOP, p. 386.

22 & 24. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Supplementary Note to Ch. X, p. 337.

The same reality of Time which has evolved the various forms of finite existence leaves room for still higher births. Thus "... there is no ground for the doctrine of cyclical periods of the world's history, a cataclysm followed by a fresh beginning, such as are supposed by many philosophies, from Heraclitus and Zarathustra and the Stoics down to Nietzsche. On the contrary, the notion of a fresh beginning vaguely assumes the finitude of Time, which in reality has no beginning, or begins at each moment indifferently. Real Time hints, by analogy with the past, at the movement towards higher empirical qualities of existence." 25

(vi) New Qualities in Human History.

In the same way as there occurs in the one process the emergence of new qualities, so in human history there is a corresponding growth of new levels in human conduct; but the growth in human history is so continuous that the moments where distinct changes seem to occur are only those where the modifications have so accumulated as to become distinct or very marked. However, in spite of this close continuity, moral history seems to be perpetually making fresh starts as mankind, bending under the burden of their inequalities, relieve themselves by their readjustment which introduces simplicity and order. 26

But though morality grows by certain and intelligible laws, the development depends on the creation of new sentiments which cannot be forecast in detail. For example "though all the conditions which produced the Christian morality were present, and determined it with the accuracy of natural law, who could have predicted the "little more" germinating in the minds of men, which, when it came to light, was to change the face of society? Just as, according to the famous saying, you cannot know a hero till he appears, neither can a moral development be known, until by the progress of character it is already accomplished." 27

25. Ibid., p. 338. It should in addition be mentioned that in MOP, A. conceived the growth of morality to be a growth in the comprehensiveness of the moral ideal. (MOP, p. 389; cf also STD, vol. II, Bk, III, Ch. IX C, p. 282). This view seems to have much in common with Smuts' view of Holism in politics.

When we discussed the emergence of qualities, we saw similarly that we could not predict a new quality until we saw one. The reason both in the emergence of qualities and in the change of morality is the same: both the total reality and human history are historical and therefore growing things. Thus the deeper justification for the unpredictability of moral development is that "human nature is a growing thing, and with the lapse of time may throw up new characters which can only be known to him who experiences them." 28

Thus to an observer in France in the eighteenth century it might have been plain that some revolution and reconstruction was inevitable. He might, with sufficient knowledge have calculated it in the mechanical and physiological terms of the actors; but he could not predict that these movements meant for the actors the new idea of democratic freedom.

Another respect in which the different levels in the "history of things" (that is, the different qualities) and the different levels in the development of morality resemble each other, is that in both the new level is distinctive. Thus we must be careful in extending the characters of a later level to an earlier level or vice-versa, not to take a thing either for more than it is worth, or to take a thing for less than it is worth. In HT, A. says that "we inevitably think of the earlier in the familiar terms of the later; and this is legitimate provided the later is understood not in its surface character but in its essentials" 29; and he gives as an example of such a legitimate extension, the application of causality and freedom to electrons. An example of an illegitimate extension of this sort, this time, in human history, is that of Alexander the Great and Caesar, who are held up nowadays as monsters of crime for shedding the blood

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26. (Contd. from previous page) MOP, p. 388.

27. (Contd. from previous page) MOP, p. 269.

28. STD, vol. II, Bk. III, Ch. X, pp. 324-5.

29. HT, p. 16.

of innocent people. According to A., "A judgement of this kind ... is but a reading of a present ideal into a past time, and is an outrage upon the spirit of history. Judged by the standard of their own times both men were not simply great, but performed the duty of their positions." 30

Again, we may not extend characters of a higher experience in the form in which we know them to a lower order of existence, except on sufficient evidence. "This," claims A., "is the obvious conclusion from the spirit of history which warns us to consider each stage of history for itself: not, for instance, in spite of the same name, to identify the democracy of Athens based upon slave labour with the democracy of free men established in 1789..." 31 A. regards it as a valid transference, however, to transfer certain characteristics of the mind - its organic character or tendency to enter into wholes (holism), and its "subjective pole" or "enjoyment". Another valid transference is the attribution of value (i.e., the satisfaction of certain desires) to all existences. 32

(vii) Human History and Great Men.

One of the perennial problems for an evolutionary philosophy is that of the influence of great men. 33 Are they the creators of history and the people merely clay in their hands, or are great men themselves merely necessary products of their generation?

If we remember A.'s treatment of freedom, we shall immediately see that A. accepts the second alternative: "the history of morality is a succession of beneficent and adorable illusions which for men are truths" 34. We are bound by our environments, and chiefly, by our characters, our selves: "morality ... is

30. MOP, p. 377, cf also MOP, p. 369.

31. HT, p. 19.

32. A. not only holds this distinctiveness (and so valid and invalid transferences) to be a point of resemblance between the total reality and human history, but to be a lesson which philosophy can learn from History. In what sense (if any) this is true, we shall see later on.

33. Cf for example the first part of Achad Ha'am's essay on "Moses" in his "Al Perashat Derachim".

properly described as an adjustment of man to his environment, and the rules of morality are contrivances which secure the persistence of the society." 35 Therefore, "a hero," or great man, "is not a hero to himself; he does what society speaking through his person requires of him. But his action, whether from the larger scope offered to him, or from his own greater gifts of character, is larger or more splendid." 36

Historical and moral greatness seem to be independent of one another, and the fact that a historically great man may be thought immoral (e.g., Napoleon or Bismarck) seems to contradict the assertion that society acts through the great man. But A. replies "great men have not been determinative of the course of things by their evil .... but insofar as their work was the vehicle of larger forces ..... it is the goodness of great men which counts in the end and not their badness." 37

(viii) Comments.

(1) We have already pointed out in the first chapter that A.'s argument identifies process and development; we remarked that there that we could see no reason for this identification. Now A. would probably meet this objection by saying that it is foolish to ask for reasons; it is a fact that process is development, and that is all that need be said about the matter. And it is certainly an undeniable fact that some processes are developments, and some developments in human history are moral progresses. But is it true that all processes are developments and all developments in human history moral progresses? Is the fact supposed to be an empirical generalisation or an "a priori" assertion?

But the distinction between "a priori" or necessary propositions, and empirical generalizations falls away on A.'s view. What matters is actual fact. Thus, he says that to assert that all developments in human history are not moral progresses is "to find some other standard of advance than in the actual movement which

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34. (Contd. from previous page) MOP, p. 410.

35. Beauty, pp. 262-3.

36. Beauty, pp. 261-2.

has taken place, to put an "a priori" conception of development in place of the facts. Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht. History is itself the bar<sup>at</sup> which institutions are to be judged." 38 And the same sort of defence seems applicable also for the assertion that all processes are developments.

This defence, then, assumes A.'s rejection of necessity of fact (and so the depreciation of necessity of logic.) We have already (in chapter four) denied that there is any need to reject necessity in this way. And if this is so, then the distinction between empirical generalizations and necessary propositions would seem to come into force again. But if it comes into force again, then A.'s assertion of the fact that all process is development and all development in human history is moral progress, becomes an empirical generalization, and so merely more or less probable.

(2) In any case, contrary to A.'s argument, we do in normal usage distinguish between "is" and "ought". Hence A. is unjustified in rejecting a standard of advance other than actual movement as "a priori" or arbitrary. A. thinks that to separate development in human history and progress, is to judge it to be a progress or the reverse according as it falls in with our own peculiar likings. 39 But this is a bare unjustified assertion on A.'s part.

(3) A.'s treatment of goodness must suffer from his treatment of freedom. If at every stage in moral progress we can look back and say that "the history of morality is a succession of beneficent and adorable illusions which for men are truths", then surely there is no such thing as goodness: all goodness must be illusory?

(4) Finally, I think that the idea of a shape of human history is a mistake. Is not this just a type of linear thinking? Why should there not be more than one line of advance in both the "history of things" and human history? But if this is so, then we cannot strictly speak of one process as being fundamental, and we then have (more reasonably it seems to me) only a multitude of criss-crossing processes, some progressing and developing, others retrogressing. The notion of a one process (whether of human history, or of things) then remains merely a helpful abstraction.

(Notes continued from previous page)

37. Beauty, p. 264.

38. MOP, pp. 369-70.

39. MOP, p. 382.

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CHAPTER SEVEN : "HISTORY".(1) Art and Science.

In the last chapter we tried to indicate what consequences the idea of the totality of things as historical has for the human historical reality. We shall now attempt to show the bearing of this metaphysical theory on the science of history (which we shall call for short "History"). Our task will be considerably easier here than in the last chapter, because A. makes a definite and detailed statement of his conception of History in his last book, "Beauty, and other forms of value".<sup>1</sup>

HT ends off with the paradox that "History can claim to be mistress of science....", but on the other hand "It must be remembered, however, of course, that historical science is but one of the sciences which arise from the facts and happenings of the world."<sup>2</sup> It is plain, therefore, that in order to understand History, we must understand the nature of the sciences and their relations to the facts and happenings of the world.

We start by examining the distinction between art and science. This distinction can be seen clearest if we compare fine art and science. Now the pursuit of Beauty (that is, "fine art") is, according to A., the satisfaction of the impulse to material constructiveness when that impulse is diverted from practice and treats the materials of its construction for their own sake, this modification of the impulse being due to the admixture, with the sensuous material, of elements, embodied in the form of the work of art, which are initiated by the mind itself. These elements life up the sensuous materials given for the artist to work upon into the condition of being contemplated for themselves.

But in the pursuit of Truth, which is science, the impulse leading to the discovery of Truth is that of curiosity when

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1. Pp. 197-201.

2. HT, p. 25.



it is diverted from practical ends, and this direction of the practical impulse upon the objects of curiosity for their own sake occurs when such an animal as man, having arrived at the stage of ideas, applies them to the data presented by sensible experience; these data partly supplement and partly contradict one another. "With the entry of ideas and comparison, conflicts and corroborations in experience become objects of contemplation for their own sakes.....The Greeks said that philosophy began with wonder, but wonder is a somewhat later stage in the process which leads to knowledge. Science arises from disappointment, hesitation and doubt." 3

Now this tendency of the mind to get rid of conflict in the data of its experiences, and to connect them where they reinforce one another, produces contemplation of objects for their own sake, and not merely satisfaction of practical curiosity. This leads on, therefore, to the building<sup>up</sup> of science.

Thus the initial impulses in both fine art and science are deflections from practice; but in fine art the subject interferes with its object, the materials, by introducing features 'foreign' to that material, whereas in science, the object about which the mind satisfies its curiosity, is the actual world given to it without any admixture from the personality - any such interference would be distortion. However, the mind does enter into science, but it enters instrumentally, and not, as in fine art, constitutively. "Truth ... is that which satisfies, and satisfies objectively, the impulse of curiosity when that impulse has become contemplative. It can only be fitly described by reference to the mind which it satisfies. It is therefore a work of art, though not of fine art. For knowledge is not the actual world of things, but that world as used to satisfy the impulse to science. The objects of the actual world recur in science, but held in relation to the mind." 4

But mind, though vital to truth, is controlled by reality;

3. Beauty, pp. 192-3

4. Ibid., pp. 194-5. The underlining is my own.

and so, science is a faithful representation of reality within the limits set by the art of science. "In fine art, mind and material have joint control, and if there is a question of higher rank, it belongs perhaps to the mind. But in science, the mind humbles itself to the lordship of reality ....The attainment of the impersonality of science, in which mind leaves itself out from the product while it maintains possession of it, does not, however, mean passivity of the mind, as if the mind were a mere mirror to nature. On the contrary, the treatment of the world by the mind so as to leave out its own personality is so far from passivity that it involves the highest exercise of personality." 5

(11) History and the Sciences.

We have seen that science is an art which bases itself in a peculiar way upon the actual process of the totality of things. What therefore is the relation of the various special sciences to this actual process and to one another? More particularly, we wish to know where History is classified among the sciences, and what is its relation to the actual process?

A. thinks that the sciences form a hierarchy in respect of the strength of their attachment to the actual. There are thus degrees of artificiality among the sciences. And the fact that science is artificial is generally recognised; but we are at the same time, according to A., tending to forget the element of control by reality. He insists, however, that no science is a pure construction by the mind. It is merely a question of the degree of attachment to the actual; and even the most artificial of sciences is based, however obscurely, on the actual.

The hierarchy of the sciences in respect of their attachment to the actual, A. conceives to be as follows:- starting with the science in which the attachment to the actual is greatest, namely, History, we get, in ascending order, the biological sciences, Chemistry, Physics, and finally, where the attachment to the actual

At least, we get the science of Mathematics.

A. stresses that "in pointing out how science grows away from history through artifice and the increasing share of the mind in its creations, I am intending no depreciation of history as such. It will, in fact, be one of my main contentions that science, even at its acme in physics and mathematics, never frees itself completely of history, and, artificial as it is, this dependence on history prevents it from being artistic." <sup>6</sup>

We shall discuss History as a science more fully in the following section, and so let us proceed here, first of all, to say a few words about the other sciences.

The biological sciences are more like History and less like Mathematics, and so there is less artifice in them than in Physics. "Botany and Zoology begin as natural history, and they retain to the end the qualitative character, which increasingly disappears from science to be replaced by the metrical or quantitative character. 'History' or the collection of facts in Biology, as it becomes more methodical and systematic and precise, becomes dignified with the name of morphology." But as these sciences grow and approach to the ideas of Physics, generalization, measurement, and experiment enter, and the sciences become physiological and admit of the statement of laws. Thus Darwinism, as a Biological theory is qualitative; at the same time "it is an immense historical comprehension, and indeed it strikes the note of the historical method in science, which came to be so marked a feature in thought as men's minds swung back from the rationalism of the eighteenth century and from the so-called mechanical philosophy..... Moreover, Darwinism, besides being a great historical synthesis, offered in the notion of natural selection a physical law regulating the historical procession." <sup>7</sup>

Between the Biological sciences and Physics, comes Chemistry, which is especially interesting, according to A., because almost under our eyes it has been changing from a historical to a semi-

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6. Beauty, p. 203.

7. Beauty, p. 202.

physical science. And when we get to Physics, says A., its artificiality is more apparent than its control by a non-mental reality. But still, Physics is not simply the 'put-up' job that Eddington says that it is.

Even in Mathematics, there is still an element of control by reality. There, particularly in Pure Mathematics, we find the mind's freedom at its highest; but even so, the extent of the mind's creativeness is to be qualified. "The products it creates are extensions or generalizations of ideas like integral numbers given to the mind, or arrived at by combinations of such ideas, as, for example, the notion of <sup>five</sup> ~~six~~-dimensional systems..... However complex the thought may be, it is, if not suggested by sense, yet derived from elements suggested in the end by sense, or like integers, given otherwise to mind, not made by it." Arithmetic takes away from these integers, but never completely loses touch with them; this is true even when arithmetic becomes identified with logic, as by Russell, and an integer is treated as a class of classes. "For though a class is a mental conception, and there are no classes in actual reality, yet reality does contain individuals which, though not mental, suffer themselves to be so grouped because they possess the same qualities." <sup>8</sup> Thus even Mathematics is not completely artificial.

Now A. says that History is the most concrete of these sciences: Science "grows out of what used to be called history, as by Bacon, that is, a collection of facts, and is most easily illustrated from what we call history." <sup>9</sup> But how does this square with the assertion that we quoted in Chapter Five that Metaphysics is the most concrete of all the sciences? A., as far as I know, never explains this himself, but I think the answer is fairly clear. History (as the title of the previous chapter indicates) deals with 'human history': it is concerned with human beings and their institutions from the point of view of moral progress. But Meta-

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8. Beauty, pp. 220-1.

9. Beauty, p. 197.

physics, as we have seen, is an inventory of the distinctive characters of the several orders of existence and of their relations to one another, and, especially, a discussion of the pervasive characters of things. Thus its purpose is completely different from that of History, although there are certain similarities between the relation of History to human history, and the relation of Metaphysics to the total reality. Metaphysics is still the most concrete of all the sciences, but it is the synoptic science; of the special sciences, History is the most concrete.

(iii) History as a Science.

We may at this stage object, however, that History is not a "science" at all, in the same sense that Physics and Mathematics are sciences: the latter two bodies of knowledge use "scientific" or inductive methods in the discovery of facts. But can we say that History uses the "scientific" or inductive method?

A. admits that there is some truth in this objection; but, he says, "it is only true in the sense that history is not a physical science, for when it begins to furnish laws of human nature or generalizations, it tends to lose its character of history and become the science of sociology." 10

And, on the contrary, A. maintains, History may correctly be called a science in as much as, like the biological sciences (and indeed, all the sciences), it is controlled by its material. However, in another respect, A. admits, History does resemble fine art rather than science, for it is concerned with individuals and series of individuals, and individualisation, as opposed to generalization, is the distinctive mark of art: "hence the close affinity of history with the drama". 11 But if we compare true History with a historical novel, then we can see the difference. History is in fact "a transitional link between science and fine art, sharing with the one its subjection to things, and with the other its limitation to individual existence." 12

Thus although History is the form of science which is the least developed (in the sense that it is more like literature than the other sciences), it shares, as a science, in the two features, which, according to A., all sciences have in common. Firstly, it shares in the freedom which science owes to the movement of the mind among the facts, organising them so as to make them significant. Secondly, it shares in the restriction forced upon the mind by the facts themselves. And it is the second feature which is specially prominent in History, since History is the most concrete of the sciences.

But the first feature also has its place in History, for, if it is true that knowledge is not the actual world of things itself, but that world as used to satisfy the impulse to science, then it is easy to see that "in order to make science, the mind selects from the world". Moreover, in the work of co-ordinating and unifying the things of the world, it "introduces conceptions of its own, as will be verified at greater length, even going so far as to use conceptions which are at first blush arbitrary, in order to pursue its work, using them instrumentally, and never pretending to put into the world what is not there or is uncongenial to the world." 13

(iv) Scientific History.

But what are the features which make a History "scientific" (or genuine History)? A. implicitly answers this when he examines the differences between History and "journal" or "chronicle". According to him, we see the first approaches to scientific History in our newspapers, which consist of two parts, the bare facts collected as news, and the comments on the facts in the leaders; the latter are reflections upon or interpretations of the news in the light of the policy or principles professed by the editor. But a newspaper fails to be scientific History, firstly, because its principles are practical and concerned with affecting public action, and secondly, because its news and leaders are strung together and

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13. Beauty, p. 195.

14. Beauty, p. 197. (Cf. following page)

not organically connected (although this is less true of such papers as "The Times" and "The Manchester Guardian"). 14

He asserts that we get "scientific" History, as opposed to mere "chronicle", when the ideas which the writer brings to his facts are not purely practical but theoretical: the facts are co-ordinated not so as to serve as the text for policies of practice, but so as to bring out the meaning of the event or period under consideration.

Thus the first feature of "scientific" History is, that

- (a) "the meaning of the facts is gathered by the Historian's mind, using its appropriate ideas - which are suggested by the facts themselves but acquire distinctness as he goes on - because he starts hypotheses as to the significance of his subject, and is helped therein by all kinds of knowledge or imagination that he brings with him from his knowledge of life or from his acquaintance with other periods of history." 15

But we must remember that however gifted the Historian may be in the interpretation of events, he must keep to the facts - he is bound by the material. To arrive at the meaning of the facts, "he must select, and he may illustrate or interpret so as to co-ordinate the facts, to make the essentials stand out and the trifling or inessential data slip out of focus, to get a consistent picture if he can, or so far as he can. But he is a scientific historian only if in organising his material he does not distort." 16

The second feature of a scientific History is this:-

- (b) Along with the work of organising, there goes the process of testing the facts themselves, so as to secure precision.

"This demands in the historian expertness in description, and has led to technical sciences like Palaeography or Chronology ...; and it requires skill in estimating the value of evidence, the skill of the scientific judge.." 17

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15. Beauty, pp. 197-8.

16. Beauty, p. 198. In the process from the chronicle to History, science and art play their part, and various Histories illustrate them in different degrees: "Gardiner's history of the Civil War betrays very little of the artist, but is an admirable example of scientific history....On the other hand, Macaulay is far more of an

Thus the facts which control the Historian are themselves in part the outcome of the effort to create the work itself which embodies them.

(v) Human Motives.

We have, therefore, the element of selectiveness in History just as we have it in all science; but the Historian is more bound by the facts than is the scientist. And History deals with human history; so that the subject-matter of History is human motives.<sup>18</sup> Thus we may sum up A.'s conception of Historical method by saying that the Historian, in order to understand the human motives as embodied in the facts at any particular phase in human history starts out with a hypothesis as to the essential nature of that phase, and this hypothesis helps him to co-ordinate the facts, and is verified or not by the manner in which the facts fit the hypothesis. The hypothesis is originally derived from the facts; probably, (though A. does not say so), what happens is that the Historian starts out with a general impression based on a sketchy preliminary reading on the subject of his work, and then, as the work proceeds, the hypothesis or general impression which helped him to look for the facts, is verified or rejected by new information which comes to hand.

It might seem that in saying that the subject-matter of History is human motives, A. is contradicting what he said in "Moral Order and Progress"; for there he asserted that "History is the palaeontology of moral ideals, preserving for us the institutions which have become obsolete"<sup>19</sup> and this seems to mean that the

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16. (Contd. from previous page.) artist, and sometimes forsakes the duty of the historian to use the freedom of the artist, by onesidedness.... In judging the greatness of a historian both scales have doubtless to be used." Ibid.

17. (Cf previous page). Beauty, p. 199.

18. Beauty, p. 199 (bottom).

19. MOP, p. 354.



subject-matter of History is "moral progress" and not human motives. But there is no real contradiction here; it is only a difference in emphasis. Moral progress, or the change in moral ideals, takes place when people set new ideals before themselves, are moved by new motives. Thus to say that the subject-matter of History is moral progress and to say that it is human motives is to say the same thing in different ways. "Human motives" does not, however, explicitly, involve any idea of progress, and so perhaps A. preferred the expression in 1933 because he was doubtful about the doctrine of "moral progress". (But this possibility is unlikely, in view of the fact that A. again speaks of "moral progress" in "Beauty, and Other Forms of Value".) <sup>20</sup>

When History takes its higher flights and records the life of a whole nation, or compares the history of many nations, or when it traces a department of civilization, or reaches to what A. calls a philosophy of history, <sup>21</sup> then, obviously, it makes more and more use of hypotheses, and is therefore, presumably, more liable to error. But if moral progress is held to be the subject-matter of History, then it would seem that "universal History" (that is, History on a wider scale) should assume more importance. A. however nowhere speaks at any length of this aspect of History. <sup>22</sup>

(vi) Comments.

I believe that there are in general two central problems of a philosophy of History (in the sense of a "theory about History-writing"). In the first place, we must decide what the relation is between History and the arts and sciences; in the second place, we must decide whether, in Bradley's phrase, there are any "Presuppositions of A Critical History", and if there are, we must say what they are and show how we are to justify the Historian's assumption of them.

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20. P. 361.

21. Cf remarks in Introduction to the thesis.

22. The only passage in which he deals at all with universal history, so far as I know, is Beauty, p. 199.

I think that in regard to both these problems, A. has something important to say, and something that we must admit to be true in general even if we cannot agree with every particular of his argument.

In regard to the first question, A. holds that History is a science, <sup>23</sup> but like all sciences, also has elements of art; it is, however, the most concrete of all the special sciences, the least concrete being Mathematics. History deals with human history under the aspect of human motives and moral progress; the totality of things is also historical (here we should part company with A.) and the science which deals with the "history of things" is Biology (that is, Darwinist biology) and, in part, Metaphysics.

As regards the second issue, A. holds that the work of the Historian does involve presuppositions, but these are presuppositions of procedure and not of subject-matter (which is, by definition, human history). The Historian like the scientist (and indeed, like the Philosopher, on A.'s view) proceeds by formulating a hypothesis which he proceeds to verify or reject. There are apparently no such things as "presuppositions" in the form of "criteria" of what are important and what unimportant facts to be recorded or left out; in these matters, our original hypothesis, as amended by the facts, is all that matters. The ethical standards by which we judge an episode should be the standards of that age, but the standards of that age as seen through our present standards. In this sense, I think that A. would agree that we are in a "histrocentric predicament".

And when A. says that the subject-matter of History is human motives, we can agree with him to the extent that this does not involve any such non-rational condition as the Marxist one (according to which the subject-matter of History would partly be to trace out human motives as a reflection of the growth of technology and the economic systems dependent on that technology) or

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23. Despite A.'s clarifications on the point, I still think we should avoid calling History a "science"; for although, as A. has argued, there may be similarities between History and such sciences as Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Mathematics, the Historian proceeds according to his own methods which are, in many respects, unparalleled in any of these sciences. To describe History as a "science" may therefore lead to some confusion.

Darwinian one (for example like A.'s, according to which human motives are traced out in respect of the moral growth of the race). I agree that Morals do grow, and that the Historian ought to take that into consideration; but I cannot agree that that they always progress, and I think it is one of the chief tasks of the Historian to tell us when morals did not progress in human history, and why they were then retarded. I do not think that to say that the subject-matter of History is human motives is the same as to say that it is moral progress (in A.'s sense of that expression).

Finally, I do not agree that the writing of a universal History is the most important thing that the Historian can do. As I explained above, I do not know whether A. would hold that view, but I suggested that it was possible that he might.

In any case, I admit the possibility of a universal History of mankind, but I think that the endeavour would be necessarily vague, and of small value.

PART THREE.CHAPTER EIGHT : CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In the previous seven chapters we have been concerned with A.'s notion of the "historicity of things". In chapters one to five, we saw that this involved that the totality of things was an actual or historical process, in which, out of a matrix of Space-Time, there emerged such qualities as materiality, life, mind, and deity. This doctrine had some metaphysical consequences with respect to such points as causality, necessity and contingency, universals, freedom, predictability, etc., which we indicated in brief.

In chapters six and seven, we showed what the notion of the totality of things as historical involved for History, and for its subject-matter the human historical reality. I regard this part of the work as important; but its essential importance lies in that it throws light upon the metaphysical doctrine expounded in the first five chapters. The main thing, then, is the metaphysical doctrine itself.

In the course of sketching out the salient points in A.'s metaphysical view, we have made various critical comments on specific points; and it remains here to collate all those comments in order to reach a general point of view in regard to A.'s philosophy. Afterwards we shall be able to go on to examine some of the important concepts which A. assumes, and which are expressed in such phrases as "taking Time seriously", and "sitting at the feet of history".

(1) The Philosophical Approach.

In the first place, I am impressed by A.'s method of philosophising. His method throughout is to say: there are certain facts which we must explain - what theories have we to offer? And as regards the facts themselves, we must not argue; we must accept them with "natural piety". As I have already pointed out in my comment on

chapter four, it seems to me highly probable that there are some facts which must be taken as "given", as brute facts. But the question is, which are these facts? I find that I do not seem to see eye to eye with A. on this point: for example he thinks that the notion of a matrix of Space-Time is just a plain fact - with this I cannot agree.

However, I agree with A. that all science is fundamentally based on concrete experience; and there are, indeed, differences among the sciences with respect to the degree of their attachment to the concrete. But I would not go so far as to say that the sciences form a definite hierarchy in this respect (although it seems to me that A. is more or less correct in his opinion as to the strength of attachment of the various sciences to the concrete). I agree that in this wider connotation of the term, History is a "science" like the rest; but for the reasons I explained in the last chapter, I think that it is better to avoid calling History a "science" altogether.

I agree that it is at any rate part of philosophy's job to discuss the pervasive characters of things, and to point out the various orders of existence and their relations to one another; I am not sure, however, that there are not other jobs which philosophy has to perform, especially in the realm of Logic. I believe A. goes too far when he reduces reasoning to a mere convenient instrument for putting the other person in the right position for seeing the fact concerned. I think this view is illuminating (since it certainly indicates the type of thing that some arguments do), but as a general statement it seems to me false, because in syllogistic reasoning, for example, we seem to be inferring a fact from another fact: surely that is different from pointing at (or getting ourselves in the right position to see) another fact?

As I pointed out in chapter five, I find that A.'s treatment of the pervasive features of things suffers from the attempt to express them in terms of Space-Time (this seeming to indicate that there is something wrong with the notion of a matrix of Space-Time).

For example I cannot agree that relations in Space-Time are themselves spaces and times; the spaces and times are not the relations, but merely something that always (or nearly always, since there are also relations between ideas) accompanies the relations, and so are a convenient measure for expressing the relations. In any case, I think that A. is definitely wrong about causality and the difference between necessity and contingency. As I have argued in chapter five, he has been too gullible in accepting Hume's critique; causal connection (and therefore "necessity of fact") is probably simply a unique and not further analysable relation (just like the relation of inner and outer in space: this is Broad's example).

(ii) The Totality of Things as Historical.

But turning to the idea of the totality of things as historical, this implies for A. his doctrine of the matrix of Space-Time. And I find this doctrine completely unconvincing. In the first place, as I pointed out in the first chapter, there is no reason why we should accept this upside-down view rather than the ordinary common-sense relational view. I do not agree that it is any more difficult to reconcile Relativity with the relational view than with A.'s matrix view.

Secondly the idea of a matrix of Space-Time implies a time when there were no colours or sounds, etc., and this seems to me a pure and unjustified abstraction. There is no extension or duration in our experience that has not got its colour or sound or shape or hardness.

Thus the notion of the totality of things as historical, insofar as it implies a matrix of Space-Time, must be rejected. Is there then any sense in which we can speak of the totality of things as historical which would be valid?

This is a difficult question to answer. We must remember that the two characteristics of things which makes them historical are, for A., actuality and process. Can we in some sense still say that

the totality of things is an actual process? Actual it no doubt is, (though not actual to the exclusion or detriment of the necessary, as A. thinks). But is the totality of things a single process? I realize that the evolutionary view implies that it is. But how seriously should we take the evolutionary view? Is the idea of a single process not rather in the nature of a useful generalisation? Let us leave these difficult questions aside for the moment. We shall return to them later.

In any case, the idea of a single process, seems, as we have seen in chapter three, to be incompatible with the experience of freedom. As I argued there, I do not see that A. has in any way given an adequate theoretical account of this experience of freedom, although he has been very penetrating in seeing the nature of the problem. Freedom is an experience : The problem is theoretically to account for it. A. thinks he can account with it with a variation of the theory of self-determinism; I do not agree that he either has or can. In the end he arrives at a Spinozistic conception of freedom in which the stone is as free as a man, but not aware of it. And as I suggested in chapter three, all that A. has in fact done is to substitute a process or chain of actual events for Spinoza's chain or process of necessary causes; but the same problem that arises for freedom on Spinoza's view remains for A.'s view of a chain of actual events. Thus the idea of a single process of the totality of things (at least, A.'s view of such a process) would seem to be difficult to reconcile with the experience of freedom.

#### (iii) The Theory of History.

I think I have already said everything I wish to say about A.'s theory of History in my comments to chapters six and seven. Here I should just like to resummarise in brief the connection between this theory and the metaphysical view about the totality of things.

In the first place, the human historical reality, which is the subject-matter of History, we have seen to be in many respects similar to the "history of things": thus, in both the dynamic of

movement is natural selection, in both there is the emergence of new and unpredictable qualities, and in both the forward movement in time is progressive and irrevocable.

In the second place, the human historical reality occurs as, in a certain sense, part of the history of things, but as the significant subject-matter of History, it is studied without reference to the history of things (except insofar as the history of things is mentioned as the background to human history; thus, for example, the Historian may begin by mentioning some of the anthropological theories about the evolution of man). The Historian however is essentially concerned with human motives (and so, with moral progress).

But the important thing is that A. claims to have learnt his metaphysical theory of the totality of things as historical by "sitting at the feet of History"; this is one of the most important (perhaps the most important) notion in the whole of the conception of the "historicity of things", and we must therefore devote our careful scrutiny to this phrase.

(iv) Sitting at the Feet of History.

A. ends off the introductory section to HT, by saying that in that essay he is "proposing to sit at the feet of history and ask how philosophy is affected if it keeps constantly in mind the timefulness of things." <sup>1</sup>

I want here to decide (a) in what sense A. does sit at the feet of History, and (b) in what sense one can sit at the feet of History.

(a) In the first place it is difficult to know whether A. means that in the course of the development of his own philosophy he has as a matter of fact learnt certain metaphysical things from the

1. HT, p. 12. For the whole of this section compare Collingwood's remarks in "The Idea of Nature", pp. 9-27 on "The Modern View of Nature". His idea of nature "on the analogy of history" seems in many respects merely a dogmatic restatement of A.'s position. Thus the consequences for him of regarding nature on the analogy of history are (1) change is no longer cyclical but progressive,



nature of History, or whether he means that certain metaphysical things in his own philosophy can be conveniently exhibited as being learnt from sitting at the feet of History. Thus what we want to know is whether A. in fact did learn some metaphysical things from sitting at the feet of History or whether he merely thinks that it is possible that one can learn these things from sitting at the feet of History.

I think we can confidently reply that what A. means is that certain metaphysical things can be learnt from History; but there is fairly good reason to suppose that as a matter of fact A. himself did learn these things from what he conceived to be the nature of History. For the resemblances between the view of human history as human progress presented in "Moral Order and Progress", and the view of the "history of things" (i.e., the totality of things as historical) which is elaborated in STD AND HT, are so striking as to afford ground for saying that A. was led to the notion of the totality of things as historical by the notion of human history as moral progress which he had worked out in MOP. What happened, we must conjecture, is that A. extended the same evolutionary view he had applied in the field of the history of morals to the history of the totality of things.

But whether this conjecture can be substantiated or not, it is perfectly clear to me that what A. means by "sitting at the feet of History" is that certain metaphysical consequences can be deduced from History. We must now ask the question, what are these metaphysical consequences?

There are three different kinds of things which we learn by sitting at the feet of History:-

- (1) That things possess the characteristics of "actuality" and "process", and the possession of these characteristics is what make things historical. We have dealt with this at some length in part one of the thesis, and it should be clear by now what

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1. (Contd. from previous page) (2) Nature is no longer mechanical
  - (3) Teleology is introduced (4) Substance resolved into function,
  - (5) there must be a minimum unit of Space, and a minimum unit of Time

A. means.

But this "lesson" is not understandable by itself, and depends for its full cogency on another "lesson" that we learn by sitting at the feet of History. This is the lesson that

- (ii) All things are part of one process; in other words, that the totality of things is historical, or that there is a "history of things" just as there is a human history: to put it still more cogently, the lesson that we learn from sitting at the feet of History is the very fact that there are such characteristics as actuality and process in things. I believe that this is the chief thing that A. thought we could learn from History: thus when he proposes in HT to sit at the feet of History, he explains what he means by adding "and ask how philosophy is affected if it keeps constantly in mind the timefulness of things". It is, then, the very fact that all things are part of one process, that Time must be taken seriously, which the philosopher can learn from History.

But there is an additional thing, or rather two additional things which A. thinks we can learn from History. They are

- (iii) That "we may not extend characters of higher experience in the form in which we know them to a lower form of existence."<sup>2</sup> and that "we should not take things for less than they are"<sup>3</sup>. These two "lessons" differ completely in type, however, from the others, and I do not think we can legitimately regard them as representing what A. calls the "historicity of things". They are essentially deductions that come after the acceptance that the totality of things is historical, and that the characteristics of things which make it so, are actuality and process. Given these lessons, we can now proceed to argue that in the same way as in human history we must not take a thing for more than it is, or less than it is, so too, in the "history of things" we must not take a thing for more or less

2. HT, p. 19 "... This is the obvious conclusion from the spirit of of history...."

3. HT, p. 22 : "... history demands also that we should not take ourselves for less than we are"

than it is.

The most important lesson from History, according to A., therefore, is that the totality of things forms a process, that we must "take Time seriously" by recognising this fact, and that we may therefore legitimately speak of a "history of things". I believe it is the fact that A. has failed to indicate clearly the differences between these three lessons that we learn from History, that makes his argument in HT seem so confusing.

(b) But, at any rate, by saying that we must sit at the feet of History, A. means that we must learn to recognise the totality of things as forming one process. We must now ask ourselves the question whether it is possible for us to accept A.'s notion of the totality of things as a process as the lesson which we can learn from History. The answer to this is simple; we have a few times indicated that we are not quite satisfied with the  $\chi$  notion of the totality of things as a process; we shall discuss this more fully in a moment. But at any rate, the moment we cast any doubt upon this lesson's validity, we cast doubt upon the fact that it is a lesson that we can in fact truly learn from History. Moreover, A.'s notion of the totality of things as historical involves his doctrine of the matrix of Space-Time which we have quite definitely rejected.

But what then is the lesson that we can truly learn from History (if any)? The answer to this is bound up with the phrase "taking Time seriously".

(v) Taking Time seriously.

First of all I agree with A. that there is something that we can validly learn from History, and that this is to "take Time seriously". I disagree however, as to what taking Time seriously means. For A. it means the recognition of the totality of things as a process and ultimately the doctrine of a matrix of Space-Time. We have rejected the doctrine of a matrix of Space-Time; we are not quite sure about the way in which we can regard the totality of things as historical.

In what legitimate sense, then, can we talk of "taking Time seriously" as the lesson we learn from History?

I believe that it is only in a negative sense that we can learn to "take Time seriously": it cannot mean more than that we must not regard Time as ultimately illusory. The Historian assumes that Time is real, and thus takes it seriously; History is perhaps the only body of knowledge that has consistently worked on the assumption that Time is real. The Historian qua Historian never worried about the ultimate reality of Time; he left that to the philosophers, and the fact that such philosophers as Bradley, Bosanquet and MacTaggart, in common with the great Plato himself, held that it was "ultimately" unreal did not trouble him. For the Historian's purposes it was real enough, and that was sufficient for him.

Now the injunction to "sit at the feet of History" may legitimately, I think, suggest the following line of thought: that the philosophers have cast doubts upon the "ultimate" status of the assumption of the Historian as to the reality of Time, but that their arguments are <sup>un</sup>convincing. The new Relativity Physics and the work of Darwin have tended to confirm the Historian rather than the philosophers. The Time has come to sit at the feet of History and see what happens when we take Time seriously.

This interpretation of what "sitting at the feet of History" could mean, is not, I admit, strikingly original. I believe that A. is arguing for fundamentally the same position. But my objection against A. is that he has taken Time too seriously; he has asserted that because Time is real, everything that is real must be in Time, even if it is free from lapse of Time. This is going too far. All that History shows us is that Time is as real as Space: it does not show us that everything that is real must be in Time. There is no reason, "historically"-speaking why God, for example, should be regarded as existing in the Time process.

In fact, as Russell pointed out, <sup>4</sup> there is some sense -

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4. "Mysticism and Logic", pp. 21-2.

easier to feel than to state - in which Time is an unimportant and superficial characteristic of reality. "The importance of time is rather practical than theoretical, rather in relation to our desires than in relation to truth. A truer image of the world, I think, is obtained by picturing things as entering into the stream of time from an eternal world outside, than from a view which regards time as the devouring tyrant of all that is. Both in thought and in feeling, even though time be real, to realise the unimportance of time is the gate of wisdom." <sup>5</sup>

(vi) The New attitude to History.

A. tells us that "the thoroughgoing conception of history in its application, not only to the affairs of man but to nature itself is due ... chiefly to Darwin." <sup>6</sup> With Darwin, the narrowly "scientific" view capitulated to the historical, and both are now agreed in conceiving their subject-matter as progressive. <sup>7</sup> A. contrasts Darwin's conception with that of Hegel, to the detriment of the latter; for Hegel "it was a sign of the weakness of nature... that Nature cannot maintain the calm of the conceptual realm but falls apart into particulars and their history." And he goes on to elucidate "No thanks can measure our debt to Hegel in particular for the historical turn he gave to thought. But after all, his history was not so much true history as the marshalling of types in Aristotelian fashion in their order; and the value of the work was immense." <sup>8</sup>

But at any rate, the new attitude to History is, for A., inextricably bound up with the theory of evolution.

(viii) The Theory of Evolution and History.

A. was first and foremost an Evolutionist, and he nowhere

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5. Cf. however STD, vol. I, Bk. I, Ch. I, p. 36 note, where A. replies to Russell: "I should say that the importance of any particular time is rather practical than theoretical, and to realise the importance of Time as such is the gate of wisdom."

6. HT, p. 11.

7. R. G. Collingwood, "The Idea of History", O.U.P. 1946, p. 129.

conceals his admiration for Darwin's work. It will be my contention here, that he accepts Darwin too naïvely, and comes to make the theory of evolution the axiomatic principle upon which his philosophy is based. In the beginning, Darwin's influence on A. was confined to the latter's Ethics (as in MOP) ; but when A.'s metaphysical thought was fully mature, it was seen that he was an Evolutionist in metaphysics too.

And A. regards Darwin's work as initiating a new attitude to History; the essential thing was that for A., Evolutionism involved a view of the totality of things as historical. What we must ask ourselves is (a) whether the theory of evolution necessitates the view of the totality of things as historical, and (b) if it does, just how seriously should we take the theory in our philosophical enquiries.

In regard to (a), I cannot see any way of avoiding the conclusion that the theory of evolution does in fact necessitate the view of the totality of things as historical; for if all types of existence are to be exhibited as evolving in Time, and Time is a one-dimensional process, then we must come to the conclusion of a single one-dimensional process in which all types of existence emerge.

But, in regard to (b), I must protest strongly against the use of a scientific theory like Evolutionism as an a priori and unquestioned axiom. A. regards it as true beyond discussion; but is it? I do not know; and it is not for the philosopher to answer. But on the other hand the philosopher must be very careful in using the scientific formulations of the moment not to regard them as certain. If the history of thought shows us anything, it shows us how philosophers who put their trust in the certain scientific "facts" of the moment, are sadly disappointed. One would not find this so

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8. (Contd. from previous page) For this idea of the "marshalling of types", see also MOP, p. 276, and A.'s little book on "Locke" p.27, where it is argued that for Locke "... history means ... not simply nor primarily the record of our ideas, but rather it has the same sense in which Bacon and Aristotle used the word before him, and in which we still speak of Zoology as natural history. The history of our minds means a description of the contents of our mind as we find them, arranging them into sorts, and assigning them to their appropriate faculties... But the 'history' which may be true as a description and an analysis is not necessarily true as an account of the order of growth." Collingwood confirms A.'s opinion of Hegel, but is understandably more sympathetic to him than A. (Cf "The Idea of Nature", p. 115).

reprehensible in A. were it not for the fact that he is normally so clear as to the distinction between a fact and a theory.

Evolutionism remains a theory to explain the facts, no matter how much corroboration it receives in the way of discovery of fossils, etc; it never becomes a 'fact'. And the philosopher is obliged to take heed of the scientific theories of the moment - he must accept the verdict of the experts. But he commits a grave breach of philosophical detachment if he regards it as a fact, to be accepted with "natural piety", as A. apparently does.

The conclusion I draw is therefore that it is quite likely that the totality of things is historical; but we should regard the doctrine as a convenient formulation and not a fact. We must therefore not be so confident in deducing metaphysical consequences from the historical nature of reality. And above all, we must never allow Time to tyrannise over us, just on the basis of the Evolutionist necessity of taking Time seriously.

(viii) Summary.

The argument in this thesis has been somewhat involved and I must acknowledge the fact; but at the same time I must disclaim complete responsibility. We started out with the resolution to examine the part played in A.'s thought by the notion designated by the phrase the "historicity of things". We found, to our surprise that it was one of the most important pillars of A.'s philosophy. It is possible that the previous assertion may not be taken as seriously as it deserves: one expects a writer to try to emphasise the importance of his particular subject. But at the risk of being thought insincere I must nevertheless stress the fundamental importance of the notion of the "historicity of things" in the philosophy with which I am dealing. Admittedly A. invented the phrase only in the "evening" of his life, and admittedly he used it confusingly to cover two distinct notions, for the two characteristics which belong to a thing as historical, and for the fact that it possesses such characteristics. But he invents the phrase to cover a feature of his thought that had always been implied.

We have shown how the fact that we can sit at the feet of History and learn that we must take Time seriously, involved for A. that we regard the totality of things as a historical process. We saw further how the idea of the totality of things as historical involved a two-fold stress being layed throughout A.'s metaphysical system, on actuality and process, because it was argued that all the features of an actual process like the "history of things" must themselves be actual and partake in process. We saw how the notion of the totality of things as historical also involved a new status for the very History from which it had been deduced.

But our examination of this imposing set of ideas also indicated the weaknesses that lay hidden beneath the surface. We saw that A. accepted evolution too readily as an axiomatic truth; that he therefore exaggerated the importance of the conception of the totality of things as historical; in fact, that he took Time too seriously.

We are now in a position to see that even a very slight modification in A.'s emphasis on the totality of things as historical carries with it the collapse of an important part of his system; for if we are not so eager as A. to see the "historicity of things", then it becomes very difficult to accept the idea of a matrix of Space-Time, the emergence of qualities, and A.'s conception of freedom.

(ix) Conclusion.

Thus, on the basis of our study of what seemed superficially a relatively unimportant point in the philosophy of Samuel Alexander, we have been led to that orientation towards the system as a whole which we had hoped to achieve.

We may say that in Samuel Alexander we find a philosopher who gives us a penetrating and profound insight into the nature of philosophic method and problems, but who was nevertheless at the same time taken in by the scientific prejudices of his time.



There is thus a fundamental dichotomy in his thought between his conception of philosophy and his idea of the totality of things as historical. A lesser man than Alexander would have given up one or both of these positions. But A. believed that they were both true, and sought to reconcile them by asserting insistently that the notion of a total history of things, of the matrix of things, is a fact.

But no amount of repetition can persuade anyone who is not so impressed by scientific prejudices as Alexander, that evolution is a fact. It remains a theory which Alexander, without proper justification has made the axiomatic basis of his philosophy.

Our conclusion is, therefore, that we can indeed "sit at the feet of History" and learn to "take Time seriously"; but we should not take Time too seriously and argue that everything must be bound by the Time-process.

If, then, there is such a thing as a "historicity of things", it cannot be a "historicity" of Alexandrian "events".

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