

A History of Philosophy

60 Post-Hegelian Idealism

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And the outline I've given you goes geographically, really for simplicity's sake, I guess, and you can sort through some of it as you need to. So, the things I want to lay particular emphasis on are the three I've noted on the board. Schopenhauer, and you have a chapter in Stumpf about Schopenhauer, there didn't used to be, but in this edition of Stumpf, there is.

And there are some selections in Gardner from Schopenhauer. Then personal idealism, because it has had a significant influence on American philosophy, if you look at the bottom of the page, personal idealism in America. And then the neo-Kantian movement.

So, those, plus F.H. Bradley in Britain, and he is an example of an early 20th-century neo-Hegelian. Actually, the neo-Hegelian who profoundly influenced Whitehead. So, we'll talk about him probably on Friday to make the transition.

Keep in mind what I said way at the beginning of our discussion of post-Kantian thought, namely, that what you have in this idealist movement is the attempt to project onto the whole of reality what one sees in the lens, the mirror, however you want to use the metaphor, of one's own human spirit, human consciousness, conscious spirit. You see it by now in Hegel that the self-consciousness is a microcosm of the absolute spirit in its unfolding manifestation in history. And something of the same carries all the way through.

In Schopenhauer, as I've noted there on the board, he's a voluntaristic idealist, meaning that the aspect of the self that he finds most revealing, that is to say, most at the very heart of reality, is will rather than reason. So, where Hegel said that the rational is the real and the real is rational, that is to say, you understand reality in terms of your own conscious dialectic, what Schopenhauer is saying is that, if you like, will is reality and reality is will. And so you understand reality in the image of the human will.

So you get those variations coming through all the way. If you look down at the three bibliographical items at the bottom of the list, Ewing will give you a good overview of the idealist tradition historically up into the 20th century, selections and commentary. If you're interested in its influence on religious thought, then C.C.J. Webb's book is very helpful, from 1850 onwards into the 20th century.

And if you're interested in its influence on social and political thought, then A.J.M. Milne. Quite unrelated to the Milne of Winnie the Pooh. One of you frowned. Have

you heard of Winnie the Pooh? I mean, that's better in some ways than Dr. Seuss, if you remember Dr. Seuss.

But those books are worth your attention. And those of you in political science or in history would do well to take a look at the Milne book. It casts a lot of light on things.

All right, now let me start by commenting about some of the lesser people down the road, and then come back to Schopenhauer. In France, you have a man like Mendebiran, and in his case, it seems to be more feeling than will or thought. It's as if he's saying, I feel, therefore I exist.

And feeling is real, and real is feeling. You see that sort of romanticized view. Maurice Blondel is an interesting character.

He was a Christian philosopher, very much influenced by the romanticist Schelling, but also a philosophical and social activist in his day. In France in the 1930s, a debate developed over the question of whether there could be such a thing as Christian philosophy. And Blondel was one of the active participants in that debate, arguing, yes, indeed, there can be.

Namely, his kind of romanticized idealism, he saw as Christian philosophy. In Italy, I've mentioned before Giovanni Gentile, who was Mussolini's Minister of Education, as a political thinker, the political theorist of fascism. Benedetto Croce is particularly significant in aesthetics and aesthetic theory.

He's still read nowadays for his contributions in that area. So if you want a Hegelian view of the aesthetic, then Croce is likely to be a little more readable than the old man himself. In Britain, F.H. Bradley, as I mentioned, is of major significance.

But A.E. Taylor is an interesting writer, very readable. He was at Cambridge. He wrote a metaphysics textbook called *Elements of Metaphysics*, which is a very fine representation of how a Hegelian idealist might do metaphysics in that conservative, old-school Hegelian tradition.

He was also a Plato scholar. Somebody commented that in his book on Plato, he turns dear old Plato into a good Episcopalian. He was a theist, and he has another book called *The Faith of a Moralist*, in which he develops something of a moral argument for the existence of God.

So Taylor is significant. William Temple was a philosopher at Oxford, but later in his career was in the hierarchy of the Anglican Church and became Archbishop of Canterbury in the 1940s. He did quite a lot of writing in social ethics, but his most significant philosophical work is *Nature, Man, and God*.

You can tell from that that he covered quite a swath of material. Nature, Man, and God. When you've talked of those, what's left? Well, that's his point.

It was a book on metaphysics, the other thing. But he also has another work called Albrecht's Creative Mind, in which he picks up on the Platonic notions of goodness, truth, and beauty and argues that they are found in the One, God, the Absolute. I should perhaps remark, and we'll come back to this another time, that Bradley does not equate the Absolute with God.

God is the highest manifestation of the Absolute, but is not the Absolute. Subtle distinction in there. He's trying to avoid pantheism in saying that.

In America, you get an earlier kind of idealism in Jonathan Edwards and, of course, in Transcendentalism. American Transcendentalism, particularly Emerson, is a kind of American Romanticism, very much in that sense. But the Hegelian movement in England, which focused in St. Louis but spread very broadly, was best represented, I think, by Josiah Royce, who taught at Harvard in the golden age of the Harvard Philosophy Department.

Some people think they're having another golden age now. But back then, they had Josiah Royce and William James and George Sandiana, quite a stellar collection of people. And Royce sort of translates the Hegelian vision of reality into the American scene, talking of the spirit of the community rather than the absolute spirit, and so forth.

But you can see some of Hegel's political thought and conception of the state coming through in Royce's view of the community, that American concept. And then you get personal idealism in America, represented by Borden Parker. That should be BP, Borden Parker Bowne.

Incidentally, the University of Southern California, for a number of years, was a center of personal idealism. And their philosophy building is known as the Borden Parker Bowne Hall of Philosophy, after this guy. The two major centers for personal idealism were at USC and at Boston University.

And it was at Boston University that Edgar Sheffield Brightman taught for many years. And he had among his students a number of evangelicals, so that he had quite a significant influence in the shaping of evangelical thought for the 1950s and thereabouts. He did doctoral work with Brightman.

So did Edward Carnell, the theologian and philosopher of religion at Fuller in the 1940s and 50s. And for a while, it was one of the more influential philosophies among Christian thinkers, both conservative and liberal. At this juncture, I think it's

fair to say that personal idealism is more a matter of history than a vigorous present reality.

But you still find people referring to it with a sort of nostalgia for those good old days. Let me say that personal idealism came in various forms, but in the Bowne-Brightman-Battocci form, it was not a monistic idealism, as the Hegelian movement was, but a pluralistic idealism. So in that sense, it seems to go back perhaps more to Brightman with his many minds, you see, rather than to Hegel.

The best metaphysical representation of it that I'm acquainted with is Brightman's book, *Person and Reality*. *Person and Reality*. Interesting title, because F.H. Bradley's major work was called *Appearance and Reality*, and Whitehead's major work was *Process and Reality*.

So they're all trying to characterize reality, you see. Bradley, in terms of appearances, which are, he maintains, only to some degree real. So you have degrees of reality in all appearance, rather than the phenomenal numerical gap count.

And, of course, there are degrees of reality in all of the stages in the historical unfolding of Hegel's dialectic, too, you see. But the title *Appearance and Reality* reflects that, like Whitehead's title *Process and Reality*, because God is in process, like everything else is in process. And the underlying model that Whitehead uses is the model of sense perception, sense consciousness, which is a process.

And so when Brightman does *Person and Reality*, he's saying that the concept of person is the concept you want for talking of what is most fully real and most ultimately real. And so, obviously, he's going to be talking of a personal God. And as a pluralist, that means there is God and other persons.

And that's what made him attractive to Christian philosophers. He did, he and Bertocci both, he did, over the problem of evil, take a theistic finitist position. That is to say, if you pose the problem of evil as the seeming contradiction in a set of four propositions, namely God is altogether good, God is altogether powerful, God is altogether wise, and purposeless evil exists, then one of the four has to go if there's a contradiction there.

And Brightman felt that the God is altogether powerful had to go. And so God is of limited power. Now, I mention that because I think it's a significant problem with metaphysical idealism to account for the problem of evil.

If you have a monistic idealism, then obviously evil is part of the whole. If it's pantheism, it's part of the divine, or else it's simply the shadow side of the good and is not really evil. And you remember how we ran into that problem with Plotinus, his theory of emanations, and his monistic idealism.

Well, with a pluralistic idealism, you run into the problem of evil as well, you see. Because much of the traditional theistic approach to the problem of evil has to do with the existence of an ordered physical creation. An ordered physical creation, which is ordered the way it is with purpose.

So that when we run afoul of some of nature's ordered processes, we get stomachaches, holes in our teeth, clogged arteries, or maybe broken heads if we lean too far out of windows, you see. In other words, evil is due in part to the kind of discipline that's now lacking due to our lack of restraint, lack of agreement with the order of nature. But in any case, it serves, and this is the way it was developed, of course, a soul-making function in an ordered universe.

You remember the soul-making theodicy. Now, if there is no physical order that exists outside of God's mind, or our minds, then there is no such external cause for evils. And in a Berkeley scheme, who causes your passive ideas of pain? You see.

So the problem of evil really rolls back on God. Well, Brightman, rather than wanting to make God blameworthy for evil and say he's not altogether good, and feeling, he was a very passionate man, very much sensitive to the suffering of people, and seeing then that there's a lot of evil that seems to be quite purposeless, you see, he could not ascribe it to a disordered cosmos the way Augustine did. He can only ascribe it to some given that's working in God's mind over which God has no control, you see, what he calls the third evil.

There is an irrational element, in other words, in reality, and so a finite God. Well, that's simply saying that the problem of evil is a perennial problem for the metaphysical idealist. Okay, so much for that run-through of the grocery list.

And let me say then some things about Schopenhauer. You'll find that Stolz's chapter on Schopenhauer is very readable and very understandable, and the selections will, I think, give you the feeling that you have some meat on those bones. But by way of orientation to that, Schopenhauer's major work is entitled *The World as Will and Idea*.

Now, remember I said that idealists view things through the lens of what the self is. And two things that we're conscious of in ourselves, introspectively, are will and ideas. So if that is the lens, if that's what I see in the mirror, then I'm going to project that on reality as a whole.

The world is will and idea. Now, it's not quite that easy, because he's influenced in emphasizing will by both Kant and Fichte, both of whom, as idealists, had maintained that our ideas of the material world, what Fichte called the non-ego, our ideas of the material world are simply phenomena. So what Schopenhauer does is to regard the

world in terms of the ideas that we have as phenomena, and will as noumena, reality, and appearance.

The underlying reality is the nature of will. Now, how does he do that? Well, the phenomena is easy, now you know Kant so well. The phenomena part comes across very easily.

The point is that the mind, the human mind, has ideas which are taken as representations of nature. But we order them with categories that are a priori. That is to say, like Kant, he thinks there are universal and necessary a priori categories.

Categories that he speaks of as the fourfold root of sufficient reason. That is to say, he has four sets of categories. Four sets of categories.

But they're not quite the same as Kant's categories as far as their identification is concerned. What he has is the following. Ground and consequent.

Cause and effect. Space and time. Motive and action.

Now, notice that those are categories in terms of which, indeed, we do talk of the world in which we live. They're not Newtonian categories like Kant's were. When he speaks of ground and consequent, he's talking of the logical ground for something and what follows.

Premise and conclusion. Axiom and inference. He's talking here of the world of abstract ideas.

The world of theoretical thought. Which is the way it is. Kant said that too.

Which is the way it is because of our categories. That's the world for me. It's the world as my idea.

The world that we think of that way. Similarly with cause and effect. Which is the way we think in terms of physical objects.

Physical events. Causal necessity rather than logical necessity. Space and time, as Kant in his transcendental aesthetic made plain, have to do with mathematical objects.

And so we find not only logical necessity. We find causal necessity. We find mathematical necessity.

In the way we think about the world. And when it comes to motive and action, this is how we think about the self. This is how we think about the self.

And so we get the idea of moral necessity. So the world of our ideas is a world in which there is logical necessity, causal necessity, mathematical necessity, and moral necessity. But all those necessities are just phenomena.

That's the way it appears. It's not that way in reality. In fact, the antithesis, notice the word, the antithesis to necessity is what? In reality, the world is will, not necessity.

So that phenomena and Newman are antithetical. The world is of the nature of will. Well, how does he develop that? Well, he says, you see, that the world is my idea.

That is to say, my *vorstellung*, my representation. A symbolic way in which I talk about the world. The world is my idea.

Vorstellung is Hegel's term for a symbolic representation in religion. Well, science is just a symbolic way of talking. Mathematics is a symbolic way of talking.

Logic is a symbolic way of talking. Ethics in terms of motive and action is a symbolic way of talking. It's not a representation that has a one-to-one correspondence.

It's the way things are. The world is my idea, a world projected by my will. Because I'm imposing my will on the world and imposing my categories of thought on it.

But that's the fourfold route of sufficient reason. Now, notice when he says sufficient reason, that draws on Leibniz's phrase, the law of sufficient reason. Everything in the ordered array of monads is the way it is for a sufficient reason.

Nothing happens without sufficient reason. The law of sufficient reason is like a causal principle. A principle of necessity.

This is the way it must be. It cannot be any other way. The best of all possible worlds turns out to be the only possible world for Leibniz.

A necessity there. But such a sufficient reason is a notion, a structure that we impose on things, according to Schopenhauer. It's a projection of my will.

Well, if we want to talk about reality, the key is in realizing that the self is, at its root, a will. An impulsive, driving, conative thing. But one of the interesting ways in which he develops this has a lot of influence on the existentialists later on.

He comes at it not by looking at human thought, because that's the way to phenomena only. But by looking at the way I live bodily. His phenomenology turns out to be a phenomenology of what now becomes known as the lived body.

Now the adjective's important. The body treated as an object of study is not the body that you live in. A lived body is your conscious bodily experience.

The consciousness of being bodily. A lived bodily experience. You can get the difference between objective time measured by physical motion and lived time.

Where lived time will drag, or race, or stand still. Likewise, you can get the difference between death as a biological phenomenon and death as something you live as you die. Where, obviously, for the existentialists, the existential qualities are vastly different.

Likewise, for Schopenhauer, he's concerned with this lived body kind of experience. And so take a look, if you will, at page 92 and the following, where he introduces this. The bottom of 92.

Section numbered 18. The meaning that I'm looking for of the world stands before me simply as my representation. It can never be found if the investigator were nothing more than a purely knowing subject, a winged cherub without a body.

But he himself is rooted in the world. He finds himself in it as an individual. And is nevertheless given entirely through the medium of a body and the affections of this body at the starting point of the understanding and the perception of the world.

See, the starting point of understanding for Kant was the empirical input, the sensory input. And so here he is picking up on the reality of the lived body. Look at 93 at the top of the page.

No, take it back. 92, halfway down the page. To the subject of knowing, the knowing subject, me, who appears as an individual only through his identity with the body.

Oh, yeah. Who appears as an individual only through identity with a body. Sure, that's how we identify an individual, isn't it? You see? That's the appearance.

This body is given in two entirely different ways. It's given an intelligent perception as representation, an object among objects, liable to the laws of those objects. The necessities, sufficient reason.

But it's also given in a different way, namely as what's known immediately to everyone, denoted by the word will. Every true act of will is at once inevitably a movement of the body. He cannot actually will and act without the same time being aware that it appears as a movement of the body.

Then the top of 93. In a certain sense, it can be said that the will is a priori knowledge of the body. Then, on page 99, he takes the step from my will to will in itself.

About 12 lines from the bottom of the page. It's apparent from what has been said that the will as a thing in itself lies outside the province of the principle of sufficient reason in all its forms. It's completely groundless.

It's not a consequence of some ground. It's groundless. Although each of its phenomena is subject to that principle.

It's free from all plurality, although its phenomena are innumerable. It's itself one, yet not as an object as one. For the unity of an object is known only in contrast to possible plurality.

The will is not one as a concept is one. A concept originates by abstraction. It's one as that which lies outside of time and space, outside any principle of individuation.

That is to say, outside the very possibility of plurality. You see, if my individual identity is that of a will, a being with a will of my own, my will, which identifies me, not my ideas, there are many, but there's a unified will. Then the ultimate reality is that of a unified will, an absolute will.

Not absolute mind as in Hegel, but absolute will in Schopenhauer. So that's the theme that he develops, then. The thing in itself is of the nature of will.

The absolute will manifest itself blindly by urge, by creative outburst. Get the Romanticism? Now, that has all sorts of consequences for Schopenhauer, pessimistic consequences. It means that at the heart of reality, there is an endless striving from which there is no escape.

If you get away from endless striving, what's left is boredom and pain. So in this world, there is only unsatisfied desire, unfulfilled will, or else boredom and pain. Says Schopenhauer, this is the worst of all possible worlds.

The worst of all possible worlds. You see, and here this is at the roots of Sartre and his pessimism later on. You can overcome the worst in degree by aesthetic experience, which is contemplative and representational.

But that's absorbing yourself in the world as an idea. You can turn to ethical responsibility and fight to overcome self-will, gain sympathy with others, and merge your will not as a craving of your own, but merge your will, the will of the absolute will. But what does that do to your own will? The third alternative is an asceticism that negates the will, represses the will.

But if the world is a projection of my will, then if I repress my will, I negate my world. So if I have no will to see, to think, to observe, then there's nothing. The state of nothingness is the result.

Well, the selections in Hartman include all of that, pages 122 to 126. Did I say Hartman in Gardner? I said Hartman because Schopenhauer had sort of a disciple, a follower, Edward von Hartmann, who, agreeing with Schopenhauer's pessimism, said that the final act of will, of course, has to be an act of suicide. And so if this is the worst of all possible worlds, then suicide, of course, is the consequence, which is back to some of the early Cyrenaic hedonists of Hellenistic times.

But if you've read Albert Camus and his *Myth of Sisyphus*, in which he discusses the ethics of suicide, he's doing so because of this Schopenhauer-Hartmannism. What do you do in a world where the dialectic has left things without a synthesis in the worst of all possible worlds? That's Schopenhauer's question, which the existentialists try to answer. And I think it's fair to say the religious existentialists pose the synthesis.

The pessimistic existentialists have no synthesis to pose. Well, I guess we're about a minute over time. Okay.

Read Schopenhauer.