

5-1-1961

# A Survey of Some Contemporaries of Man

Richard Carroll

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## Recommended Citation

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A SURVEY OF SOME CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHIES OF MAN

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the

Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Divinity

by

Richard Francis Carroll

May, 1961

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

It is the task of Philosophy to answer the basic questions of life. What are we? why are we here? are questions basic to the life of every thinking person.

There is a division of Philosophy which deals specifically with the foregoing questions. That division is known as Metaphysics. Metaphysics deals with the questions of being or nature, man, God, and the world or cosmos. Although the older philosophical divisions have been somewhat modified with recent investigations by the exact sciences, the main divisions within Metaphysics remain the same.

Primary metaphysical investigation deals with the question of ultimate reality. The metaphysical problem of man is closely related to the search for an adequate and coherent explanation of ultimate reality. Man in his relationship to himself, to nature, to God, and to the world has been fuel for many a philosophical treatise. However, before these relationships can be coherently explained the question of man himself must be answered. Many schools of philosophy and psychology have attempted to answer the question of man's existence, nature, and social relationships. Each of these schools started with some presuppositions which have influenced, if not determined, the conclusions at which they arrived concerning man. Therefore, to survey a philosophy of man,

one must begin with the presuppositions, and then proceed to the conclusions in the light of the presuppositions.

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It was the problem of this study to survey some contemporary Idealistic and Existential philosophies of man and their ethical implications. In order to solve this problem it was necessary to investigate their views of the nature of ultimate reality, the nature of being, and the nature of man.

## III. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

This survey of some contemporary philosophies of man is of importance for two reasons. First, man is the subject of common concern for most philosophers and theologians. At the present time, there is perhaps no other subject upon which philosophers, theologians, and psychologists are so divided. It is of importance to survey some of the leading views of man as held by contemporary philosophers.

The second reason for this survey of some contemporary philosophies of man is that upon the basis of a view of man a system of ethics is usually constructed. As Emil Brunner so aptly put it,

. . . every political or social theory, and every social or political postulate stems from a definite anthropology. Behind Liberalism, behind Totalitarianism, behind Communism, there is always a certain view of man, each of which is the alternative to the Christian doctrine of man. . .<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1952), II, p. 47.



#### IV. LIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM

This study has been limited to a survey of two general types of contemporary philosophy: Idealism and Existentialism. The concepts of man's being, nature, and existence were of primary concern. The ethical implications of the concepts of man were the secondary concerns of each chapter in the main body of the study.

#### V. DEFINITION OF IMPORTANT TERMS

Survey. The consideration of a position as a whole in a generalized manner. A study in general terms with the purpose of obtaining a broad, comprehensive view of the whole and important aspects.

Philosophy. The system of thought which interprets basic facts of reality and the principles of human nature and conduct. Particularly in this study it had reference to a system of principles identified with a specific thinker, tendency, and school of thought.

Idealism. The philosophy which interprets all of life in terms of ideas. Broadly speaking it is signified by a theoretical or practical view emphasizing mind, soul, or spirit as pre-eminent values and keys to reality. It is the alternative to Materialism.

Existentialism. The school of philosophy which determines the worth of knowledge according to its biological value contained in the pure data of consciousness when affected by emotions, volitions, and social prejudices. For the main purposes of this study Existentialism shall be conceived as to mean that school of thought which emphasizes the existence of man as preceding his essence.



## VI. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

This study was divided into two major types of philosophy. The division of each chapter was undertaken in the following manner. The first section of each chapter dealt with a general introduction to the type of philosophy. The second section of each chapter discussed the general principles of the philosophy, and included an expanded definition of the philosophy. The third section of each chapter discussed the leading exponents of the philosophy. The fourth section dealt with the ethical implications of the philosophy's view of man. The final section was a summary of the general survey completed in the chapter.

## VII. STATEMENT OF THEOLOGICAL POSITION

This survey was initiated from a conservative Wesleyan-Arminian theological position. The assumptions of this position are: that God created, governs, and controls the present known universe; that man is the direct creation of God; that man as he is born into the world is in a state of rebellion against God; that man is spiritually dead until brought to life by personal faith in Jesus Christ; that the Word of God, the written revelation of Christ, is the objective authority for Christian living; that the Holy Spirit calls man to a new life in Christ through God's plan of reconciliation as revealed in the Bible; that the Holy Spirit initiates man's reconciliation to God and that through His work and ministry the believer is able to attain to full spiritual maturity; that the primary motive of Christian living is love for God and for one's fellowmen; that man is a whole being, a complex unit, composed of body,

mind, and spirit; that these aspects of man's being are indivisible, interacting and compose what is commonly known as "personality"; and that through personal faith in Christ man is able to become a new person or become free from the power of sin to attain to his God-given capabilities.

## CHAPTER II

### MAN IN IDEALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

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### MAN IN IDEALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Idealism has its main impetus from the eighteenth and nineteenth century German philosophers, Immanuel Kant<sup>1</sup> and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel.<sup>2</sup> Although these two men differed in their interpretations of experience, they both based their interpretations of experience on the empirical method.

Since the time of Kant and Hegel, Idealism has experienced many changes and modifications. These modifications are embodied in the two general types of Idealism prevalent today. Before these two general types are discussed it was deemed advisable to attempt to explain the idealistic principle and a definition of Idealism.

#### The Principle of Idealism

Henry Wieman and Bernard Meland gave an excellent analysis of the Idealistic principle in their book American Philosophies of Religion. According to them Idealism has had a long and complicated history. Many of the co-creators and many of the diverse ideas assimilated into Idealism have made it difficult to come up with a general principle to which

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<sup>1</sup>A brief, but excellent history of Idealism is found in J. Donald Butler's Four Philosophies (revised edition; New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1957), pp. 131-171.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



most idealists would subscribe. Nevertheless, in Wieman and Meland's opinion, there are three basic principles upon which most idealists would agree.

They are:

- (1) What we know most surely and directly is mind, pre-eminently our own minds;
- (2) if our knowledge of the external world is to be trustworthy, that world must also somehow be the manifestation of mind;
- (3) the good is the ultimately real while evil is not.<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, Idealism is a way of interpreting human experience and the world in terms of mind, spirit, or soul. Materialism emphasizes matter while Idealism emphasizes mind. Idealism contends the mind is real and that matter is only a by-product of the mind. Idealism rejects the materialistic view that the world of sense, sight, and sound is basically a great machine dependent upon energy.<sup>2</sup>

Idealism is a world view which holds reality to be constituted of, or closely related to mind, ideas, or selves. For the idealists the real is the rational and the intelligible. The world has meaning apart from the appearance of physical entities. An understanding of the meaning of physical things is through a self rather than through the objective analysis of nature. The world is interpreted by a study of the laws of thought and consciousness and not by means of objective science.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry Nelson Wieman and Bernard Eugene Meland, American Philosophies of Religion (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1936), p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Harold H. Titus, Living Issues in Philosophy (New York: American Book Company, 1946), p. 237.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

The entire universe has meaning for the idealist. There is an inner harmony between the physical world and man. As one prominent idealistic philosopher put it:

What is highest in spirit is also deepest in nature. Man is at home in the universe and not an alien or a mere creature of chance, since the universe is in some sense a logical and a spiritual system. The self is not an isolated entity; it is a genuine part of the world process. The process at its high levels manifests itself as creativity, mind, and selves, or persons. Man, as a part of the cosmos, expresses its inner structure in his own life.<sup>1</sup>

Another aspect of idealistic thinking is that nature, or the objective world, is real in the sense that it exists and demands our attention and adjustment to it.<sup>2</sup> Since nature depends upon mind it is not sufficient in and of itself. Most idealists are willing to let the physical scientists determine what matter is, providing the scientists do not reduce everything in the world to matter. Idealists are willing to let the biological sciences describe life and its processes also, providing they too do not reduce all other levels of life to the biological and physiological level.<sup>3</sup>

A general principle of Idealism is its stress on the organic unity of the world process. For idealists the whole or parts of the world process cannot be separated without dangerous abstractions. There is an inner unity, an unfolding series of levels, from matter to vegetable forms, through animals to man, mind, and spirit.<sup>4</sup> "Thus

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<sup>1</sup>Titus, op. cit., p. 237.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



a central principle of Idealism is that of organic wholeness."<sup>1</sup>

### Some Definitions of Idealism

In defining Absolute Idealism, R. F. A. Hernly stated;

Absolute Idealism explores every avenue of human experience for the contribution it can make to a fuller knowledge of Reality. It regards mental activity as the process through which Reality discloses or reveals itself as an object of knowledge. And it treats worlds which our minds create and sustain as the highest manifestations of Absolute Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

William E. Hocking defined Idealism as "the philosophy which holds that reality is of the nature of mind."<sup>3</sup> Mind for Absolute Idealism is the key to understanding the universe as a whole.

Borden Parker Bowne defined his Personalism as the system which holds "personality as the key to reality."<sup>4</sup> Edgar Sheffield Brightman defined Personalism as the "theory that only persons are real; that all true being is personal."<sup>5</sup> Albert C. Knudson defined Personalism as

that form of idealism which gives equal recognition to both the pluralistic and monistic aspects of experience and which finds in the conscious unity, identity, and free activity of personality the key to the nature of reality and the solution of the ultimate problems of philosophy.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Titus, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Sommer Robinson (comp.), An Anthology of Recent Philosophy (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1929), p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>William Ernest Hocking, Types of Philosophy (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 247.

<sup>4</sup>Wieman and Meland, op. cit., p. 134.

<sup>5</sup>Edgar Sheffield Brightman, An Introduction to Philosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), p. 389.

<sup>6</sup>Albert C. Knudson, The Philosophy of Personalism (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1927), p. 87.

## II. TYPES OF IDEALISM

Idealism, as an historical movement, became fragmented with many points of view and many elaborate arguments coming from its exponents. There are many classifications of the various types of Idealism yet no one classification seems to be entirely satisfactory. For the purposes of this study Idealism was divided into two main types: Absolute Idealism and Personalism. Absolute Idealism's leading exponents in America have been Josiah Royce and William Ernest Hocking, while Personalism's leading exponents in America have been Borden Parker Bowne and Edgar Sheffield Brightman.

### Absolute Idealism

Josiah Royce. Royce was born in 1855. He was perhaps one of the greatest philosophical minds America has produced. He spent his undergraduate days at the University of California. John Stuart Mill and Herbert Spencer were an influence upon Royce in his early educational pursuits. Later in Germany he came under the influence of Kant, Schopenhauer and Lotze. His acquaintance with Hegel came in later years. Upon his return to America from Germany he took his doctorate at Johns Hopkins University in 1878. Royce then accepted the instructorship in rhetoric and logic at the University of California. From 1882 to 1883, while William James was abroad, Royce began his career at Harvard. The following year, 1884, G. H. Palmer took his sabbatical leave in order to keep Royce at Harvard another year. Royce remained there until his death in 1916.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Walter G. Muellder and Laurence Sears, The Development of American Philosophy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 234.



In the preface of his volume The World and the Individual, Royce stated his methodology. He accepted the empirical evidence for an interpretation of reality and of the human self. He viewed the human self as dependent upon experience for its temporal origin, its development, its preservation, and for its present form of life. For Royce the various selves, present in experience, could possess, in the whole or in a part of their lives, identically the same experiences. Thus one self could originate or develop within another self resulting in the interweaving of the lives of the various selves in complex ways. Royce justified his point of view by pointing out that the doctrine of multiple personality was not contrary to known empirical facts.<sup>1</sup>

In explaining his theory of being Royce argued that the only valid basis for facts of being were those facts found within the experience of man. Yet experience is not a valid basis in all circumstances. For the experience of one self is not the same experience of another self and therefore, the experience of the two selves would produce different as well as similar facts. To avoid the alternative of a moment by moment experience as the basis for facts Royce offered the following:

It is plain, at once, that, according to our view, every concrete fact in the universe becomes for us, just in so far as it is acknowledged, the expression of a purpose, and so is never a mere constraining power, that from without simply forces our assent. A fact may be acknowledged while yet many aspects of it remain mysterious. In so far it remains a "foreign" fact. But it is also our thesis that no purpose in the universe either is, or can now be rationally viewed by me, as wholly foreign, to say my own; while facts, so far as I understand them become ipso

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<sup>1</sup>Josiah Royce, The World and the Individual (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), pp. xii-xiii.

facto expressions of ideas, and so of purposes. All purposes seek the expression that even now I am consciously seeking. Thus I myself am real, and I regard nothing real as a me alienum (It is foreign to me).<sup>1</sup>

The above quotation not only expresses Royce's answer as how to interpret experience in the way of facts but it also gives evidence to the fact that he is a thorough-going empiricist. His empiricism becomes most obvious in such statements as

In fact, then, our presented experience is indeed our only guide; but it always guides us by pointing beyond itself to that without which it becomes self-contradictory. We know of no metempirical truth except by means of presentations. But our presentations, in our present form of consciousness, get their whole sense from their reference to what, for us, remains metempirical truth. No fact gets "accredited" unless our experience gives it credit. But experience, when rationally interpreted, in the light of our indirect demonstrations, never gives credit to any facts except to those which, in some aspect, transcend our presentations.<sup>2</sup>

The use of the term "metempirical" by Royce is but his way of side-stepping a Naturalistic or Realistic approach to the interpretations of unexperienced data. He defined "metempirical" in the following manner:

This term "metempirical", which we have just used, is only a relative term. We have here employed it with express reference to the transcending of the narrow limits of human experience. But of course such transcending, so far as we get our indirectly demonstrable right to the assertion that facts lie beyond these narrow limits, is not a transcending of all experience. What lies beyond our presentations is still, in so far as it has true Being, presentations. For the world of fact exists in so as it is presented in unity to the Absolute Experience.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 24.



These presuppositions and conclusions regarding human experience are but reflections of Royce's basic concept of an Absolute Mind purposing and expressing itself in human experience. His ontology is necessarily influenced by his interpretation of experience. As Royce said, "Every question about Being is also a question about the organization of experience, that is, about the organization of true final experience of which our own is always a fragment."<sup>1</sup>

Life for Royce was a search for truth and the Self beyond oneself.

Every struggle, every tear, every misery, every failure, and repentance, and every rising again, every strenuous pursuit, every glimpse of God's truth--all these are not mere incidents of the search for that which is beyond. They are all events in the life; they too are part of the fulfillment. In eternity all this is seen, and hereby--even in and through these temporal failures, I win, in God's presence and by virtue of His fulfillment, the goal of life, which is the whole of life. What no temporal instant brings, what all temporal efforts fail to win, that my true Self in its eternity, and in its oneness with the divine possesses.<sup>2</sup>

Royce's conception of nature was that all nature is an expression of Mind. By nature Royce meant "the external to our own private experience and yet this side of ultimate Reality--a realm between the divine."<sup>3</sup> Royce believed in the reality of nature as inseparably bound up with his belief in the existence of his fellowmen. According to him neither nature nor our fellowmen could be understood apart from one another. If the social factor were taken from Royce's view of nature, a most essential characteristic of possession for man, would be lost.<sup>4</sup> "Our assurance that outer

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 180.

nature exists apart from any man's private experience, is thus inseparably bound up with our social consciousness."<sup>1</sup>

William Ernest Hocking. Hocking was born in 1873 and at the writing of this study was still living. After completing undergraduate work at Ames, Iowa, and graduate work at Harvard, Hocking studied in Germany. He was Harvard fellow at Goettigen, Berlin, and Heidelberg. Aside from his deepest obligation to classical German Idealism, Hocking acknowledges indebtedness to Husserl, Paulsen, Dilthey, Rickert, Simmel, and Windelband. His philosophy of religion reflects the influence of William James and Josiah Royce. From 1904 to 1906 Hocking was instructor in history and philosophy of religion at Andover Theological Seminary. He taught at the University of California from 1906 to 1908 and from 1909 to 1914 he was at Yale. Since 1914 he has been at Harvard.<sup>2</sup>

Although Hocking was not a prolific writer in metaphysics he has developed his Idealism to a point where it is discernable in much of his work touching religion, ethics, law, politics, and social philosophy.

Perhaps his most outstanding single volume has been The Meaning of God in Human Experience. This volume reflects Hocking's general point of view in the philosophy of religion. It also gives insight into some of his basic concepts of religious experience.

When speaking of "Objective Idealism" in his Types of Philosophy, Hocking pointed out that "we have in our own being something like in kind

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Muelder and Sears, op. cit., p. 450.



with the activity which produces nature and presents it to us."<sup>1</sup>

Along the same line of thinking Hocking stated that the supreme mind which produces nature would differ from the human mind only in matter and greatness. It would seem that Hocking agrees with Royce in the concept that man is but a part of the physical expression of the Absolute Mind.

In contrasting the Absolute Mind with the human mind, Hocking states:

Our minds can only create after they have learned from experience; but the world-mind must bring forth the qualities of experience from itself, without previous pattern; it must therefore be wholly active, not partly passive.<sup>2</sup>

The Absolute Self or Mind for Hocking would be a wholly active Self, whereas, man is only a partially active self--a partly passive self.

Hocking discussed the position of Idealism in two propositions, one negative and one positive:

(a) The apparent self-sufficiency of nature is illusory: nature appears to be independent, to go its own course, to operate its own laws, to be eternal, to require no creator or other ground outside of itself; but in truth, nature does depend on something else.

(b) That upon which nature depends is Mind (Spirit, Idea). We adhere to the world, Idealism, taking it to signify simply that whatever is ultimately real in the universe is such stuff as ideas are made of. That is, if we are looking for the substance of things, the ultimate being which explains all other beings, we shall find it to be mental in nature--the thinker and his thought, and will and its doings, the self and its self-expression. And whatever appears to be other than this, independent of it or hostile to it, as matter, or force or space and time,

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<sup>1</sup>Hocking, op. cit., p. 275.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

will be found to depend on the mind for its very existence.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing "Why Nature Exists", Hocking pointed out that God is often viewed as present to the human mind in consciousness; and that consciousness is thought of as very different from sense-experience. Hocking contended that the very obligation to objectivity which makes scientists and naturalists of philosophers should be the obligation which makes scientists and naturalists into philosophers.

I point out that this instinctive, loyal deference to the element of objective truth in sense-experience is the perpetual token that the world-mind is there present to us. That which makes naturalists of us is the very thing which taken with more complete self-consciousness, would make of us objective idealists.<sup>2</sup>

With the insight which Objective (Absolute) Idealism affords, the answer to the question regarding the purpose of nature is made possible. To Hocking, nature is the neutral, colorless, lifeless, stable, indifferent base upon which to build up the intricate and endless network of give and take, cooperation and conflict, agreement and clash of judgment in society. "Nature exists in order that we may be social beings"<sup>3</sup> was Hocking's opinion. In this Hocking agreed with Royce. Their emphasis upon the social expression of the self within nature as the expression of the Divine Self was the same.

In summing up Hocking's point of view it can be said that he is in full agreement with Royce in the empirical approach to the interpretation of reality. The ultimate reality for Hocking is Absolute Mind. Finite

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<sup>1</sup>Hocking, op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



selves are expressions of the Absolute. The facts of experience are sufficient to convince any thinking person that mind is the ultimate reality according to Hocking. Nature is the neutral substance upon which all the intricate and complicated cooperation of society is built.<sup>1</sup>

### Personalism

Borden Parker Bowne. Bowne was born in 1855 at Leonardsville, New Jersey. He attended New York University as an undergraduate. In 1871 he began a two-year study at Halle and Goettigen, Germany. During this study he came under the influence of Erdman, Ulrich, and especially Lotze, whose philosophy was a determining influence in Bowne's Personalism. After Bowne returned to the United States he followed journalism for a time. He was then called to Boston University in 1876 and there he remained until his death in 1910. Bowne was a great and influential teacher. His work contributed profoundly to the maturing and liberalizing of theological thought within Methodism. He gave American culture a host of inspired religious teachers, ministers, and administrators, a number of prominent contemporary philosophers, and a vigorous school of thought.<sup>2</sup>

Bowne began the discussion on "The Notion of Being" in his book of Metaphysics by pointing out the short-comings of the theory of pure being. To avoid the same short-comings Bowne suggested that being be

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<sup>1</sup>See Appendix A. for Hocking's Summary of Objective (Absolute) Idealism.

<sup>2</sup>Muelder and Sears, op. cit., p. 510.

viewed as essentially causal and active.<sup>1</sup> In closing his discussion of "The Notion of Being" he concluded "that every substantive thing, in distinction from both compounds and phenomena, must be viewed as a definite causal agent."<sup>2</sup>

Going on the supposition that being is action Bowne then gave his view of "The Nature of Things". He believed that everything is what it is because of its nature, and that things differ because they have different natures.<sup>3</sup> There is one nature of matter and another of spirit. He continued his explanation by saying, "The nature of a thing expresses the thing's real essence; and we hold that we have no true knowledge of the thing until we grasp its nature."<sup>4</sup> For Bowne "things exist only in their activities, and have no being apart from them."<sup>5</sup>

Bowne concluded his discussion of things by positing,

Being in distinction from nonbeing finds its mark in causality. Things find the definiteness which they must have in order to exist at all in the law of this causality. Differing things find the ground of their difference in the different laws of the respective causalities. To know this law is to know the thing in itself, or in its inmost essence. The only insoluble question in such a case is how the law can be set in reality or made substantial; and this question does not belong to human philosophy. It may be that further study may compel us to give up things altogether in distinction from phenomena; but so long as we hold them, we must view them not as picturable

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<sup>1</sup>Borden Parker Bowne, Metaphysics (New York: American Book Company, 1910), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 31.



objects, but as concrete and definite principles of action.<sup>1</sup>

When discussing "Causality" Bowne pointed out that living, active intelligence is the condition both of conceptual and metaphysical unity. Also that volitional causality--intelligence itself in act--is the only conception of metaphysical causality in which one can rest. There is no alternative; being is either volitional causality or nothing. Through the concepts of causality one receives insight into the significance of free intelligence. In his own words: "Explanation is possible only through free intelligence. Unity, identity, and causality are possible only through free intelligence."<sup>2</sup>

In his chapter "The World-Ground", Bowne gave his interpretation of the infinite and the finite. For him the infinite was active and the cause of the universe. As for the finite, two views are possible according to Bowne. One sees the finite as "a form of energy on the part of the infinite, so that it has only phenomenal existence." The other looks upon the finite as "a substantial creation by the infinite."<sup>3</sup> However, as Bowne asserted, "in neither of these views is it possible to identify the infinite with the finite either totally or partially."<sup>4</sup>

According to Bowne the only way to decide between the foregoing views of the finite is to study the facts of experience. According to him if any finite thing can be found which is capable of acting from

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, op. cit., pp. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

itself and for itself, it has in that fact the only possible test of reality, as distinguished from phenomenality. But this possibility can be found only in the finite spirit. For "only selfhood serves to mark off the finite as substantial reality, and to give it any ontological otherness to the infinite."<sup>1</sup>

When discussing the relation of the infinite to the finite Bowne held that the infinite was "the primal source of all finite existence."<sup>2</sup> The finite has no being in itself and therefore its nature and its relation are determined by the infinite. The finite may be viewed as the expression of the purpose of the infinite. Thus the manifestation of the finite is an expression of the plan of the infinite. No finite has any rights, except those granted by the infinite. Hence, "every finite thing is what it is, and where it is, and when it is, solely and only because of the requirements of the fundamental plan."<sup>3</sup>

When speaking of a common ground upon which all philosophers build Bowne mentioned the following:

First, the coexistence of persons. It is a personal and social world in which we live, and with which all speculation must begin. We and the neighbors are facts which cannot be questioned. Secondly, there is a law of reason valid for all and binding upon all. This is the supreme condition of any mental community. Thirdly, there is the world of common experience, actual or possible, where we meet in mutual understanding, and where the great business of life goes on.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>4</sup>Borden Parker Bowne, Personalism (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1908), p. vii.



Bowne explained that the foregoing conditions are absolutely necessary in order to give any rational standing to philosophical investigation. These three basic conditions cannot be questioned by any one without immediate and obvious absurdity.<sup>1</sup> "The basal facts, therefore, for philosophy are the personal world, the common reason, and the world of experience."<sup>2</sup> It was upon these three principles that Bowne built his philosophy of Personalism.

Edgar Sheffield Brightman. Brightman was the successor of Borden Parker Bowne at Boston University. He was born in 1884 at Holbrook, Massachusetts. He received the A. B. and A. M. from Brown University. Continuing his studies at Boston University he received the theological degree in 1910 and the doctorate in 1912. He was a Boston University fellow at Berlin and Marburg. From 1912 to 1915 he was professor of philosophy at Nebraska Wesleyan University, and taught at Wesleyan University from 1915 to 1919. From 1919 to the time of his death in 1953 he was Borden Parker Bowne Professor of Philosophy at Boston University. Among Personalists Brightman was especially emphatic in the quest for a coherent account of experience. Thus he was a systematic thinker, yet he was sensitive to the development of common philosophical perspectives which transcend the apparent diversity of present day positions. In his criticism of other philosophies the emphasis was on their failure to take all the aspects of experience coherently into account. Personality was

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, Personalism, op. cit., pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

affirmed to be the key to reality for Brightman.<sup>1</sup>

Brightman has been acclaimed as one of the most influential philosophers in America. This is based upon the fact that more than any other, Brightman attempted to give a coherent and logical explanation of human experience. His understanding of the field of philosophy was profound, yet by no means did he claim to have the absolute truth.

His use of the word Personalism indicated his presupposition about the real.

If we use the real as a word to indicate the whole active universe of which our experience is but a tiny fragment, then we may say that philosophy is an attempt to discover a coherent and unified definition of the real. Or, alternatively, philosophy is an attempt to give a reasoned account of experience as a whole. More simply still, philosophy is an attempt to discover the whole truth.<sup>2</sup>

Brightman used the empirical method in his philosophy of Personalism. He justified his use of the empirical method by pointing out that sense-experience is the only basis upon which science or philosophy can build. There is no other common frame of reference other than experience of the conscious life. As Brightman put it:

Science is one stage of reinterpretation of experience, philosophy another. Both science and philosophy are movements of experience from a state of confusion and contradiction toward a state of order and coherence. Science is such a movement within a limited field; philosophy aims to include and interpret all experience in a comprehensive unity.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Muelder and Sears, op. cit., p. 510.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Sheffield Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion (New York: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1940), p. 21.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



In pin-pointing the world-view of Personalism Brightman stated that it "interprets reality as a society of persons; there is one Supreme Person, in and for whose thought and will all physical things exist so that they are nothing apart from him."<sup>1</sup> While discussing this Supreme Person Brightman said that the functioning of the Supreme Person's will is being for all who exist by Him. Finite persons depend on his purpose for their being, and yet their being is self-conscious and self-determining. Human consciousness is not identical with the consciousness of the Supreme Person. "In finite selves the Supreme Person wills the existence of what is genuinely other than himself; so that the universe is ultimately a society of selves, not a single self."<sup>2</sup>

In defending his Personalism as a world-view Brightman offered three arguments as a defense. First:

The Personalist appeals to the coherence theory as a ground for believing that there is a unitary and supreme mind in the universe. Without this hypothesis, the order and interaction of nature becomes a mystic miracle, and an inexplicable fact. Thus absolutism and personalism have a common starting point.<sup>3</sup>

Second:

The fact of finite limitation and the nature of self-experience proves. . . that finite selves are really distinct, true "monads" as not part of any other self.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Sheffield Brightman, An Introduction to Philosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), p. 246.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 247.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

Third:

Personalism is consistent with epistemological dualism which has been established on other grounds. (He discussed it in an earlier chapter of this book.) As has been shown, the dualism of idea and object is in accordance with the fact of a plurality of persons, which an ultimate monism contradicts.<sup>1</sup>

In the broadest sense, Personalism is a world-view which makes personality the key to all philosophical problems and discussion. For Personalism the world of reality is made up of many selves which are self-conscious and self-determining. These selves derive their being and existence from one Supreme Person, yet they are not parts of the one Self. These created selves are individual, private and free. The selves are not parts of other persons, or of an Absolute Self.<sup>2</sup>

#### Summary

The world-view of Absolute Idealism is that reality is to be interpreted in terms of an Absolute Self of which all reality is a part or expression. Finite selves are expressions of the Absolute Self. The world-view of Personalism is that reality is to be interpreted in terms of a Supreme Person of which other selves are creations. Nature is an expression of the Supreme Person and finite selves are the expression of the will of the Supreme Person.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Brightman, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>An excellent resume of Personalism is given in Wieman and Meland's American Philosophies of Religion, pp. 139-145.

<sup>3</sup>Brightman, A Philosophy of Religion, op. cit., pp. 216-218.



### III. IDEALISM VIEWS MAN

#### Absolute Idealism

The Human Self. In his chapter "The Human Self", Royce set forth and defended his doctrine of the human person. His argument for his view was in answer to the question, "Wherein shall our own metaphysical doctrine seek for guidance in this world of complexities?"<sup>1</sup> The reply was:

The concept of the human Self, like the concept of Nature, comes to us, first, as an empirical concept, founded upon a certain class of experiences. But like the concept of Nature, the concept of the human Self tends far to outrun any directly observable present facts of human experience, and to assume forms which define the Self as having a nature and destiny which no man directly observes or yet can himself verify.<sup>2</sup>

Although there are various ways of viewing the human Self, Royce maintains that the most reliable is the empirical method. His concept of the empirical method is that "a certain totality of facts, as viewed as more or less immediately given, and as distinguished from the rest of the world of Being."<sup>3</sup> This totality of facts is observed by the Self as well as society. The actions, body, clothing, and attitudes of the Self are but expressions of its nature. To change any of these observable facts would tend to change the concept of the Self. As Royce stated:

For to my neighbor as to myself, I am this man with these acts, this body, this presence; I cannot see these facts as my neighbor does, nor can he take my view of them. But we all regard such facts, not only as belonging to the Self, but as constituting, in a measure, what we regard as the Self of the present life.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, op. cit., p. 256.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

Along with the external Self of the phenomenal world there is the equally empirical and phenomenal Self of the inner life. Royce distinguished this Self as the "series or states of consciousness, the feelings, thoughts, desires, memories, emotions, and moods."<sup>1</sup>

Royce makes distinctions within the inner empirical Self which do and do not belong essentially to the nature of the Self. In affirming the unity of the Self in the confrontation of the not-Self, Royce based his argument upon a psychological rather than a purely rational principle. He maintains that despite the chaos of experience, the Self of man's inner and outer life preserves a genuine but hidden unity.

His explanation of the psychological principle was:

that in us men, the distinction between Self and not-Self has a predominantly social origin, and implies a more or less obviously present contrast between being, or as you may for short in general call him, an Alter, as just when viewed as the life of the present Ego.<sup>2</sup>

By this Royce means that an individual's concept of himself as distinguished from that which is not-himself is largely determined by society. In other words, environment partially if not wholly determines the nature of the Self.

As to the origin of the Self, Royce maintained that the Self of each man has "its origin in time, and its development makes it dependent, for its contents and its character, upon natural conditions."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, op. cit., p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 246.



In Royce's opinion man's self-consciousness, when once developed, furnishes him with an insight whereby he can comprehend some of the mysteries of nature.<sup>1</sup>

Royce states that "the Self is not a Thing but a Meaning embodied in a conscious life."<sup>2</sup> In the present form of existence man catches a mere glimpse of the true meaning of the individual Self. As the meaning of Self finds expression in man's deeds and in his ideals, he also obtains fragmentary glimpses of the way in which his Self is linked with the Absolute Self and with the selves in the general moral order of the universe.<sup>3</sup> To quote Royce:

These various transient flashes of insight constitute our present type of human experience. And it is their variety, their manifoldness, and their fragmentariness, which together are responsible for all those inconsistencies of our accounts of the Self.<sup>4</sup>

Hocking's view of the Self was very similar to that of Royce.

The human self is more than a thing of nature, because it is more than a fact: facts are not conscious facts,--the self is; facts are not valued,--the self lives on values and is a value; facts are present,--the self spans past and future. And because of these things, while facts are as they must be, the self is free, it determines, out of a matrix of plural possibilities, which one shall be the fact of the next moment.<sup>5</sup>

In the light of the various possibilities which confront the

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 270.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Hocking, op. cit., p. 442.

self, Hocking pointed out:

The self is thus a union of opposites. And because precisely the same opposites are discernible in the composition of the larger cosmos and must somehow be united there, we may transfer the problem of this "somehow" in part to the world within, as we do when we recognize that the whole is a self. The ultimate evidence for the selfhood of the whole is not primarily the evidence of argument, however, nor of analogy, but that of immediate experience, interpreted by the dialectic. We, as a group of human selves, know that we are not alone in the universe; that is our first and persistent intuition.<sup>1</sup>

Hocking viewed the body as the bridge of communication between minds, and it was a means of getting across to other selves and a way by which other selves get across to another mind or self. The body becomes for those who can read it a symbol of the individual mind. This in no measure means that the individual mind produces the body. Rather the body comes to each one, like the rest of nature, from beyond oneself. Hocking's concept of the mind was that at first it was passive and then active: what it receives it re-creates. The body, however, is in a less plastic state than the mind, but more plastic than the rest of nature. "Thus at birth one has the body (and the mind) bequeathed to us; at forty we have the body (and the mind) built by our own wills."<sup>2</sup>

Hocking presupposed the ability of the Self to act on its own. He said that in the capacity of self-building there is the expression of freedom of will. This freedom applies to the sphere of one's choices. It gives no absolute mastery of the Nature outside of self. For there are

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<sup>1</sup>Hocking, op. cit., p. 442.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 294.



tides of physical and social circumstance which no man can change.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing the soul of man Hocking said that psychologists have been unable to discover a soul separate from the mind of man. It is his conclusion then that "the soul is the self of man engaged in getting its bearings in the total universe."<sup>2</sup>

While describing the relationship of the body to the mind, Hocking states that this is the chief puzzle of human nature. According to him the "two are fused into one being so closely that it is impossible to say where the joint is."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, to solve the puzzle of the two Hocking offered the following as a temporary solution to the puzzle of the mind and body:

- (a) that the mind and body are not the same;
- (b) that they are inseparably joined in a living person;
- (c) that, to think of our own mind, we manage to think of thinking;
- (d) that since we cannot directly perceive the thinking of other people, we have to get at their minds by way of their bodies, their gestures, expressions of emotions, language; in the same way, we interpret the minds of animals.<sup>4</sup>

Hocking was careful to avoid saying that there is first a mind, and then a body for man. He said,

The self requires the body to be itself; the visible body is the mind made visible to others. The visible musculature of the body is the mind's capacity of going across from deliberating to acting, made visible to others. Hence, in decision, the mind does not act upon the body as though the body were something else; the

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<sup>1</sup>Hocking, op. cit., p. 296

<sup>2</sup>Hocking and others, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.

action of the bodily muscles is the mind's act of will, the same identical thing--only not as it feels to the mind acting, but as it looks to the outside observer.<sup>1</sup>

Man, for Hocking, is the being who is capable of thinking and using a perfect (or absolute) standard. It is this which makes it possible for man to reach an understanding and agreement with other human beings. The capacity to stand alone, to think alone, to be independent, to hold to a different opinion than his neighbor, is a capacity which belongs to man being a self.<sup>2</sup>

Summary. Absolute Idealism views man as a self. The quality of this self is determined by man's social relationships and experiences. Man is self-conscious and it is this which makes him part of the expression of the Absolute Self. Self and body are so intricately woven together that it is impossible to separate the two. The body is the means of communication between selves and is therefore an expression of the self to which it belongs. Man has the capacity to choose, hold to an absolute standard, and can determine his own course of action.

#### Personalism

Soul and Body. Bowne holds that there is no escape from regarding the soul as something substantially real. The fact that it abides, acts, and is acted upon are essential marks of its ontological reality. In comparison to the body, the soul is the more real of the two. The body is in a perpetual state of flux and at best, is only a form of in-

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<sup>1</sup>Hocking and others, op. cit., pp. 477-478.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 66 and 82.



cessant flow of the physical elements.<sup>1</sup>

Bowne viewed the soul as posited by the infinite, and the body as simply an order of phenomena connected with the soul which reproduces features of the general phenomenal order. Thus the body becomes the visible expression of the personality, a means of personal communion, and a means for controlling to some extent the inner life.<sup>2</sup>

In discussing the origin of souls Bowne held that two views have gained prominence in philosophical and theological thought. The first is the creationist theory of the reduction of mental phenomena to functions of organization; the second is a materialistic theory which Bowne rejects as inadequate. The Creationist theory has included two concepts: one supposes a pre-existence of souls and the other posits individual creation in connection with individual earthly existence.<sup>3</sup> Bowne holds to the latter.

For Bowne man is a free individual who can determine, in part, if not wholly, his experiences and life. Freedom for Bowne is:

The power of self-direction, the power to form plans, purposes, ideals, and to work for their realization. We do not mean an abstract freedom existing by itself, but this power of self-direction in living men and women. Abstract freedom exists as little as abstract necessity. Actual freedom is realized only as one aspect of actual life; and it must always be discussed in its concrete significance.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, Metaphysics, op. cit., p. 349.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 368.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 373.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 405.



This freedom was no fiction for Bowne. It is a freedom of thinking and feeling human beings with some insight into values, and a complex body of practical interest; and this freedom means simply the power of self-direction within certain limits set by their own nature and the nature of things.<sup>1</sup>

Such freedom is presupposed in every department of life according to Bowne. It is implicit in the assumption of responsibility on which society is built. "The moral nature in both is mandatory and its retributive aspect is absurd without it."<sup>2</sup> This ability or capacity of freedom of action is involved in the thought of the personal and rational life.<sup>3</sup> The clearest case of self-direction is the process of thinking itself. Man directs and maintains attention, he criticises the successive steps of an argument, he looks before and after, he thinks twice and reserves his decision. The process goes on within reason itself, reason supplying the motive, the norm and the driving force. In Bowne's own words,

Thus life itself spontaneously takes on the form of freedom; and if freedom were an unquestioned fact it could hardly manifest itself more unambiguously than it seems to do now.<sup>4</sup>

Brightman begins his discussion of the world of personality with three presuppositions:

- (1) Nature is more than and other than all human minds;
- (2) Matter belongs to an order of being wholly different from any

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, Metaphysics, op. cit., p. 406.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

mind or personality, human or divine.

(3) The nonmental and impersonal being of matter is just as certain and as immediately given as is the conscious being of personality.<sup>1</sup>

Brightman defines personality as:

A complex but self-identifying, active, selective, feeling, sensing, developing experience, which remembers its past (in part), plans for its future, interacts with its subconscious processes, its bodily organism, and its natural and social environment, and is able to judge and guide itself and its objects by rational and ideal standard.<sup>2</sup>

Brightman's definition is an attempt to give a true-to-life description of what he found to be the essential functions of personality as any man experiences it in his own person. All experience<sup>3</sup> is complex. Activity and selection are essential personal experiences; man is always both doing and preferring. Memory is necessary to the unity and identity of personality; when it fails man has amnesia or in some cases dual personality. Responsive striving is a mark of every conscious being; and, in a thinking being, purposes generate plans for their fulfillment.<sup>4</sup>

The relation of the body to the mind (soul) was viewed by Brightman as a functional unity. The mind both affects and is affected by bodily changes. For him the body is that organ of the universe which

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<sup>1</sup>Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Nature and Values (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1945), pp. 49-50.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>Experience is used as a synonym for consciousness but it is preferred as being a more concrete term.

<sup>4</sup>Brightman, Nature and Values, op. cit., p. 54.



creates a personality, although the spiritual and the intellectual life are proof that a personality has powers that a material body does not possess and could not explain.<sup>1</sup>

The body and the mind are closely related, but are not one. According to Brightman, man can make a clear distinction between his experience of the body and the body itself; and it is unreasonable to identify a cause with its effect. To identify the mind with the body is as unreasonable as it would be to say that the refreshment we feel on drinking cool water is actually nothing but cold water.<sup>2</sup> To quote Brightman,

If we are to insist that the causes which are essential to the existence of personality are all a part of it, then the body, the subconsciousness, the air we breathe, the life-giving sun, in fact, the whole of nature, must be parts of every person, and every person is all bodies, all minds, all things. In order to avoid the utter confusion that arises when causes and effects are identified, all things melt into one, and all distinctions are lost (as in certain kinds of absolute idealism and pragmatism), we have only to consult experience and reason. If we take our personality to be just what we experience it to be, we can identify our personality with our consciousness and also reasonably infer the interaction of personality with its surrounding world of body and nature and God, as well as their interdependence.<sup>3</sup>

To summarize his discussion of the human person Brightman offers this condensed definition:

A person is a unity of complex conscious changes, including all its experiences--its memories, its purposes, its values, its

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<sup>1</sup>Brightman, Nature and Values, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 55-56.



powers, its activities, and its experienced interactions with its environment.<sup>1</sup>

Summary. Man as viewed by Personalism is a functional unity of body and mind (soul). Man has the capacity to act, determine and choose his course of life and action. Man is best described by what he experiences. He is capable of intercommunication with other persons and with the Supreme Person. Man is a complex unity of conscious actions and interactions with his environment, body, and God.

#### IV. THE ETHICAL IMPLICATION OF IDEALISM'S VIEW OF MAN

##### Absolute Idealism

Absolute Idealism has maintained that man is free, he is capable of determining his own life and the type of person he will be. Man is the expression of the Absolute Self and therefore is capable of intercommunication with the Self through the social relationships he has with other finite selves. Royce reasons from his concept of man to an ethical theory built upon the concept of loyalty. He states in the preface of his volume The Philosophy of Loyalty that,

The conception of "Loyalty to Loyalty", as set forth in my third lecture, constitutes the most significant part of this ethical task. For the rest, if my philosophy is as a theory, more or less new, I am still only trying to make articulate what I believe to be the true spirit and meaning of all the loyal, whoever they may be, and however they define their fidelity. The result of conceiving duty in terms of the conception of loyalty which is here expounded is, indeed, if I am right, somewhat deep-going and transforming, not only for ethics, but for most men's views of truth and reality, and of

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<sup>1</sup>Brightman, Nature and Values, loc. cit.

religion.<sup>1</sup>

While discussing the nature and the need of loyalty Royce maintains that the self is in quest of the eternal. He rejects the emphasis of spiritual estrangement as set forth by traditional Christianity. Royce wanted to know the way that leads human practical life homewards, even if that way proved to be infinitely long. He found the way to practical living in the concept of loyalty.<sup>2</sup>

Royce holds that when loyalty is properly defined it is the fulfillment of the whole moral law. Man can center his entire moral world about the rational conception of loyalty. Justice, charity, industry, wisdom, spirituality, and all definable moral virtues are essentially in the concept of loyalty.<sup>3</sup>

Royce states his definition of loyalty:

Loyalty shall mean: The willing and practical and thorough-going devotion of a person to a cause. A man is loyal when, first he has some cause to which he is loyal; when, second he willingly and thoroughly devotes himself to this cause; and when, third he expresses his devotion to some sustained and practical way by acting steadily in the service of his cause.<sup>4</sup>

According to Royce loyalty never means a mere emotion of life for one's cause. It never means merely following one's own pleasure. For once man's will and desire is fully brought to self-consciousness, it fur-

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<sup>1</sup>Josiah Royce, The Philosophy of Loyalty (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1908), p. viii.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 17.



nishes the only valid reason for man to know what is right and good.<sup>1</sup>

To know one's duty was of primary importance to Royce for as he put it:

If I am to know my duty, I must consult my own reasonable will. I alone can show myself why I view this or this as my duty. But on the other hand, if I merely look within myself to find what it is that I will, my own private individual nature, apart from due training, never gives me an answer to the question: What do I will? By nature I am a victim of my ancestry, a mass of world-old passions and impulses, desiring and suffering in constantly new ways as my circumstances change, and as one another of my natural impulses comes to the front. By nature, then, apart from specific training, I have no personal will of my own. One of the principle tasks of my life is to learn to have a will of my own. To learn your own will--to create your own will--is one of the largest of your human undertakings.<sup>2</sup>

In his discussion of "Loyalty to Loyalty" Royce set forth the basic principle of his whole concept of loyalty. According to him loyalty is, for the loyal individual, a supreme good, whatever it be, for the world in general, the worth of his cause.<sup>3</sup> Man in choosing and in serving the cause to which he is to be loyal, is to be, in any case, loyal to loyalty.<sup>4</sup> Royce's thesis was that all the commonplace virtues, in so far as they were defensible and effective, were special forms of loyalty to loyalty.<sup>5</sup> They are to be justified, centralized, inspired,

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, The Philosophy of Loyalty, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 121.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 130.



by the one supreme effort to do good, namely, the effort to make loyalty triumphant in the lives of all men.<sup>1</sup> Royce maintained that all those duties which man has learned to recognize as the fundamental duties of the civilized individual, the duties every man owes to every man, are to be rightly interpreted as special instances of loyalty to loyalty.<sup>2</sup>

When speaking of "Loyalty, Truth, and Reality" Royce said:

My cause partakes of the nature of the only truth and reality that there is. My life is an effort to manifest such eternal truth, as well as I can, in a series of temporal deeds. I may serve my cause ill. I may conceive it erroneously. I may lose it in the thicket of this world of transient experience. My every human deed may involve a blunder. My mortal life may seem one long series of failures. But I know that my cause liveth. My true life is hid with the cause and belongs to the eternal.<sup>3</sup>

The ethics of Royce is that man wills to be loyal to a cause.

Whether that cause be good or evil that is not the question of ethics.

The question is: Is man loyal to loyalty? In Royce's view immoral action would be the failure of man to assert his will and freedom to know his duty in the light of loyalty. So the key to morality for him is to be loyal in the sense that he defined loyalty.

Hocking pointed out that Idealism views man as something different from the causal or biological machine, and that by virtue of what he is, he is worthy of respect.<sup>4</sup> He maintains that this is the necessary

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<sup>1</sup>Royce, The Philosophy of Loyalty, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 348.

<sup>4</sup>Hocking, Types of Philosophy, op. cit., p. 310.

foundation under the whole ethical system.<sup>1</sup>

According to Hocking all ethical principles are contained in one: "Universalize thyself."<sup>2</sup> "Consider thyself a unique being, a view of reality granted to no other, which is thy destiny to express. Express this latent idea, make thy private feeling or intuition of the world the universal sense."<sup>3</sup>

For Hocking the ethical life begins with the "summons to take experience as something more than subjective pantomime; sensation itself I know I 'ought' to take as a sign of objective truth."<sup>4</sup> Man's first duty is to gain and keep a common footing with the rational life around him. Regard for truth is the primary condition of any further moral progress; how far any two minds can get in mutuality depends directly on the degree of their sincerity toward each other.<sup>5</sup> That is, man can serve men only by first serving what appears to be the mere abstract elements of reason in the world, objective truth and right.<sup>6</sup>

Summary. Absolute Idealism viewed man as a rational being with

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<sup>1</sup>Hocking, Types of Philosophy, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 318.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

the capacity to adhere to an absolute standard. Royce set up a standard of loyalty as the key to ethical existence for man. Ethical living for Hocking is the adherence to an objective standard of truth and right. These two standards of ethical living are objective standards to which the moral man can adhere according to Absolute Idealism

### Personalism

Bowne took his ethical concepts from the three leading moral ideas given by Schleiermacher: The good, duty, and virtue.<sup>1</sup> According to Bowne these ideas are essential in a system which is to express the complete moral consciousness of the race. He reasoned that where there is no good to be reached by action, there can be no rational duty, and with the notion of duty vanishes also that of virtue.<sup>2</sup> Behind these three concepts of good, duty, and virtue lay Bowne's concept of man as a free, rational, and self-conscious person, or self.

Moral action, for Bowne, must come under the head of rational action; and action to be rational must have some end beyond itself. Action for form's sake, action which ends in itself and leaves things where they were before, is irrational and purposeless. He maintained that there can be no obligation of mischievous action or to indifferent action. Therefore the ground of obligation to action lies in some good to which the action could be directed.<sup>3</sup> To quote Bowne:

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<sup>1</sup>Borden Parker Bowne, The Principles of Ethics (New York: American Book Company, 1892), p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 26.



It (action) must be directed toward a good and must find in that good the ground of its authority. As the deepest thing in society is not law, but a set of social and personal goods to which the law is instrumental, so the deepest thing in the moral life cannot be moral law, but some good and goods to which that law is instrumental.<sup>1</sup>

In speaking of the idea of the moral Bowne said that the idea of moral obligation arises within the mind itself. However, when the idea comes, it has no external origin, and admits no definition except in terms of itself.<sup>2</sup> The right to which obligation refers is simply a perceived good; and the affirmation of obligation is the act by which the mind imposes duty upon itself in the presence of such a good.<sup>3</sup> The free spirit thus imposes duty upon itself which in turn gives meaning and experience to moral obligation.<sup>4</sup>

Bowne concluded his volume on ethics with the following ethical principles which have been included to give an over-all view of his ethics.

1. That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural, and afterward that which was spiritual. But the spiritual is not something apart from the natural, as a kind of detached movement; it is rather the natural itself, rising toward its ideal form through the free activity of the moral person. The natural can be understood only through the spiritual, to which it points; and the spiritual gets contents only through the natural, in which it roots.
2. As a consequence, the field of ethics is life itself, and immediately, the life that now is. And our moral task is to make this life, so far as possible as expression of rational good-will.

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, The Principles of Ethics, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

3. For life has two poles. It demands for its perfection both outward fortune and happiness and inward worth and peace.
4. The moral life finds its chief field of service of the common good.
5. The greatest need in ethics is the impartial and unselfish will to do right.
6. Presupposing this will to do right, the great need in ethical theory is to renounce abstractions, as virtue, pleasure, happiness, and come into contact with reality.
7. The great need of ethical practice, next to the good will, is the serious and thoughtful application of intellect to the problems of life and conduct.
8. We shall also do well to remember that righteousness is nothing which can be achieved once for all, whether for the individual or for the community.
9. In a very important sense the respectable class is the dangerous class in the community. By its example it degrades the social conception of the meaning of life, and thus materializes, vulgarizes, and brutalizes, the public thought.
10. In the application of principles to life there will long be a neutral frontier on the borders of moral life, where consequences and tendencies have not so clearly declared themselves as to exclude differences of opinion among men of good will.
11. Finally, in reducing principles to practice we must be on our guard against an abstract and impracticable idealism. Even in the personal life conscience may be a measureless calamity, unless restrained by a certain indefinable good sense. Many principles look fair and even ideal when considered in abstraction from life, which cannot, however, be applied to life without the most hideous or disastrous and socialistic quacks. Ethics when divorced from practical wisdom prevents the attainment of its own ends. The abstract ethics of the closet must be replaced by the ethics of life, if we would not see ethics lose itself in barren contentions and tedious verbal disputes.<sup>1</sup>

Brightman defined ethics as "the normative science of morals, which means that it is the attempt to discover and justify reasonable standards of conduct."<sup>2</sup> The implications of Brightman's definition are made explicit in his three basic concepts. They are: law (principles),

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<sup>1</sup>Bowne, The Principles of Ethics, op. cit., pp. 304-309.

<sup>2</sup>Edgar Sheffield Brightman, Moral Laws (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1933), p. 13.



value (the good), and obligation (ought, duty).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the science of ethics is to reveal what value (good) ought (duty) to be attained.<sup>2</sup> It must explain the obligation to achieve the good.<sup>3</sup>

The basis for Brightman's ethics was that of experience. By experience he meant the whole field of consciousness, every process or state of awareness within it; not sensation alone, nor scientifically interpreted experience alone. Consciousness is not to be in contrast with reason or speculation, but, rather, in contrast with the absence of experience, or unconsciousness.<sup>4</sup>

Brightman pointed out that experience is always complex. It is ongoing activity. In the sense in which he used experience it contained both what has been called empirical and what has been called transcendental (rational) factors.<sup>5</sup> To quote Brightman:

Moral experience, in the broad sense, included not only the act of voluntary choice, but also the experiences chosen--the consciousness of value, of obligation, and of law. . . . Moral experience occurs only in persons. A person may be defined as a being capable of moral experience.<sup>6</sup>

Brightman's view of man as a rational being capable of choice came to be the foundation upon which he built his ethics. As he put it:

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<sup>1</sup>Brightman, Moral Laws, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 58.



If choice is not possible, the science of ethics is not possible. If rational, purposive choice is not effective in the control of life, good is not possible. When we discuss the nature of will and freedom, therefore, we are dealing with an absolutely central and essential foundation of ethics.<sup>1</sup>

Brightman constructed a system of moral laws around which he organized his concept of ethical principles. This system of moral laws is contained in brief form in Appendix B. of this study.

Summary. Personalism viewed man as capable of moral action. This action was to contain three concepts of what is moral: the good, duty, and virtue. Moral action is possible only under rational action. The basis of ethics for Personalism is upon experience. Experience including in this case both rational and empirical elements. The fact that man is a free, independent, rational creature makes it possible for him to attain to moral standards. To act less than in a rational way is immoral.

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<sup>1</sup>Brightman, Moral Laws, op. cit., p. 74.

CHAPTER III

MAN IN EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Within recent years there has arisen a school of thought known as Existentialism. Although it is relatively new on the philosophical scene, nevertheless, Existentialism has had roots which extend into history. Blaise Pascal was the father of the Existential.<sup>1</sup> With his deep interest in man Pascal began a philosophical movement which was passed from one generation to another and from one country to another.

The most prominent man to influence Existentialism on the modern scene was the Danish theologian-philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard. The work and writings of Kierkegaard were primarily in protest to the cold formalism of the Danish State Church and the impersonal, deterministic idealism of Hegel. Kierkegaard, who was of a very sensitive and introspective nature, was greatly influenced by his father. His father was in constant dread that he had committed the unforgivable sin. It was a natural consequence that Kierkegaard should also exhibit in his life the same concept of dread and inward gloom. These concepts carried over into his thinking and writing.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>See Frank Thilly's book A History of Philosophy (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1914), pp. 250-503.

<sup>2</sup>J. M. Spier, Christianity and Existentialism, trans. D. H. Freeman (Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1953), pp. 7-9.



Soren Kierkegaard had two fundamental presuppositions upon which he built his theology, psychology, and philosophy. According to Hugh Ross Mackintosh, they were:

First, the principle of spiritual inwardness, or as it is often called, subjectivity, has a determinative influence on all his thinking. By inwardness is meant the personal appropriation of Divinely presented truth, its apprehension with or through passion. . . . The second. . . is the rooted distrust of Hegelian philosophy in which, after years of storm and stress, he had ended. He now rested in an immovable conviction that Hegelianism, with its serene objectivity and optimistic acceptance of the actual is the worst possible framework in which authentic Christian belief can be set.<sup>1</sup>

Kierkegaard emphasized the personal decision and choice of man. In his writings and articles he stressed continually the predicament of man with reference to the three levels or stages at which men could live. The first level or stage is that of the aesthetic. The men who lived on this level are hedonistic. Pleasure or enjoyment are primary values, whether that enjoyment is mental or physical. This type of existence is without meaning or unity.<sup>2</sup>

The second level or stage of existence is that of the ethical. On this level man enjoys some of the warmth and wholesomeness of a life shared with others. There is development of the personality but only in a limited or partial sense.<sup>3</sup>

The third level or stage of existence is that of the religious. This level of existence brings man face to face with the Will behind

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<sup>1</sup>Hugh Ross Mackintosh, Types of Modern Theology (London: Nisbet and Company, 1947), pp. 224, 225.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 231-232.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

all things, the Will that perpetually demands his decision.<sup>1</sup> On this level of existence man experiences and discovers that meaning of faith.<sup>2</sup> Faith for Kierkegaard is "the deepest passion, the most audacious and incredible paradox in which the human spirit can be involved".<sup>3</sup> Through faith man is able to approach God.

Upon His absoluteness we can lay hold only through the struggle of faith, in which (to take one example) the No of doubt and fear evoked by His felt holiness is overcome and absorbed by the Yes of trust engendered by His love.<sup>4</sup>

The whole thrust of Kierkegaard's thinking was that man could know God only in the personal relationship, not by logical Syllogisms. God and man stand alone and in that aloneness man can either say Yes to God or No. When the Yes is given the No is there also, because in Kierkegaard's dialectical method the truth lay between the two answers. Later in history this same line of thought was taken up by Karl Barth.

Kierkegaard was influential only after his death. His Christian presuppositions had little influence upon the later philosophers who took up his method. But before something can be said concerning the atheistic Existentialists of today, there must be an explanation of the Existential principle as it has been propagated in recent times.

#### The Existential Principle

It has been found that the principle or method known as Existen-

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<sup>1</sup>Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



tialism is that principle which distinguishes the essence or nature of a thing from its existence. Upon this one principle all Existentialists have agreed: existence precedes essence. To define existence without destroying the principle of Existentialism has been nearly an impossibility for the Existentialists. Essence and definition to the Existentialists are correlative terms. To describe a thing or person is to give it essence. Existence is undefinable. For when existence is defined it was no longer existence, it becomes essence. Hence existence always precedes essence and there is no definition for either.<sup>1</sup>

#### Some Definitions of Existentialism

According to William Barrett in his article "What is Existentialism", Existentialism

is a philosophy that confronts the human situation in its totality to ask what the basic conditions of human existence are and how man can establish his own meaning out of these conditions. Its method is to begin with this human existence as a fact without any ready-made preconceptions about the essence of man. There is no prefabricated human nature that freezes human possibilities into the preordained mold; on the contrary, man exists first and makes himself what he is out of the conditions into which he is thrown. "Existence precedes essence", as the formula puts it.<sup>2</sup>

J. M. Spier in his book Christianity and Existentialism said that according to the leading exponents of Existentialism, it

is a philosophy of the meaninglessness of life, of the nihility, and mortality of human existence which is devoid of any prospect or future.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Vergilius Ferm (ed.), A History of Philosophical Systems (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1950), p. 405.

<sup>2</sup>William Barrett, "What is Existentialism?", The Saturday Evening Post, November 21, 1959, p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. xvii.



In his evaluation of the philosophic background of Existentialism, Spier stated that Existentialism is based upon the religious motives of nature and freedom, and that it is irrationalistic in character. In his thinking Existentialism is the same as humanism; for humanism is committed to a faith in the autonomous freedom of human personality, and no matter how much the various brands of Existentialism differ, they all agree that man is absolutely autonomous.<sup>1</sup>

In evaluating the non-philosophic background of Existentialism, Spier pointed out that Existentialism represents a withdrawal from the rational to an irrationalistic structure of the autonomous human personality. Existentialism uses concrete human experience as a first principle. Existentialists do not base their philosophy upon an abstraction of personality such as reason, pure consciousness, or something similar. It is based upon the concrete individual with his anxiety, futility, and despair, but also with his resolute determination to account for his hopeless situation and seek a final stronghold from which he can existentially experience and accept his own concrete existence. Existentialism is anthropology first of all. Some of its representatives have attempted to arrive at an ontology but even their primary interest is anthropology.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Carl Michalson in his lectures on What is Existentialism at the Iowa State University, February 25, 1958, gave a somewhat facetious definition of Existentialism: "Existentialism is a clandestine marriage

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<sup>1</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

between Nordic Melancholy and Parisian Pornography."<sup>1</sup> Then in a more sober vein Michalson gave the major concepts of Existentialism, which have been quoted in part from the class notes of Eldon Fuhrman:

1. Individualism: no regulated quest for first principles, for it goes back to persons, not merely as a man, but as a person.
2. Freedom: let man be. One is free to so act as to allow others to remain free. Man must be free to develop.
3. Existence: to stand beyond or out of oneself. God does not exist (go beyond himself), nor do animals. Man is the being who exists.
4. Atheism: if God exists then man is not free. Everything must be permitted; man must be free to negotiate life for himself.
5. Commitment: Existentialism tries to close the gap between ideas and actions. It says you are what you think; what you think you are. You must act where you think! You must commit yourself to your thoughts or else change your thoughts. Get out of the balcony and participate. To know a thing you can not stand at a distance. You must immerse yourself into the reality into which you are engaging.
6. Nothingness: Existentialism is an encounter with nothingness. Life is ultimately meaningless, is shot through with holes. Where we stand life is meaningless. There is an abyss in our wake, etc. As a cat on a hot tin roof. Where will we leap? From nothingness to nothingness in our search for authenticity.<sup>2</sup>

Now that some definitions of Existentialism have been set forth, as well as some of the basic principles and concepts, the next section will deal with the leading exponents of Existentialism. To avoid confusion the discussion has been divided into two sections. The first section will cover the leading Atheistic Existentialists and the second section will deal with the leading Theistic Existentialists.

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<sup>1</sup>What is Existentialism, Carl Michalson, a lecture give at Iowa State University, on February 25, 1958, taken from the class notes of Eldon Fuhrman.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



## II. TYPES OF EXISTENTIALISM

### Atheistic Existentialism

Martin Heidegger. Heidegger was born in 1889. He was strongly influenced by the phenomenology of Husserl during his educational pursuits. Phenomenology in its methods seeks to inspect essence. This inspection of essence can only be applied after a "transcendental reduction"<sup>1</sup> has taken place. In this reduction a thing is abstracted from its concrete individual existence and the essence of phenomena are contemplated in pure consciousness, and are then inspected and described.<sup>2</sup>

In 1928 Heidegger succeeded Husserl as professor of philosophy at the University of Freiberg. He retained Husserl's method of phenomenology. His most important work, in which he developed his existentialist views, was published in 1927 under the title Sein and Zeit. Heidegger was known only by his close associates until his thought became widely known through the writings of his former student, Jean-Paul Sartre.<sup>3</sup>

Among the contemporary exponents of existential philosophy, Heidegger is perhaps the most significant and most likely to hold a secure place in the history of thought. The importance of Heidegger lies in the deliberateness with which he makes an analysis of what human life has to say for itself without the introduction of any transcendent refer-

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<sup>1</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



ence, and also without drawing any conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

Heidegger is a philosopher of existence. He has used the same method Decartes used to solve the perennial riddle of reality. Only Heidegger put Decartes's proposition in reverse. Heidegger's proposition was "not cogito ergo sum, but sum ergo cogito."<sup>2</sup> He began and continued his examination into the nature of existence where he finds existence immediately at hand. Heidegger applies the phenomenological method of analysis to human existence. He asked the question: How does my existence reveal itself? His answer was that human existence is characterized by "ex-sistence--it is ex-static--not so much emotionally as cognitively; we stand out of ourselves."<sup>3</sup>

Heidegger employed the term Da-sein to describe the self-awareness which man has in existence. For Heidegger man is always present to himself. He finds himself in the world. When man finds himself in the world he asks himself the question, Was I simply thrown into it? Thus, according to Heidegger, man becomes aware of the problem of time, not as a general question but by being caught up into a stream of events that carries him along. This awareness of finding himself in the world that is not his own, and yet in which he must continue to be, fills life with a sense of anxiety.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James S. Thomson, "The Existential Philosophy," Philosophy Today, Summer 1958, volume II, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

As Heidegger viewed it, life is not what it ought to be, for man falls beneath real existence. Yet man cannot disavow responsibility, so that he has a positive sense of guiltiness about life. Nevertheless, existence runs on to non-existence, which is death. Heidegger is vague in explaining what he means by non-existence, he prefers to allow existence to speak for itself.<sup>1</sup>

According to Thomson, Heidegger propounds no doctrine, constructs no theories; rather he seems to say, "If you want positivism, real down-to-earthism, here is what we have on hand. This is existence."<sup>2</sup>

Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre was born in 1905. Besides being a philosopher, Sartre is the author of numerous literary works. As a philosopher, Sartre was a student of Heidegger and Husserl. However, Decartes, Hegel, and Freud exerted an influence upon his thought. His philosophical method is an intertwining of the phenomenology of Husserl with the dialectic of Hegel.<sup>3</sup>

Sartre's main philosophical work was entitled L'Etre et le Neant (Being and Nothingness)<sup>4</sup> and was published first in 1943. He has also written a brief summary of his thought in Existentialism is a Humanism. And just before the last war he wrote books on scientific psychology and

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<sup>1</sup>Thomson, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 60.

<sup>4</sup>Sartre's Being and Nothingness has been translated by Hazel T. Barnes (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1956).



on the phenomenology of Husserl.<sup>1</sup>

Sartre passed along the same strange pathway to real existence as Heidegger. For Sartre, the search is the prelude to self-realization. Over against the nothingness of the world, man can enter upon the sole possession of himself, determined by no constraint other than what he wants to be. Man has but himself, and to enter upon this estate is to taste real freedom. This is the theme of Sartre's Being and Nothingness which he summed up in these words: "Freedom is precisely that Nothingness which arises in the heart of man and which compels human reality to make itself instead of being."<sup>2</sup>

Existential thought is thus for Sartre: "The process of disenchantment, through which man learns how to achieve his own destiny."<sup>3</sup>

When man has himself, he has everything. Man must achieve his own self-transcendence. Man must become his own God,

and if man has a preontological understanding of the being of God, it is neither the great insights of nature nor the power of society that have conferred it on him; but God, as value and chief aim of transcendence, represents the final point at which man makes himself announce who he himself is. To be a man is to stretch out towards being God, or if you prefer it, man is fundamentally a desire to be God.<sup>4</sup>

Sartre devoted a long passage near the end of Being and Nothingness to the discussion of the sin of Adam and Eve. He insisted that Adam fell from his original estate because he accepted the rule of God.

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<sup>1</sup>Spier, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Thomson, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 102-103.



Adam's sin was his failure to be Adam.<sup>1</sup> Thomson characterized Sartre as the reincarnation of Nietzsche who held that man's destiny is to achieve the Superman. Only for Sartre, the Superman lies in the depth of man's being. In the concluding chapter to his aforementioned book Sartre sketched three stages of disenchantment: "To have, to do, and to be."<sup>2</sup> The question comes however, To be What? Sartre would say, Nothing.

Atheistic Existentialism assumes the basis of existence to be that man recognize his utter futility in changing his time-bound world. Heidegger and Sartre both apply Husserl's method of phenomenology in interpreting existence. They stress the self awareness of man and that for man to be himself is the key to real existence or the escape from non-existence. A note of despair and futility runs through Atheistic Existentialism. Outside of human existence, being is nothing, being is meaningless, chaotic, absurd.<sup>3</sup>

#### Theistic Existentialism

Karl Barth. Barth was born in 1886. He took his studies at the Universities of Berne, Berlin, Tuebingen, and Marburg. Among the men who influenced Barth the most were Kierkegaard, Dostievski, Oberbeck, and the Blumhardts. He began his pastoral ministry at Geneva, Switzerland where he remained for two years. He then was pastor at Safenwil for the

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<sup>1</sup>Thomson, op. cit., p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 31.

next ten years. At Safenwil, under the shadow of the war of 1914 to 1918, he was led to a radical questioning of current theological notions, and wrote his Commentary on Romans. The critical power and the pessimism of the post-war situation at once gave Barth a very wide hearing among German-speaking Protestant theologians. In 1921 he became Professor at Goettigen and later Professor at Muenster.<sup>1</sup>

When Adolph Hitler came to power, Barth was deprived of his chair at Muenster because he refused to take the oath of allegiance to the Fuehrer. He left Germany and in 1939 became professor of theology at Basle. In 1939 he was deprived of his doctorate of the University of Muenster, but in 1945 it was restored.<sup>2</sup>

Barth's main literary works have been The Word of God and Theology (1924), Theology and the Church (1928), and Dogmatics (1946).<sup>3</sup>

Although much could be said about Barth's theology and his contribution to Protestant Christianity, for the purposes of this study his theory of crisis and view of man is the primary concern.

Barth, more faithful to Kierkegaard's intention than Heidegger or Sartre, looked upon crisis as the triumph of faith won through the discomfiture of reason. For Barth, reality is disclosed through the anguish of the human situation, and reality is God. However, Barth's God is not the God of the philosophers, but the God of Abraham, Issac,

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<sup>1</sup>F. L. Cross (ed.), The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 135.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



and Jacob; the God who had spoken through the prophets; the God who was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

For Barth the surrender of autonomous reason at the climax of the inner drama became the contrite sinner hearing the Word of God. The conclusion drawn by Barth from his theory of crisis is itself not a philosophical but a biblicism which denounces philosophy as an inept guide towards faith.<sup>2</sup>

According to Barth the crisis of man has a two-fold meaning. Crisis is the supreme law of this world, the hint of the Lawgiver, who as such is above His law. It is also the turning point to the better. It is the limiting-fence and a way out. It is the end and a new start. It is Yes and No. It is the landmark of Divine wrath and the landmark of approaching Divine deliverance.<sup>3</sup>

Barth has taken the Existential principle of crisis and personal decision in the midst of anxiety and retained it within a Christian context. Later in his career Barth admitted that he had carried the Existential principle into his first edition of his Dogmatics. In the preface of his second edition he said,

To the best of my ability I have cut out in this second issue of the book everything that in the first issue might give the slightest appearance of giving theology a basis, support,<sup>4</sup> or even a mere justification in the way of existential philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup>Ferm, op. cit., p. 410.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>R. Birch Hoyle, The Teaching of Karl Barth (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1930), p. 135.

<sup>4</sup>Mackintosh, op. cit., p. 264.



When speaking of the being of God and reality Barth contended that the being of God is found only in the act of his revelation, and that ontological speculation has been to a great degree the error in the Church's doctrine. He asserts that when man asks questions about reality he is actually asking questions about God. According to Barth God is being, but being is not God. The question of the being of God is only answered in God's revelation of himself through Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Barth explains that when, on the basis of God's revelation, man defines God as event, act, and life, he does not identify God with the sum or essence of event, act, and life in general. God's revelation is a special event, not identical with the sum or essence of all events in either nature or history. Therefore it is not sufficient to denote God as pure act. God is the origin, reconciliation, and goal of all other events. God distinguishes himself from all other actuality, not only in that he is actuality itself, its principle or nature, but in that he is free event, free act, free life, in himself.<sup>2</sup> Barth insists that God's being is the being of a person, of the original and intrinsic person. He stands in marked contrast to the impersonal and nonconcrete being of God taught by Paul Tillich. For Barth God is not being itself, nor is He pure existence, God is really a being whom in prayer man addresses as "Thou" and who speaks to man as "I am."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur C. Cochran, The Existentialists and God (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), p. 115.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

Emil Brunner. Brunner was born in 1889. He is a native of Winterthur, Switzerland, and from 1916 to 1922 he served as pastor at Obstalden. From 1922 to 1938 he taught at Zurich and from 1938 at Princeton. He was one of Karl Barth's foremost supporters in protesting against immanence in religion and Christian mysticism. But on the other hand he holds that a genuine element of truth is contained in the Catholic doctrine of analogy, a position for which he was taken severely to task by Karl Barth.<sup>1</sup>

His writings include The Philosophy of Religion from the Standpoint of Protestant Theology (1926), The Mediator (1927), The Divine Imperative (1923), and Man in Revolt (1937).<sup>2</sup>

Brunner in his Man in Revolt discussed his relationship to Existential philosophy under the heading of "Philosophical and Theological Anthropology." He maintained that faith must never renounce its own ontology.

Being--not merely the existent--as being created, and indeed as being created by and in the Word of God, is equally a being of its own kind as the Being of God is the ground of all that exists, and of His manner of being. There is absolutely no definition which is more "original" than this: Creator and creature. God is the Creator not only of all that exists, but also of all the forms of existence, just as there is no reason which is higher than God in which the Divine Being might share--God is the Creator also of the reason.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Cross, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Emil Brunner, Man in Revolt, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1957), pp. 542-543.



Brunner maintained that the "thought of being of the existent is fundamentally different according as the idea of the Creator lies behind it or not."<sup>1</sup> There is no neutral being. Every idea of being betrays its background, whether it be that of metaphysics or of faith.<sup>2</sup>

Brunner was less reluctant than Barth to draw the lines of relationship between his position and that held by Existential philosophers. Brunner said it was no accident that Kierkegaard was the originator of the Existential principle. He criticized Heidegger and Sartre for divorcing the Existential principle from its Christian pre-suppositions.<sup>3</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr. Niebuhr was born in 1892 at Wright City, Missouri. He was educated at Elmhurst College and Yale University and in 1915 was ordained. He was pastor at the Bethel Evangelical Church of Detroit from 1915 to 1928, when he was appointed professor of Applied Christianity at the Union Theological Seminary in New York City.<sup>4</sup>

Niebuhr was influenced by the Dialectical Theology of Karl Barth, and finds central place for myth and paradox in theology. But he insists against Barth that Christianity has a direct prophetic vocation in relation to culture.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Brunner, op. cit., p. 543.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 544.

<sup>4</sup>Cross, op. cit., p. 958.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



Niebuhr's principle work is The Nature and Destiny of Man (1941-43). He has also written Moral Man and Immoral Society (1932) and An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (1936).<sup>1</sup>

For Niebuhr secular views of man and the world were rejected as misleading and inadequate. The secular interpretations of idealistic-liberalism and naturalistic-proletarianism have ended in illusion because they can not comprehend the heights and depths of man and the world. According to Niebuhr the confusion of man trying to cope with the present situation stems from the separation of man from the sources of religion, out of which correcting and transforming forces come.<sup>2</sup>

Niebuhr's main interest has been in the social and ethical implications of the Christian message. His emphasis upon the tragedy of the human situation, the crisis experience through anxiety has shown his assumption of the Existential principle. Since Niebuhr has written primarily on man, his views will be discussed in the section on man.

Paul Tillich. Tillich was born in 1886. He was the son of a Lutheran pastor and he studied at the Universities of Berlin, Tuebingen, and Halle. During the First World War he served as an army chaplain. In 1924 he became professor of theology at Marburg, and in 1925 professor of theology at the Technical Hochschule at Dresden. In 1929 he became professor of philosophy at Frankfurt. Compelled by his connection with the Religious Socialists to leave Germany in 1933, he settled in the

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<sup>1</sup>Cross, op. cit., p. 959.

<sup>2</sup>Hans Hofmann, The Theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, trans. Louise Pettibone Smith (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1956), p. 89.

United States where he was appointed professor of philosophical theology at the Union Theological Seminary. In 1940 he became an American citizen. His thought has been much influenced by Karl Barth and Existentialism. He is recognized as one of the leading contemporary exponents of Protestantism.<sup>1</sup>

Among the more important of his writings are Biblical Religion and the Search for Ultimate Reality (1951) and Systematic Theology (vol. I 1951 and vol. II 1957).<sup>2</sup>

The three leading concepts of Tillich's thought were being, non-being, and being-itself. These concepts correspond in some measure to Heidegger's Da-sein, nothing, and being. There is a leading principle which is perhaps the key to Tillich's whole system: The idea of correlation. In his Systematic Theology he explained his method of correlation.<sup>3</sup> "Primarily it is epistemological."<sup>4</sup> To quote Tillich:

There is a correlation in the sense of correspondence between the religious symbols and that which is symbolized by them. There is a correlation in the logical sense between concepts denoting the human and those denoting the divine. There is a correlation in the factual sense between man's<sup>5</sup> ultimate concern and that about which is ultimately concerned.

It is important that one understand that the method of correlation is

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<sup>1</sup>Cross, op. cit., p. 1358.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 1359.

<sup>3</sup>Cochran, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), I, p. 60.



"an element of the reality itself."<sup>1</sup> Epistemologically the method of correlation is justifiable because the subjects studied are ontically correlated. According to Cochran unless this point is kept in mind the student cannot do justice to Tillich's thought.<sup>2</sup>

As Cochran pointed out there are three leading concepts in Tillich's philosophy: being, nonbeing, and being-itself. One is obliged to examine each of these concepts separately if he is to understand Tillich. It is well to bear in mind that none of these concepts of realities exist in isolation. They exist in correlation and interdependence.<sup>3</sup>

We discern three parts of correlation in Tillich's system: Being, and nonbeing (finite being), being-itself and nonbeing (God), and finite being and being-itself. There is thus a dialectic in man, a dialectic in God, and a dialectic between God and man. All three are interdependent and interpenetrable. Being reveals nonbeing and nonbeing reveals being. Together they reveal being-itself and at the same time being-itself (God) reveals finite being.<sup>4</sup>

With his principle of correlation, Tillich was able to be both a philosopher and a theologian at the same time. Philosophy asks the question of being as being, whereas theology is concerned about the question of God.<sup>5</sup> As Tillich put it, "Systematic theology cannot and should not enter into the ontological discussion as such. Yet it can and must consider these central concepts from the point of view of their theological

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<sup>1</sup>Cochran, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.



significance."<sup>1</sup> This implies that theology is obliged to take ontology into account not only for its doctrine of man but also for its doctrine of God. Tillich holds that theology cannot and ought not to be independent of philosophy. They are correlated and interdependent.<sup>2</sup>

Cochran's summary of Tillich was,

Tillich's thought has a comprehensiveness and finality that evoke profound admiration even where it failed to gain assent. There is something "Hegelian", something distinctly "Germanic" about his achievement. A man who can assimilate Greek and Judaeo-Christian traditions to his system, who can survey the realm of human learning and see it whole, and who can then offer us a reasoned, logically consistent, and unified philosophy of history and of religion, deserves unstinted praise. Although Paul Tillich may not be the greatest living Protestant theologian, he is surely one of its profoundest thinkers.<sup>3</sup>

Theistic Existentialism has been characterized by an emphasis upon the crisis experience as man was confronted with the Word of God. The crisis situation presents both the dread of despair as well as the hope of deliverance. The Existential theologians have posited a reality which is God, He being ultimate reality. They have also criticized the Atheistic Existentialists for borrowing the Existential principle without taking along with it the Christian presuppositions. The Theistic Existentialists have shown a great interest in speaking to man in his estranged condition. In the estranged condition man asks himself the question concerning his existence. Man's one hope of coming to know reality is through the experience of anxiety and dread. Anxiety, because reality

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<sup>1</sup>Tillich, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>2</sup>Cochran, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

has slipped through his fingers; dread because he has fallen short of God's requirement.

### III. EXISTENTIALISM VIEWS MAN

#### Atheistic Existentialism

Human Existence. Heidegger's intention was to develop a general ontology. But any universal ontology must be preceded by an existential theory of human existence. For Heidegger existence is significant to the individual in an absolute way. To exist is to exceed oneself; it is to stand outside of oneself and to transcend oneself. It is self-transcendence, never being but always becoming.<sup>1</sup>

Existence is not the total man in the all-sidedness of his existence. It is not all the temporal aspects of man, but only an abstraction of the latter. The natural aspects of number, space, motion, and life do not belong to existence. Existence rests in itself and is not based upon the natural aspects. The natural aspects are in themselves meaningless. They depend upon Existence as it alone can give them meaning.<sup>2</sup>

All human existence for Heidegger is in essence, existence. That is, existence is self-determination, self-projection, or self-transcendence. Existence is to have the potentiality and possibility of Being. Man is his potentialities; he constantly chooses one of his potentialities and thus projects and actualizes himself in the future. Existence is

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<sup>1</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 28-29.



never identical with itself. It is never static. It is always something different than it was. It is always becoming itself, and in becoming himself, man is a law unto himself, the creator of his own norm. All existence is characterized by freedom. It can misuse its freedom by choosing against itself. As a result man loses himself and his autonomy; his free self-determination changes into heteronomy. As he now bows before norms which are foreign to him, norms which he did not make, his existence perishes in the world of daily life.<sup>1</sup>

Spier characterized Heidegger's Existentialism as,

in a certain sense it is still humanistic, for it is an irrationalistic defense of the ideal of personality, and this ideal is one of the basic motives of modern humanism. On the other hand, its philosophy is a constant nihilism which accepts a disqualified pragmatism. Its ideas shift between a pragmatic and nihilistic pole, and undoubtedly the accent falls upon the latter. Heidegger ends in a dark attitude of nullity which cannot be penetrated by the faintest glimmer of hope.<sup>2</sup>

In the last analysis Heidegger's concept is still a humanistic philosophy of freedom, but its irrationalistic character is displayed in the typical Existentialist manner. The Existentialist manner is evident in the fact that Heidegger affirms that no one can be redeemed from unauthentic Existence by merely accepting his theory. One cannot attain the freedom and wisdom of authentic existence by merely believing in Heidegger's doctrine. Authentic existence is only reached through the existential Angst. To reach the place where the individual is conscious of his freedom-toward-death a person must personally experience this

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<sup>1</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 37.



Angst in the very depths of his being. It is possible that a person who has never heard of Heidegger's theory may arrive at authentic existence, and it is equally possible that another person who knows Heidegger's theory may never attain to the real wisdom of authentic existence.<sup>1</sup>

The first principle of Atheistic Existentialism is that man exists. Man turns up on the scene and only afterwards does he define himself. Jean-Paul Sartre put it like this,

If man, as the Existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence.<sup>2</sup>

Sartre went on to state that all Atheistic Existentialists may say that man was in anguish. By anguish Sartre meant: the man who involves himself and who realizes that he is not only the person he chooses to be, but also a law-maker who is at the same time, choosing for all mankind as well as himself, could not help escape the feeling of his total and deep responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

The Atheistic Existentialists thought it very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him. There can be no a priori

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<sup>1</sup>Spier, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Franklin Baumer (ed.), Main Currents of Western Thought (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 676.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. Nowhere is it written that Good exists, that men must be honest, that men must not lie; because the fact is that men are on a plane where there are only men. That is the very starting point of Existentialism, according to Sartre.<sup>1</sup>

Sartre held that everything was permissible of God did not exist and as a result man is forlorn, because neither within himself nor without does he find anything to cling to. He can not make excuses for himself.<sup>2</sup>

According to Sartre since existence really precedes essence, there is no explaining things away by reference to a fixed and given human nature. In Sartre's own words,

There is no determinism, man is free, man is freedom. . . . if God does not exist, we find no values or commands to turn to which legitimize our conduct. So, in the bright realm of values, we have no excuse behind us, nor justification before us. We are alone, with no excuses.<sup>3</sup>

Sartre's whole idea was that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet, in other respects, free; because, once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. The Existentialist discounted the power of passion. He would never agree that a sweeping passion was a raging torrent which fatally led a man to certain acts and is therefore an excuse. The Existentialists hold that

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<sup>1</sup>Baumer, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 677.

man is responsible for his passion.<sup>1</sup>

Sartre, in summing up the Atheistic Existentialist's view, stated that Existentialism is nothing else than an attempt to draw all the consequences of a coherent atheistic position. It was not an effort to plunge man into despair at all. Existentialism is not so atheistic that even if God does exist, that would change nothing. In his own words Sartre said,

Not that we believe that God exists, but we think that the problem of His existence is not the issue. In this sense existentialism is optimistic, a doctrine of action, and it is plain dishonesty for Christians to make no distinction<sup>2</sup> between their own despair and ours and then call us despairing.

In criticism of Sartre, Spier pointed out that Sartre's view is characterized by nihilism in his concept of the human spirit, and by materialism in his theory of being. Spier noted that Sartre's nihilistic anthropology is the kernel of his system, and that his anthropology actually struck a death blow to the heart of Existentialism.<sup>3</sup>

#### Theistic Existentialism

Karl Barth's concept of man is intricately bound up with his concept of God. He said that "the ontological determination of man is based upon the fact that in the midst of all other men one of them is the man Jesus."<sup>4</sup> Barth's ontological definition of man places man before his divine counterpart in the person of Christ. "Man is there-

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<sup>1</sup>Baumer, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 679.

<sup>3</sup>Spier, op. cit., p. 74.

<sup>4</sup>Cochran, op. cit., p. 131.



fore with God because he is with Jesus, and because Jesus had become man's neighbor and brother."<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive definition of human being for Barth would be that of a being-with-God.<sup>2</sup>

According to Barth,

Godlessness is not a possibility but the ontological impossibility of man's being. Man exists with God, and not without him. Sin is a reality. But sin is not a possibility of human being, but its ontological impossibility. . . . Our being does not include sin; it excludes it. A being in sin, being in godlessness, is a being contrary to man's being.<sup>3</sup>

Man is able to deny his own being as a being-with-God. But, as the fact remains, man is, because God is; or, to state it concretely, "because God's being is identical with the being of the man Jesus."<sup>4</sup> Barth retains this concept of human existence and upon it he rests his doctrine of the goodness of man's created being.<sup>5</sup>

Human being, according to Barth, "as a being-with-Jesus, is a being that rests upon God's election, and consists in a hearing of God's Word."<sup>6</sup> Therefore, a human being is a being who is responsible to God. The freedom of man is only that freedom of choice which God has granted to him. "The freedom which constitutes man's being is not merely man's possibility or ability which would first be realized in this use of free-

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<sup>1</sup>Cochran, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

dom."<sup>1</sup> In other words,

Man is precisely in that he decides for God--in that he knows, obeys, and calls upon God. Man's very being is his freedom. It is a freedom of choice, but, as freedom granted by God, it is a freedom in which the right is chosen. The right is that which corresponds to God's free choice.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore man does not choose between different possibilities, but rather he chooses between his only possibility and his impossibility, between his being and nonbeing.<sup>3</sup> Barth insists that man's freedom is not a freedom to sin. For when man sins, he forfeits his freedom.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of the fact that man chooses nonbeing he "is still God's creature, and the object of God's grace."<sup>5</sup> Sinful man, the one who chooses nonbeing, is not the real man. "The sinner who participates in God's grace is the real man."<sup>6</sup> Barth sees the real man as the one who meets man in the person of Christ.

Barth bases his anthropology upon his Christology. Even though Jesus was sinless, and ordinary man sinful, Barth holds that the real existence of man is revealed in Jesus. In Jesus man is together with God. To be a true man means then that one is preserved by God's mercy, adheres to God's righteousness for Jesus' sake.<sup>7</sup>

In his book The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption,

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<sup>1</sup>Cochran, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Nobel V. Sack, "The Eschatology of Some Neo-Supernaturalists" (unpublished Doctoral dissertation, Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1957), pp. 130-131.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

Brunner spoke of "the image of God and creation." Brunner's concept of the creation of a self came to full expression when he described the relationship of the self with the creator.

The heart of the creaturely existence of man is freedom, selfhood, and to be an "I", a person. Only an "I" can answer a "Thou", only a Self which is self-determining can freely answer God. An automaton does respond; an animal, in contradistinction from an automaton, may indeed re-act, but it cannot re-spond. It is not capable of speech, of free self-determination, it cannot stand at a distance from itself, and it therefore is not re-sponsible.<sup>1</sup>

However, Brunner is quick to point that man's freedom is only that which God has willed to man. God willed man's freedom in order that man could answer God and that his answer could be a responsible one.

Responsibility is restricted freedom, which distinguishes human from divine freedom; and it is a restriction which is also free-- and this distinguishes our human limited freedom from that of the rest of creation.<sup>2</sup>

According to Brunner the free Self capable of self-determination belongs to the original constitution of man as created by God. But from the outset man's freedom is limited.<sup>3</sup>

When speaking of the relation of body to spirit, Brunner emphasized the biblical doctrine of the wholeness of man.

The Biblical view leaves no room for the dualistic notion that though the "spirit" is of divine origin and divine in character, the body on the other hand is something lower and inferior. But

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<sup>1</sup>Emil Brunner, The Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, trans. Olive Wyon (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), II, p. 56.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



it is less well-known why the Bible takes this view.<sup>1</sup>

The relation of body and soul is determined by the divine revelation in the Incarnate Word. The fact that man has been made in the image of God implies that the body is equally the means of expression and the instrument, of the spirit and the will. The body has been given to man by the Creator, in order that in it he may express his higher calling and make its realization concrete. The body which God has created for man is full of the symbolism of his divine-human destiny, and is well suited for its realization.<sup>2</sup>

For Brunner the spirit is that aspect of human nature by means of which man can perceive his divine destiny and, knowing and recognizing this could receive it, and transmit it to the body, as the instrument through which it is accomplished. The spirit receives the Word of God, as it is the Spirit of God which speaks to it within the human spirit. This is in harmony with the fact that God's Word never comes to man as a purely spiritual word, but is always mediated through physical means as a spiritual message, as a word that is spoken with the lips, and that the revelation of God takes place through the Incarnation of the Word. It is not an abstract spirituality, but in a spirituality of faith, connected with the body, that man received the divine self-revelation. As He is the God who wills to reveal Himself through the world, and in the world, so He created a creature in His likeness, which by nature is a

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<sup>1</sup>Brunner, Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

unity of body and soul. The divine love in its self-revelation can only be received by the heart of man which is destined to love.<sup>1</sup>

Brunner spoke of "Christian Anthropology in Relation to Natural Science." He maintained that modern science is constantly raising two significant difficulties for faith. The first is that the mental and psychical powers of man are conditioned by the brain, and the second is the influence of heredity on the individual.<sup>2</sup>

Brunner pointed out one fact which could not be contested. That all the ideas and observations and theories which the Self initiates, which the thinking Self shapes and alters, estimates logically, verifies, corrects, accepts or rejects are products of the Self. Apart from the unity of the Self there can be no unity of theory. Without the freedom which the Self examines and ponders, in a critical way, the deduction and theoretical constructions drawn, there can be no progress in science at all. And without the strictly scientific ethos, which constrains the man of science to subordinate all his personal interests to that of the Truth, there can be no scientific progress. Thus Brunner's argument for the unity of the Self and freedom of the Self to choose remains valid.<sup>3</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr spoke of the uniqueness of the human self in his work on The Self and the Dramas of History. He defines the uniqueness of the human self by emphasizing the three dialogues in which it is involved

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<sup>1</sup>Brunner, Christian Doctrine of Creation and Redemption, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 81

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 85.



according to the Hebraic rather than the Hellenic description of its reality. For Niebuhr the implications of these three dialogues can give more accurate content to the original metaphor "image of God" than the Greek emphasis on reason. The self for him is a creature which is in constant dialogue with itself, with its neighbors, and with God.<sup>1</sup>

The dialogue of the self with itself is an empiric fact in the sense that every person must admit that such a dialogue goes on in the internal life of the self, though there is no external evidence of this dialogue. This internal dialogue is a more significant testimony of the self's freedom over nature than its endowment with conceptual capacities, though these are frequent instruments of the self in the dialogue.<sup>2</sup>

The self is in constant dialogue with various neighbors. It is not merely dependent upon others for its sustenance and security. It depends upon them for the image which it has of itself and for the spiritually security which is necessary for the self as its social security.<sup>3</sup>

The self is in dialogue with God. The assertion that the self is in dialogue with God took the inquiry immediately beyond the limits of empirical verification. But Niebuhr made some preliminary concessions to the spirit of contemporary empiricism and said merely that the self imagined itself in an encounter with the divine. For the persistence of

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<sup>1</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, The Self and the Dramas of History (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p.4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



the imagination is an empirical datum about the self. Niebuhr prefers to be moderate and declare that the self distinguishes itself by a yearning for the ultimate. He said that if one does not admit this characteristic he will have failed to define the total anatomy of human selfhood.<sup>1</sup>

Niebuhr discussed the internal dialogue of the self with itself. In his thinking the self maintains a rather constant internal dialogue in which it approves or disapproves its actions, or even itself. Its accusations and defenses of itself are quite different from those in which it engages in its external dialogues. The self pities and glorifies itself as well as accuses and excuses itself. It can not carry on this dialogue without using its reason; for the dialogue means that the self in one of its aspects is making the self, in another of its aspects, its object of thought.<sup>2</sup>

From Niebuhr's point of view the dialogue within the self proceeds on many levels. Sometimes it is a dialogue between the self as engaged in its various responsibilities and affections and the self in the grip of its immediate necessities and biological urges, and the self as an organization of long-range purposes and ends. Sometimes the dialogue is between the self in the context of one set of loyalties and the self in the grip of contrasting claims and responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

Niebuhr concluded his discussion of the self in a dialogue with itself by saying,

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<sup>1</sup>Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

The dialogue which the self carries on within itself is certainly more complex than understood in classical philosophy. Depth psychology has uncovered many of these complexities. But it has no doubt obscured many others because it failed to grasp that the same self is in the various personae of the dialogue.<sup>1</sup>

Another area of particular interest to Niebuhr was that of the self in space and time. His opinion is that there can be no question that the self is an object among other objects in space and time. It has its dated existence at some particular time and in some particular location. The conditions of time and space, of age and environment determine the self's character to a large degree.<sup>2</sup>

But according to Niebuhr the self also rose out of the situation of time and space. By its memory and foresight it transcends the given moment and is therefore transtemporal in one dimension of its being. It is also spaceless in one dimension. The self-consciousness of the self proceeds in a particular organism. But the self is, in one dimension, non-spatial. Its imagination is free to rove over the boundaries of time and space to which it is bound. But it is more important to note that self-consciousness is ultimately non-spatial.<sup>3</sup>

The self and its body was for Niebuhr a particular relationship. He held that the self is not a particular self merely because it is in a particular body. It can take a partially objective view of its body just as it could of its mind. But it has an internal relation to its body as to its consciousness which makes the idea of "my body" differ-

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<sup>1</sup>Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

ent from the idea of "my property". There is an organic unity in every animal organism which is usually described as its "soul". This self insofar as it has an experience of the unity is "soul". But it is more than soul insofar as it can think of its body as an object even while it has an inner experience of the bodily organic unity.<sup>1</sup>

The self and its search for ultimate meaning was discussed by Niebuhr as a threefold response. The first response embraces all religious responses in which the self seeks to break through a universal rational system in order to assert its significance ultimately.<sup>2</sup>

The second alternative of explicit religious response stands at the opposite pole of idolatry. It is in fact an heroic effort to transcend all finite values and systems of meaning, including the self as particular existence, and to arrive at universality and "unconditioned" being.<sup>3</sup>

The third alternative, a religious answer to the self's search for the ultimate, embraces the two biblical faiths of Judaism and Christianity. These faiths interpret the self's experience with the ultimate in the final reaches of its self-awareness as a dialogue with God. The idea of a dialogue between the self and God assumes the personality of God, an assumption which both rationalists and mystics find untenable, but to which biblical faith clings stubbornly.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Niebuhr, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.



Paul Tillich has seen man as existing in a state of finitude. He knows not who he is nor where he is going. Man exists in an extraneous state from some great unknown thing that is demanded of him. Man is filled with wonder at the phenomenon of being, simple astonishment that things are. This wonder presupposes a darker knowledge that they might not be; being is threatened, and will always and everywhere be threatened, by non-being.<sup>1</sup>

Tillich is much like Kierkegaard in that he looks upon man's existence as a state of anxiety. This Existential anxiety is ~~not~~ to be confused with fear, for it has no object, and fear must have an object. Nor was it to be confused with neurotic anxiety; the neurotic attempts to avoid non-being by avoiding being.<sup>2</sup>

The victim of Existential anxiety may try to sidestep by frantic activity, or by worshipping secular concepts, or he may try to bury his anxieties in a heteronomous religion that offers him ready made certitude for his uncertainties. In either case, said Tillich, the individual has committed idolatry. Against such idolatry Tillich asserts the Protestant Principle which considers it presumptuous of any conditional institution, such as church or state, to pose as spokesman for the unconditional, for example, God. According to the Protestant Principle as Tillich expounded it, every Yes must be coupled with a Corresponding No, and the Protestant Principle does not accept any truth of faith as ultimate

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<sup>1</sup>"To Be or Not to Be", Time, March 16, 1959, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

except the one that no man possesses it.<sup>1</sup>

According to Tillich the only way man could cope with his Existential anxiety is by having the courage to be, which he defines as self-affirmation in spite of the threatened possibility of non-being. This courage to be is like a spark across the gap between existential and essential, philosophy and theology, man and God. For this human, self-affirming courage has its own source and power in the divine self-affirmation.<sup>2</sup>

Man approaches reality through the confirmation of longing and frustration, which Tillich calls ultimate concern. Man's hope is the New Being, a conception Tillich derived from Second Corinthians 5:17.<sup>3</sup>

The great questions arising from man's ultimate concern Tillich grouped under three headings: Being, Existence, and Life. Man's Being was his essential nature, from which he is estranged as Adam was estranged from Eden. Existence encompasses the situation in which estranged man found himself. Life is the combination of Being and Existence.<sup>4</sup>

Another aspect of Tillich as he viewed the human situation, is estrangement, suffering, and bondage. By estrangement Tillich meant that man is shut within himself and cut off from participation. At the same time, man falls under the power of objects which tend to make him a mere object without a self. If subjectivity separates itself from ob-

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<sup>1</sup>Time, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 51.

jectivity, the objects swallow the empty shell of subjectivity.<sup>1</sup>

By suffering Tillich pointed out that in Christianity the demand is made to accept suffering as an element in finitude with the ultimate courage and thereby to overcome that suffering which depends on Existential estrangement, which is destruction. Christianity knows that such a victory over destructive suffering is only partly possible in time and space.<sup>2</sup>

By bondage Tillich stated that in every act of Existential self-realization, freedom and destiny are united. Existence is always both fact and act. From this it follows that no act within the context of existential estrangement can overcome existential estrangement. Destiny keeps freedom in bondage without eliminating it.<sup>3</sup>

Summary. Theistic Existentialism sees man as he stands in relation to God in an estranged condition. Human being was created good and man was given the possibility for choice between being and nonbeing. The human self has a body which serves as a symbol of the relationship in which the incarnate Word came as the God-man. Man as a self is capable of free action and communication with himself, others, and God. It is his chief duty to choose that which God has planned for him. Man must choose between being and nonbeing. In the midst of this choice there is the frustration of dread and anxiety. For man to choose other than his real be-

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), II, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 78.



ing is to sin and fall into idolatry. To sin is to choose nonbeing.

#### IV THE ETHICAL IMPLICATION OF EXISTENTIALISM'S VIEW OF MAN

##### Introduction

The Existential principle of existence before essence has practically eliminated a systematic discussion of Existentialism's ethics. The only reliable value in Existentialism is that of decision in the midst of anguish and anxiety. Carl Henry gives some reasons why Existentialism is difficult to systematize. "The Existentialist scorns every endeavor to define moral and spiritual claims by rational criteria."<sup>1</sup> Traditional ethical studies, with their systematic approach is a speculative luxury for the Existentialist. They represent as evasion of life itself via abstraction. "Systematic ethics appears to the Existentialist as grotesquely irrelevant to the stark realities of daily problems and pressures."<sup>2</sup>

Existentialism is hostile to any attempt to discover universal essences or principles; it insists that to understand the values and moral questions is to misunderstand them. The effort to formulate a principle as a test of the rightness or wrongness of any ethical decision is to obscure the essential nature of ethical living. The ethical life for the Existentialist is a life of existential decision and not a life of rational synthesis.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Carl F. H. Henry, Christian Personal Ethics (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1957), p. 120.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Existentialism scorns the attempt to formulate a world-and-life view. Any claim to a rational understanding of existence is thrust aside as pretense. Thus the entire moral tradition of the West is repudiated as speculative rationalism.<sup>1</sup>

In Henry's evaluation existential moralists have proposed a "practical" morality rather than speculative rational systems. The Existentialist asks,

What shall I do in this concrete predicament in view of its specific alternatives? and, not What is the nature of duty? or, What is the nature of the self that it should be required to do anything at all?<sup>2</sup>

For the Existentialist, disintegrating and frustrating experiences of life serve constantly to alert one to the awareness that human life is intense subjective decision. "The Existentialist pleads for a passionate life-or-death approach to ethics."<sup>3</sup> The ethical man comes into being through moral commitments. In decision man makes his own tomorrow in a context of existence which is neither bound by necessity nor hemmed in by reason. The Existentialist sees the problems of life as psychological and not logical. Therefore ethical decision should be ventured on the existential-practical level, rather from the theoretical point of view.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henry, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

### Atheistic Existential Ethics

Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre are the leading exponents of Atheistic Existentialism. Both have rejected the rational approach to life as invalid. Hedonism is condemned as unjustifiable by Heidegger and Sartre. The tragic side of life is to serve an introduction to the various possible ethical decisions. By passionate living man can, in a world wherein he is a homeless vagrant, be free to create his own values, and thus make himself a moral individual.<sup>1</sup>

According to Norman N. Greene, Sartre's description of human reality (nature) is best summed up by the statement that,

Man is a free being, in that bright realm of values, we have no excuse behind us, nor justification before us. No excuse behind us, because only our own free choice can account for our actions.<sup>2</sup>

It was Greene's opinion that Sartre's ethics was the obligatory pursuit of chosen ends, accompanied by a constant awareness that they are freely chosen and that a new choice is possible. It requires both action and uncertainty, activity and reflection, modes of life which have often been held to be incompatible.<sup>3</sup>

Atheistic Existentialists have regarded the tragic dimension of man's experience as a silent acknowledgment that man is separated, not from God, but from his real self. Man's sense of the tragic is forced on him from the inside, not from the outside. This sense of anguish arises because man is conscious of his experience and other creatures

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<sup>1</sup>Henry, op. cit., p. 125.

<sup>2</sup>Norman N. Greene, Jean-Paul Sartre: The Existential Ethics (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1960), pp. 45-46.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



merely undergo theirs. For man to affirm his identity with the distraught self is to acknowledge himself a failure, and to deny the ambiguity of the self. The alternative option is a dynamic "conversion" which, accepting this ambiguity, strives to actualize the transcendent self.<sup>1</sup>

For the Atheistic Existentialist the absence of values means man's freedom is unthwarted. Death is the only sure thing in man's experience. Therefore, man must make his decisions and act under the threat of death. Life gains its entire significance from the present act alone.<sup>2</sup>

Man's decision becomes absolute in significance in that he is the god who shapes his own destiny. Man's will alone can act determinatively in the free historical order.<sup>3</sup>

In criticism of the Atheistic Existential view of ethics, Henry pointed out that the cardinal "evil" for them is human existence at half-mast. This "evil", if taken seriously would seem to require a rejection of the existential approach to life. For existence is not as free and determined as the Existentialist would have people to believe. The fact that the Existentialist admits death as the last experience would seem to inhibit freedom. Since man can not will his existence there is little evidence which would say he can will the reality of values. Man can hardly be ethically creative when personal

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<sup>1</sup>Henry, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

extinction is the surest of his encounters with reality. Since all is in the flux of change man's decisions too are bounded by meaninglessness and indifference of the time-space process.<sup>1</sup>

According to Henry the Existentialist has become a victim of his own rejection of a providential order of fixed moral purposes and rational ultimates. The Existentialist's argument that values and the risk of total loss requires that nothing be decided beforehand becomes unconvincing in the light of experience. If man creates the distinction between right and wrong, and subjectivity supplies the content, the absolute significance of the existential decision discloses itself as merely psychological deception.<sup>2</sup>

Another point of difficulty in Atheistic Existentialism for Henry was the notion that man is without light in the darkness of his moral predicament. To say that man is to will his freedom is to imply no concrete content to ethical action. No objective content can be attached to the moral act. The existential formula is that man ought to choose; what he choose is a matter of indifference.<sup>3</sup>

In summary of Atheistic Existentialism it can be stated that man is the creator of his own values and his own world of reality. The tragedies of the human situation are merely a separation of man from his real self. Life gains value and significance only through the decision of the crisis experience. Man's decision becomes absolute in that he becomes his

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<sup>1</sup>Henry, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

own god and shapes his own destiny.

### Theistic Existential Ethics

Karl Barth has written little directly in the field of ethics, however, the ethical implications of his thought can be found in his Doctrine of the Word of God and other works. Barth's claim has been that he is setting forth church doctrine. In the opinion of Thomas Hill, Barth "challenges philosophy with a position the acceptance of which would supersede virtually all independent philosophies."<sup>1</sup>

Barth opposes any kind of intellectual investigation in isolation from life, which proposes to find ultimate truth. He has a distrust for conscience whether religious or otherwise. Truth can exist only in the existential moment when God speaks to man. When he applies this concept to ethics Barth shows that man is incapable of apprehending ethical truth or of fulfilling its requirements. Also he shows that both ethical truth and ethical achievements are wholly dependent upon God's speaking to man. Both of these emphases are reflected in Barth's statement concerning a proposed treatment of ethics in the foreward to his Doctrine of the Word of God where he writes:

Ethics so-called I regard as the doctrine of God's command and do not consider it right to treat it otherwise than as an integral part of dogmatics, or to produce a dogmatics which does not include it.<sup>2</sup>

Barth attacks ethical relativism and shows the complete inability

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Hill, Contemporary Ethical Theories (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1957), p. 98.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, The Doctrine of the Word of God, trans. G. T. Thomson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), p. xiv.



of man to discover moral truth or to fulfil moral requirements. "He holds that in the light of the fact of God, the complete realitvity of all human knowledge is manifested."<sup>1</sup> Man adopts

Ideas and principles, points of view scientific, ethical and aesthetic, exioms, self-evident truths, social and political, certainties, conservative and revolutionary.<sup>2</sup>

These become gods and universities are their temples; but "to recognize the one and only God means to make all these systems relative." "When the knowledge of God becomes manifest, they no longer possess ultimate credibility."<sup>3</sup> According to Barth ethics have no validity save for persons in particular times and places. Therefore any objective test for ethics cannot but lie beyond the world of space and time: "Our demonstrated existence in this world is measured upon a standard which is not at all a part of existence as we know it or conceive it."<sup>4</sup> According to Barth the relativism of all our codes and all our interpretations is becoming generally evident in the modern revolt against "authority for its own sake."<sup>5</sup>

Hill evaluated Barth as contending that moral insight and achievement are, in the moral sphere, completely dependent upon the sovereign and free revelation of God, that is, upon the Word of God. According to

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<sup>1</sup>Hill, op. cit., p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Karl Barth, The Knowledge of God and the Service of God, trans. J. L. M. Haire and Ian Henderson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939), p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 18, 19.

<sup>4</sup>Karl Barth, "The Problems of Ethics Today" in The Word of God and the Word of Man, trans. Douglas Horton (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1928), p. 138.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 292, 293.

Barth this revelation comes to man from a God who is Himself completely other than man and so altogether incomprehensible to man. God is a holy God and it is presumptuous to try to encompass Him in any kind of formula. Man's insight never penetrates beyond God's revelation or even fully grasps that revelation itself. In Barth's concept, man's ultimate meaning of right and good is the sovereign incomprehensible approval of God.<sup>1</sup>

The Barthian concept of the Word of God is that the Word of God never becomes an object. It must be repeated if it is again to be valid. "What God utters is never in any way known and true in abstraction of God Himself."<sup>2</sup> This Word of God is manifested in three forms: preaching, Scripture, and revelation itself. The Word of God can never be structured into a code or system or displayed in scriptural quotations.<sup>3</sup> It is always personal, living, and purposive. It is, and remains God's mystery, yielding no remaining content that can itself be called "the Word of God."<sup>4</sup>

The dawning of the Word of God upon man is the other side of his despair. At the time when man sees his struggle to be impossible, Light from God breaks in.<sup>5</sup> The content of that which God approves does not seem to be particular acts, but a certain type of existence. God does not demand of man this or that according to some rule. Nor does He prescribe the details of our duty. Rather He commands man to choose his way in the

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<sup>1</sup>Hill, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>2</sup>Barth, "The Problems of Ethics Today," op. cit., p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 184.

<sup>5</sup>Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, op. cit., p. 67.



light of the new and approved kind of existence. As Barth writes:

Without being disturbed by the inconsistent appearance of it we shall then enjoy the freedom of saying now Yes and now No, and of saying both, not as the result of outward chance or of inward caprice, but because we are so moved by the will of God, which has been abundantly proved "good, and acceptable, and perfect" (Rom. 12:2).<sup>1</sup>

The moral theory implied in the statements of Barth become explicit and orderly in the thought of Emil Brunner. Like Barth, Brunner adopts from the outset an avowedly Christian standpoint, refusing to be led outside this approach.<sup>2</sup> As Brunner writes of the Christian:

There he stands--as one who has been touched by God, whose heart has been pierced by Him, as one who has come under the stern judgment of God and has tasted the Divine mercy, as one who can never seek the meaning of his life and the answer to that great human question anywhere else save there!<sup>3</sup>

The Good, which for Brunner, stands for all the moral predicates, is never something intrinsic. Ethics is the dependent child, not the parent or the independent partner of theology. Christianity has always regraded even the Law of Nature as the command of God.<sup>4</sup> As Brunner puts it:

Here there is no "intrinsic" Good. What God does and wills is good; and all that opposes the will of God is bad. The Good has its basis and its existence solely in the will of God. . . . The will of God only is Good and it is to be done because He wills it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, op. cit., p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Hill, op. cit., p. 102.

<sup>3</sup>Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>4</sup>Emil Brunner, Justice and the Social Order, trans. Mary Hottinger (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945), p. 85.

<sup>5</sup>Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit., p. 53.



For Brunner the will of God is not something that can be apprehended by human powers and objectified in human thought forms. Thus the good is never a universal principle or a general truth:

The universal validity and universal intelligibility or rationality of its principle. . . must be absolutely rejected by the Christian ethic. The scientific presentation of the Christian ethic can certainly never represent the Good as a general truth, easy to be perceived, and based on a universal principle.<sup>1</sup>

The good is likewise never obedience to a fixed and formal law. Instead the good is revealed in the moment of God's speaking to an individual, and there alone.<sup>2</sup> As Brunner put it:

There is no Good save obedient behaviour, save the obedient will. But this obedience is rendered not to law or to principle which can be known beforehand, but only to the free, sovereign will of God. The Good consists of always doing what God wills at any particular moment.<sup>3</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr insists upon a thoroughgoing relativity of all human ethical insight and activity. The relativity of man's ethics is rooted in the very structure of human nature according to Niebuhr's concept. Niebuhr criticized Rationalism and Romanticism for their "lack of a principle of interpretation which can do justice to both the height of human self-transcendence and the organic unity between the spirit of man and his physical life."<sup>4</sup> According to Niebuhr man is thoroughly rooted in this finite world, but on every side his nature reaches out toward in-

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<sup>1</sup>Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit., p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>Hill, op. cit., p. 104.

<sup>3</sup>Brunner, The Divine Imperative, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>4</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955), p. 123.

finitude so that "the limits of self lie finally outside the self."<sup>1</sup>

Niebuhr holds that individual relationships, being based on common presuppositions and rooted in personal ties, are less biased than group judgments. However, "these advantages are in terms of degree and not in kind."<sup>2</sup> Even the common standards are "qualified by the particular perspectives of different families, classes, cultural groups, and social functions."<sup>3</sup> We always judge ourselves by our own standards and weigh ourselves in balances which give us a special advantage.<sup>4</sup>

The very essence of sin, according to Niebuhr, is man's effort to exalt his relative ideas into absolutes or to pretend that he is God. His interpretation of Christian doctrine is "that sin has its source not in temporality but in man's willful refusal to acknowledge the finite and determinate character of his existence."<sup>5</sup> Moral effort itself is tainted.

Thus the moral urge to establish order in life is mixed with the ambition to make oneself the center of that order; and devotion to every transcendent value is corrupted by the effort to insert the interests of the self into that value.<sup>6</sup>

Nor does effort to elevate moral ideals help for: "The higher the aspira-

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<sup>1</sup>Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>2</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1935), p. 126.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., p. 177.

<sup>6</sup>Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, op. cit., p. 85.



tions rise the more do sinful pretensions accompany them."<sup>1</sup> Such pretensions tend only to intensify confusion. For example the troubled international situation is not only a picture of human finitude, it is also a "tragic revelation of the consequences of sinful dishonesty which accompany every effort to transcend it."<sup>2</sup>

Niebuhr holds that Christian ethics depend upon revelations. These revelations are of two sorts: private or general revelations, and public or specific revelations in history. General revelation is the basis for the acceptance of special revelation, but only through special revelation does general revelation become meaningful. Only through it does man learn that it is God who gives direction and force to conscience.<sup>3</sup> Through the special revelation of the Bible

a universal human experience, the sense of being commanded, placed under obligation and judged, is interpreted as a relation between God and man in which it is God who makes the demands and judgments upon man.<sup>4</sup>

It is also Niebuhr's thought that without this interpretation of conscience through historical revelation, "conscience becomes falsified, because it is explained merely as man facing the court of social approval or disapproval or as facing his own best self."<sup>5</sup>

Niebuhr suggests that the significance of morality is found in the

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<sup>1</sup>Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, loc. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>3</sup>Hill, op. cit., p. 108.

<sup>4</sup>Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., p. 129.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 130.



concept of "vicarious suffering love" as exemplified in Jesus. He justifies this love in terms of the will of God and its demands upon us in terms of the revelation of God's will. The content of morality or its practical standard may be spoken of in terms of love which demands both disinterested equality and positive benevolence.<sup>1</sup> Its specific demands cannot, however, be set forth in advance; nor is there every ground for hope that they may be completely fulfilled. In practice one must attempt to apply the ideal as fully and as realistically as possible, all the while recognizing that his efforts fall far short. In this process the acknowledgment of sin and redemption are essential. One only begins to escape the partiality that mars man's judgments when he recognizes his own sin and God's forgiveness. "Only a forgiving love, grounded in repentance is adequate for healing the animosities between nations."<sup>2</sup>

Paul Tillich has not written directly in the field of ethics, but his ethical concepts are apparent in his various works. The crux of his ethics is the imperative for man to be himself. Man is confronted with various choices as to what he will be and this causes anxiety. Man may try to avoid this anxiety by worshipping secular concepts such as success or nationalism.<sup>3</sup> Or he may try to avoid anxiety by turning to religions which offer him ready made certitudes for his uncertainties. In either case, once man has committed himself,

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<sup>1</sup>Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>2</sup>Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics, op. cit., p. 128.

<sup>3</sup>Time, op. cit., p. 48.

he has committed idolatry.<sup>1</sup>

This idolatry is the outgrowth of man's basic sin, that of not being man. Tillich holds that the myth of Adam and Eve explains the universal sin of man, in that man wants to be God rather than man. With this urge to be something other than himself, man shuts himself off from God and other men. Man is in a state of estrangement.<sup>2</sup> Tillich said,

In the state of estrangement man is shut within himself and cut off from participation. At the same time, he falls under the power of objects which tend to make him into a mere object without a self. If subjectivity separates itself from objectivity, the objects swallow the empty shell of subjectivity.<sup>3</sup>

For Tillich man is immoral when he chooses to be something other than himself. Man becomes subject to the material and secular when he chooses to be other than himself. The moral man lives in a state of existential anxiety, in which he is always confronted with the decision of choose between being (himself), and non-being (something other than himself).

Summary. Theistic Existential ethics reconstructs the traditional Christian concept of ethics into a relative system of ethics. The basis upon which Theistic Existential ethics is built is found in the existential moment when God speaks to man in revelation. Revelation is not something fixed or static, but something on-going, something living. With reference to a written revelation Theistic Existentialists hold that the Bible contains only in concept the Word of God and that the concepts be-

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<sup>1</sup>Time, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Tillich, Systematic Theology, op. cit., II, p. 65.

come revelation only when God chooses to reveal them to man. This revelation occurs in existential anxiety or as Barth put it, in dialectical confrontation.

The absence of an objective standard poses no problems for the Theistic Existentialists, for man lives in the true sense of living when he is in the midst of anxiety and anguish. William Shakespeare's lines from Hamlet give expression to the situation in which man finds himself, "to be, or not to be: that is the question."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III, Scene I, Line 56.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## CHAPTER IV

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## I. SUMMARY

Introduction

It was the problem of this study to survey some contemporary Idealistic and Existential philosophies of man and their ethical implications. In order to solve this problem it was necessary to investigate their views of the nature of ultimate reality, the nature of being, and the nature of man.

After much reading and research the writer of this thesis has made the following observations about some contemporary philosophies of man.

Man in Idealistic Philosophy

Absolute Idealism. The leading exponents of this school of thought were Josiah Royce and William Ernest Hocking. They conceived man as a self. This human self's character and quality were derived from its social relationships and experiences. Man has the capacity to choose, hold to an absolute standard, and can determine his own life and course of action. The human self and the body are one; for the two together equal a full self. The body is a means of communication between selves and therefore becomes an expression of the self to which it belongs. The fact that the human self is self-conscious gives evidence to the theory that it is an expression of the Absolute Self which is immanent in na-

ture and all of life.

Since man is capable of determining his own course of action, Absolute Idealism has conceived man as being a rational creature with the capacity to adhere to an absolute standard. Ethical living is that way of life which adheres to an objective standard of truth and right. Ethical living for Royce was loyalty to loyalty.

Personalism. The leading exponents of this school of thought were Borden Parker Bowne and Edgar Sheffield Brightman. They conceived man as a functional unity of body and mind. Man is the product of his experiences. He is capable of intercommunication with other persons and with the Supreme Person who willed him into existence. Man is a complex unity of conscious actions and interactions with his environment, his body, and the Supreme Person.

Personalism holds that man is capable of moral action. The primary moralss and ideals of Personalism are the good, duty, and virtue. Moral action is possible only under rational action. Experience is the basis of ethics when experience is conceived as rational as well as empirical. To act less than rational, or irrational, is immoral for the Personalists.

#### Man in Existential Philosophy

Atheistic Existentialism. The leading exponents of this school of thought have been Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Their concept of man is characterized by the absence of a rational account of the nature or content of the human self. Rather their main attention was directed to a description of the human condition. Yet in their descrip-



tion of human existence Heidegger and Sartre retained an idealistic concept of man. Hence their philosophy has been labeled humanistic as well as atheistic. Man appears on the scene and only after his appearance does he describe himself. Thus existence always precedes essence. Therefore there can be no static human nature nor description of human nature which is always valid for all in the flux of change.

In ethics Atheistic Existentialists hold that the absence of set or static values makes man free. Death is the only sure thing in man's experience and all of life is lived under this threat. Man's decision in the midst of anguish and anxiety becomes absolute in significance in that man himself is the god who shapes his own destiny. Thus man creates his own values and his own world of reality.

Theistic Existentialism. The leading exponents of this philosophy were Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Paul Tillich. These men see man as he stands in relation to God in an estranged condition. Man was originally created good but when given the possibility to choose between being and nonbeing, he chose the latter. Man has a body which serves as a symbol of the relationship which the incarnate Word came as the God-man. Man's chief duty is to choose that which God has planned for him. Man must choose between being and nonbeing. In the midst of the two possibilities man experiences frustration and anxiety.

In ethics man is confronted with the Word of God and given the freedom to either say yes or no to the Word. To say yes is to side with God and to say no is to fall short of God's plan. However, the content of this Word of God is subjective rather than objective and therefore

leads to a relative rather than absolute standard of truth or right. The greatest sin would be the refusal for man to realize his real self as being-with-God. Anything short of this is idolatry.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

Absolute Idealism holds a lofty view of man and makes ethics merely a matter of loyalty to an objective standard of moral principles. It tends to ignore or treat lightly moral evil and its relationship to the nature of man.

Personalism sees man as determining his character by conscious choice and ethics are based upon moral laws. Even though it holds a high view of man it falsely assumes that man will always act rationally or coherently. The empirical evidence proves otherwise. Man acts irrationally and emotionally as well as rationally.

Atheistic Existentialism views man as he appears on the scene of time and says that man alone is qualified to construct his world of values. This type of Existentialism tends to ignore the rational aspects of human existence. Although it disclaims an idealistic concept of man, it has retained a humanistic view of man. Man creates his own work, god, and moral criteria.

Theistic Existentialism conceives man as a sinner in revolt against his Creator. Though in revolt man still retains the rational and emotional nature given to him by God's creative act. Ethics are based upon a relativity which demands the individual to choose right conduct when confronted with "revelation". This view of man is in keeping with the Reformed Doctrine of Man but its ethical concepts are too dependent upon subjective decision.



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## APPENDIX A.

## Hocking's Summary of Objective (Absolute) Idealism

- (1) There are two main kinds of order in the world, an order of classes (for things existing at the same time) and an order of events. The order of classes runs up to a unity chiefly because the mind works that way: it classifies its classes into higher classes, until it reaches the all-inclusive class, "being". This leaves open the question whether there is or is not an inclusive unity in the objects themselves.
- (2) Of the events in time-sequence, there are two orders, a causal order and a purposive order. The fact that the causal order applies to all events, on the principle that every event has a cause, can not exclude the actual existence of a purposive order, of which we are aware in ourselves, nor the possibility of a corresponding principle that every event has a purpose.
- (3) These two orders are not independent; they constitute, not a dualism, but a single system of events.
- (4) The purposive system can explain and include the cause system. The causal system cannot explain nor include the purposive system. Thus the purposive system must be the beginning of an explanation of the world. The physical must be understood from the mental, not the mental from the physical.
- (5) This means that the event-structure of the world has its unity in purpose. And this purpose must be one and not many. The singleness of the causal order implies a corresponding singleness of the purposive order.
- (6) The single purpose corresponds with the unity of the order of classes. The unity of purpose is the unity of being. This is the result which, in religious terms, is called the existence of God, as the one real from which all other things are derived.
- (7) This proposition implies the following propositions: (a) the world has a meaning; (b) nothing in the world is meaningless, not even wastes and its evils; (c) the existence of mankind has a meaning; (d) the existence of individual men has a meaning.
- (8) Proposition 6 does not imply: (a) that the world has, or has not a beginning in time; (b) that nothing is added to the world since the original deposit or creation of the physical order; (c) that there is no other space-time order than the one present to scientific inquiry; (d) that the human self is destroyed with the death of the body.

(9) In bringing forth man, the universe has brought forth a mind which is free and creative. Its freedom implies its power to determine the future from conceived alternatives; also its power to err, to reject duty, and to injure. Its creativity implies its capacity to add to creation and to cooperate with the original purpose in the finishing of the world.

(10) If man can cooperate with God, man must be able to grasp in substance, though not in plan, the nature of God's purpose: goodness and right must be the same for man and God, not different; truth must be the same; beauty must be the same. This is what is meant by the proposition, found in Buddhism, in Vedanta, in Stoicism, in Christianity, and other religions, that man "shares in the nature of God."

(11) This constitutes the dignity of human nature and, at the same time, the obligation of the human being. Life is an occasion in which obligation, opportunity, and happiness normally coincide.

(12) Life is also an occasion in which the fulfillment of one's task is likely to be attended with suffering. But the suffering which is a consequence of the aggressive fulfillment of duty is significant suffering and loses that sting of pure accident or pure loss. And in it there need not be defeat; but rather, the assured fulfillment of the deepest will of the individual.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>William Ernest Hocking and others, Preface to Philosophy (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), pp. 503-504.



## APPENDIX B.

## Brightman's System of Moral Laws

## I. The Formal Laws.

1. The Logical Law is stated as follows: All persons ought to will logically; i.e., each person ought to will to be free from self-contradiction and to be consistent in his intentions. A moral person does not both will and not will the same ends; this property of a moral person is called his formal rightness.
2. The Law of Autonomy: All persons ought to recognize themselves as obligated to choose in accordance with the ideals which they acknowledge. Or: Self-imposed ideals are imperative.

## II. The Axiological Laws.

3. The Axiological Law: All persons ought to choose values which are self-consistent, harmonious, and coherent, not values which are contradictory or incoherent with one another.
4. The Law of Consequences: All persons ought to consider and, on the whole, approve the foreseeable consequences of each of their choices.
5. The Law of the Best Possible: All persons ought to will the best possible values in every situation; hence, if possible, to approve every situation.
6. The Law of Specification: All persons ought, in any given situation, to develop the value or values specifically relevant to that situation.
7. The Law of the Most Inclusive End: All persons ought to choose a coherent life in which the widest possible range of value is realized.
8. The Law of Ideal Control: All persons ought to control their empirical values by ideal values.

## III. The Personalistic Laws.

9. The Law of Individualism: Each person ought to realize in his own experience the maximum value of which he is capable in harmony with moral law.
10. The Law of Altruism: Each Person ought to respect all other persons as ends in themselves, and, as far as possible, to cooperate with others in the production and enjoyment of shared values.
11. The Law of the Ideal Personality: All persons ought to judge and guide all of their acts by their ideal conception (in harmony with the other Laws) of what the whole personality ought to become both individually and socially.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Brightman, Moral Laws, op. cit., pp. 98, 106, 125, 142, 156, 171, 183, 194, 204, 223, 242.