SELF-TRANSCENDENCE

AND THE DIALECTIC OF THE FINITE-INFINITE IN THE PHILOSOPHY

OF BERNARD BOSANQUET:

METAPHYSICS, RELIGION AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

By Stamatoula Panagakou

ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a new interpretation of the philosophy of the British Idealist Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923). The new interpretation that I elaborate is based on two principles that I have identified in systematising and examining Bosanquet's metaphysics expounded in his Gifford Lectures, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912) and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913). I am referring to the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. My analysis is also based on two other conceptual frameworks that I created in order to offer a comprehensive reassessment of Bosanquet's philosophical project. These conceptual frameworks are: (a) the genealogy of selfhood; and (b) the metaphysics of the self. In the thesis, I apply the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite to three areas of Bosanquet's philosophy: (a) metaphysics and theory of individuality; (b) religion, morality and the system of values; and (c) political philosophy. I demonstrate that the self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite: (a) sustain the meaning, nature and structure of Bosanquet's philosophical project; (b) have heuristic value and contribute to an insightful apprehension of Bosanquet's entire theorisation; (c) show the coherence, unity and systematicity of his philosophy; and (d) prove the importance and value of his theory for moral, social and political philosophy. The major contribution of this thesis is a new extensive reassessment of the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy. I defend Bosanquet's *The Philosophical Theory of the State* against Hobhouse's erroneous accusations. I also offer a new comprehensive assessment of *What Religion Is*.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

Some of the material of Chapter One has been presented in an article, S. Panagakou, "The Concept of Self-Transcendence in the Philosophy of Bernard Bosanquet," *Collingwood Studies*, VI (1999), pp. 147-164. Some of the material of Chapter Three has been presented in an article, S. Panagakou, "Religious Consciousness and the Realisation of the True Self: Bernard Bosanquet's Views on Religion in *What Religion Is*," *Bradley Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Autumn 1999), pp. 139-161.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis offers a new interpretation of the philosophy of the British Idealist Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923). The nature of my project is theoretical and not historical. I offer a new interpretation of some specific issues of Bosanquet's philosophy based on a selective reading of his writings. The specific issues that I deal with are metaphysics, religion and political philosophy. My interpretation systematises and develops Bosanquet's philosophy and intends to show the coherence and systematicity of his thought in relation strictly to the topics that are discussed in this thesis. My interpretation of Bosanquet's philosophy should not be regarded as an attempt to recover Bosanquet's intentions in the sense that the latter might be understood within the context of specific schools in the history of ideas. I have created the following terms in order to analyse Bosanquet's philosophy: (a) the principle of self-transcendence; (b) the principle of the dialectic of the finite-infinite; (c) the metaphysics of the self; and (d) the genealogy of selfhood.

This new interpretation is based on two principles that I have identified in his metaphysics expounded in *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912) and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913). These two principles, which also signify processes characterising the nature of individuality, are: (a) the principle of self-transcendence; and (b) the principle of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. I claim that Bosanquet's philosophy can be better understood and that many issues can be clarified thoroughly and comprehensively if we use constructively the explanatory conceptual framework that these principles offer. I use the principles of self-transcendence and

of the dialectic of the finite-infinite, together with the ideas of the metaphysics of the self and the genealogy of selfhood (that I have also developed), in order to provide a new interpretation of Bosanquet's views on the theory of individuality, on religion, morality and the realisation of the real self, and on the theorisation of the State, Society and the Individual. The culmination of the thesis is found in the fourth chapter where I use the ideas developed throughout the thesis, the conclusions I reached, and the explanatory power of the metaphysical principles in order to address Hobhouse's attack on Bosanquet's political philosophy. Bosanquet published *The Philosophical Theory of the State* in 1899: the book was immediately recognised as a classic statement of the tradition of Philosophical Idealism. Hobhouse criticised *The Philosophical Theory of the State* in his *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* (1918). His critique created a sort of "standard" interpretation of Bosanquet's political philosophy, yet his accusations, as I will demonstrate, are based on false foundations for he did not understand the meaning, significance and function of Bosanquet's philosophical project. Hence in the last part of the thesis I address Hobhouse's erroneous views concerning Bosanquet's political philosophy from the standpoint of my new interpretation of Bosanquet's views on metaphysics. I now elaborate the development of the argument of this thesis by describing how I use the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite in the context of the four chapters which belong to three areas of philosophical inquiry. Each chapter contains an application of the principles to a specific question related to the nature of the theoretical province to which I refer. The four chapters are interrelated and should

be viewed as forming a coherent and systematic whole. Each chapter deals with a particular thematic category which contributes to the overall understanding of the nature and meaning of Bosanquet's philosophy in relation to the new interpretation of his philosophical project that I endeavour to realise in this thesis. I also provide a new systematisation of Bosanquet's philosophy which is based on the structural and conceptual systemic interrelations and notional realities that the two principles provide.

The first chapter is devoted to Bosanquet's metaphysics and to an overview of his theory of individuality structured around the function and meaning of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. This chapter, which is entitled "Self-Transcendence and the Dialectic of the Finite-Infinite in the Philosophy of Bernard Bosanquet," must be regarded as the starting-point of my inquiry. Its main purpose is explanatory and descriptive: it is the chapter that contains both a description and an application of the two principles. In this chapter, I systematise and develop Bosanquet's views on the self-transcending, or the finite-infinite nature, of the self and I show the emergence of the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite through the matrix of his metaphysical theorisation. I argue that we have two principles, or processes: self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite. They are not identical: they are two processes which are however, logically, essentially and fundamentally interrelated. I claim that self-transcendence is made possible because of the finite-infinite nature of being. Self-transcendence refers to the impulse towards the whole that characterises the

ontological constitution of the finite-infinite self. The impulse towards the whole means a movement towards self-completion, self-perfection and self-realisation. Self-transcendence, which substantiates the ontic force to unity, completion and coherence, is made possible because of the dialectic of the finite and the infinite aspects of the self that is premissed on human spirituality.

The first chapter is divided into three sections. The first section deals with Bosanquet's critique of the concept of pure ego. I argue that Bosanquet attacks the idea of pure ego by elaborating a powerful ontological theory that regards the finite-infinite being as a representative of universal determinations. I claim that for Bosanquet, the self is a living cosmos in itself. The essence of the self must be "captured" in the pulsing substance of a cluster of intertwined relations and determinations that crystallise the interaction of the self with its externality. The second section is devoted to Bosanquet's critique of psychological individualism. In this section I show how Bosanquet opposes the ontological project of the atomistic individualists that focuses on the distinction between "self" and "other." I develop the idea of the genealogy of selfhood. The genealogy of selfhood means that the sources of the self are found "beyond" and "beneath" the apparent exclusivity and the limitations of the particular self. The third part is devoted to teleology, finite consciousness and individuality. I use the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite to inquire into Bosanquet's views on teleology. The real sense of teleology in Bosanquet's project refers to the attainment of completion which is identified with the real individuality.

The second chapter is entitled "An Outline of Bernard Bosanquet's Views on Religion." The main thesis is that Bosanquet's views on the meaning and significance of religious consciousness for a comprehensive understanding of the nature, value and destiny of the finite individual revolve around the two principles which characterise the fundamental spiritual structure of the finite self. These principles are the dialectic of the finite-infinite and the concept of self-transcendence. I argue that for Bosanquet, religion is found at the heart of his metaphysical theorisation of the self and that it is logically, essentially and indispensably related to the realisation of the true, or real, self.

This second chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is entitled "Religious Consciousness and the Metaphysics of the Self." The second section is entitled "The Immanentist Perspective." In this chapter I develop another conceptual framework: the metaphysics of the self. The metaphysics of the self refers to the entire spiritual project of the formation of the self in Bosanquet's philosophy. The metaphysics of the self refers to such dimensions as the genealogy of selfhood, the ontological formation of the self and the dynamics of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation. In the first section I discern how the principles of the dialectic of the finite-infinite and of self-transcendence can enable one to understand Bosanquet's theorisation of religion as faith in the reality of the good. I systematise Bosanquet's views on religion, and, in the light of my interpretation I critically assess MacEwen's, Hinman's and Sell's views on Bosanquet's discourse on religion. In the second section I relate the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the

finite-infinite to an analysis and assessment of Bosanquet's immanentist perspective.

I discern how Bosanquet theorises the relation between morality and religion.

Morality (belief that the good is a reality) depends on religion (belief that the good is

the only reality). Religion, or religious consciousness, sustains the personal

endeavour of the members of the social whole to achieve in the context of ethical life

the realisation of the good. The human individual realises the real will and the real

self in striving to achieve the good on the basis of the self-transcending dynamics of

the finite-infinite nature of his/her being.

The third chapter provides a comprehensive analysis of *What Religion Is*

(1920). This chapter is entitled "Religious Consciousness and the Realisation of the

True Self: Bernard Bosanquet's Views on Religion in *What Religion Is*." My purpose

is, first, to show how Bosanquet's analysis is based on a conceptual framework that

is sustained by his metaphysical principles. Secondly, I reconstruct Bosanquet's views

on the importance of religion for the formation of individuality and the assertion of

the moral being of the self. Thirdly, I relate Bosanquet's views on religion to the

structure and systematicity of his entire philosophical project. Fourthly, I show that

Bosanquet's views on religion are characterised by theoretical continuity. I argue that

Bosanquet defends from the idealistic standpoint a theory of religion that reveals in

an original way the essence of religious consciousness in its relation to the meaning

of the individual's social and ethical life. In this chapter I offer a critical assessment,

a new comprehensive interpretation and a systematic reconstruction of Bosanquet's

thoughts on religion in *What Religion Is*. The third chapter is divided into two

sections. The first section deals with "The Right Way of Approaching Religion" and the second contains an extensive discussion concerning "The Essence of Religion." Both sections are structured around the issues of morality, sociality, spirituality and elaborate the fundamental constitutive elements for the proper conception of the spiritual world, the world of the values of truth, beauty and goodness.

The last chapter of the thesis is entirely devoted to the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy and offers a new assessment of this central episode in the history of British Idealism. Hobhouse's book created an erroneous understanding of Bosanquet's political philosophy as a theory of State-worship and State-Absolutism which affected the reception of Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State, the overall assessment of his political philosophy, and the tradition of Philosophical Idealism. In this chapter, I offer a defence of Bosanquet's *The Philosophical Theory of the State* by both discerning the points in his logic and metaphysics that Hobhouse misunderstood, misinterpreted and misrepresented. I elaborate a conceptual anatomy of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* and I discern and critically assess Hobhouse's erroneous presuppositions concerning the spirit and content of Bosanquet's political philosophy in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*.

I situate my analysis in the broader perspective that was inaugurated by Pfannenstill, Nicholson and Sweet. I build on their previous attempts to demonstrate the richness and importance of Bosanquet's political philosophy. My analysis, however, elucidates a new perspective of looking at the exact nature of the controversy. I use the conclusions I reached and the ideas I developed in the

previous chapters in order to demonstrate why Hobhouse did not get the point. I use my analysis of Bosanquet's metaphysics, that is epitomised in the doctrines of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite, to address Hobhouse's criticisms concerning the nature and meaning of the philosophical foundations of Bosanquet's project. The main thesis that runs throughout the chapter is that Hobhouse both misunderstood and misrepresented Bosanquet's views concerning the State, Society, the Individual, institutions as ethical idea and the idea of the real self because he did not understand the philosophical assumptions, on the basis of which, Bosanquet developed coherently and systematically his views. My purpose is to defend *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, to demonstrate Hobhouse's misunderstandings and misrepresentations of Bosanquet's analytical categories, and to show the richness of Bosanquet's philosophical project in its entire realisation.

CHAPTER ONE

SELF-TRANSCENDENCE AND THE DIALECTIC OF THE FINITE-INFINITE IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF BERNARD BOSANQUET

INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912) and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913), which contain his metaphysical views. I also use some passages from his *Psychology of the Moral Self* (1904 [1897]) which is Bosanquet's contribution to philosophical psychology. However, my main focus is on the Gifford Lectures and I draw upon the *Psychology of the Moral Self* in order to make some points clearer and to elucidate further the nature of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. I wish to state from the outset the following points. First, I do not include in my analysis a discussion of the Absolute. The Absolute is a central concept in the Gifford Lectures, yet, for the purposes of my analysis, the dialectic of the finite-infinite and the idea of self-transcendence can be dealt with without an explicit reference to, and theorisation of, the Absolute. In other words, a discussion and a critical assessment of the Absolute is beyond the scope of my thesis. Second, I do not include in my analysis a discussion of the views of the Personal Idealists concerning Bosanquet's theory of the human individual and the value of the person. Very briefly, the Personal Idealists championed the autonomous reality of the finite individual (Mander. 2000: 12) and accused the Absolute Idealists of not recognising the ultimate value of the

finite individual. Another principal concern of the Personal Idealists was the personhood of God. In my view, the controversy between the Personal and the Absolute Idealists is a huge issue, which goes beyond the scope of this thesis. This topic deserves detailed investigation especially because their disagreement is not very clear. Mander writes:

> Although this distinction between the Absolute and the personal idealists is commonly made and generally both valid and useful two points need to be remembered, first, that the difference is not always clear-cut - when does a genuine community of individuals turn into a unity that contains genuine diversity? - and second, that apart from this specific point of difference, the personal and the Absolute idealists were by and large in agreement; both were, for example, united in urging an idealist case against realism and materialism (Mander, 2000: 12).

I repeat: I do not include in my thesis a critical assessment of the views of the Personal Idealists. I classify them in the general category of Bosanquet's critics and I implicitly reply to them when I elucidate Bosanquet's conception of individuality.[1] Finally, my purpose in this chapter is mainly to elaborate the content of the principles.

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[1]For more information about the Personal Idealists, see: Boyce Gibson, 1906-1907: 407-424; Passmore, 1976: 17-36; Boucher, 1997: xiii; and Mander, 2000: 1-31.

or processes, of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. I elaborate their meaning both as principles and as ideas which are indispensably related to the discussion of such issues in Bosanquet's philosophy as soul-making, the formation of individuality and the idea of teleology. Hence my aim is to describe their content, to elucidate and clarify their meaning, and to prepare the ground for their application to the issues discussed in the next three chapters. In brief, I endeavour to clarify the content, nature and meaning of these two principles: I do not intend to discuss and assess critically others' views on the theory of individuality in Bosanquet's philosophy. I now turn to a more detailed analysis of the content of this chapter.

To me, self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite sustain Bosanquet's metaphysics of the self expounded in the two volumes of his Gifford Lectures. Bosanquet speaks about the "self-transcending" or "finite-infinite" nature of the human individual and regards these characterisations as referring mainly to one and the same thing. He writes:

> For he is a unit engaged by a process of self-adjustment - necessarily more or less obstructed - in forming a link through which a *prima facie* confusion is absorbed in and transformed into the underlying harmony. The technical formula for this position of his we found in some such expression as "a finite-infinite" or "self-transcendent" creature. This is to say that his nature is in contradiction with his existence, and in the adjustment of this contradiction at once by

remoulding circumstance and by recasting the self he has to deal with the chances offering *prima facie* now satisfaction and now obstruction ... We emphasised the point that the chapter of accidents is necessary. It belongs to finiteness. It is just the appearance of externality, by overcoming which in its degree, the finite self makes its contribution to the Absolute (Bosanquet, 1913: 225).

In inquiring into the precise meaning and usage of the terms, I have systematised Bosanquet's views. The result of my systematisation is to understand "self-transcendence" and the "finite-infinite" character as two distinct, yet logically, essentially and fundamentally interrelated processes. Self-transcendence is made possible because of the finite-infinite nature of being. The finite-infinite nature of being refers: (a) to the inevitable condition of finiteness which characterises the human individual; and (b) to the reality of the spiritual world - the world that is substantiated inside the world of our everyday experience and makes the formation of the real self possible. The finite aspect and the infinite aspect of being show a dialectical relation: I call this entire process "the dialectic of the finite-infinite." I need to explain further. The ontological formation of the finite self is a complex spiritual process which is characterised by the dialectical interweaving of the finite-infinite aspects of the human individual. In my analysis, I use the terms "dialectic" and "dialectical" in the sense of interconnection, interdependence, interrelation and spiritual exchange of contents. In this context, the meaning of the term "dialectic" does not derive from the Marxist

use of the word. Hence, self-transcendence is made possible because of the finite-infinite nature of the self. Self-transcendence describes the impulse towards the whole that characterises the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite self. The impulse towards the whole means a movement towards self-completion, self-perfection and self-realisation. Self-transcendence, which substantiates the ontic force to unity and to a more inclusive reality (a whole) is made possible because of the dialectic of the finite-infinite that characterises the spiritual substance of the self. One can see how I have systematised in two parts, which are essentially, logically and fundamentally interconnected, a characteristic that, in Bosanquet's view, expresses one thing. In my view, the process of the formation of individuality is not characterised by "self-transcendence" or by a "finite-infinite" dynamic. I have showed that the formation of individuality is based on two processes which, from the standpoint of a logical system, are two principles. Therefore, we have the principle of self-transcendence and the principle of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. I situate my systematisation in the context of Bosanquet's theory and I present it as a development and systemic / conceptual clarification which is consistent with the logic and spirit of his overall theorisation. Yet my systematisation and identification of the two principles elucidates better his points, enables one to discern and theorise more coherently the relation between his metaphysics and his moral, social and political philosophy, and shows the coherence and internal systematicity of his philosophical project. I now turn to a brief discussion of the idea of soul-making in the context of Bosanquet's metaphysics. Bosanquet writes:

The universe is not a place of pleasure, nor even a place compounded
of probation and justice; it is, from the highest point of view
concerned with finite beings, a place of soul-making (Bosanquet,
1912: 26).

Bosanquet refers to the idea of soul-making in Lecture I of *The Principle of Individuality and Value*. The title of this lecture is "Central Experiences": the idea of soul-making occupies a central position throughout the two volumes of his Gifford Lectures. To me, the idea of soul-making is the inclusive framework which contains the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. Soul-making refers to the formation of individuality. Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite characterise the formation of individuality. Soul-making and the formation of individuality presuppose the individual self which is regarded as a finite-infinite being. Soul-making is a continuous process of self-affirmation, self-perfection and self-realisation. Sweet notes that: "Curiously, Bosanquet does not often use the term 'self realization' to describe the object of moral action, preferring in its place the term 'self transcendence.'" (Sweet, 1999a: 144, n. 29). This is true, the use of the term "self-realisation" is not frequent. Yet I do not regard as identical the terms "self-transcendence" and "self-realisation." In my view, "self-realisation" is the result of "self-transcendence." But "self-realisation" refers to a result which is not a finished project. Soul-formation (the excellence of souls, the realisation of the real self) is a continuous process of self-affirmation and of the attainment of deeper and more

comprehensive degrees of reality. I now offer an outline of this chapter.

I argue that Bosanquet propounds a theory of individuality which is intrinsically related to the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. I attempt to clarify and systematise Bosanquet's views on the importance and meaning of the human individual as they are derived from his theorising on the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite being. I also elucidate the meaning of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. My claim is that Bosanquet's theory is a vindication of the importance of the human individual. Throughout, I argue that self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite structure a unique theory of individuality that takes into account issues of completion, perfection and self-realisation and, also, the fundamental relations: (a) between the self and the other selves; and (b) between the self and the substance of "externality."

Bosanquet's critics[2] have failed to realise that his ontology is not referring to two different and distinct manifestations of being (the finite and the infinite being corresponding to the actual and the real being respectively). What Bosanquet actually does is to elaborate a complex narrative of different states or phases of being as they are realised and ceaselessly surpassed in the changing yet concrete place of spiritual encounter which is identified with the boundaries of the finite self. The actual and the real self are not separate or unrelated entities; they are intrinsically interrelated phases of the same entity, the human individual, in his/her development

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[2]See, for instance, Carr (1918).

towards completion, perfection, and real individuality:

> [E]very focus of consciousness is an effort, whose success is subject to constant and enormous fluctuations, to seize and make its own the value and significance of a world beginning from some simple minimum of experience, but capable of extending far beyond , and appreciated only by fits and starts. So far from its being a strange or unwarranted assumption that the experiences of conscious units are transmuted, reinforced, and rearranged, by entrance into a fuller and more extended experience, the thing is plainly fact, which, if we were not blinded by traditional superstition, we should recognise in our daily selves as a matter of course. We, our subjective selves, are in truth much more to be compared to a rising and falling tide, which is continually covering wider areas as it deepens, and dropping back to narrower and shallower ones as it ebbs, than to the isolated pillars with their fixed circumferences, as which we have been taught to think of ourselves (Bosanquet, 1912: 372-373).

We can distinguish between the actual and the real self; though we cannot separate them, and we must always deal with them both, and both together. The attainment of the real self is the culmination of a complex spiritual process, the beginning and end of which are found in the microcosmic self-restructuring totality of the finite-infinite

self. The transformation of the actual self into the real self does not mean the annihilation of the finite self because the process of transformation takes place in the context of the self-realising experience of the finite self. The "passage" from the actual to the real self is an event of crucial ontological importance. The "passage" from a particular and incomplete state of being that actuality implies to a more comprehensive and complete state of being that reality expresses is made possible because of the dynamics of self-transcendence. In this sense, the human being must be conceived of as the meeting-point of "universal determinations." "Universal determinations" stem from the individual's participation in the life embodied in institutions as ethical ideas (family, neighbourhood, or district, civil society and the State), and in the ultra-social area of human experience (art, philosophy and religion).

In Bosanquet's metaphysics, the condition of finiteness, the spiritual process of soul-making, the formation of the self and the assertion of individuality are structured around the dynamics of self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite. For Bosanquet, the act of self-transcendence is not identified with the annihilation of the finite self. On the contrary, self-transcendence is a spiritual act signifying the re-assertion and emergence of the subject through a complex relational framework that has two main functions. First, to expand the spiritual limits of finiteness beyond the actuality of the immediate existence to the reality of the ideal self which is a more comprehensive and inclusive unit than the mere sensitive self of the immediate perception. Second, to enrich the content and meaning of the self by refusing to define the ultimate essence of the human being according to the restrictive
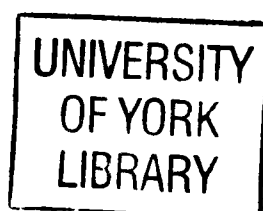
criteria of isolation and exclusion and, thus, by including in the conceptualisation of the self the notion of otherness which is an integral part in the spiritual realisation of the human individual.

In this chapter I discuss Bosanquet's views on self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite in three interrelated sections. These sections are: (a) the critique of the concept of pure ego; (b) the reaction to psychological individualism; and (c) teleology, finite consciousness, and individuality. The self is the epicentre of the dialectic of the finite-infinite which substantiates the potentials of the double nature of the finite-infinite being through the dynamics of self-transcendence. Both the dialectic of the finite-infinite and the principle of self-transcendence refer to the human being's spiritual struggle to acquire more complete states of self-realisation and to affirm the reality of the spiritual world:

> [T]he finite being is always passing out of itself, which also means
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> into itself. And this passage, while on the one hand the condition of
>
> expansion and attainment, is on the other hand inevitably attended by
>
> some degree of contradiction, friction, sacrifice. It is in the tension
>
> and its incidents, which this self-transcendence implies, that the very
>
> life of the universe consists (Bosanquet, 1913: 162)

Furthermore, self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite revolve around the complex structure of a vital nexus of trans-subjective and intra-subjective

determinations that ceaselessly interweave and synthesise the constructive function of factors endogenous and exogenous to the content of the microcosmic unit. The finite-infinite being, in its endeavour to attain fuller and more comprehensive states of realisation, passes recurrently through the symbolic experiences of "death" and "rebirth" that correspond to the teleological dynamics of transforming or transmuting the contents of finiteness.

1. THE CONCEPT OF PURE EGO

In his *Psychology of the Moral Self*, Bosanquet defends a conception of the self that emphasises the inherent ontological complexity of the subject which, at once, knows and it is known in an inseparable duality of a unifying purpose. The attributes of will and intelligence which characterise the self belong to a multi-relational spiritual unit whose limits are not fixed, and whose content is formed in a ceaseless self-restructuring process of expansion, fluctuation, momentary stabilisation, and transcendence of the given. At the moment of transcending the given, the self realises within itself the logic of negation. Negation is an essential spiritual activity of the finite self that makes the self in order to attain a real being to transcend its actual being (Bosanquet, 1912: 232). The spirit of negation acts simultaneously at two interrelated and logically interdependent levels of experience. First, at the level of the members of the whole being regarded as distinct from the totality of the whole and, second, at the level of the comprehensiveness of the whole being regarded as a spiritual unit crystallised, articulated, and affirmed within the fluctuating limits of

finite consciousness. The self negates a phase of its own actual constitution in order to incorporate within itself a more comprehensive and real content which is crystallised on the basis of the relationality of its finite-infinite identity. The very idea of a self implies content or, using Bosanquet's words, the self is "a positive content to be realised, a certain set of ideas" (Bosanquet, 1904: 94). The content of the self is the product of a ceaseless reconstituting activity that occurs through a complex nexus of relations and fundamental connections characterising: (a) the self; (b) the environment, the surroundings, of the self; and (c) the logic of the necessary relation of the self to its environment.

The above process is based on the dialectic of the finite-infinite which conditions the finite consciousness. The principle of the dialectic of the finite-infinite is central to our apprehending the nature and potentials of finiteness. Finiteness refers mainly to a state of restless spiritual restructuring affecting the development of the individual. The spiritual restructuring is realised while the double process of transcending the boundaries of finiteness and of returning to the initial, yet transformed, content of the finite self occurs within finite consciousness and between consciousness and its environment (externality). Bosanquet asserts:

> This double being *is* the nature of the finite. It is the spirit of the whole, or of ultimate reality, working in and through a limited external sphere. Its law is that of the real; its existence is the existence of an appearance (Bosanquet, 1913: 12)

It is the nature of the individual to be a representative of universal determinations (Bosanquet, 1912: 140-141). This characteristic has implications. Abstractions of the kind of "pure ego" or "abstract I" appear not only useless but unreal in our endeavour to capture the essence of the finite being. Any anatomy of finiteness based on the idea of pure ego[3] gives a defective and deceptive picture of the finite being because it disregards the fact that the "I" or self is necessarily accompanied by content (Bosanquet, 1904: 55). The content of the self is the product of a ceaseless dialectical association between the self and its environment, and is characterised by change, negation of the given, and affirmation of new states of reality and completion. I now turn to Bosanquet's critique of psychological individualism.

2. THE REACTION TO PSYCHOLOGICAL INDIVIDUALISM

According to Bosanquet, the psychological individualism of Bentham, Spencer and Bain, which is structured around the distinction between "self" and "others" generates a problematic and limited apprehension of both the content and inherent potentials of the self (Bosanquet, 1904: 92-96). Bosanquet's main objection to the philosophical discourse of psychological individualism is that it cannot account for the spiritual formation of the ideal or universal self which should not be conceived as an entity distinct from the finite-infinite self, but as its ultimate and more comprehensive

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[3]I refer to the idea of pure ego understood as a unit impervious to the influences of its surrounding environment and articulated in isolation.

realisation. The realisation of the ideal or universal self signifies a complicated spiritual moment that capture the self's reaching out and return to itself. During the process of self-transcendence, the new content which is acquired is transformed into a constitutive element of the changing nature of the finite-infinite self.

The human individual does not originate in isolation, but "reflects some sort of community, so that from the first the self goes beyond the bodily unit" (Bosanquet, 1904: 87). The bodily unit, the material manifestation of separation, particularity and atomistic individuation is only a partial representation of what a human individual is. Bosanquet asserts that, contrary to the perspective of psychological individualism, the definition of the self cannot start from the separate body as the separate self (Bosanquet, 1904: 92). The definition of the self in the discourse of psychological individualism refers to an immediate impression that does not reveal the entire truth about the self. Immediacy captures only one level of reality leaving aside the cluster of intertwined contents that account for the arduousness of reality despite its apparent simplicity. Immediacy brings with it the danger of simplifying the complexity of experience by insisting on the first impression of the finite consciousness. In other words, immediacy precedes the work of the "penetrative imagination" which systematises the material of experience, discerns the spirit of the whole in the particular units and thus asserts coherence, and reveals the greatest possibilities inherent in the world of the finite-infinite being. In his Gifford Lectures Bosanquet provides us with the term that describes the character of the bodily unit: it is the word "appearance" (Bosanquet, 1913: 13). The word "appearance," however, must be

understood strictly in the context of his metaphysics and not in relation to other irrelevant conceptual frameworks. Appearance is the material manifestation of the finite being, the limits of which are the visual limits of the bodily unit. The feature of appearance is attributed to something which stands out, produces itself in a specific manner and is clearly discerned. Appearance is the particular moment of finitude that captures the visible realisation of the separate microcosms which constitute the inclusive world of spiritual membership. The discernible particular stands out as the meeting-point of universal determinations which originate from "beneath" and "beyond" the apparent exclusive limitations of the finite self. The bodily unit presupposes a constellation of relations and connections that is partly created by the self itself and partly belongs to the contextual genealogy of selfhood. As Bosanquet asserts, there is a substantial part of the identity of the individual that is given and not created *ab initio* by the finite individual. In other words, the self and its environment relate substantially to each other and realise a state of structural and spiritual unity that underlies the condition of selfhood: "No one maintains that we ourselves made our positive qualities. Our language, our ancestors, our religion, our leading ideas, the country we live in, are given to us, not made by us" (Bosanquet, 1904: 125). Bosanquet uses the word "immediate" in contrast to "real." The former refers to the material object of our first impression which can be perceived as the typical embodiment of a constellation of individualised universal determinations. The latter refers to the actual content of those determinations as it is crystallised and restructured under a variety of forms which tend: (a) to reconstitute both the content

and context of any given state of being; (b) to enable the spiritual process of self-transcendence: and (c) to formulate new dimensions of development and perfection. In contrast to "immediacy" that captures only a particular phase of selfhood, "reality" deals with the life and spirit of human agency in their multiple manifestations of diversity, development and potentiality. As Bosanquet explains in his Gifford Lectures, to possess reality is not to identify the real with the immediately given, but to adopt an attitude to experience that enables one to discern the spirit of the whole in every particular manifestation:

It tells us nothing to say that an experience is immediate; for there are countless immediates and there is nothing that cannot be immediate. But if we understand by immediate as far as may be the primary datum, the factual nucleus, the naïve apprehension, then it is the plain and unmistakable lesson of logic and of the world that the immediate cannot stand. You cannot anywhere, whether in life or in logic, find rest and salvation by withdrawing from the intercourse and implications of life; no more in the world of individual property and self-maintenance than in the world of international politics and economics; no more in the world of logical apprehension than in that of moral service and religious devotion. Everywhere to possess reality is an arduous task; stability and solidity are not in the beginning, but, if anywhere, only in proportion as we enter the larger

vistas of things (Bosanquet, 1912: 7).

In his *Psychology of the Moral Self,* Bosanquet theorises extensively the idea

of the ideal or universal self. I tend to treat the ideal, or universal, self and the real

self as almost identical concepts. If there is a difference, it must exist at the highest

level of the logical and metaphysical constitution of the concepts. However, there are

common elements and in my analysis here I emphasise what is common and what can

be constructively used to understand better both the meaning and function of

concepts. Hence the ideal or universal self is the self that affirms the reality of the

spiritual world, that is to say, the world of value. In this context, the ideal or

universal self is a spiritual formation and must be construed as the ultimate phase of

the finite self in its double nature as a finite-infinite being. The interesting point is that

the ideal self is premissed on the dynamics of self-transcendence and on the

transformative action of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. Both processes have a

common aim: the aim is to strengthen the spiritual constitution of being and to affirm

the attainment of a more comprehensive degree of reality and individuality. This can

be effected through self-transcendence and through the dialectic of the finite-infinite

which both enable the self to communicate substantially with "all the great contents

of developed human self - truth, beauty, religion, and social morality" (Bosanquet,

1904: 95). The spiritual reality of the ideal self that emerges through the ontological

content of the bodily unit signifies the essential "moment" of recognising the operation

of the spirit of the whole inside the apparent particularity of the human individual. I

use the term "apparent particularity" in the sense of asserting that the particular existence of each distinct individual contains potentials and dimensions for development, growth, flourishing and self-realisation which enable him/her to overcome the limitations and restrictions embedded in the formal ontic normativity of finitude. Two points need explanation here. First, by the phrase "apparent particularity," I do not mean that the human individual is not particular, distinct and "individualised" in his /her external, namely, somatic material manifestation. This is an inescapable state of being associated with the biological condition of finiteness. I mean that, in each human individual, there is something more than that: something that, without being immediately visible, is the true essence of his/her nature. In this context, the reality of the spiritual world, that is a reality within the world of our everyday experience, goes "beyond" the "apparent particularity" of our individual being. Second, I use the phrase "the formal ontic normativity of finitude" as a descriptive phrase referring to the conditions which determine the ontological constitution of finiteness. Bosanquet's theorising on the metaphysics of the self revolves around a conceptual framework that emphasises the elements of completion and comprehensiveness inherent in the teleology of the human individual. I now turn to the discussion of teleology, finite consciousness, and individuality.

3. TELEOLOGY, FINITE CONSCIOUSNESS, AND INDIVIDUALITY

Teleology is not the immediate translation into fact of fancies drawn from nowhere. It is the unity of a real individual, for whose parts, there is nothing undignified in framing and disciplining themselves to a definite conformity with the whole. When we think of Hegel's conception of the psychical, how, for him, the planetary, the terrestrial, and the climatic influences draw together and become organic to consciousness in the concrete soul-life of a race and an individual, we must recognise that to be something in particular, to be built up on a definite structure which has learned many detailed lessons of conformity to reality, is in principle what we should expect for the most central and concrete of all finite existences (Bosanquet, 1912: 178).

Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite which underlie Bosanquet's ontology are rooted in his teleological theory concerning human nature. Bosanquet echoes the Aristotelian standpoint in his assertion, first, that the "end" is the whole (Bosanquet, 1912: 181) and, second, that the core-meaning of the "end" refers to positive maturity.[4] Teleology operates through the finite consciousness; the

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[4]"The 'end' for Aristotle's theory was not merely satiety but satisfaction; and satisfactoriness, the power of giving satisfaction, was a positive characteristic, the completeness of a form, and not simply the cessation of a disturbance. ... For our

boundaries of finite mind, however, can neither limit nor restrict its nature and manifestations. The question is: how should teleology be understood in the logic of Bosanquet's philosophical project? Teleology should be understood as a normative principle which conditions finiteness but goes beyond the restrictive framework of its particular determinations because the essence of teleology is not identified with the realm of finite purpose (Bosanquet, 1912: 146). [5] Teleology operates through the world and reveals the spirit of coherence which is "the basic demand of reason itself" (Gaus, 1994: 410). Teleology substantiates the spiritual communion and the fundamental interconnectedness of the finite and the infinite aspects that characterise the nature of being in the world. Teleology, real teleology, must be seen as a universal principle that goes beyond mere purposiveness. The purposive character of finite consciousness is a particular manifestation of a universal principle that expresses, what Bosanquet calls, "the logical spirit, the tendency of parts to self-transcendence and absorption in wholes" (Bosanquet, 1912: 24). Teleology is not mere purposiveness; Bosanquet writes: "Things are not teleological because they are

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purpose it is enough to repeat that in Aristotle's usage the term 'end' is applied to positive maturity as more than the mere cessation of growth which it involves, and to the continuous or perhaps timeless character of the fullest life and fruition, rather than to the completion of any serial process" (Bosanquet, 1912: 128-129).

[5] In a similar vein, Bosanquet explains why finite consciousnesses cannot be the "ultimate constituents" of the universe: "... Finite Consciousnesses cannot be the ultimate directors or constituents of the universe. They and their subjective teleology are appearances at a certain stage; they rest on arrangements below them; they indicate in every feature fuller forms of totality above them. Finite consciousness, whether animal or human, did not make its body, and does not set the greater purposes to its world. Something greater and more inclusive than itself both operates through it and reveals itself to it" (Bosanquet, 1912: 221).

purposed, but are purposed because they are teleological" (Bosanquet, 1912: 137). Teleology determines finiteness and opens to it the potentiality of being submerged into a universal purpose but this characteristic should not mislead us into believing that the above function exhausts the meaning of teleology. In all respects, teleology stands above finite consciousness. In fact, finite consciousness must not be regarded as the source of teleology, but as a particular matrix through which the spirit of teleology is manifested, yet not exhausted. The essence of teleology is the attainment of individuality which is defined along the lines of (logical) unity, completeness (comprehensiveness) and coherence and refers to a state of self-formation that affirms the structural union of universal determinations operating through the finite-infinite constitution of the individual.[6] Sweet rightly observes:

> For Bosanquet, the nature of a thing is inseparable from what it will become, and so he begins with the finite self ... and moves on to its interconnectedness with other selves and with the environment. But this procedure does not lead, as Bradley suggests, to a confusion of the self with the non-self. It is, rather, a means by which one can express the nature of the individual more adequately (Sweet, 1997a: 440).

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[6]"A purpose is not realised, it is not a reality as penetrating and vivifying a mass of content, if it is not affirmed continuously and traceably in a coherent structure. No purpose or significance can be realised through miracle" (Bosanquet, 1912: 141).

Bosanquet's views on teleology are characterised by intrinsic notional complexity. Things might appear confusing if one does not discern that Bosanquet discusses two senses of the concept "teleology." I agree with Sweet who discussed extensively this issue in his *Idealism and Rights* (1997b: 96-110). Sweet distinguishes between the two senses of teleology in Bosanquet's philosophy. The first sense refers to teleology as "purposive" or "ethical"; the second sense refers to teleology as a "systematic coherence" (Sweet, 1997b: 99). In more plain language, the first sense refers to what we commonly understand by this term, and the second sense refers to to the "real" meaning of the term teleology. In this context, and before proceeding to an analysis of these two senses (conceptions) of the concept "teleology," I wish to add a further clarification concerning the presentation of the concept "teleology" in Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures. I distinguish between "teleology" and "Teleology," although Bosanquet does not seem to be terribly consistent with this specific use of the terms. Let me clarify. He definitely uses "Teleology" when he refers to the "real" or "thick" conception of the notion, yet, sometimes, he means the same by "teleology"; the reverse situation never occurs. It needs to be emphasised, however, that the aforementioned notional differentiation neither affects nor distorts the gist of Bosanquet's argument. The remark has value with respect to the crystallisation of the typical (formal) structure of Bosanquet's synthesis, and not with respect to the coherence of his argument. I now turn to the analysis of the two senses (conceptions) of the term "teleology."

The first sense of teleology has a limited and particular reference. It signifies

a plurality of purposes or pleasurable impulses with which the finite consciousness satisfies its particular needs and attains satisfaction. It refers to the "means and ends" discourse which is articulated in the context of the "world of claims" - a descriptive expression used extensively by Bosanquet in his discussion of the nature and ontological formation of the self. However, the first sense of teleology can explain neither teleology's universal functioning, nor its meaning beyond the context of the individualised applications. The limited explanatory power of the first sense of teleology stems from its inherent particularity. In this semantic framework, the meaning of teleology is narrow and restricted by the condition of finiteness:

It is vain to look to the bare fact of conscious purpose or impulse for the essence or significance of teleology. Purpose only means, *prima facie*, that, using consciousness in the very widest sense, some creature consciously wants something (Bosanquet, 1912: 136-137).[7]

The second sense of teleology refers to its proper, or real, meaning. In this context, teleology relates the finite-infinite nature of the human individual with the

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[7]Sweet explains: "In rejecting as the primary or only sense of 'teleology' a 'purposive' teleology that understands reality in terms of 'ends' and 'means', Bosanquet does not deny that there is an order or unity in the universe; in fact, he argues that it is *this* order or unity that is the standard of value. Consequently, while he uses the term 'teleology' with reservation, he is in no way hesitant in arguing that there is an 'end'. He simply denies that it is the product of the plans of finite or of a supreme consciousness. It is only the first - not the second - sense of 'teleology' that Bosanquet means to reject, and even his rejection of this first sense is based primarily on his view that it is insufficient as a ground for *all* value" (Sweet, 1997b: 99-100).

spirit of completion that includes yet transcends finite intelligences. The spirit of completion refers: (a) to the purposive reality of the finite-infinite being apprehended as *entelechy*; and (b) to the inclusive reality above finite consciousness. The boundaries of those two "levels" of reality are not clear because the former is an individualised manifestation of the latter, and the latter is partially yet effectively substantiated through the former. The link between them, which also expresses the spirit that runs through both levels, is a notional scheme that characterises the finite-infinite being of consciousness. This notional scheme is what Bosanquet calls "the immanent individuality of the real" (Bosanquet, 1912: 152). By "the immanent individuality of the real," I understand the spiritual reality that: (a) sustains the dialectic of the finite-infinite which characterises the ontological constitution of the human individual; and (b) substantiates the spirit of completion that is inherent in the condition of finitude. It must be noted, however, that "completion" in this semantic framework does not mean "conclusion" in the sense of "the mere cessation of growth" (Bosanquet, 1912: 128-129; 135). Completion or completeness must be regarded as a spirit (an impulse) that refers to an ontological necessity deeply embedded in the nature of being. Completion seems to have the character of a timeless becoming, the phases of which unfold simultaneously in two dimensions: (a) deep into the depth of the self-restructuring and self-transcending human individual; and (b) beyond the limitations of finitude, in the territories of thought, history, art, religion, society, and nature, in which "mind begins to transcend its finiteness" (Bosanquet, 1912: 133-134). We have reached a crucial point here. The spiritual symphony that characterises the

interconnectedness between the finite intelligences (which are fundamentally finite-infinite) and their surrounding environment is performed throughout the content of the finite centre and is expanded all over and throughout the levels of being. Sweet and Armour have grasped the significance of this movement for the theorisation of individuality in Bosanquet's philosophy. Sweet writes:

> Bosanquet argues not only that selves are necessary for the realization of the whole ... but that the finite self has a central role. Its role is to convert 'externality' - to 'bridge' externality and the Absolute (Sweet, 1997a: 437).[8]

Armour reflects on the importance of the self in Bosanquet's philosophy at the level of logic and metaphysics and at the level of socio-political theory. Armour stresses the point that the self is a "necessary agent": (a) in substantiating infinity (the spiritual world) within the visible world of our everyday experience; and (b) "in bringing about or realising a unity which is more real than itself" (Armour, 1999: 69; 80).[9] Coming

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[8]Bosanquet writes: "Each being has his work to do; he is responsible for the future of the world; he looks to do his part in modifying and reforming the universe" (Bosanquet, 1913: 212).

[9]Armour reflects further on the self and its self-restructuring dynamic: "It is true that the unity is of a kind which cannot originate without the individual, but it is true, too, that the self is to be transcended" (Armour, 1999: 80). I would add a further clarification: it is the finite aspect of the finite-infinite self that is to be transcended. Concerning the issue of the self as a "necessary agent" in the overall discourse on reality and individuality, Bosanquet writes: "Individuality is there for the observer before it is for the subject; or, we may say, determinateness, objective continuity, the

back to the issue of teleology, finite consciousness and individuality, one can ask the question: Where and how can we discern the foundations of teleology, in this complex unity of the finite-infinite selves with their "externality"?

Bosanquet puts at the centre of his analysis the idea of nature as the cradle of teleology together with art, thought, and religion. For him, the concept of nature is a notion that is broader and more comprehensive than the idea, or the immediate impression, of natural environment. In fact, nature refers to to the content of a complex living structure within which the spirit itself finds its ultimate actualisation. Nature, art, thought, and religion are regarded as ceaselessly self-remoulding comprehensive totalities that refer to states of being which belong to the experiential horizon of the finite mind for "mind is the meaning of externality" (Bosanquet, 1912: 220). Furthermore, nature, art, thought, and religion are fundamentally associated with the spiritual realisation of the concrete universal which, in the context of this analysis, is the content of the finite-infinite self in its comprehensive systematicity as a coherent, yet continuously self-restructuring, whole. Bosanquet asserts, however, that the finite consciousnesses or minds are not the "sole vehicles of teleology" (Bosanquet, 1912: 135). It is important to understand Bosanquet's standpoint without misinterpreting his views on this topic. The misinterpretation of his position is that Bosanquet "sacrifices" the human individual in the name of a "being" that

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character of a definite centre of experience, precede conscious selfhood and furnish its pre-supposition and materials. The finite self, then, *qua* finite, is the centre or awakening of a determinate world which is its pre-supposition" (Bosanquet. 1912: 190).

seems to be other than the human being. I argue that Bosanquet's conception of teleology vindicates the importance and significance of the finite mind for the actualisation and unfolding of the continually reconstituting "universal project" that the real meaning of teleology implies. By the term "universal project," I mean what Bosanquet identifies as the eternal reality of the unconscious movement of the whole (Bosanquet, 1912: 153-155). The unconscious movement of the whole is spiritual and immanent both in its particular individualised manifestations and in its comprehensive transhistorical realisation. Despite the fact that teleology is mainly an unconscious movement in the sense that its operation through the world is not confined to the designs and particular purposes of finite consciousnesses, it does depend on the finite-infinite self. In what sense does it depend on the finite-infinite self? Teleology depends on the dynamics of a complex relational framework that is crystallised out of the action and reaction of the finite consciousnesses with each other and with their environment. After all, the very fact of conceptualising and apprehending teleology is inevitably related to the cognitive ability of the finite mind. It is of the utmost importance to discern the proper relation between teleology and the finite mind. The finite mind does not determine teleology, but it is the finite mind, being itself a manifestation of teleology, that meaningfully relates the expressions of teleology to a coherent whole immanently.

Teleology links together the unconscious with the conscious movement of the determinations of finite consciousness. It brings together "waves" of crystallising and substantiating the real which emerge ceaselessly through the formative matrix of a

multi-dimensional spectrum. This is the unlimited spectrum of intra-subjective, trans-subjective and transhistorical constitutive elements of the totality of being. This vital process of creative unity that leads to the realisation of the real is actualised beneath and beyond the boundaries of the finite mind and opens up the human geography to a spiritual "deconstruction" of the limitations of finiteness and to the rebirth of the self. Each separate mind participates in this universal drama of moulding and re-moulding the soul under the double nature of its being that substantiates the dialectic of the finite-infinite. The "finite" refers to the limitations of the finite-infinite self. The "infinite" refers to the state of overcoming the limitations that characterise the condition of finitude. The affirmation of the infinite aspect of the self, in the dialectic of the finite-infinite within the context of the self, is made possible because of the spirituality of the human individual. The spirituality of the human individual is an absolute, or a fundamental, presupposition that characterises through and through any discussion concerning both the ontological constitution and the social nature of the finite-infinite self. In the logic of Bosanquet's project, the ontological formation of the self is structured around spirituality, sociality, and self-transcendence. Infinity refers to the spiritual world of value, the world of truth, beauty and goodness. The world of infinity is substantiated inside the self because of the spirituality of the human individual which sustains and motivates the self-transcending dynamic and animates the dialectic of the finite-infinite in the soul. The affirmation of infinity within the finite centre signifies the spiritual defeat of the latter's apparent limitations, leads to the rebirth of the finite-infinite self, and proves the axiological importance of the "die

to live" symbolic formula.[10]

The "infinite" refers to the state of overcoming the limitations characterising the condition of finitude. The realisation of this new state of selfhood is based on a complex tripartite simultaneous action. The constitutive elements of this action are three. First, recognition of the self in the other and, thus, assertion of a spiritual relationality deeply embedded in the nature of being. Second, apprehension of nature as an inclusive, interactive, and dynamic reality that refers to a living structure which simultaneously substantiates, and it is substantiated through, the self-transcending nature of the finite-infinite self. Third, submergence of the finite-infinite self into more comprehensive and complete substantiations of the real embodied in art, philosophy or thought, religion, and ethical life. Although Bosanquet does not always use these terms in the way and order with which I present them here, the pattern that consists of those fundamental categories of the real is a recurrent pattern found in his theorisation of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. As he explains, it is in "art, thought, society, history" that "mind begins to transcend its finiteness" (Bosanquet, 1912: 134). The dialectic of the finite-infinite is crystallised in the realm of the realm of the finite mind and enables it: (a) to actualise a continuous spiritual transformation of the immediate given into more coherent (more real) forms of experience; and (b) to assert the substantiation of deeper levels of coherence and reality in the life of the finite-infinite self. Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the

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[10]For the use and meaning of the "die to live" symbolic formula in Bosanquet's philosophy, see "Plato's Conception of Death" (Bosanquet, 1999b [1903-1904]: 98-109) and *Some Suggestions in Ethics* (Bosanquet, 1919: 161-180).

finite-infinite refer to the self-restructuring dynamic and realisation of the finite-infinite

self. Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite are spiritual processes

which occur within the experiential horizon of the human individual and characterise

the nature of his/her being. Yet both processes have a trans-subjective or universal

nature, that is to say, a character that relates the essence of the finite-infinite being to

the unconscious movement of teleology whose foundation in the universe:

> ... are far too deeply laid to be explained by, still more, to be restricted
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> to, the intervention of finite consciousness. Everything goes to show
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> that such consciousness should not be regarded as the source of
>
> teleology, but as itself a manifestation, falling within wider
>
> manifestations, of the immanent individuality of the real (Bosanquet,
>
> 1912: 152).

CONCLUSION

Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite play a crucial part in

Bosanquet's metaphysics of the self. They both function as fundamental

presuppositions for the spiritual process of soul-making and for the ontological

completion of the finite-infinite self.

In assessing Bosanquet's views on the concept of pure ego, when this notion

refers to an isolated and exclusive unit which is impervious to the influences of its

surrounding environment, I argued that he is right to regard it as an unreal and useless abstraction that is incapable of capturing the essence of the finite being. Bosanquet attacks the idea of pure ego by elaborating a powerful ontological theory that focuses on the intrinsic nature of the finite-infinite being to be considered as a representative of universal determinations. Furthermore, Bosanquet asserts that the self is realised as a concrete universal which means that its content is characterised by a continuous overcoming and negation of the given, by affirmation of new states of completion and by a ceaseless dialectical interaction with its surroundings. For Bosanquet, the self is a "complete" and living cosmos in itself. The essence of the self must be "captured" in the pulsing substance of a cluster of intertwined relations and determinations that affirm the interaction of the self with its externality (material and spiritual).

In the part devoted to Bosanquet's critique of psychological individualism, I showed how Bosanquet opposes the ontological project of the atomistic individualists that focuses on the distinction between "self" and "other." According to Bosanquet, this theory expresses a limited and defective understanding of both the nature and essence of the finite-infinite self because it takes into account only the appearance of the separate bodily units without discerning the spirituality of being. In systematising Bosanquet's insights concerning this topic, I have developed the idea of a "genealogy" of selfhood. The gist of this notion is that the sources of the self are found "beneath" and beyond" the apparent exclusive limitations of finitude. This idea endeavours to capture the meaning of the ideal or universal self which refers to the intrinsic nature of the human individual being apprehended from the spiritual point of view. In

Bosanquet's words:

> [T]he spiritual view, or the spiritual being, is always that which has
> more in it, and never that which has less; it does not omit, it includes
> and transforms. The spiritual view of life, for instance, does not omit
> the affections, but transforms them; it takes them up into the whole of
> life (Bosanquet, 1904: 127).

The ideal self is neither a self separate from the finite-infinite self nor a projection into utopian states of the human being's realisation. On the contrary, it refers to the spiritual content of the finite-infinite self as it is ceaselessly substantiated and restructured within a complex framework of relations, influences, interdependencies and universal determinations.

Finally, in the third section, I used the ideas of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite to theorise Bosanquet's views on teleology. I inquired into Bosanquet's views on teleology in relation to finite consciousness and individuality. Teleology operates within the boundaries of the finite mind, yet the inherent limitations of finitude cannot restrict its scope. Teleology conditions finiteness without being identified with particular purposes: in its proper, real, meaning, teleology stands above finite consciousness. Teleology reveals the impulse towards the whole. The spirit of teleology refers to the attainment of completion which is identified with the real individuality.

CHAPTER TWO

AN OUTLINE OF BERNARD BOSANQUET'S VIEWS ON RELIGION

INTRODUCTION

The interpretation of Bosanquet's views on religion is a much contested issue. Bosanquet denied personality in God and he firmly held that God is not an almighty power beyond this world that masters the universe; he asked for a thoroughly critical reading of the New Testament: a reading based on common sense and intelligence, and not on the guidelines of an "old-fashioned theology"; he did not regard the New Testament as the Holy Scripture of a Church; he had no belief in the supernatural and asserted that a proper understanding of the essence of Christianity - and of any other religion - requires distinction between fancy, symbolism, and the unreasonable; he despised the authority of the clergy as a fact belonging to the childhood of humanity where people had not yet reached a certain level of spiritual development and needed to be taught; he was rather indifferent to religious rituals and ceremonies and he saw in them a kind of instrumental value; and he understood the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ from an immanentist perspective. No wonder that he challenged the world of doctrinal theology and Christian orthodoxy.[1] Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, Hastings Rashdall and Clement C. J. Webb, speaking from the

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[1] "Christ himself claims his divinity not apart from his humanity, but in and because of it. The double nature is a figment of theologians; it is the Son of Man who as such is the Son of God. This, we are well told, has always been the voice of religious devotion, though not of doctrinal theology" (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 443).

standpoint of traditional Christian theology, argued against Bosanquet's idea of an impersonal God.[2] Sell, without denying Bosanquet's philosophical importance, does not consider him as a successful thinker in bringing closer Idealism and Christian thought (Sell, 1995: 5).

Yet, Bosanquet wrote extensively and comprehensively on religion. He emphasised the role of Christianity for both the development of mind and the development of Western Civilisation; he understood Christianity as the Absolute Religion in terms of representing the most developed form of religious consciousness; he analysed the contribution of Christianity both to the philosophy of religion and to the history of civilisation; and he asserted that religion "is the only thing that makes life worth living at all" (Bosanquet, 1920a: vii). In sum, Bosanquet put religion at the heart of his philosophical system. Sprigge sees Bosanquet's views on religion as coming close to what W. James called "refined supernaturalism" (Sprigge, 1992: 105-125). Sweet notices the affinities between Bosanquet's perspective and the humanistic demythologising stance of many thinkers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He argues that, although Bosanquet's views are not totally unproblematic, "his analysis not only provides an alternative to the evidentialist, quasi-evidentialist, and pragmatist views of his time - those of Whately, Clifford, James, and Newman - but may well provide an advance on more recent discussions of the character and reasonability of religious belief" (Sweet, 2000: 137).

His personal attitude to religion and the way that other people understood it

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[2]Tsanoff, 1920; Webb, 1922-23; Robbins, 1982; Patrick, 1985; Sell, 1988 and 1995.

are also interesting and revealing.[3] He was one of the five sons of the Rev. R. W. Bosanquet. His parents, whose life was characterised by "deeply religious feelings and devotion to the Church," expected that he would enter the ministry. At Balliol, however, and probably under the influence of Jowett, he turned away from orthodox Christianity. Yet he was "fundamentally religious by nature as well as by education, and never lost his hold upon the ultimate realities of faith." As a Fellow of University College (1870-1881), he was remembered by one of the undergraduates as a personality with a mystery attached to it. Helen comments that the "mystery" "seems to have been due to a reputation for 'free thought' which was unusual for a University Don in those days, and was confirmed to the undergraduates by his non-attendance at chapel." Later on and after his appointment as Professor of Moral Philosophy in St. Andrews University, he heard that the invitation to join St. Andrews "had been opposed by some of the Divinity Professors on the ground of his unorthodoxy." Yet Bosanquet's presence and teaching there strengthen the religious consciousness and encourage the firm assertion of religious faith.[4] As Lord Haldane writes, "his services

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[3]My main source of information about this subject-matter is Helen Bosanquet's short memoir (Bosanquet, 1924). The phrases and passages I quote come from the following pages: 8; 24-25; 32; 106-107; 113; 151-152.

[4]Helen writes: "It is remarkable how that influence [Bosanquet's influence], so unconsciously exerted, went to strengthen all that was best in the religious faith of those who came in contact with him. His teaching was never directed towards undermining faith, rather to widening and deepening its foundations, and to making it a reality in daily life" (Bosanquet, 1924: 113). The ideal of making religion a reality in daily life is found at the heart of Bosanquet's immanentist perspective and is thoroughly affirmed in the ethical faith, which is faith in the reality of good as the only reality.

to religion itself came to be deeply appreciated there, and not least by some of the Divinity Professors." When Bosanquet left St. Andrews, he "was considered ... to have raised the level of religious thinking, among professors and students alike, in a high degree." There is evidence that Bosanquet himself recognised the importance of ritual and religious observance in his own life. Sweet, who searched the Bosanquet papers at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, writes that Helen Bosanquet "records that, during a cycling tour holiday in the south of England in early July 1901, on 5 July they went 'in the afternoon to service in Cathedral' and the next 'morning to service in [Salisbury] Cathedral' " (Sweet, 2000: 139). Dr. Gow, who delivered the address at Bosanquet's Memorial Service, described with the following words the spirit of Bosanquet's life:

> His whole teaching and life were one and were an expression of a deep religious faith. ... His life was marked by a great sincerity and beauty of trust, by high courage and deep love. He always sought to see the best in others, he always made for peace. He lived habitually in the light of his own religious faith" (Bosanquet, 1924: 151-152).

In what follows, I will endeavour to reveal the spirit of Bosanquet's "own religious faith" as articulated throughout his philosophical work. I will show that Bosanquet "never lost his hold on the ultimate realities of faith" and that he theorised substantially on religion and, especially, on its essence, meaning and significance for

the moral development of the finite-infinite being. The purpose of this chapter is not to resolve theoretical disputes about theological matters. I do not examine Bosanquet's views on religion from a theological standpoint. My aim is to clarify what Bosanquet means by religion or religious consciousness[5] in relation to his philosophical project and, especially, to the theorisation of the finite-infinite self. More specifically, I look at how the processes of self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite, in the context of the entire self-realisation discourse, are ontologically and systemically related to religious consciousness. The main thesis is that, for Bosanquet, religion is found at the heart of the metaphysical theorising on the self and that it is logically, essentially and indispensably related to the realisation of the true, or real, self. To develop my analysis, I use references from all his published work on the topic of religion. There are two exceptions. First, I will discuss his short treatise *What Religion Is* separately in the next chapter. *What Religion Is* represents his most comprehensive and systematic statement on the topic of religion and, thus, it deserves special attention and more extensive analysis. I will point out the theoretical affinities because there is continuity between the views discussed in the present chapter and those in the next. Second, I do not discuss statements about religion, God, or religious consciousness found in his *The Meeting of Extremes in Contemporary Philosophy* (1921). Any discussion of his views in this book should take into account the general framework of the neo-realism and neo-idealism debate. This is beyond the purposes of my analysis.

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[5]Bosanquet uses both terms indiscriminately; I follow his usage.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is entitled "Religious Consciousness and the Metaphysics of the Self." I argue that there is an indispensable relation between religion, or religious consciousness, and Bosanquet's discourse on the metaphysics of the self. I created the descriptive term "the metaphysics of the self" to conceptualise the entire spiritual project of the formation of the self in Bosanquet's philosophy. The metaphysics of the self refers to such dimensions as the genealogy of selfhood, the self's ontological formation, and the dynamics of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation. Here is a summary of the argument developed in the first section of the chapter. Bosanquet's views on religion revolve around the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite characterise the fundamental spiritual structure of the finite self. The metaphysics of the self is premissed on the potential for the realisation of the true, or real, self. The realisation of the true self presupposes belief in the reality of good. Religion means faith in the reality of good as the only reality. In this context, I systematise Bosanquet's views on religion and I discern and discuss three fundamental elements in his analysis of religion. These elements are: (a) religion as the unity between the self and the world; (b) transcendence, sociality and the formation of the real self as the practical aspect of the unity between the self and the world; and (c) religion as faith in good as the only reality. In the light of my analysis, the central point of which is that religion and the metaphysics of the self are fundamentally interdependent, I critically assess MacEwen's, Hinman's, and Sell's views and point out the weaknesses

of their arguments.

The second section is devoted to "The Immanentist Perspective." I argue that Bosanquet's immanentism derives from the idea of affirming the divine in our actual lives in our endeavour to achieve self-perfection and self-realisation. The idea of an immanent deity is substantiated in the spirituality of human individuals and realised in the process of self-transcendence which aims at attaining unity with truth, beauty and goodness. Immanence does not mean that there is no spiritual world; it means, on the contrary, that the spiritual world is the only real world in terms of perfection, completion and embodiment of value. Yet, this world is within our world and is revealed gradually in the soul-moulding activity of the finite-infinite being. The spiritual world is a world of value and meaning continuous with the sensuous world which can be perceived as its "symbol." According to Bosanquet, Christianity expressed the continuous revelation of God in the human spirit. To understand this and, consequently, to affirm the true conception of the "other" world, we need to read the New Testament aright, namely, not to read it from the standpoint of the old-fashioned theology. In the same context, religious observance has instrumental value. Churches, creeds and rituals are important for the articulation of religious consciousness if and only if they help us both to apprehend and realise in our lives the essence of religion which is unity in love and will with the supreme good. Morality (belief that the good is a reality) depends on religion (belief that the good is the only reality). Religion, or religious consciousness, sustains the personal endeavour of the members of a social whole (a community) to achieve in the context of ethical life the

realisation of good. The human individual realises the real will and the real self in striving to achieve the good on the basis of the self-transcending dynamics of the finite-infinite nature of his/her being.

1. RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE METAPHYSICS OF THE SELF

Bosanquet's views on the meaning and significance of religious consciousness for a comprehensive understanding of the nature, value and destiny of the finite human individual revolve around the two principles which characterise the fundamental spiritual structure of the finite self. These principles are: (a) the dialectic of the finite-infinite; and (b) the principle of self-transcendence. Both principles operate throughout Bosanquet's analysis of the finite being and signify the reconstitutive activity of complex spiritual processes related to the affirmation of individuality. The occurrences of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite take place within the boundaries of the finite self in its endeavour to realise the true, or real, self. In following the logic of Bosanquet's ontological scheme, I consider the real self to be a reality emerging from the depths of being and belonging to the teleological dynamics of finite consciousness. Thus, the realisation of the real self[6] is both an

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[6]Throughout my analysis I use such phrases as "the realisation of the real self" or "the real self is a reality." Although the realisation of a reality appears to be a contradiction in terms, this is not the case in the discourse of Bosanquet's Philosophical Idealism. In my view, the ideal of the real self is an ever-present reality within the content of the self. It is, however, a potentiality related to the moral, spiritual, and social development of the finite self because it needs the will, action and faith of the particular human agent in order to be finally attained.

ontological and a systemic claim and refers to the attainment of spiritual completion

(perfection) which must be understood as an inherent demand stemming from the

self's ontological formation: a demand which is also related to the notion of

determinateness in Bosanquet's teleological discourse. Sweet has rightly pointed out

that Bosanquet distinguishes "determinism" from "determinateness." In the case of

determinateness "the perfection of the self is arrived at through building on its own

experience, as it is in art; it is not a simple product of the working out of certain

mechanical laws on matter." Determinism, on the other hand, "is purely the working

out of a causal process." He suggests that the view "that Bosanquet presents here can

be described as 'teleological,' though in a special sense" (Sweet, 1999b: xxvi).

Although it is not my aim in this chapter to discuss Bosanquet's notion of

teleology, I wish to clarify Bosanquet's intention because it is related to the proper

understanding of the metaphysics of the self discourse. Bosanquet's intention is to

emphasise the interrelation of (a) an inclusive cosmic or universal process or

movement (the nisus towards a whole); and (b) the self-realisation of the human agent

which is both a conscious and an unconscious process. In my view, Bosanquet

regards both movements (the universal and the individual movement towards the

whole) as encapsulating the cosmic force of a natural, in fact, a spiritual process. The

individual movement stemming from the finite human being is a manifestation of the

impulse towards a whole that characterises the universe, yet it is not a mere copy or

replica of the universal movement. The finite human being, in seeking completion and

thus perfection or self-realisation through self-transcendence, embodies the spirit of

the universal nisus towards a whole. The finite being realises this primordial and transhistorical impulse partly as a conscious agent who wills and acts and partly as a member of a spiritual community that transcends the limitations of finitude. In the act of willing unity with a greater reality (which can be, for instance, the moral community, the state as embodiment of the ethical life, or the world of aesthetic experience), human agency manifests both the universal spirit and its particular realisation. Firstly, it manifests the spirit towards unity that characterises the universe as such in its comprehensive totality. And, secondly, human agency expresses the spirit towards unity which is both logically and indispensably related to the universal impulse, yet it does take a particular form as it is gradually actualised by the will, effort, action and faith of the particular human individual.

I regard the realisation of the real self as both an ontological and a systemic claim referring to the self's spiritual completion and to the broader issue of teleology in Bosanquet's philosophy. By "ontological claim" I mean that the realisation of the real self is a state of being embodying what the self fundamentally is. The true nature of finite selfhood is encapsulated in its potentiality which "determines" throughout the spiritual process of soul-making that substantiates the self-perfecting impulse of the human individual. Let me explain how I contextualise the real self in the overall story of the finite being's quest for completeness, perfection and self-realisation that I call "the genealogy of selfhood." I have noted elsewhere that I use the phrase "genealogy of selfhood" as a descriptive term that derives from the historicity of being and endeavours "to capture the meaning of the ideal or universal self which refers to the

essence of the finite human being in its spiritual totality" (Panagakou, 1999a: 162).

The sources of the self dwell "beyond" and "beneath" the apparent exclusivity of finitude: the self crystallises the influences signifying the very fact of its existence and by willing its perfection and acting towards this goal realises what it fundamentally is. Bosanquet testifies to my view when he forcefully asserts that the human individual "does not value himself as a detached and purely self-identical subject. He values himself as the inheritor of the gifts and surroundings which are focussed in him, and which it is his business to raise to their highest power." And he continues: "The man is a representative, a trustee for the world, of certain powers and circumstances" (Bosanquet, 1912: 21). Although the realisation of the real or true self is a ceaseless "dying to live" process expanding over a life-time, it must be conceived as a logical priority that comes before any other concern related to individuality. In other words, the real self is a logically prior, yet, "naturally" posterior state of selfhood in the sense that it is the object of self-realisation and the reason of self-transcendence, namely, it is the "thing" to strive for. Therefore, the real self must be apprehended as a state of being which is not passively given or inherited, but willed, "revealed" and achieved. The phrase "systemic claim" describes a more "technical" situation for it strictly refers to the systematicity of Bosanquet's project. Thus, for analytical reasons, I see the realisation of the real self as a state of the finite being's self-realisation which is situated consistently and coherently in the logic of Bosanquet's philosophical system.

Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite refer to spiritual

processes which, in their systemic and logical interdependence, constitute the foundation of what I call "the metaphysics of the self." In the context of my analysis, the metaphysics of the self is a generic term for Bosanquet's ontological project elaborated mainly in his Gifford Lectures which are regarded as "the most extensive and systematic account of his metaphysical views" (Sweet, 1999b: xiv). As we have already seen, Bosanquet's ontological project is based on the premise that being cannot be conceived apart from a consciousness which, in his *Logic*, is defined as "a single persistent judgment" (Bosanquet, 1911 / I: 4; 21). Thus, the metaphysics of the self describes Bosanquet's philosophical conceptualisation of the self and refers to: (a) the genealogy of selfhood; (b) the ontological formation of the self in relation to the moral and social dimensions of being; and (c) the fundamental spiritual constitution of the finite being including the dynamics of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation. In sum, the metaphysics of the self is an inquiry into the genesis or emergence of the real self.

How does Bosanquet conceive of the religious consciousness in the context of this enterprise? What does religion, or religious consciousness, imply for the experience of the finite self? What is Bosanquet's own version of faith, and how does faith relate to the realisation of the true self? Bosanquet addressed and answered these questions from a demythologising and anti-supernatural standpoint, namely, a standpoint referring to immanentism and to the soul-moulding activity of the human agent. I discern here a pattern of thought parallel to his ontological project. We saw that the concept of being is discussed inseparably from consciousness, sociality and,

thus, human agency and morality. In the same way, religion is understood as a central human experience[7] which permeates the whole of being[8] and substantiates the restructuring dynamic of a multi-dimensional process characterising the formation of the real self. The real self emerges from the self-transcending, self-perfecting, and self-realising activity of the finite being within the social reality. The real self - the object of religious consciousness - is not an affirmation of otherworldly principles unrelated to the social nature of the individual. It is, on the contrary, a forceful assertion of the perfectability of the soul which embodies an inherent tendency deriving from the social nature of the individual.[9] The process of self-realisation is made possible because the finite being believes in its spiritual unity with the reality of good - the only true reality from the standpoint of religious consciousness.[10] Religious consciousness, which is defined as "the growth of a form of human consciousness" (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 433), is inextricably intertwined with the

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[7]Schaub writes that religion "was for Bosanquet one of those central experiences whose understanding carries us deep into philosophy and far towards a comprehension of reality" (Schaub, 1923: 653).

[8]"The religious consciousness, like the perception of beauty or goodness, or the belief in the uniformity of nature, permeates the whole of life. It is the business of philosophy to understand it, like any other leading characteristic of life. To understand it is in some degree to liberate it from accidental accretions, and, so far, indirectly, to reinforce it and promote its maintenance" (Bosanquet, 1913: 231).

[9]Boucher observes that for the British Idealists religion is "an inextricable part of the process of self-realisation" (Boucher, 1998: 91).

[10]"Repudiation by the finite creature of his exclusiveness, and identification, through faith, with the immanent spirit, which, as perfection, manifests itself as an urge to perfection - these, to Bosanquet, are the two inseparable phases of the religious attitude" (Schaub, 1923: 660).

self's quest for perfection[11], namely, with its endeavour to realise what fundamentally it is. In the light of this interpretation, I now discuss MacEwen's, Hinman's, and Sell's views and I point out the weaknesses of their arguments.

MacEwen (1999), who has given one of the most recent accounts of Bosanquet's views on religion, should have been more attentive to Bosanquet's conceptualisation of the finite-infinite self. MacEwen uses the category of the finite-infinite self, yet he does not capture the dialectic between the finite and infinite aspects of the self which is a feature that Bosanquet asserts and I emphasise constantly. It seems to me that, by inserting two classificatory matrixes into the heart of the finite self, and then by moving from the less to the more adequate and complete form, he tends to ignore the importance of the finite centre and to regard the finite-infinite unit as a reality different from the finite self. Bosanquet, however, insists throughout on *the double nature of the finite being*. For instance, he starts his analysis of the religious consciousness by affirming the double nature of the finite being:

> We have spoken of his origin and formation, as a self to whom on the one side his own nature is communicated by the world, and who, on the other side, in eliciting that nature from the world, reveals himself as a creative force, and as a copula raising externality towards the Absolute. We regarded him so far as being moulded by nature,

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[11] "An individual's pursuit of perfection requires participation in social life" (Gaus, 1994: 420).

though in being moulded he reveals the power of eliciting its secret,

a secret even from itself (Bosanquet, 1913: 224).

The quest for perfection, the emergence of the real self, and the self-transcending impulse come from the finite self in its double nature as finite-infinite. MacEwen writes that religion "abandons the quest for perfection through the finite self and, laying hold on her resources of the true self, finds that it is equal to the task" (MacEwen, 1999: 54). But the true self is a reality emerging from the finite self: the realisation of the true self does not mean that it stops to be finite as well. We do not have a series of selves in time: we have different levels of self-realisation and deeper levels of experiencing unity with the reality of good which are substantiated within the finite self in its double nature as finite-infinite. The self is ontologically constituted as finite-infinite. In my view, the "dying to live" process, which is an expression that Bosanquet takes from Goethe, refers to the finite self in its entirety. The "death" and "rebirth" of the self constitute spiritual processes occurring within the finite self and providing it with new strength and determination. I agree with MacEwen that the finite-infinite self "has to experience and go through the dying process in order to become alive unto itself," yet it is rather unclear to me how "[w]hile the finite self is dying, therefore, the infinite-finite self is living" (MacEwen, 1999: 59). According to my interpretation, there is only one self, the finite-infinite self, and it is at once dying and living.

Hinman, who examines the views of Bosanquet and Radhakrishnan from the

standpoint of Logos theology, makes a similar error. The term "Logos theology" is not clearly defined in the article. In my view, it is a form of "philosophical theism" - I follow Hinman's terminology here - that refers to a mixture of Christianity with the logical structures of Greek philosophy. I do not focus on this issue, however. Hinman writes:

> The historic idea of self-realization through self-sacrifice, central to the Christian religion and developed in large in the Logos theology, is as clearly at home in the modern idealism as in any stage of the idealistic tradition. Professor Bosanquet has developed it in many places, usually under the formula of the self-transcendence of the finite (Hinman, 1921: 344)

To me, Hinman stops at a point which, if it is adopted as expressing Bosanquet's views, can lead us to a misleading direction. He emphasises the idea of "self-sacrifice" and the "self-transcendence of the finite." I think that the picture is incomplete because it implicitly refers to a transcendent theorisation of Bosanquet's views. We do not go beyond experience, we do not leave aside the finite. Hinman, like MacEwen, fails to grasp the dialectical relationship between the finite and the infinite aspects that characterises the essence of the individual. Self-transcendence is a fundamental ontological feature of the finite-infinite being which, during the processes of self-affirmation and self-perfection, moves to a higher stage of spiritual completion

and fulfilment and affirms more emphatically the infinite aspect of its ontological constitution. The self-transcendence of the finite does not mean the abolition of the finite, for there is only one self, as I stated before, the finite-infinite, and it is at once dying and living. The "dying to live" process is a symbolic representation of the ceaseless self-restructuring spiritual activity that affirms gradually a more real dimension of selfhood within its finite-infinite constitution. The birth, death and rebirth of the self, in this context, refer to a dynamic, self-transformative and self-restructuring spiritual reality occurring within the finite-infinite self. One can retort that the idea of self-realisation "through self-sacrifice" that Hinman mentions might describe a spiritual process as well. I do not object to this. What I wish to point out is that the purpose of the spiritual process of self-transcendence is not to sacrifice the self, or to abolish the finite aspect of the finite-infinite being. The purpose of self-transcendence is, on the contrary, to sustain the finite-infinite being's self-maintenance in the world and to enable the human individual to affirm a greater degree of reality and a more comprehensive sense of self-perfection during the self-realising process. In other words, the "dying to live" process does not refer ultimately to self-sacrifice. As the self is spiritually dying and living at once, the self's being is triumphantly affirmed and infinity is substantially realised within the finite-infinite centre that sustains the self-restructuring dynamic. Let me explain further.

I do not object to the idea that there might be a case where one achieves self-realisation through actual self-sacrifice. A mother, for instance, who sacrifices herself, to save the life of her child. In this case, we have the discourse of self-realisation

articulated at a different level of experience. As far as I understand Bosanquet's theorising on this issue, this and similar cases cannot and should not be excluded because, first of all, they describe life at its most ultimate moral realisation. Yet my point is two-fold. First, I wish to emphasise that self-transcendence, as an ontological and logical dimension in the reality of being, should not be identified with self-sacrifice, meaning the actual sacrifice of the individual. Second, I wish to make clear that the "dying to live" process that is a more dramatic description of self-transcendence is a symbolic spiritual process that comprehensively affirms the reality of being in its double finite-infinite nature. I now turn to a critical assessment of Sell's interpretation.

Alan Sell claims that "Like Bradley, Bosanquet regarded religion as but a prelude to metaphysics..." (Sell, 1988: 54). I do not think that this claim is justified by Bosanquet's analysis.[12] I do not see why Sell understands religion and metaphysics in Bosanquet's philosophical project to stand in a kind of hierarchical order. To me, religion signifies the essence of metaphysics (more specifically - and for the purposes of my analysis - the metaphysics of the self) and metaphysics provides religion with a conceptual and semantic framework facilitating the expression of its spirit. If, on the other hand, we insist upon regarding religion and metaphysics as separate projects, we must emphasise their mutual interdependence. Bosanquet recognises a logical relation between religion and metaphysics which, in my view, culminates in the affirmation of their fundamental interconnectedness: "The World or object; the Self

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[12]I consider only Bosanquet's case here.

or subject; their unity, or God; these are the two elements and their connection which, whether we know it or not, make up the hinge of life." Religion is the consciousness of this unity (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 435). It is obvious that, far from being "but a prelude to metaphysics," religion is situated at the heart of the metaphysical project. Tsanoff saw this point: "The deeper conviction of our genuine, self-transcendent nature is manifest in the religious consciousness, and indeed constitutes the essence of religion" (Tsanoff, 1920: 63). Schaub also recognised that "Bosanquet has performed a notable service in arguing so forcibly that religion has a genuine metaphysical aspect and a cosmic, as distinct from a narrowly humanistic, orientation" (Schaub, 1923: 666). In my view, religion and metaphysics are logically and indispensably interrelated. Bosanquet's definition of "the religious consciousness as an expression of ultimate reality" in his discussion of the philosophy of religion testifies to my position (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 29).

Bosanquet's "The Evolution of Religion" (1894-1895: 432-444), "Religion (Philosophy of)" (1999b [1902]: 29-39), and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913: 224-256) contain all the essential points used in his analysis of the religious consciousness in relation to the metaphysics of the self.[13] These points are: (a) religion, or religious consciousness, is the consciousness of the spiritual unity between

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[13] I do not discuss in this section the immanentist approach and the related issues of the true conception of the other world, the kingdom of God on earth, and the connection between religion, morality and sociality. To an extent, these topics belong to the theme of the present section; I wish, however, to concentrate on more technical issues, i.e., issues referring (broadly speaking) to the structure of the religious consciousness. The division I have introduced serves mainly analytical purposes. The two sections of this chapter and the following chapter should be seen as interrelated.

the self and the world; (b) religious consciousness is inextricably related to the formation of the real self and to the self-transcending socio-ethical nature of the finite being; and (c) religious consciousness is faith in good as the only reality. Next, I discuss these issues in turn.

1a. Religion is the Unity Between the Self and the World

In "The Evolution of Religion"[14] Bosanquet emphasises that the most developed form of religion is the "Absolute or Spiritual Religion." The "Absolute or Spiritual Religion" is also described as "the Religion of the Absolute" which refers to "the recognized Unity between the Self and the World" (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 443-444). Attention must be paid to the definite secular, or immanent, meaning of the concept because such a phrase as the "Religion of the Absolute" is obviously a clear target for Bosanquet's critics. I think that there is an interesting connection here with the idea of "the absolute standpoint" that Bosanquet mentions in two of his essays: "The Part Played by Aesthetic in the Development of Modern Philosophy" (1888-1889) and "The Civilisation of Christendom" (1893a). The absolute standpoint refers both to a tendency of mind and to a way of understanding and conceptualising our

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[14]Bosanquet notes that this article is inspired by E. Caird's *The Evolution of Religion* (1893). He states: "... I claim no originality, but on the other hand, I have so far employed my own language and illustrations that Mr. Caird must in no way be held responsible for what is said" (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 432). Caird's views on religion, though not identical, belong to the same line of theorisation with those of Bosanquet's. Caird believed that Christianity, or "absolute religion" was the highest realisation of religious consciousness. In Christianity, God is conceived neither as a natural power nor as a spiritual being set over against nature. God is spirit being manifested in the process of nature and immanent in it. See Long (1989).

being in the world. Bosanquet explains in a revealing and powerfully written passage that shows a strong resemblance to the ideas of the Enlightenment:

> For the phrase, "absolute stand-point," we may not incorrectly substitute the apparently more simple phrase, "modern stand-point." I do not say that the world "modern" has a technical signification in philosophy; but the spirit of conviction embodied in the word "modern" does correspond to the idea conveyed by the word "absolute." When, for example, we speak of modern science, modern enterprise, modern civilisation, what is the fundamental feeling which the expression is intended to convey? I believe that we may safely answer, "a sense of rational freedom," that is to say, the conviction that man can meet with nothing that is outside himself, in the sense of being necessarily and fundamentally superior to his rational nature and incapable of being faced or dealt with by it. We know that the individual may be cowed by superstition, degraded by vice, or destroyed by physical agencies, but we do not believe that man, as such, is beset with any necessary inferiority in face of any power or of any phenomena in the universe (Bosanquet, 1888-1889: 85).

The absolute standpoint can be seen as epitomising the highest stage in the realisation of human consciousness. At the centre of the absolute standpoint we find the human

being, who as a rational being, is able to reflect on the world and to understand its own situatedness in the world from a standpoint that does not refer to a "reality" outside itself. Externality might be hostile (the action of physical agencies); states of mind and systems of belief might be imperfect (vice and superstition); yet the human agency because of its rational capacity is able to overcome the obstacles through judgment, self-reflection, deliberation, will and action. The "sense of rational freedom" that Bosanquet refers to signifies a liberating moment in the overall story of human consciousness that deeply affected and re-defined the fundamental interconnectedness between the being and its world. There is no superior power outside the finite-infinite being which is premissed on the human being's inferiority and which can "master" its fate in the context of a preconditioned, and predestined scheme of things.[15] How can we understand it? Let me explain.

An earthquake, for instance, is a physical power deriving from nature and it is above the ability and will of the individuals to predict it and avoid its occurrence for the time being at least. We cannot pretend that in physical terms the human being is above the destructive power of the earthquake. It is a fact: human lives are lost, properties are destroyed, the everyday life of work, creation and enjoyment is interrupted, suffering has been generated. However, human beings, because of their

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[15] The crucial point is how the human beings understand the incident, how they situate it in the larger picture of things, and how they deal with it in order to enable life to continue and flourish again. The sense of rational freedom and the rational capacity characterising the constitution of the human individual from the "absolute or modern standpoint" provide us with a new way of understanding the being in the world and the unity of the self with the world.

rational capacity, are able to deal with the fact and to go beyond, materially and spiritually, its destructive consequences. The earthquake, therefore, is a power that can be mastered and dealt with successfully - to a great extent - by the creative and rational power of the human agent who is able not only to create new structures, but to utilise the existing ones for the betterment of life and the well-being of the community. In this example and in relation to the modern or the absolute standpoint (which was the starting-point of this discussion), the crucial point is not the incident (the earthquake) that causes destruction, suffering and devastation. The crucial point is the way that the human beings understand and deal with the incident which brings together an array of interrelated issues: (a) how they situate the incident in the larger picture of things; (b) how they explain it scientifically and thus promote knowledge and gain more information about, and a deeper insight into, physical phenomena of this kind; and (c) how they deal with it practically and spiritually in order to eliminate the impact of the destructive consequences and to enable life to continue without hindrances and flourish again. Human consciousness has made a definite advance in viewing the earthquake as something that can be explained scientifically and dealt with effectively because of our skills, organisation, management and rational capacity. In this sense, the earthquake is a physical phenomenon: it is not a power that goes beyond the power of mind to deal with it and explain it in the light of the results of scientific experience and not as embodying a "spiritual" power of unknown origin, namely, a power outside the reach of the apprehension of consciousness.

In the context of the absolute standpoint, the explanatory framework and the

dynamics of knowledge do not dwell outside this world. Human agency does not refer to a cluster of determinations outside the boundaries of consciousness being understood, however, in its more comprehensive and real manifestation as the cradle of the spiritual world. Both the sense of rational freedom and the rational capacity which characterise the constitution of the human individual, according to the "logic" of the rational or modern standpoint, provide us with a new way of understanding the being in the world, its self-realision despite the chapter of hazards and accidents, and finally, the fundamental nature of the unity of the self with the world.

In Bosanquet's "The Civilisation of Christendom," the absolute or modern standpoint is connected in particular with Christianity, from which religion "it was in fact derived by the great men who first proclaimed it in the time of Goethe and of the French Revolution" (Bosanquet, 1983a: 80). In his essay ""The Part Played by Aesthetic in the Development of Modern Philosophy," Bosanquet makes a similar point concerning the genesis of the absolute standpoint alluding, however, to the Hegelian origins of its semantic articulation. He mentions in this essay that the absolute or modern standpoint expressed a conviction which was characteristic "of the progressive civilisation of Christendom" and he continues that it is "this conviction which took philosophical form at the time of the French Revolution in the doctrine of the absolute or the objective idea" (Bosanquet, 1888-1889: 86). Bosanquet's conception of the "Absolute Religion" seems to have close connections with "the absolute or modern standpoint" which refers to a point of view that "excludes accident, caprice, and with these *the vulgar idea of the supernatural*" (Bosanquet,

1993a: 78, my emphasis). This is a point of view premissed on the idea of an immanent divinity - an idea that Bosanquet attributes to the spiritual heritage of Christianity (Bosanquet, 1893a: 84).

The absolute standpoint, from which the unity between the self and the world is comprehensively articulated, presupposes that the reality of the spiritual world is revealed and affirmed in its totality within consciousness and in the context of the world we are in. The spiritual world that sustains the processes of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation and signifies the meaning of life is the world of truth, beauty and goodness. The spiritual world transcends the limitations of finiteness as such: yet it is articulated, revealed and substantiated in the concrete universality of the finite-infinite self. In this context, the finite-infinite self strives ceaselessly to realise the fundamental nature of its being. Self-transcendence both sustains triumphantly, and it is structured around, the firm belief that the spiritual world is a comprehensive reality revealed thoroughly and ultimately in the world of our daily life and experience. Self-transcendence is made possible because of the self-restructuring and self-affirming dynamics emerging from the matrix of the spiritual world. Human mind, the mind of the finite-infinite being, is able to grasp the beauty, truth and significance of the world when it penetrates a deeper level of reality and thus it comes closer, with its own power, to the true nature of things. We seem to have here both a historical and a trans-historical dimension concerning the realisation of consciousness. In the context of the discourse on religion that stems from this philosophical point of view, religious consciousness which, in Caird's theorisation, is

a "psychological necessity in the development of human spirit" (Long, 1989: 364),

articulates itself in a more comprehensive, more real, manner. The Absolute Religion

refers to the continuous and progressive revelation of divinity immanently, in the spirit

of the finite-infinite human being and throughout nature. In this stage of religious

consciousness:

> The unity of man and the world is no longer indicated by the
>
> sacredness of a natural object, nor transferred into a mind or will
>
> believed in as remote from nature and outside it, if also above it; but
>
> it is recognized in its own proper form. For by Absolute or Spiritual
>
> Religion it is apprehended as that divinity which progressively reveals
>
> itself in the spirit of man and also in the order and beauty of the
>
> natural world from which he issues (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 442-443).

Divinity is gradually revealed in man and nature and the spiritual unity[16] of the self and

the world is affirmed. "The Evolution of Religion" is a highly speculative and difficult

article. Bosanquet wants to accommodate God in this project, yet not in the

conventional sense of the orthodox religion. God clearly is neither a person nor a will

above and outside the world. Divinity is revealed immanently as the spirit of union

between two essentially and logically interdependent and interrelated units. Although

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[16]This unity "may be called Providence, or Reason, or Design, or the Uniformity of
Nature, or the Reign of Law, or the order of the Universe, or, in short, God; and the
consciousness of this unity is Religion" (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 435).

the concept of good is introduced to complete the story, the precise nature of its connection with the self and the world is not explained clearly.[17] Bosanquet, however, puts forward a conceptual pattern which appears in all his discussions concerning the meaning of religion: *religion, or religious consciousness, refers to a state of unity and, in particular, to the unity between the world or object and the self or subject.*[18]

1b. The Practical Aspect of the Unity Between The World and the Self: Transcendence, Sociality and the Formation of the Real Self

In 1902, Bosanquet returns to the question of religious consciousness and to the familiar topics of God, the supernatural, and the principle of immanence - this time, in a detailed analysis of the philosophy of religion:

> We ask, how much do we include under the religious consciousness?
>
> Is it to be confined to a consciousness of God, or of the supernatural;
>
> or are the essentials of it to be found in states of mind which bear no

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[17]The idea of religion as the unity between the self and the world is a strong, comprehensive and useful metaphysical point. Elsewhere Bosanquet will elaborate this unity as unity with a higher perfection referring to the idea of good and presupposing the self-transcending movement of the finite self. At this stage, however. Bosanquet does not explain how man's capacities for participation in a common good depend on, or derive from, the consciousness of the unity between the self and the world.

[18]For Caird, "unity or God is the presupposition of all consciousness" (Long, 1989: 367).

explicit reference to what we should call God or to a supernatural

world? (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 32).

Bosanquet distinguishes the philosophy of religion, which is defined as "the study of

the religious consciousness as an expression of ultimate reality" (Bosanquet, 1999b

[1902]: 29), from theology and from the history, science or natural history of religion.

Theology fails "to deal with the universal and necessary nature and foundations of the

religious attitude as such"; the philosophy of religion, on the other hand, "is universal

in its scope" (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 29). The philosophy of religion, in dealing

comprehensively with the fundamentals of the religious attitude as such, is an inquiry

into the nature, meaning, content and conceptualisation of the religious consciousness.

There are different forms of religion depending on the stage of civilisation, yet all of

them have a common element: they endeavour to express the spiritual oneness, the

unity between the self and the world. The unity between the self and the world is

expressed both at the metaphysical and at the socio-ethical level. The spiritual

membership in the community of human beings substantiates the metaphysical unity

at the socio-ethical level. The purpose of religion is to assert the togetherness of

human beings in their quest for the good and to sanctify their spiritual unity: this is a

recognition and affirmation of the social nature of the individual and the foundation

of ethical thinking.[19] Ethical thinking means to apprehend the self as a member of a

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[19]"From the first there is a tendency to rally some social group around the god, and to sanctify in his name some social ritual and observance; and wherever there are the beginnings of social unity and obligation there are also the beginnings of ethics"

more inclusive reality that offers the framework of self-perfection and self-realisation. The realisation of the true self occurs within the social whole.[20] Bosanquet regards society as a sustaining force behind the self-realising endeavour of the individuals, for it provides them with a unique sense of situatedness:

> A certain courage and a certain guidance are needed for the mere
>
> conduct of existence from day to day; and the particular human being,
>
> if wholly deprived of the sense of unity with society and with the
>
> world, which is at the root of his reliance on his scheme of life, seems
>
> to perish like a plant deprived of warmth or nourishment (Bosanquet,
>
> 1999b [1902]: 34).

1c. Religious Consciousness is Faith in Good as the Only Reality

The process of self-perfection, which aims at the realisation of the true self, occurs within society. The formation of the real self presupposes the self-transcending activity of the finite-infinite self which is always in a state of re-adjustment, transformation and spiritual reconstitution.[21] Self-transcendence means

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(Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 36).

[20]This is a shared belief among the British Idealists. Boucher writes of them: "The test of a morally worthwhile existence is the extent to which the individual attempts to do God's work in the world by achieving his or her own potential and contributing to the common good" (Boucher, 1997: x).

[21]The real self is the object of religious consciousness from the standpoint of social ontology.

to reach out, to overcome the limitations (and obstructions) of the finite nature, and to unite with a greater reality (to seek absorption in a more complete world). Self-transcendence means (a) unity with something greater than oneself; and (b) unity with a source of strength outside or beyond oneself. This view of self-transcendence refers to the religious attitude in general. The link between self-transcendence and the ultimate form of religious consciousness needs further clarification. Let me explain.

I regard Bosanquet's views on the elaboration of the meaning of religious consciousness as being crystallised in two levels. The first level refers to the structuration of that specific form of consciousness that can be recognised as the religious consciousness or religion. Religious consciousness is the movement beyond oneself, the sense of unity with a greater reality, and the absorption of oneself into a world of content to which one is devoted and loyal. Devotion and loyalty to this "object" refer to a complex experience felt within finite consciousness, i.e., a deep experience that influences the being of selfhood.[22] The elements of this "religious" devotion are the following. First, one would die rather than abandon one's faith because one affirms one's humanity by being united with this reality.[23] In Bosanquet's

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[22]"The love of a person, or devotion to an idea" may contain the characteristics attributed to religious consciousness because they "may apparently produce the peculiar religious effect, the effect of something which is at once an overmastering law of life and a source of strength outside our everyday being" (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 32).

[23]Sweet emphasises the idea of commitment to something as one of the characteristics of religious belief in Bosanquet's theory. Religious belief "is an individual's commitment to something that is part of one's sense of oneself as a human being and that one considers more important than one's own private interests and desires" (Sweet, 2000: 125).

own words:

> A man's real religion, it may be said, is that set of objects, habits and convictions, whatever it might prove to be, which he would die rather than abandon, or at least would feel himself excommunicated from humanity if he did abandon. It would follow from this that his actual religion may differ in any degree from his nominal creed. On the other hand, it might be contended by students of the philosophy of religion that only those convictions which are called religious *par excellence* in the normal sense [faith in God and in future life and, for the Christian world, the doctrine of the Incarnation] are capable of affording in the fullest degree that support, and that sense of triumphant unity, which seem to be the central facts of religious experience (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 33).[24]

Second, one experiences a strong and overwhelming feeling of unity with the greater world. Third, one has a sense of being absorbed in, and united with, a higher perfection that gives satisfaction and completion. And, finally, one perceives oneself as nothing in comparison to the reality to which one attaches oneself. This reality

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[24]One can easily note the two different conceptions of religion that Bosanquet identifies: (a) a man's real religion: the real "object" of devotion and loyalty; and (b) the nominal creed that refers to what conventionally or traditionally we mean by religion.

seems to be everything:

> Whenever, then, we find a devotion which makes the finite self seem
> as nothing and some reality to which it attaches itself seem as all, we
> have the essentially religious attitude. Thus there may be false
> religions, conflicting religions, partial and hesitating religions. But a
> finite self-conscious life without religion is hardly to be found
> (Bosanquet, 1913: 235-236).

This is an important statement conveying the fundamental characteristic of what is *the essentially religious attitude*. At the speculative level, religion is at the root of the ontic impulse to unity that embodies the essence of human nature. Bosanquet offers a more elaborate account of his thoughts in *What Religion Is*:

> Obviously there must be grades of the religious experience. I do not
> believe that a human being can be wholly without it. Wherever a man
> is so carried beyond himself whether for any other being, or for a
> cause or for a nation, that his personal fate seems to him as nothing in
> comparison of the happiness or triumph of the other, there you have
> the universal basis and structure of religion (Bosanquet, 1920a: 5-6).

The above quotation refers to the first level of the anatomy of religious consciousness,

namely, to the structuration discourse. We move now from the first to the second level of the analysis of the religious consciousness. Although the religious consciousness presupposes self-transcendence, this is not to say that "every sense of attainment or self-transcendence by the conquest of externality, is religious" (Bosanquet, 1913: 226). The crucial point is the idea of a higher perfection with which the finite self seeks unity, namely, unity "with perfection in the form of good" (Bosanquet, 1913: 226).[25] The second level of the analysis refers to the religious consciousness as faith in the unity of the self with the reality of good that embodies the idea of a higher perfection. What we have in religion, Bosanquet writes,

> is the practical recognition of the absorption of the finite will in the will for perfection, that is, in the will for good, as the real and actual will dominant in the universe. ...The finite mind so far as religious accepts as its true self an actual perfection, which alone is real, and in which evil is absorbed and annihilated. With this perfection it identifies itself by faith, that is to say, in the will to be, allied with the

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[25]At the same time Bosanquet introduces a distinction concerning the notion of self-transcendence and relates its more comprehensive form to religious consciousness: "Thus we must not say that every satisfaction, every sense of attainment or self-transcendence by the conquest of externality, is religious. On the contrary, the sense of satisfaction and achievement, in our own strength (taking no note of what is implied in the self-transcendence which all achievement actually involves), may well become the self-sufficiency which is the essence of irreligion. But every satisfaction and achievement - every self-transcendence in which we become united with something which was beyond us - may be religiously felt, if it is taken as involving recognition of a higher perfection, that is, as coming to us not in our own strength, but as a pledge of our absorption in the greater world" (Bosanquet, 1913: 226-227).

judgment of what is, disowning its finite imperfections and those of the world, and treating them as nothing - but, it must be added, not as non-existent" (Bosanquet, 1913: 245-246).

From the standpoint of religious consciousness, the will for good is the only real will dominant in the universe. Religion means belief in the reality of good as the only reality with which the self is united while its finite will is absorbed in the world of a higher perfection. Human beings achieve this state of self-realisation because they believe in the domination of the good will and they have faith in the reality of good as the only reality. This does not mean that evil is non-existent. Evil exists for it belongs to the condition of finiteness. Yet it is not real, in the sense that it cannot be seen as the embodiment of value, completion and perfection. Gaus notes that our finite nature imposes limits on our quest for perfection; this is why absolute perfection, "a coherent self encompassing all values," is impossible (Gaus, 1994: 419). Despite the fact, however, that absolute perfection cannot be attained, the self strives for perfection and asserts its infinite nature: "Religion establishes the infinite spirit because it is continuous with and present in the finite - in love and in will for perfection" (Bosanquet, 1913: 256). The belief in the reality of the good sustains the fight against evil.

The Pauline doctrine of Justification by Faith completes the picture of Bosanquet's views on religion and reveals the fundamental structure of his immanentist approach. In his instructive essay "How to Read the New Testament"

Bosanquet explains:

These - *in* and *with* Christ - are the two aspects of Paul's doctrine.

Being one *with* the risen Christ, means that the particular believer has

put away his bad will, is dead to sin, and has thoroughly submitted his

heart and soul to the dominion of the good will, that is the mind of

Christ. Being one *in* the risen Christ means that the society of

believers form what Paul calls the "body of Christ," that is, a spiritual

unity which is Divine and yet human, and as wide as humanity. Faith

means realizing this oneness in and with Christ. This great

comparison of the relation between human beings in society to that

between the parts of a living body was introduced into moral thought

by Plato, and has been, perhaps, the most fruitful of all moral ideas

(Bosanquet, 1899a: 151).

Belief in the risen Christ and his Divinity means the spiritual oneness of believers in

and with Christ. The body of Christ signifies the spiritual unity and relation of human

beings within the social whole. The finite selves must ceaselessly transcend the

limitations of their particularity and affirm the infinite spirit within in order to sustain

the spiritual cohesion underlying the life of the social whole. The soul-moulding

process, which is seen by Bosanquet as a continuous reaching out for perfection,

involves the will for good and faith in the reality of good.[26] Religion is the recognition

of the absolute reality of good. The idea of an immanent divinity[27] refers to the

human being's effort for moral development and perfection: "For positive effort, and

strenuous effort, will always be needed to apprehend the ideal reality. I said, the

reality is near us, is not separate and remote; but how hard it is to apprehend what

stares you in the face" (Bosanquet, 1893b: 149). Both "the kingdom of God" and

"the other world" refer to the realisation of good and the affirmation of infinity in the

lives of the individuals who constitute the social whole. We are "in and with Christ"

within society in our everyday endeavour to realise the true, or real, self and thus to

assert the infinite aspect of our finite-infinite being.[28]   This is the essence of

Bosanquet's immanentist perspective.

In this section I showed the indispensable relation between religion, or the

religious consciousness, and Bosanquet's discourse on the metaphysics of the self.

The latter refers to: (a) the genealogy of selfhood; (b) the ontological formation of the

self; and (c) the spiritual constitution of the finite being including the dynamics of

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[26]I agree with Sweet that Bosanquet's views on ethics "reflect what is now popularly called "perfectionism" or, more broadly, an ethic of self-realisation that has as its aim the perfection of human personality" (Sweet, 1999b: xxiii).

[27]The idea of an immanent Deity "forms the very centre of Hegel's thought." Bosanquet, however, carefully distinguishes between "the difficult question of Hegel's ultimate conception of the being of God" - an issue that he does not discuss - and the most prominent side of this conception, namely, the notion of an immanent Deity (Bosanquet, 1905: xxx-xxxi).

[28]"The finite-infinite being is always to a degree cognizant of both phases of his nature. Unless he to some extent and in some manner recognized his character as infinite, he would lack religion" (Schaub, 1923: 657).

self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation. The metaphysics of the self is premissed on the individual's potential for realising the true self. The realisation of the true self presupposes belief in the reality of good. Religion means faith in the reality of good and, more especially, an unshakable belief that only the good is real. All these processes and states of being occur in this world, the world of our everyday experience and soul-formation.

2. THE IMMANENTIST PERSPECTIVE

Webb observes that Bosanquet's views on religion belong to the second phase of the philosophy of religion of the British Idealists which is characterised by a stronger sense of immanentism (Webb, 1933: 100). In my view, Bosanquet's immanentism derives from the idea of finding and affirming the divine in the actual life of the finite human beings in their endeavour to achieve self-realisation and self-perfection. The divine is revealed in the ideal self which is the real self that the finite individual strives to realise through action and a complex process of spiritual relations. In Bosanquet's philosophy, the idea of God is finally identified with the idea of good which is apprehended by the finite consciousness as the most real and comprehensive content of human experience. In contrast to a transcendental and otherworldly notion of God who stands outside human existence, immanence is the idea that, because of our spirituality, we all participate in the divine which is realised in the souls of human individuals in their quest for the good. Bosanquet's immanentism can be seen in his theory of the true conception of the "other" world, and in his discussion of religion

and morality. In both areas, the self-transcending dynamics of being and the dialectic of the finite-infinite structure the individual's soul-moulding activity that lies beneath the spiritualisation of the natural body. The spiritualisation of being does not refer to a peculiar disembodied existence, but to the real nature of the individual understood comprehensively from the standpoint of self-realisation and self-perfection. In religion, the self holds fast to the truth of the reality of the good in spite of appearances. The finite-infinite being affirms this ultimate belief in every single moment of its spiritual expansion and soul-formation which constitute the restructuring "dying to live" experience. Penetrating the substance of the world we are in means conquering gradually deeper and more substantial levels of reality and thus coming closer to the secret of the universe that is revealed in the reality of the spiritual world. The object of self-perfection is an even more comprehensive substantiation and revelation of the spiritual world within the finite mind.

2a. The Reality of the Spiritual World

Bosanquet's essay on "The True Conception of Another World" (1905) is implicitly related to his views on religion.[29] In this important essay Bosanquet clarifies how the "other" world should be apprehended and where the distinction between "this" and the "other" world is to be found. In this context, he explains the difference

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[29] The essay was first published in 1886 as a prefatory essay to Bosanquet's translation of *The Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of Fine Art*. In Helen Bosanquet's words, "The True Conception of Another World" "is an attempt to assist the reader to realise the definite and concrete nature of Hegel's thought upon spiritual realities" (Bosanquet, 1924: 57).

between the philosophical and the popular conception of the supra-sensuous world, he differentiates between the true and the false form of spiritualisation and, in my view, he prepares the ground for the arguments developed in essays dealing more explicitly with religious themes. I refer to such essays as "How to Read the New Testament" (1899a), "The Kingdom of God on Earth" (1899b), "The Civilisation of Christendom" (1893a), "Are We Agnostics?" (1893b), and "Old Problems Under New Names" (1893c).[30] The focal point of the immanentist perspective is the idea of the spiritual world understood as: (a) a world found within human experience in the present life; and (b) a whole that does not need reference outside itself to be completed. In fact, the structuration of the immanentist perspective and the articulation of a project that substantiates the reconciliation of "the other world" with "this world" started long ago with Plato. Christianity and Hegel continued the project. Bosanquet writes:

> More particularly, the doctrine of the divine spirit as present in the
>
> human society, inherited from Plato by Christianity... completed in
>
> principle the reconciliation of "the other world" with "this"; and when
>
> Hegel told us, in so many words, that the object-matter of philosophy

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[30]There is an unbreakable theoretical continuity between the essays discussed in this section, the essays analysed in the previous section - "The Part Played by Aesthetic in the Development of Modern Philosophy" (1888-1889), "The Evolution of Religion" (1894-1895), "Religion (Philosophy of)" (1999b [1902]), and "The Religious Consciousness" off *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913) - and *What Religion Is* (1920a), the analysis of which is the topic of the next chapter.

was never anything abstruse and remote, but always something concrete and in the highest sense present, the ghost of the other world was finally laid, as in Plato it had been laid in principle (Bosanquet, 1924a: 55).

The spiritual world is present, actual and concrete and contains the comprehensive value and meaning of these spheres of human experience which embody the spiritual life of being and are known as ethical life, art, philosophy, and religion. The significance of an institution, the apprehension of beauty, the critical evaluation, reasoning and desire to understand, and the essence of religious consciousness refer to the human being's endeavour to penetrate the substance of reality and conquer a deeper and completer level of self-realisation. The self communicates with a world of meaning articulated beyond the immediacy of the senses. This is a supra-sensuous world that is continuous with, and related to, the material world of its "symbolic" representation. The supra-sensuous world presupposes the sensuous world. This is the true conception of the "other" world: the conception of a world "logically" related to the world of the senses (yet, beyond the immediacy of the senses), inseparable from it and indispensable to the latter for its meaningful assertion in consciousness. The popular conception of the "other" world refers either to a future projection of a distant paradise, or to a remote world of disembodied spirits or ghosts (angels, the dead, etc.) which exists somewhere separately from us and, although it might correspond to the world of our concrete existence, it is characterised by "an

inaccessibility that defies apprehension" (Bosanquet, 1905: xix). Bosanquet, in clarifying Hegel's idea of spiritual being, puts forward the true conception of the spiritualisation of the natural body:

> The notion of a spiritual body other than and incompatible with the natural body does not arise. Spirit exists in the medium of consciousness, not in a peculiar kind of matter. The spiritualization of the natural body is not to be looked for in an astral or angel body, but in the gait and gesture, the significance and dignity, that make the body of the civilized man the outward image of his soul, and distinguishes him from the savage as from the animal. The human soul becomes actual itself, and visible to others, only by moulding the body into its symbol and instrument (Bosanquet, 1905: xxxiii-xxxiv).

The spiritualisation of the natural body refers to the completion and affirmation of its distinct individuality, and not to the abolition of its material form. The spiritual world must not be reduced to a world of disembodied spirits regarded as separate existences apart from the human body. The "other" world as the revelation of divinity in the human spirit, which is a distinctive Christian doctrine, is a constant pattern in Bosanquet's theorisation of religion based on the insight that the spiritual world is the apprehension of the meaning of the world in which we live.[31] The spiritual world is

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[31]Compare (Bosanquet, 1893b: 139-141) and (Bosanquet, 1905: xvii-xix).

a world of value and meaning continuous with the sensuous world which exists in the

medium of consciousness and articulates the individual's self-realisation process:

The "things not seen," philosophically speaking, are no world of

existences or of intelligences co-ordinate with and severed from this

present world. They are a value, an import, a significance, superadded

to the phenomenal world, which may thus be said, though with some

risk of misunderstanding, to be degraded into a symbol. The house,

the cathedral, the judge's robe, the general's uniform, are ultimate facts

for the child or the savage: but for the civilized man they are symbols

of domestic life, of the Church, and of the State. Even where the

supra-sensuous world has its purest expression, in the knowledge and

will of intelligent beings, it presupposes a sensuous world as the

material of ideas and of actions. "This" world and the "other" world

are continuous and inseparable, and all men must live in some degree

for both. But the completion of the Noumenal world, and the

apprehension of its reality and completeness, is the task by fulfilling

which humanity advances" (Bosanquet, 1905: xxiii-xxiv).

A self-transformative dynamic accompanies the apprehension of the spiritual

world and the symbolic submergence of the finite self into its reality. As the finite

being discovers the spiritual world within itself, the self is restructured, the soul is

remoulded and deeper levels of self-transcendence and self-realisation are gradually affirmed. This gradual process of self-realisation and soul-formation is best seen in the case of child development - a development that Bosanquet compares to the Resurrection of the traditional theology:

Does any man wish to see a far nobler miracle than the Resurrection, - not the recalling of a dead organism to life, but the elevation of an animal soul into membership of the supra-sensuous world? *Then let him observe the education of his child.* The metaphors of old religion may now seem awkward and erroneous, but their language was not at all strong for the facts which we must *learn* to see" (Bosanquet, 1893b: 143).

I read the essay "Are We Agnostics?" as an applied version of the insights found in "On the True Conception of Another World." Bosanquet's target here is, especially, Huxley's views on Agnosticism.[32] The real spiritual world is "the world of

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[32]Bosanquet refers to Huxley's *Essays on Controverted Questions* and to a subsequent article by the same author in which Huxley explained further his standpoint (Bosanquet, 1893b: 128, n. 1). Agnosticism is the thesis that "contrary to what atheists and theists alike assume, it is either in practice or in principle impossible to know whether or not God exists. In various forms, agnosticism recurs throughout the history of thought. It had some notable exponents in Victorian England, for example, T. H. Huxley, who coined the term" (Flew, 1983: 7-8). Bosanquet's main argument concerning religion is a refutation of this thesis. "God" dwells in the spiritual world, the world of truth, beauty and goodness which is the most comprehensive and real manifestation of our world. The spiritual world of value is revealed in mind within the context of the world we are in. Faith in God is faith in the reality of the good. Hence

beauty, and goodness, and truth." The Agnostic professes ignorance of what he calls "the Unknowable" which, in fact, is the supernatural world of "the old-fashioned theology."[33] Does it really matter if we do not know "the Unknowable" and, more specifically, is there any "Unknowable" left to be known when we are aware of the real spiritual world? In apprehending the spiritual world (the world of truth, beauty and goodness) man "differs from animals, that is, is raised above the mere life of the senses." To know this means to know the truths of the everyday life which constitute human experience. In fact, Agnosticism represents a regression in the development of religious consciousness.[34] Bosanquet asserts his immanentist standpoint:

> I believe that time has come to say in so many words that for us the
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> Unknowable is and must be nothing, and that our business lies with
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> the life and with the good that we know, and with what can be made
>
> of them. Agnosticism at best is self-defence, and little good work can

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"God" is neither a separate being nor an intelligence that "masters" the world and "governs" human destiny. For Bosanquet, these ideas belong to the supernatural world of "the old-fashioned theology" which has nothing to do with the absolute standpoint of modern consciousness.

[33]Elsewhere Bosanquet refers to the "ludicrous position" of the Agnostic writers who "mean that there is something in particular of great and fundamental value, which somehow they claim to know and expect to know, and are disappointed by not knowing" (Bosanquet, 1893a: 79).

[34]"My own impression is that our Agnostics have themselves to some extent lost their way, and that their delay in going forward proceeds from not precisely knowing in which direction to move. It is here that I wish to express a strong conviction, and urge a forward movement" (Bosanquet, 1893b: 138).

be done while you are on the look-out for an enemy" (Bosanquet,
1893b: 135).

Despite the fact that Christianity brought about forcefully the idea of an
immanent divinity (the idea of a continuous revelation of God in the human spirit
through the concrete experiences of the spiritual world), the New Testament contains
some ideas which might not encourage us to assert in our lives the true conception of
the spiritual world. The kingdom of God is found on earth and means mainly the
affirmation of the reality of good in the ethical life and the development of enlightened
citizenship. How can we assert these ideals? What is the role of religious observance
in the immanentist scheme of religion as unity in love and will with the supreme good?
In my view, Bosanquet's reply to the first question is that one must read the New
Testament aright - a task that must not be aided by what is "ironically called a good
religious education" (Bosanquet, 1899a: 161). His answer to the second question
appears, to some extent, perplexing. The objective is to hold fast to the true
conception of the spiritual world: this must be our guiding principle throughout.

2a/i. Reading the New Testament Aright

The New Testament contains some ideas which might have had an instructive
influence on people's minds in the past, yet they seem to have no real function at a
later stage in humankind's spiritual development. Compensation in heaven; the idea
of rewards and punishments; the idea of God perceived as a master in heaven whose

commands in the Bible we must obey; and, subsequently, the authority of the clergy to interpret God's will (Bosanquet, 1899b: 108-114) are ideas that neither reveal the essence of the Christian doctrine, nor help us to apprehend properly the spiritual world. The wrong way of dealing with the New Testament can lead us to a defective understanding of its message. According to Bosanquet, we hold fast to the real spiritual world when we avoid the dangerous dualism of the wrong interpretative approach: "Life must not be split up into a present of endurance, and a future of enjoyment. Injustice must be redressed, beauty enjoyed, knowledge won, and goodness attained, here on this earth of ours" (Bosanquet, 1899b: 109). It is easy to infer that such tendencies as apathy, fatalism, escapism, belief in the supernatural world of the "old-fashioned theology" (belief in disembodied spirits, in a future life in Paradise, in eternal punishment, etc.), lack of initiative and lack of interest in action for realising the good in our present world and, finally, unwillingness to exercise our intelligence while reading the New Testament, do not represent the right interpretation of the message of the New Testament.[35] Bosanquet forcefully asserts:

No one can feel more acutely the extreme difficulty of reading the New Testament aright than one who has enjoyed what is ironically called a good religious education. And I have often wished, in the bitterness of my heart, that the New Testament could be buried for a

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[35]"It is easy to say to Jesus, 'Lord, Lord;' it is not easy to learn the lessons which Jesus taught" (Bosanquet, 1899a: 134).

hundred years and discovered afresh in a wiser age. But man must untie, with patience and labour, the knots which man has tied; and it is our task, and the task of a future moral education, to regain, for ourselves and for our children, some clue to the religion of Jesus and of Paul (Bosanquet, 1899a: 161).

It is a usual pattern in Bosanquet's thought that people who lived at historically earlier stages of the overall spiritual development of mankind sought recourse to less refined forms of conceptualising the spirit of the "other" world. Bosanquet, as a true representative of the Enlightenment spirit, constantly reminds us that we have entered a new era of spiritual development and that both the childhood of mankind and the world of fancies are over. Bosanquet elaborates an extensive list of technical instructions on how to read the New Testament which aim at entering into its spirit thoroughly and at revering the greatness of its message (Bosanquet, 1899a: 158-160; 134). Many of his instructions do not conform to the conceptions of traditional theology:[36]

We must not regard it [the New Testament] as written by a special inspiration in order to reveal the truth to later ages. We must not regard all the twenty-seven books as of equal value. We must not

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[36]Bosanquet is careful to clarify his position, however: "I am not a theologian or critic by profession" (Bosanquet, 1899a: 131).

suppose that all the writers of these books had the same principles, or the same purposes, or the same capacity, or the same nearness to the time and ideas of Jesus Christ. We must not think that the language of these writings has a supernatural depth, which in theory is too profound for human apprehension, and in practice admits of any interpretation we may choose. We must not, above all, clog ourselves in reading the New Testament with the theological ideas of the Catholic or Protestant Church, which are wholly strange to the grand and simple sentiment that influenced the Apostolic age. We must not, in short, consider the New Testament as the Holy Scripture of a Church" (Bosanquet, 1899a: 132).

2a/ii. Religious Observance

What is the significance of religious observance for the true conception of the spiritual world? We will see that in *What Religion Is* Bosanquet makes clear that religious observance has value in as far as it helps one to understand and realise in one's life the essence of religion which is unity in love and will with the supreme good. Religious observance does not have value purely in itself, i.e., independently from the purpose it helps to realise. In this book, however, Bosanquet does not go too far in suggesting that, probably, the strictly ceremonial observance in its traditional (conventional) form might not have any value at all. In discussing briefly the Ethical

Movement[37] of his time and its function "in a time of transition" Bosanquet

acknowledges the fact that people might need some sort of moral guidance, yet he

warns against the dangers of any ethico-philosophical priesthood and, also, against

the idea of possible doctrinal formulations.[38] I see his point: the important thing is to

strive for the realisation of good in the context of ethical life and not to replace one

structure with another. The essence of ethical life is something deeper and more

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[37]Bosanquet's connection with the Ethical Movement in England was his involvement with the London Ethical Society. The London Ethical Society "originated in 1886 among a group of the pupils of T. H. Green and Edward Caird" (Bosanquet, 1924: 44). Bosanquet was invited to join the Society in 1887 and he remained an active member till 1900, when both the London Ethical Society and its successor, the London School of Ethics and Social Philosophy, came to an end. Bosanquet's main reservation concerning the attitude of the London Ethical Society, which expressed a specific direction of the Ethical Movement as it was developing both in America and in England, was "the tendency to form a sort of Ethical 'church'" (Bosanquet, 1924: 44). To this tendency, Bosanquet reacted with a leaflet which he issued to the members of the Society in May 1887. His main claim was that: "moral philosophy has little definite tendency towards moral edification; and that even moral suasion is not the prime necessity" (Bosanquet, 1924: 44-45). In his own words: "A man is what he is made of, and he is not made of what he hears once a week, but of what habitually goes into him. It is this that in my judgment we ought to aim at transforming, by organising the material of noble life, so as to bring it within the reach of all" (Bosanquet cited in Bosanquet, 1924: 45). It became the purpose of the Society to bring the best available teaching, especially in philosophy, "within the reach of all." Bosanquet lectured at Toynbee Hall and at the lecture centre of the University Extension Scheme. Bosanquet gave the best of his work and inspired hundreds of students who "had been shown the way to a wider life and thought" (Bosanquet, 1924: 48). Much of Bosanquet's published work grew out of lectures given in these years: *The Essentials of Logic* (1895), *A Companion to Plato's Republic for English Readers* (1895), *Psychology of the Moral Self* (1897), and *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (1899). For more information about the Ethical Movement, the London Ethical Society and Bosanquet's connection with it, see: Bosanquet, 1924: 44-51; Spiller, 1934; Muirhead, 1942: 74-89; MacKillop, 1978: 119-127; and MacKillop, 1986.

[38]See Bosanquet, 1893b: 144-146.

substantial than the formalism of structures. Do we need religious observance for the realisation of the essence of religion?

Bosanquet's answer is clear, to some extent, yet not without some tension. In my view, the partial obscurity and the tension derive from the heart of the immanentist project on the basis of which the meaning of religion is largely substantiated. The difficulty arises from the fact that although at the theoretical level we can have different interpretative discourses (for instance, the "other" world is not a world of disembodied spirits but the world of beauty, truth and goodness), at the practical level a specific structure is related to a specific content and context. Nobody disagrees that faith in the reality of the good is the essence of religion, yet at the creedal and structural level this belief is accompanied by specific forms of ritual assertion that provide it with a meta-philosophical and meta-ethical meaning. Despite the degree of their "refinement," creeds and rituals are inevitably related to the mystical element. I grasp Bosanquet's point that we must assess critically every custom and belief using as our guiding principle the promotion and affirmation of our unity in love and will with the supreme good. Yet, how far can we go? Up to what limit can we critically assess and select? What is our relation to an organised structure like the (visible) Church? In my view, Bosanquet did not have an absolutely clear answer *precisely because of the complexity of the matter.* In what follows, I systematise Bosanquet's reflections on the topic of religious observance by discerning a general pattern of thought which appears everywhere when he discusses religion. According to this theoretical pattern, rituals, creeds and Churches have value if they

help us to understand what religion is.[39] Sometimes, the strength of this assertion

appears to weaken. Focusing on two texts, I argue that the standard form of the

above claim appears in *What Religion Is*. In "The Future of Religious Observance,"

where Bosanquet reflects on the meaning and future of religious observance. it

appears that Bosanquet is ready to dispense with any kind of symbolic representation

of the spiritual world. A very attentive reading proves that this is not exactly the case.

Bosanquet does not seem to question the validity of his standard claim, yet his whole

argument takes up a more reflective form as he speculates on the topic from the

standpoint of the spiritual development of humankind and its possible long-term

consequences and potentialities. One must not forget that the essay is about the

future of religious observance. The essay can also be seen from another perspective:

from the perspective of inquiring into a reality faced by Bosanquet's audience in a

historical period of transition.

What is the future of religious observance? There is no clear answer to the

question and Bosanquet acknowledges the difficulty of the subject-matter from the

outset:

I have no dogma to put before you upon this very difficult question.

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[39]"What we are to remember about a visible Church, like the Church of England, is
this. It is a good thing if it makes our wills good, and points out, or helps us to feel,
duties which form a part of the good will. We judge whether a Church is a useful
society just as we judge any other society. ... But we must remember that no visible
Church, Christian or Comtist, has any authority; and no church service is a duty,
except in as far as it makes us better" (Bosanquet, 1899b: 123).

I propose that we should simply direct our attention to it. It is well sometimes to let our thoughts play freely upon such a subject, to walk round the mountain and look at it with a glass, instead of trying to ascend it (Bosanquet, 1893d: 1).

I read and analyse the essay in terms of two questions. The first question is: Do we need the churches? The churches must have meaning for the local life. Country churches have indeed preserved this character. In the cities, however, the organisation is congregational rather than territorial and the city dweller has no relation to his local church. The church, without the spirit that animates its existence, becomes a formalism: "An increasing proportion of the church buildings are hideous, and no one could desire to preserve them for their own sake" (Bosanquet, 1893d: 11-12). The second question is: What is Sunday for? Sunday is not for going to church: people have reached a level of intellectual maturity and spiritual development that they can live without the generalities and platitudes of the preachers. In brief, what Bosanquet says is that Sunday is the day on which we affirm our sociality, ethical life and the soul-moulding process of our being in our leisure time. Sunday thus is for cultivating the soul and for seeking self-realisation in the context of our family and community. We can relax in Nature and enjoy socialisation and occupation with art, music and literature. *Sunday is a special day for the family which for Bosanquet is even more sacred than any church or congregation.*[40] As to "more strictly ceremonial

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[40]See Bosanquet, 1899b: 123 and Bosanquet, 1893d: 16-21.

observance" Bosanquet sounds indifferent and sees it as something that can take a completely secular form and be performed by the citizens themselves. Even this service "might be ridiculous, according to the turn taken by the national mind" (Bosanquet, 1893d: 16-17). Bosanquet adopts a more radical standpoint: he reduces the sacraments to civil ceremonies. Has Bosanquet gone too far? To me, the key to understanding his thoughts in this essay is found in its last paragraph:

> But if by abandoning the general external symbol we indicate, and truly indicate, that we at last have felt in our hands and recognised in our lives the things signified, the actual spiritual world in all its various reality, then, surely, life will be nobler than it ever has been before (Bosanquet, 1893d: 26).

Churches, rituals and religious observance refer to the material representation of truths asserted in the spiritual world. They signify the spiritual world; they are the symbols of a reality that is able to be affirmed and understood in consciousness without first being symbolically represented as an external reality. We have already seen that the spiritual world is within this world: it is the world of comprehensive value and meaning that is gradually discovered by the individuals in their self-transcending endeavour leading to self-perfection and self-realisation. The external symbol assists the conceptualisation of the reality signified. We have seen that there is an unbreakable continuity between the sensuous and the supra-sensuous world

(Bosanquet, 1905: xxiii-xxiv). Throughout "The Future of Religious Observance" Bosanquet does not assert that we must abandon the "symbol." He suggests that as the spiritual development of mankind progresses, the importance of the symbolic representation of the truths of the spiritual world gradually fades away. The preacher, for instance, has nothing significant to say because the movement of culture and civilisation, in Bosanquet's view, has taken away the childhood of humankind. Bosanquet does not suggest that we are ready to abandon the "symbol"; he indicates, however, that probably we do not need the external symbol if we can truly prove that we have affirmed in the totality of our being the full significance of the spiritual world. The whole essay has a latently undecisive tone.

2b. Religion and Morality

All that we mean by the kingdom of God on earth is the society of human beings who have a common life and are working for a common social good. The kingdom of God has come on earth in every civilized society where men live and work together, doing their best for the whole society and for mankind. When two or three are gathered together, co-operating for a social good, there is the Divine Spirit in the midst of them (Bosanquet, 1899b: 121).

"The Kingdom of God on Earth" is a complex essay. Bosanquet discusses both religion and morality and, as Sweet notes, "he presents an analysis of the nature of the human individual and the community that was taken up later in his political philosophy" (Sweet, 1999: xviii). Vincent also, in theorising the state and social purpose in the discourse of Philosophical Idealism, refers to Bosanquet's "The Kingdom of God on Earth" and indicates the fundamental interconnectedness between the essence of religious faith and the self-realisation of the individual within the context of ethical life that the social whole provides and sustains. He writes:

> Salvation, theologically and secularly, lies in a deeper understanding of this world and not another. It is no wonder that the British Idealist, Bernard Bosanquet, should have written a paper with philosophical sincerity, entitled 'The Kingdom of God on Earth.' [Vincent quotes part of the opening paragraph of the 2b sub-section in this chapter - Bosanquet, 1899b: 121]... It was in this light that the Idealists viewed the state with its constitutive institutions as embodying will and purpose (Vincent, 1987: 343).

A brief comment on the two aspects of salvation that Vincent refers to, in relation always to Bosanquet's perspective. I do not think that Bosanquet would have agreed with the idea of salvation "theologically" and "secularly" considered. I have discussed in the first section of this chapter the idea of the "absolute standpoint" by which

Bosanquet describes the point of view that is based on the notion of an immanent divinity - an idea that he attributes to Christianity. My point, therefore, is the following. Salvation, for Bosanquet, is a secular affair which is premissed on the spirituality, self-transcendence, and sociality of the finite-infinite self who can affirm throughout its being and within mind or consciousness the spiritual world of truth, beauty and goodness. The affirmation of the spiritual world occurs in this life that sustains and substantiates the individual's quest for self-realisation and self-perfection structured around the transformative dynamics of self-transcendence. Hence the secular dimension, in being spiritual throughout, includes the theological dimension that constitutes a component part of the spiritual character of the secular dimension. The theological dimension refers to a special discourse of theorising the divine within the more comprehensive framework of the philosophical point of view. In the light of this interpretation, the "secular" does not oppose the "spiritual" because in the discourse of Philosophical Idealism and, more especially, in Bosanquet's philosophical project, the "secular" properly understood affirms, asserts and substantiates the "spiritual" as the ultimate character of reality and individuality within the relations and determinations of this world, the world we are in. This is, of course, a classification that mainly derives from Bosanquet's perspective. I do not claim that this is a position that is either consistent with, or identical to, the standpoint adopted by orthodox theology. I now turn to my critical analysis of Bosanquet's seminal essay "The Kingdom of God on Earth."

In unravelling Bosanquet's argument, I discern the following points. The

"kingdom of God" is realised in society.[41] Yet, in my view, society is not by definition "the kingdom of God." The realisation of the kingdom of God on earth depends on religion: it presupposes the belief that only the good is real and nothing else is real. The belief that only the good is real is the differentia between religion and morality.[42] The kingdom of God is present in the ethical life of the individuals who have faith in the reality of good and substantiate this faith in their will for good during the self-realisation process that is related to the commitments, duties and responsibilities of their everyday life. Note that the kingdom of God is not "given": it is realised "gradually," slowly" and "silently." It is among us, yet it is "arising in the spirit of man" as a result of man's good will. We find God's will in our own right will or the good will. The right will is substantiated mainly through that state of self-realisation that is called "our station and its duties." One's station and its duties is one's position in society that should not be understood in terms of social class, in the narrow

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[41]The immanent situatedness of the kingdom of God is a recurrent theme: "The Kingdom of God, he [Jesus] says, comes naturally, slowly, silently: it *is* in the midst of you; it is something which arising in the spirit of man, has the power to realize an ever increasing unity in the human race by a gentle and gradual growth, like the quiet gracious growths of nature, out of which it develops" (Bosanquet, 1894-1895: 443).

[42]Bosanquet, 1899b: 124-126; 1920: 10-11 & 45-49; 1913: 245. In "The Kingdom of God on Earth" Bosanquet actually says that in morality we know that the good purpose is real and in religion we believe that nothing else is real; this amount to the position that religion and morality are the same in principle for "It is the same faith, differently held" (Bosanquet, 1899b: 125). I wish to make a remark. It is the same faith for it springs from the same source, yet each formulation of this faith contextualised refers to a slightly different conception of reality - even if both conceptions are co-existing and aim at the same goal. A conception of reality in which only the good is real is a more comprehensive form of being for it involves a higher degree of perfection than the other form.

conventional sense of the term. I wish to wish to emphasise at this point that Bosanquet, in his major political treatise, *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, makes clear that the term "class" does not refer to a political institution, but to one's occupation with all its special powers, functions and services. The idea of class, in this sense, is found at the heart of the discourse of institutions as ethical ideas. Class, not as a political privilege but as an occupation, is the incarnation of a moral ideal that enriches both the life of the individual and the life of those around him/her in the spiritual framework of the ethical system. Bosanquet writes:

> One's class, then, in the sense in which it indicates the type of position and service involved in one's occupation, approaches very near the centre of one's individuality. In principle, as an ethical idea, it takes the man or woman beyond the family and the neighbourhood; and for the same reason takes him deeper into himself. He acquires in it a complex of qualities and capacities which put a special point upon the general need of making a livelihood for the support of his household. In principle, his individual service *is* the social mind, as it takes, in his consciousness, the shape demanded by the logic of the social whole. He is "a public worker," by doing the service which society demands of him. And just because the service is in principle something particular, unique and distinctive, he feels himself in it to be a member of a unity held together by differences. And in this sense

the bond of social union is not in similarity, but in the highest degree of individuality or specialisation, the ultimate point of which would be to feel that I am rendering to society a service which is necessary, and which no one but me can render - the closest conceivable tie, and yet one which, in a sense, really exists in every case. Your special powers and functions supply my need, and my special powers and functions supply your need, and each of us recognises this and rejoices in it. This ethical idea of unique service, or the service of a unique class, involves of course a more or less conscious identity in difference (Bosanquet, 1925: 291-292).

"My station and its duties" refers to a state of the individual's self-realisation and life that is broader and more inclusive than "class" in the sense we discussed it. However, I needed to make this clarification because "my station and its duties" includes, although it does transcend, the idea of class. In clarifying the usage of the term "class" in Bosanquet's philosophy, I also clarify the meaning of the term "my station and its duties." I now come back to "The Kingdom of God on Earth" and to the definition of "my station and its duties" in this essay:

Our station and its duties are the greatest part and the simplest part of the right will or the good will, which is also our own will. Without this object and interest in life, a man is like a boat without sail or helm.

This sounds rather commonplace, and it *is* rather commonplace. If it were not, in a sense, known to every one, I do not see how it could be imagined to be every one's guide through life (Bosanquet, 1899b: 116-117).

One's station involves a variety of roles and functions in society which correspond to rights and duties and generate a complex framework of relations, ties, dependencies, feelings, affections, purposes and hopes. One can be a mother, a daughter herself, an administrator, an executive member of her professional organisation, a member of a Church, a member of voluntary organisations, an amateur photographer and musician. All these roles and functions constitute her station in society and the content of her ethical life. They involve action, reflexivity, participation, communication, judgment. The ethical life provides us with a sense of purpose, with duties involving rights, with a chance to seek self-perfection in the context of a variety of activities that sustain life, mould the character and affirm the distinctiveness of individuality in the framework of our community. Bosanquet explains:

> There are the simple duties of honesty and thoroughness in all work; there is education; there is wise and painstaking help of our neighbours; there is wise management of societies or clubs which we have to do with; there is forming an enlightened judgment on trade questions and on questions that concern us as citizens; and there is the

attempt to make the tone of our society a little higher, more full of real interests, more free from vice and vulgarity. Every man is responsible for the tone of the society in which he moves, and for the influence which he spreads round him, hour by hour (Bosanquet, 1899b: 119).[43]

In ethical life we are still in the province of morality for there is always the possibility for the "bad self" and of the "bad will" to emerge. The human agent needs a specific kind of thinking and feeling in order to combat the bad will and to make the right choice (the choice that involves a conception of good that is not narrowly perceived). In other words, she must will the good and she must believe that the reality of good is the only reality in spite of appearances. Religion is precisely this overwhelming

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[43]A striking example of "my station and its duties" comes from Bosanquet's own family. Helen Bosanquet, in writing about Bernard's family in her memoir of his life, describes Bernard's father, the Rev. R. W. Bosanquet, as a person who, from his station in life, fulfilled his duties in the broader context of ethical life. His commitment to his family was harmoniously realised together with his commitment to the betterment of the life of the community at the Rock estate. Helen's account testifies to the ideal of ethical citizenship that, for Bosanquet, starts in the family and characterises all the manifestations of one's life. R. W. Bosanquet took the service at Rock and at the joint parish of Rennington, and he gave lectures for the people in Rock or in Alnwick on the topic of foreign mission work. Helen continues her account of Bernard's father: "At Rock he was constantly engaged in improvements of one kind or another, such as restoring the church and carrying out extensive draining operations; and he bestowed much personal care upon his workers. To his boys he was devoted, caring scrupulously for their present and future welfare, noting in his diary as special events the return of each to and from school, and even recording their childish accidents and ailments. ... He shared also in their recreations - archery, cricket, skating, riding; and when in London took them to the entertainments of the day" (Bosanquet, 1924: 9-10).

faith in the reality of good: a belief that can make *Sittlichkeit* a true representative of the kingdom of God. Sweet observes that religion is more than *Sittlichkeit* because "it supplies a motive and a ground for overcoming evil and an assurance that evil is overcome" (Sweet, 2000: 130). The acting agent of my example, in participating, thinking and communicating, breaks the boundaries of her isolation and consciously or unconsciously goes beyond the narrowly conceived self-interest. For instance, in her function as a daughter, she might "sacrifice" a trip to the countryside (which would provide her with beautiful scenery for her pictures), in order to look after her disabled mother. In this case, she transcended the limitations of the finite self - the desire to go for a trip - and she asserted her will in a higher stage of self-realisation: the stage that involves thought and care for others. From her station in life, she made a successful effort to fulfil her duties. She succeeded in developing an insight that gave her a broader and more inclusive perspective of life that benefited both her as an individual and those around her. In paraphrasing Bosanquet, yet in emphasising his point, I would say that she succeeded "in discerning the great and simple facts" - an enterprise on which every human being can embark using his/her own "penetrative imagination," will, judgment and insight.[44] She did not abolish her finiteness, yet she affirmed the infinite aspect of her finite-infinite self. She managed to think beyond her

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[44]I am inspired by the following statement found in *The Principle of Individuality and Value*: "The great philosophers, it will be found, are just those who have succeeded in discerning the great and simple facts. It is, I am convinced, a serious lack of sympathetic insight which prevents us from understanding that to be right in one's bird's-eye view of centrality and the scheme of values, demands a higher intellectual character and even a more toilsome intellectual achievement than to formulate whole volumes of ingenious ratiocination" (Bosanquet, 1912: 6).

immediate satisfaction, to overcome the atomistic desire, to unite with infinity. Infinity stands for the world of value and comprehensive meaning: it refers to the world of spiritual completion that the human agent of our example affirmed in her mind and life because of her will. Self-transcendence is accompanied by a feeling of satisfaction and completion, as the right will substantiates the communion of being with an innermost part of its spiritual constitution. At the heart of the affirmation of the right will lies the overwhelming belief that only this will is real because only the real will refers to the incarnation of comprehensive value in human life. The woman of my example, during the process of asserting her real will and thus substantiating her real self from her specific station in life, was engaged in a comprehensive self-restructuring process that spiritually transformed the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite being of her self and developed further her personality and individuality. The soul-making process, Bosanquet asserts, is a continuous spiritual activity of self-transcendence and self-affirmation that occurs ceaselessly throughout life and characterises the development and crystallisation of personality:

> The idea of a solid given - a personality, a fact, an apprehension, which we possess *ab initio*, and are tempted rashly and perversely to abandon in the quest of the Absolute, is an illusion which has no warrant in vital experience. The road of philosophical speculation is not the possible way for most men, nor the only way for any man; that is true and sound. But in one way and another. in labour. in learning,

and in religion, every man has his pilgrimage to make, his self to remould and to acquire, his world and his surroundings to transform. ... We are only attempting, in the form of reflection, what every living creature at least is doing, one way or another, between birth and death. And it is in this adventure, and not apart from it, that we find and maintain the personality which we suppose ourselves to possess *ab initio* (Bosanquet, 1912: 9).

CONCLUSION

The first section of this chapter was devoted to "Religious Consciousness and the Metaphysics of the Self." The main thesis was that there is an indispensable relation between religion, or religious consciousness, and Bosanquet's discourse on the metaphysics of the self. I created the descriptive term "the metaphysics of the self" to conceptualise the entire spiritual project of the formation of the self in Bosanquet's philosophy. The metaphysics of the self refers to such dimensions as the genealogy of selfhood, the self's ontological formation, and the dynamics of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation which characterise the nature of the finite-infinite being. The metaphysics of the self is premissed on the potential for the realisation of the true, or real, self. The realisation of the true self presupposes belief in the reality of the good. I systematised Bosanquet's views on religion and I discerned three fundamental elements characterising his analysis of religion. These elements are: (a) religion as the unity between the self and the world; (b)

transcendence, sociality and the formation of the real self as the practical aspect of unity between the self and the world; and (c) religious consciousness is faith in good as the only reality. I argued that religion and metaphysics of the self are fundamentally interdependent and I clarified the nature of this interdependence on the basis of the doctrines of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. In the light of my analysis, I critically assessed MacEwen's, Hinman's, and Sell's views on the topic of Bosanquet and religion and I pointed out the weaknesses of their arguments. In this section I commented on, and integrated into my analysis, Bosanquet's theorisation of the absolute standpoint as a fundamental characteristic of modern consciousness. I also showed how the absolute, or modern, standpoint is related to the "Absolute Religion" which, for both Edward Caird and Bosanquet, represents the highest realisation of the religious consciousness and is identified with Christianity. At the root of the absolute standpoint is found the firm belief that the spiritual world is within our own world and that it is embodied in the values of truth, beauty and goodness. Divinity is revealed in human mind through the experience of spiritual values which substantiate the individual's quest for perfection and self-realisation. In this context, faith in God is faith in the reality of the good and not faith in the existence of a separate being or intelligence who masters the universe. This is the immanentist perspective.

The second section of this chapter was devoted to "The Immanentist Perspective." This section was divided into two parts. In the first part, I analysed "The Reality of the Spiritual World." In the second part, I embarked on an inquiry

into "Religion and Morality." I argued that Bosanquet's immanentism derives from the idea of finding and affirming the divine in the life of the finite-infinite human beings in their endeavour to achieve self-realisation and self-perfection. The divine is revealed in the ideal self which is the real self of the finite-infinite being. I showed that Bosanquet's immanentism is expressed in his theory of the true conception of the "other" world, and in his discussion of religion and morality.

I showed that Bosanquet's claim that faith in God means faith in the reality of the good is a fundamental premise of his immanentist perspective. In contrast to a transcendental and otherworldly notion of God who stands outside human existence, immanence is the idea that, because of our spirituality, we all participate in the divine which is realised in the souls of human individuals in their quest for the good. "God" dwells in the spiritual world, the world of truth, beauty and goodness, which is the ultimate and most comprehensive manifestation of the reality of our world. The spiritual world of value is revealed in mind within the context of the world we are in. In the light of this interpretation, "God" is neither a separate being nor an intelligence that "masters" the universe and "governs" human destiny. These ideas belong to the supernatural world of "the old-fashioned theology" which has nothing to do with the absolute standpoint of modern consciousness. In this context, Agnosticism represents a regression in the development of religious consciousness.

I argued that the focal-point of the immanentist perspective is the idea of the spiritual world understood as: (a) a world found within human experience in the present life; and (b) a whole that does not need reference outside itself to be

completed. Bosanquet contends that both the structuration of the immanentist perspective and the articulation of the reconciliation project between "this world" and "the other world" started with Plato. Christianity and Hegel continued the project. The conception of the "other" world as the revelation of divinity in the human spirit is a distinctive Christian doctrine. The spiritual world, the supra-sensuous world of value and meaning, is continuous with the sensuous world and exists in the medium of consciousness. The finite-infinite self, which partly belongs to the sensuous world, communicates with the world of value that is articulated beyond the immediacy of the senses. The supra-sensuous world presupposes the sensuous world. The spiritual world is present, real and concrete and is comprehensively manifested in these spheres of human experience which substantiate the spiritual life of the human individual and are known as ethical life, art, philosophy and religion. This is not the popular conception of the "other" world that refers to the supernatural world of superstition. In the context of the true conception of the "other" world, the spiritualisation of being does not refer to a peculiar disembodied existence, but to the real nature of the individual that is articulated through self-transcendence. In religion, the self holds fast to the truth of the reality of the good as the only reality in spite of appearances. The finite-infinite being affirms this ultimate belief during its spiritual expansion and soul-formation which constitute the restructuring "dying to live" experience.

In relation to the issue of the true conception of the spiritual world, Bosanquet provides us with some instructions on how to read the New Testament aright. Many of his instructions do not conform to the conceptions of traditional theology.

Bosanquet argues that, in order to understand properly the spirit and message of the New Testament, we must: (a) avoid the dangerous dualism of the wrong interpretative approach; and (b) disregard some ideas which, although they are found in the New Testament, do not reveal the essence of the Christian doctrine. Compensation in heaven; the idea of rewards and punishments; the idea of God perceived as a master in heaven; and the authority of the clergy to interpret God's will are ideas that belong to the childhood of humanity which is inconsistent with the absolute standpoint of modern consciousness.

I have also discussed the issue of religious observance in its relation to the realisation of the essence of religion. I argued that Bosanquet's attitude to this issue reflects a tension that derives from the heart of the immanentist project. In brief, the difficulty arises from the fact that, although at the theoretical level we can have different and refined interpretative discourses concerning the meaning of religion, at the practical level a specific structure is related to a specific content and context. However, and despite this tension-difficulty, I claimed that Bosanquet is able to provide a theoretical pattern that appears consistently (with different degrees of assertion) throughout his discussion of the topic of religious observance. His criterion is this. Creeds, rituals, prayer, and ceremonies have only instrumental value: they have value only if they help us to hold fast to the truth of religion and to apprehend its meaning for our life - this is deeper and more substantial than the formalism of structures.

Finally, in "Religion and Morality" I offered a critical assessment of

Bosanquet's views on the topic as expressed mainly in his important essay "The Kingdom of God on Earth." I argued that "the Kingdom of God" is realised in society and depends on religion for it presupposes faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. The belief that the good is the only reality is the differentia between religion and morality. "The Kingdom of God" is found on Earth and means the affirmation of the reality of the good in the ethical life and the development of enlightened citizenship. We find God's will in our own right will, or the will for good which is substantiated throughout our life that sustains the soul-making processes of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation. The ethical life, which is the life that affirms the spiritual membership of the human individual in a social whole, contains that sphere of self-transcendence and self-realisation which, for F. H. Bradley and Bosanquet, is called "my station and its duties." I argued that, "my station and its duties" is a concept that forcefully describes (as Bosanquet himself shows at every page of his seminal essay) the content of ethical life in its distinct individual form corresponding to the particular human beings who are members of a community. By "community" I mean that social whole that sustains the life of the social beings, provides the necessary institutional arrangements and organisation, and enables human individuals to realise and develop their individuality. In this context, one's station involves a variety of roles, functions, and services in both one's family and society, which correspond to rights and duties, and generate a complex framework of relations, dependencies, feelings, affections, hopes, purposes, commitments and responsibilities. Religion, which means faith in the reality of the good as the only

reality, enables the individual to realise the right, or the good, will from his/her

"station" in life and to "lead a useful life" - as T. H. Green, on his death-bed, said to

his wife (Nicholson,1997:xv).

CHAPTER THREE

RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE REALISATION OF THE TRUE SELF: BERNARD BOSANQUET'S VIEWS ON RELIGION IN *WHAT RELIGION IS*[1]

INTRODUCTION

I have argued in the previous chapter that the idea of religion is found at the heart of Bosanquet's theorisation of the self and that the religious consciousness is logically, essentially, and indispensably related to the realisation of the true, or real, self. Bosanquet's views on religion are structured around the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite which characterise the spiritual constitution of the self. In the context of Bosanquet's perfectionist discourse, the realisation of the true self presupposes belief in the reality of the good. Religion, or religious consciousness, means faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. I have shown that the ultimate form of religious consciousness refers to a specific kind of self-transcendence which derives from faith in the unity of the self with the reality of the good - the reality that embodies the idea of a higher perfection. Bosanquet's immanentism stems from the idea of affirming the divine in our actual lives during the

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[1]This chapter is a largely revised version of an article published in *Bradley Studies* (Panagakou, 1999b).

intertwined processes of self-transcendence, self-perfection, and self-realisation. Self-realisation involves one's will and action to contribute to the common good in society and thus to complete the quest for the best life. The spiritual world is the only real world in terms of perfection, completion and embodiment of value. The spiritual world is immanent: it is found within the world of our everyday experience and it is revealed gradually, ceaselessly and meaningfully in mind. The apprehension of the full significance of the spiritual world for the quality of our life is a state of intellectual development that relates to the teleological dynamics of consciousness. Bosanquet regarded Christianity as the most advanced form of religious consciousness and contended that it expressed clearly and comprehensively the continuous revelation of God in the human spirit. He also considered Christianity to be both the philosophical matrix and the pillar of Western civilisation and culture. To him, the most important thing is to realise the spirit of religion and not to stick in formalities. According to his analysis, religious observance has instrumental value, namely, it derives its value from the purpose it helps to realise. Religious observance is important for the articulation of religious consciousness, if and only if, it enables human beings both to apprehend and realise in their lives the essence of religion.

In *What Religion Is* Bosanquet re-asserts and elucidates further the fundamental elements of his discourse on religion in its relation to the metaphysics of the self. In this short treatise, Bosanquet inquires into the essence of religion apprehended as a central human experience that is indispensable to the dialectics of the human being's self-realising endeavour. *What Religion Is*, which is Bosanquet's

only short treatise devoted to the topic of religion, has a specific historical context.

Helen Bosanquet mentions that, apart from helping religious people to understand better the essence of religion, Bosanquet decided to write the book for another reason as well:

> He was also painfully impressed by certain developments which arose out of the sorrows of the war, feeling that many were being led to seek consolation where they could find no lasting satisfaction, and longing to help them on the firmer ground. The little book is the culminating expression of his lifelong passion for helping others to find happiness where he had found it himself - in the life of spirit (Bosanquet, 1924: 141).

Muirhead notes that the book "was written in a white heat of indignation against war-time exploitation" of spiritualistic phenomena (Muirhead, 1935: 53, n.1). In a letter to Professor Webb, Bosanquet explains why he decided to write the book. Although in this chapter I do not intend to assess the book in the context of the historical circumstances of its writing, I wish to draw attention to the fact that Bosanquet's letter to Webb is significant for the understanding of the former's standpoint with respect to religion. To me, this letter is important for four main reasons: (a) it shows the significance that Bosanquet attached to religion in its proper form; (b) it testifies to Bosanquet's life-long interest in ascertaining the essence of religion and clarifying

its fundamental components; (c) it shows that Bosanquet, in theorising religion, never deviated from the standpoint of "the true conception" of the spiritual world; and (d) it shows Bosanquet's constant concern for relating religion to the reality of ethical life and to the undisturbed development of family and social relations. Bosanquet explains the reason behind the genesis of *What Religion Is*:

> The thing is this, my wife and I have been greatly shocked and distressed by things we knew of publicly and privately about the harm done by "spiritualistic" and necromantic practices, leading sometimes to complete morbid absorption, and to consequent division in families. I first thought of writing a furious criticism of ... Then we reflected that could only do harm, awaken horrible irritation, and stiffen all the believers in their superstitions. And it seemed worth trying whether, without overt controversy, one could help a mind here and there - I do not hope for more - to recall its attention to the central truths of religion and its fundamental facts, and maintain the sanity and proportion of its faith (Bosanquet to Webb [19th June 1920], in Muirhead, 1935: 226-227).[2]

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[2]We can easily discern that Bosanquet's attitude in this letter is similar to what he writes in the Preface of *What Religion Is* explaining his intention: "Now I should think it a great thing if I could help ever so humbly in guiding some minds to the right type of expectation, the true and open attitude in which they will have a fair chance to feel their religion in its fulness and its simplicity." And he continues: "I have nothing to say that has not been better said by thousands of better men. But every crisis has its own demand for the right question and the right answer" (Bosanquet, 1920a: vii-ix).

My purpose in this chapter is, first, to show how Bosanquet's analysis is based on a conceptual framework which contains notional patterns drawn from a set of principles deriving from his metaphysics. Secondly, I reconstruct and assess Bosanquet's views on the meaning and importance of religion and religious consciousness for the human being's spiritual endeavour to achieve self-realisation and affirm the spirit that characterises the real content of human nature. Thirdly, the chapter focuses on the elaboration of the fundamental structural components of Bosanquet's theory of religion which relate to the conceptual framework of his philosophical project. Fourthly, I show that my critical assessment of *What Religion Is* affirms the core ideas of Bosanquet's treatment of religion that I discerned and discussed in the previous chapter. I will consequently prove that Bosanquet's views on religion are characterised by theoretical continuity. Throughout I emphasise that Bosanquet's analysis of religion is an integral part of his moral and social ontology, the inmost essence of which is the idea of good as the only real and final end of the individual's struggle for self-realisation and self-perfection.[3] I argue that Bosanquet defends from the idealistic standpoint a theory of religion that reveals in an original way the essence of religious consciousness in its relation to the meaning of the individual's social and ethical life. The strength of Bosanquet's theory of religion derives from: (a) its metaphysical foundations; and (b) its implications for the individual's ethical life in a social whole. Sweet has also pointed out that Bosanquet's

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[3]For Bosanquet, religion "like other activities of the spirit, is necessary if man is to transcend the constricting and impoverishing limits of the individual self" (Reardon, 1971: 311).

contribution to the philosophy of religion lies in the fact that it offers a viable alternative theory to evidentialism that focuses on the demonstrability of religious belief (Sweet, 2000: 123-127). A careful reading of *What Religion Is* in the context of Bosanquet's metaphysics reveals a unique perspective of theorising religion and of reflecting on its experience that has not been fully explored and analysed. Alan Sell (1995), for instance, had little to say about Bosanquet's part in the contribution of the British Idealists to the articulation of Christian belief. This new evaluation and re-assessment of Bosanquet's philosophy of religion suggests that his views on religion should be given more prominence.

In this chapter I offer a critical assessment, a new interpretation and a systematic reconstruction of Bosanquet's thoughts on religion in *What Religion Is*. My analysis is based on a close textual investigation which aims at: (a) assessing Bosanquet's arguments by inquiring into what he actually wrote on the topic; (b) revealing Bosanquet's message concerning the meaning of religion for the individual's moral development and self-realisation in the context of ethical life; and (c) proving that Bosanquet had a great deal to say about the importance of religion and the necessity of understanding it properly. This chapter continues and completes the analysis of Bosanquet's views on religion that I have started in the previous chapter and affirms the conclusions reached there. My analysis is sustained throughout by the two principles that I have identified in Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912) and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913). I am referring to the interaction and relation between, or the dialectic of the

finite-infinite and the doctrine of self-transcendence.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section, which is entitled "The Right Way of Approaching Religion," is devoted to a methodological inquiry. In this section, I systematise Bosanquet's thoughts on the essential features of religion and I elucidate the three major methodological conditions which I regard as fundamental presuppositions for an effective theorisation of religion in the spirit of *What Religion Is*. These conditions are: (a) to ask the right questions; (b) not to confuse (religious) faith with science and logic; and (c) to understand properly the value of prayer and worship. It is important to clarify these issues because the true conception of the essence of religion depends on the way of approaching it and on the type of expectations we have from this experience. I argue that Bosanquet's intention is to create a firm methodological foundation which will sustain his reflections on the essence of religion.

In sum, this is the content of the three methodological conditions. First, the questions we should ask are questions which reflect the individual's common sense, personal judgment, and intellectual ability to discern the truth. Questions about the nature of the spiritual world are not questions about the supernatural which has no place in Bosanquet's philosophical system. The spiritual world is the suprasensuous world of values that dwells within our visible world and signifies the latter's ultimate meaning. Second, science and logic cannot reveal the truth of religion. Religion is premissed on faith that substantiates an ontic force emerging from the depths of the human soul. (Religious) faith is faith in the reality of the good as the only reality

which, viewed from the perspective of the metaphysics of the self, is faith in the perfectability of human nature. In the same context, faith in God is faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. God is neither a person nor an intelligence that "masters" the universe and people's destinies. And, finally, prayer and worship have instrumental value in our quest for apprehending, feeling and realising in our lives the essence of religion that ultimately means spiritual rebirth and salvation.

In the second section I discuss "The Essence of Religion." I argue that Bosanquet's conception of religion as the weld of finite and infinite and his definition of religion as spiritual unity, in love and will, with the supreme good relate essentially to his philosophical discourse on the metaphysics of the self. An array of conceptually interrelated issues is discussed in the context of the essence of religion: the real self, the spiritual integration of the non-self inside the being of the self, salvation, freedom and suffering. The emergence of the real self depends on the individual's ability to transcend the boundaries of particularity and isolation and affirm infinity within. Infinity is the spiritual world of truth, beauty and goodness. The human being needs religion in order to affirm both the real self and the infinite aspect of its finite-infinite being. Religion is more than morality for it refers to the overwhelming faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. The spiritual transcendence of the limitations characterising finitude opens the road to salvation and freedom. I argue that salvation is an endogenous transformation that, although it affects the finite content, does not change the fundamental ontological structure of the finite-infinite being. Salvation, which presupposes self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite, is an

internal awakening that characterises the way in which the individual relates to the world. Religious faith is the force that motivates the entire process of the self's spiritual rebirth. Bosanquet relates the spiritual rebirth to the attainment of the idea of good. Achieving the good requires a spiritual battle: each individual follows a different pathway in the realisation of the good which, however, contributes to the overall realisation of the idea of good in society. The quest for the good is premissed on sociality and spirituality which also characterise the processes of self-perfection and self-realisation. Unity with the supreme good represents the ultimate state of ontological completion and fulfilment that a moral agent can realise. Religion is faith in the spiritual unity of the self with the non-self: unity with God, Man, and Nature. Salvation restructures the content of the self and entails suffering. My analysis of suffering does not pretend to exhaust this complex issue. I discuss the notion of suffering from a perspective that can highlight some of the interesting points that Bosanquet makes, despite the difficulties and the complexity of the issue. I argue that Bosanquet theorises suffering in metaphysical terms as an aspect of the human condition that is embedded in the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite being. His treatment of suffering evokes the theme, familiar from his Gifford Lectures, of the hazards and hardships of the finite selfhood.[4] Suffering should be understood as the counterpart of conflict that is both a subjective and a universal fact. In the context of

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[4]In Part B of *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913), Bosanquet deals with the "Hazards and Hardships of Finite Selfhood." He devotes three lectures to this subject: "The World of Claims and Counter-Claims" (Lecture V); "Pleasure and Pain" (Lecture VI); and "Good and Evil" (Lecture VII).

religion, conflict culminates in victory. Victory is the spiritual rebirth of the self as the finite-infinite being constructs itself out of itself. I now turn to the analysis proper.

1. THE RIGHT WAY OF APPROACHING RELIGION

What I hope and desire to do in writing this little book is to be helpful to persons who, while feeling the necessity of religion, are perplexed by the shape in which it comes before them. I am not thinking about historical criticism. I have in mind more fundamental things (Bosanquet, 1920a: v).

The opening paragraph of *What Religion Is* describes briefly the intention of the author. The purpose of the book is to help people to understand the meaning of religion in its relation to the human condition and leave aside questions of historical criticism. Bosanquet will examine religion neither as an event defined and conceptualised on the grounds of a determining historicity, nor as an occurrence in time, nor as a cultural phenomenon. Religion is associated with time, yet this specific kind of temporality is the ontological historicity of the finite consciousness. To me, Bosanquet regards religion as a fundamental psychical predisposition existing in the

inmost part of the human soul and characterising the idea of humanity as such.[5]

What does Bosanquet endeavour to do? He attempts to conceptualise the essence of religion as an experience that substantiates the true self. He defends the true meaning of religion by referring to an "ideal type" of religion beyond the plurality of religions and asserts that this ideality conveys the truth that every religious creed purports to offer. In other words, Bosanquet inquires into the essence of religion despite the plurality of its manifestations. One can argue, however, that this is not a completely unproblematic conception. There were religions in the past which required the sacrifice of human beings, or religions nowadays which - from an "outsider's" perspective - include inhuman practices in their rites and rituals. What would Bosanquet's answer be? In my view, Bosanquet's theory allows us to consider this situation from the following two perspectives. First, in the context of the evolution of religion, imperfect forms are replaced by more perfect forms. The evolution might not be seen as an unfolding in time of different forms, but as a process of realisation of the true essence of religion: a process in which imperfect forms co-exist with more perfect forms. Second, there are imperfect or false religions that are not "real" enough, in the sense that they have not developed thoroughly and comprehensively all their inherent potentials to achieve their real nature and, thus, to be true to their idea. Even in these cases though, there must be an element corresponding to the essence of religion. People follow a wrong direction because

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[5]Sweet observes that Bosanquet appears to regard religious belief "as the product of a natural impulse" (Sweet, 2000: 125).

they have not realised where this element lies. Religion is a human experience, so it cannot absolutely escape from the implications and limitations of finiteness. Finally, it depends on the individual's reasoning ability, feeling and reflexivity to judge if a specific religious belief or custom promotes or sustains his/her unity, in love and will, with the supreme good.

Bosanquet's perspective is broader than the explanatory framework structured around the analytical categories of the traditional theological discourse. He regards religion as the experience of unity with something greater and more inclusive than the individual self in its atomistic isolation: this experience revolves around the facts of "love, loyalty, community" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 12). Bosanquet introduces the notion of the supreme good as the final end of religious experience and re-defines the idea of faith in God as faith in the reality of the good (ethical faith):

> My object was simply to insist that by dropping the notion of a person or of an intelligence, we have only shorn off some distracting accessories from the old problem of faith in God, which still governs life under the new name of faith in the reality of the good (Bosanquet, 1893c: 115).

Bosanquet's account of religion offers a new interpretation of a phenomenon that is an existential need of the human souls emerging from its self-realising and self-moulding dynamics. He asserts: "No man is so poor, I believe, as not to have a

religion, though he may not, in every case, have found out where it lies" (Bosanquet, 1920a: vii-viii). Bosanquet's purpose is neither to develop a theological argument nor to assert the fundamental premisses of a traditional (conventional) inquiry into the nature of the divine. Yet, he does have a view concerning the proper way of conceptualising the divine and he defends a position of social theology that exhibits two main features. First, the content of his social theology is determined by, and related to, his theory of social ontology which refers to the philosophical-metaphysical theorisation of the nature of being. We have already seen that in Bosanquet's ontological scheme, being is inseparable from consciousness. Second, Bosanquet does not refer to the traditional idea of God as accepted and used by the proponents of orthodox theology. I do not wish to be engaged in any kind of theological argument here for it will increase the complexity of the situation without making any substantial contribution to my argument in this chapter. I need, however, to clarify my point. By using such terms as "traditional," "conventional," or "orthodox" conceptions of God, I mean the idea of God as an independent Being, an intelligence, who "masters" the universe and can be conceived in an interactive and objectified relationship with the human being. This is not the case in Bosanquet's discourse. In his theological semantics, the idea of God is identified with the reality of the good, and it summarises the essence of the desirable spiritual unity, in love and will, with the supreme good.

Bosanquet starts his analysis of the experience of religion by emphasising the importance of the right way of approaching religion and by suggesting three main

methodological elements that should guide any attempt to apprehend and conceptualise religion. First, the meaning of religion is crystallised through a process of questioning activity, reflexivity and judgment on the part of the individual. Second, science and logic do not help us in our quest to reveal the truth of religion. Religion is a mode of experience premissed on faith; its content and function do not depend on either ratiocination or scientific proof. Third, prayer and worship can aid the human individual in his/her endeavour to conceive the spirit and meaning of religion. Praise and supplication are instrumental to the process of acquiring the truth conveyed by religion, and they cannot replace the individual's personal effort to understand the spirit of religion. Bosanquet does not present these three methodological features in a systematic way. His intention is to create a firm methodological foundation which will underline his reflections on the essence of religion, but he does not put it forward from the outset. My discussion of Bosanquet's methodological standpoint in this chapter is a theoretical construction based on an in-depth analysis of key points concerning the right way of approaching religion. These key points have been mentioned in his theorisation of religion in *What Religion Is*. I will discuss now these three methodological conditions. Then I will proceed to an inquiry into the essence of religion.

1a. Asking the Right Questions

Bosanquet starts his analysis with the following remark:

[W]e may be disappointed in an experience which we have been taught to regard as all-important, not because it offers us too little, but because it offers not just what we were prepared for. Everything depends on the expectation and the hope with which we approach it. Religion is the knot, the centre, of all human difficulties; it is a many-sided thing, and if we ask it the wrong questions it will give us misleading responses (Bosanquet, 1920a: v-vi).

We must find the best way of looking at religion in order to discover its essence and to benefit thoroughly from its message. Religion is a human affair and constitutes a human experience. Religion might be a complex situation for the human being's consciousness because it contains a variety of elements, the significance of which is articulated through a process of different levels of interpretation and critical assessment. This is how I understand this point. Religion presupposes a thinking and acting agent who wills to achieve a life worth living, the content of which is broader than the concern for private and personal happiness narrowly conceived. The reality of the good that constitutes the content of ethical faith is more inclusive and more substantial than conceptions of the good which are substantiated in the particular desires of finite selves. The particular desires of finite selves are these desires which are not subjected thoroughly to the "scrutiny" of the real will that emerges from the complex spiritual processes of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation characterising the finite-infinite being's life. The human mind is capable of capturing

the meaning of religion that refers to an infinite world of comprehensive value because of its finite-infinite nature. One of the functions of religion as a mode of human experience is to become a spiritual tool for discerning the nature of the good life that is the end of the individual's life within a social whole. Religion provides the individual with a specific understanding of his/her own ontological constitution that leads to the realisation of the good life. In my view, the underlying structure of Bosanquet's argument is the distinction between the happy life (narrowly conceived) and the good life. The former is not enough for one who finds the assertion of one's humanity in the ceaseless struggle against the atomistic aspect of one's individuality. This distinction is discussed neither properly nor systematically because it does not form the explicit subject-matter of Bosanquet's short treatise. In my view, it is crystallised out of his reflections on the value of religion for the individual's self-realisation. This distinction also has a heuristic function in conceptualising the real meaning of religious experience and the importance of religious consciousness for the completion of one's life. What is then the relation between "the good life" and "the happy life"?

The good life includes the happy life but the happy life in itself and without any other qualification cannot be identified with the good life. The happy life cannot be identified with the happy life immediately and without any other qualification because the actualisation of the good life demands effort and struggle against the moral agent's tendency to retain the condition of his/her finiteness that offers the "happy" but not necessarily the good life. For instance, in my insistence on not

quitting smoking, although I do know that it damages my health and I am aware of its consequences both to the environment and to the others' health, I assert the narrowly conceived and limited "happy life" and the bad will. I do not really care about the broader consequences of my action for the social whole that includes my well-being and the well-being of people who are either members of my family, or fellow citizens, or participants in the moral community of human beings. I insist on my narrowly conceived happiness which affirms the finite aspect of my finite-infinite being, and I do not develop the potential of my real will that accompanies my true or real self and contributes to the real and overall well-being which is a distinct feature of the good life.

This example shows that the good life is a more inclusive, more substantial and completer conception of life. The good life is premissed on a higher level of reflexivity and self-transcendence. The realisation of the good life involves recognition of our spiritual unity with the being of the "other"[6] (the non-self) that is transcendental, yet immanent, and that both extends and deepens spiritually the content of the finite-infinite being. The ultimate meaning of this unity is salvation. Salvation signifies a change in the inward constitution of the human being's intra-subjective reality and opens the spiritual pathway to the realisation of the good life.

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[6]The "other" which is, however, an intrinsic part of the real self. The self is situated in the world and the content of this situatedness is revealed in its relation to a multi-dimensional externality. The dimensions of externality are characterised by complexity and interdependence. They are partly immanent (internal) and partly external as articulated in a continuous interactive and self-restructuring process without fixed points of rapprochement.

How does one discover the essence of religion - "the only thing that makes life worth living at all"? (Bosanquet, 1920a: vii). Bosanquet warns against any "first-look" relation between religion and the idea of a (superficially) happy life. He also warns against preconceptions which can be perilous to the proper understanding of the meaning and essence of religion. There are three things that religion does not do. First, religion does not guarantee the attainment of a state of spiritual fulfilment without the active involvement of the moral agent.[7] Second, it does not give definite, "ready" answers which might discourage the development and exercise of personal judgment. And, finally, religion should not be associated with the supernatural because the spiritual world that it refers to is the world of values and not a world of events caused by divine interventions, of non-human existences and disembodied spirit that have no connection whatsoever with the fact of being human. Real spirituality is not superstition.[8] Human beings can realise the essence of religion because of their spirituality.

The essence of religion is found precisely in its unique contribution to the

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[7]Religious belief "is an activity and involves action" (Sweet, 2000: 125).

[8]Sprigge, following W. James, describes this attitude as "refined supernaturalism" in contrast to "crass supernaturalism." From the standpoint of the crass supernaturalist "the supernatural is a realm of concrete existence distinct from our ordinary natural world from which occasional influences emanate." For the refined supernaturalist, however, "special divine interventions, such as miracles, are mere superstition having nothing to do with real spirituality, except as symbols suitable for a more primitive stage of human culture than the present." Sprigge discerns some affinities between refined supernaturalism and the positions of B. Bosanquet, R. B. Braithwaite, D. Z. Phillips, and Don Cupitt. He notes, however, that none of these thinkers would probably like to be regarded as a "supernaturalist." This is absolutely true in the case of Bosanquet. See Sprigge, 1992: 105-125 [both quotations are from page 105].

revelation of the individual's rich psychical potential and to the affirmation of the reality of the good in human life. The human being has an active involvement in clarifying the meaning of religion and in articulating its essence: this is consistent with the immanentist perspective. The meaning of religion should not be regarded as a given content that can be passively apprehended. Because of the teleological dynamics of consciousness, the essence of religion is revealed, in the sense of achieved or discovered anew by the individual, through (among other processes) a continuous questioning enterprise that presupposes reflexivity and personal judgment. We have already seen that Bosanquet despises the authority of either the clergy or a philosophical priesthood to give "final" answers, to interpret the sacred texts, and to structure the guidelines of the ethical life. The only authority is the thinking agent. What sort of questions should the thinking agent ask? Which are the rules guiding the type of questioning activity that pertains to religious inquiry? Which is the relation between this type of questions and the questions associated with science and logic? I now turn to the discussion of Bosanquet's second methodological condition: drawing the line between science, logic, and faith.[9]

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[9]In *What Religion Is* Bosanquet does not discuss his views on the theory of evolution and the consequences they might have for the development of religious theorising. This is consistent with the nature of the case he set out to defend. I have mentioned in the Introduction of his chapter that his intention was to help people to understand "the central truths of religion... and maintain the sanity and proportion of its faith" (Bosanquet to Webb, in Muirhead, 1935: 227). For the reaction and response of the British Idealists to the evolutionary theory, see Boucher's excellent analysis (Boucher, 1992: 87-103).

1b. Science, Logic, Faith

Science and Logic have their rights; but we must not confuse them
with religion (Bosanquet, 1920a: 29).

The meaning of this statement is simple and clear: the truth of religion should be
sought by different means from those pertaining to science and logic. Religion refers
to an experience which is different in kind from the type of experience that science
and logic substantiate. Science and logic focus on the particular. Faith refers to an
ontologically important experience that permeates throughout finite consciousness.
The term "Logic" here means the typical logical analysis and inquiry and, to an extent,
that sort of intense questioning activity that breaks up the content of experience into
fragments and impedes the apprehension of the order of things in its
comprehensiveness. It does not refer to the Hegelian science of the concept where
"Logic" deals with the universal and not with the particular. Bosanquet accepts the
necessity of judgment in his theorising on religion, yet he refers to a specific kind of
questioning activity that derives from from the individual's common sense and not
from the formal structures of logical analysis. He also clarifies in which areas of the
discourse on religion the thinking agent must exercise his/her reflexivity and he
introduces a criterion of judging. This is an important point and Bosanquet has
prepared his readers from the Preface of *What Religion Is*: religion "is a many-sided
thing, and if we ask it the wrong questions it will give us misleading responses"

(Bosanquet, 1920a: vi). Bosanquet's main thesis is, as I understand it, that religion is something more comprehensive and essentially different from the plurality of particular religious beliefs and from the "scientific" validity of specific religious creeds. Bosanquet regards religion as an essential experience to the development of human consciousness that reveals in mind the reality of the spiritual world. Bosanquet's theorisation of religion emphasises the fact that religion is indispensably related to the process of self-realisation and to the affirmation of ethical life within the spiritual community that society provides. According to Bosanquet, any inquiry into the nature of religious faith must not focus on the mythological aspects of its literary formulations, but on the universal message of religion for humanity. Bosanquet (a) introduces a criterion of judging the truth of religion; and (b) emphasises the importance of faith for the articulation of the religious attitude and the understanding of the religious consciousness. These two elements are interdependent and interrelated. I now turn to the analysis of these issues.

1b/i. The Criterion of Judging the Truth of Religion

If you are offered a doctrinal certainty, ask yourself *of what* it is a certainty. Is it really of a truth pertaining to religion, or is it something quite different, which perhaps tradition or controversy has associated with it? Every one, I repeat, must judge for himself. The absolute need in judging is sincerity, pureness of heart. Does this

really belong to my oneness, in love and will, with the supreme good?

Does it flow from this, and confirm me in it? If not, it may be an

interesting and valuable speculation; but it is not a part of religion

(Bosanquet, 1920a: 32-33).

Religion refers to my unity, or oneness, in love and will with the supreme good. This

is the essence and meaning of religion. This is also the criterion of judging the truth

of the variety of doctrines, creeds and ways of conceptualising the divine element that

different religions offer. One's unity, in love and will, with the supreme good is the

criterion of judging the truth of religion as such despite the plurality of its

manifestations and doctrinal differentiations. The certainty of this spiritual unity

dwells at the heart of the idea of religion. It is the affirmation in my life of the infinite

aspect of my finite-infinite being. The apprehension of this unity as real and

meaningful helps me to hold "fast to the centre" of an experience "which we have

been taught to regard as all-important" (Bosanquet, 1920a: v and 26). Our spirituality

enables us to be united with the life of the Spirit that is eternal and infinite. We

participate in eternity, we become eternal because, for Bosanquet, it is a fact that what

"is united with the eternal is eternal" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 25-27). Our unity, in love

and will, with the supreme good is the absolute or ultimate presupposition that

substantiates the spirit of religion in our life. As an ultimate presupposition, it is the

starting-point of any discussion concerning the essence of religion. The affirmation

of spiritual values in the activities and thoughts of everyday life signifies the realisation

of infinity in the concrete experience of the individual and proves his/her participation in eternity, that is, participation in the impersonal world of values which transcends the limitations of finite existence. This is a state of self-realisation derived from our unity, in love and will with the supreme good.

Our unity, in love and will, with the supreme good is the absolute presupposition that sustains Bosanquet's entire discourse on religion. In other words, this is the ultimate ideal fact which is not questioned because any other dimension of the theorisation of religion is premissed on the truth of this presupposition. The nature of this unity cannot be proven "technically": if we try to do so, we run the risk of going astray and of missing the real point. This happens because the experience of religion starts the moment in which we wholeheartedly believe in this unity as the only reality and our faith justifies us. In this context, faith is the intuitive and instinctive ontic force that pushes back the boundaries of finiteness in the finite-infinite self. This is an ontological fact that describes an unpremissed reality of being: questions start from this point. These questions must relate to the intellectual capabilities of the thinking agent and, first and foremost, they must not require an intelligence different from the common sense needed for individual judgment.[10] We are all able to inquire into the idea of religion in order to apprehend its simple, yet overwhelming message. Bosanquet explains the only requirement that this enterprise

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[10]"Every man, in the end, must judge for himself, and I am not preaching any particular form of religion, nor intentionally criticising any. I am only trying to help people to get the full good, the point and spirit, of the religion which they profess, or which I am sure they really have, whether they profess one or not" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 8).

needs:

> Your mind is a good instrument; only keep it free and sincere; keep
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> away from selfishness, self-conceit, from the vanity of learning, and
>
> from the vanity of resentment against learning. Open it to experience,
>
> and take that as largely as you can. We know the type of man who on
>
> the whole gets nearest to truth. It is not the cleverest. It is, I think,
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> the sincerest (Bosanquet, 1920a: viii).

The emphasis is on our ability to see the perceive the truth of unity that religion conveys. The spirit of this unity refers to a comprehensively continuous, felt and lived experience. This is not a substance that we can break into pieces without damaging its unique character. To apprehend the truth of religion and, consequently, to realise its essence in our life, we need faith.

1b/ii. Faith and Religion

The self in religion perceives the whole as an experience substantiated in the trans-subjective unity of the "subject" with the "object." This is the "metaphysics" of religion. The "object" is conceived of as God, Man, and Nature. The "object" reflects the "other," the non-self that abolishes its state of otherness in its spiritual unity with the "subject." Faith enables us to apprehend and feel the reality of this spiritual unity. This is the first function of faith. Its second function is to express the belief that the

reality of the good is the only reality. Obviously faith cannot be properly understood through logic: the latter is too limited to describe faith's almost cosmic self-restructuring and world-changing power. Yet faith does have its own logic in the larger perspective of reality as systematised in Bosanquet's metaphysical project. In this context, the logic of faith is mirrored in the self's dynamic resurfacing into a richer ontological reality - a condition of being that Bosanquet describes as rising "into another world while remaining here" (Bosanquet, 1920: 9). This "another world" forms a part of the content of the individual's particular world: a part, however, that needs to be discovered, affirmed and felt as a new and deep experience. The affirmation of the spiritual world enriches the meaning of the individual's sense of selfhood. Hence the logic of faith derives from the teleology of the finite-infinite being.

The suprasensuous world that is rediscovered and asserted inside the consciousness of the finite-infinite being is not a static world. It refers to a world that is characterised by change, internal dynamic, and intrinsic complexity. Two intertwined dialectical processes are associated with the whole movement of discovery and redefinition. The first process deals with the continuous unfolding of gradually deeper levels of selfhood that refers to a recurrent "exchange" of contents between the "subject" and its externality. The second process focuses on the interactive dynamic of the spiritual dialectic between finiteness and infinity. Both processes are spiritual and aim at achieving a state of unity without abolishing difference, complexity and heterogeneity. In other words, the two dialectical processes culminate

in a state of unity between the Self and the World which is premissed on the element of spirituality. Spirituality is the ultimate and fundamental quality of being - a quality unaffected by the difference and heterogeneity that the distinct individual cases are bound to manifest. The initial process of affirming the content of the non-self as part of the spiritual substance of the visible self leads to a completer state of selfhood as the self asserts more forcefully the infinite aspect of its finite-infinite being. From the standpoint of religious consciousness, this redefinition of the self refers to the spiritual unity with the supreme good. In Bosanquet's words, religion is unity or oneness "in love and will, with the supreme good" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 33). Religious faith sustains the belief that the reality of the good is the only reality. How does Bosanquet theorise religious faith in the context of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation? He writes:

Religious faith has two inseparable sides of will and of judgment. They are hardly indeed sides, for each has the other in it. Both mean absorption in a good such as nothing else matters and nothing else is real. This is why religion "justifies" the religious man. It does not abolish his finiteness - his weakness and his sin. But what it does is to make him deny that they are real - to make his whole being, as he accepts and affirms it, a denial that they are real. This is the very crux and test of religion, and its combined simplicity and profundity are here most plain. Nothing is so simple, nothing is so impossible. It is

the cry from the heart of religion for all time, "Only believe" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 9-10).

Bosanquet recognises that faith in the reality of the good is a common element in the plurality of religious systems. The sort of faith that he defends is not faith in a particular religious creed or set of doctrines. On the contrary, he emphasises the idea that faith can be conceived independently from the specific content(s) of its particular manifestations. The essential feature of religion that differentiates it from morality is the specificity of faith as faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. Bosanquet acknowledges the Pauline doctrine of "Justification by Faith" as the phrase that epitomises the meaning of religion (Bosanquet, 1920a: 7).[11] Faith "justifies" the cosmic impulse of the finite-infinite being to self-transcendence and signals the entrance into another dimension of being. In Bosanquet's philosophical understanding of religion, self-transcendence aims at effecting the unity of the Self or subject with the World or object. In more concrete terms, faith is the individual's unshakable belief in the reality of good as the only reality and in his/her unity with the supreme good in this world. This unity characterises the process of self-realisation and opens the road to salvation and spiritual rebirth. Faith justifies our certainty that the reality of the good is the only reality, that our unity with it is real, and that salvation is possible:

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[11]C. C. J. Webb comments on Bosanquet's philosophy of religion: "It centres in the doctrine that the perfection to which we aspire can only be enjoyed in the recognition of our membership in a whole which is already, and indeed eternally, perfect" (Webb, 1923: 78-79).

The situation which this expression [Justification by Faith] embodies is simple, though fundamental, the knot or centre, as we said, in which the open secret of all human nature is bound up. We cannot be "saved" as we are; we cannot cease to be what we are; we can only be saved by giving ourselves to something in which we remain what we are, and yet enter into something new. The peculiar attitude in which this is effected is religious faith. And this is, as I see the matter, just what we mean by religion - this, and no more, but nothing less. It is faith which is contrasted, *not* with knowledge, but with sight. All the resources of knowledge may contribute to faith. But faith is contrasted with sight, because it is essential to it that we rise into another world while remaining here" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 8-9).

We have already seen that faith cannot be subjected to the investigating methods of a typical logical inquiry. Any "logical anatomy" of faith is surpassed by the soul-remoulding power of its overwhelming message. Faith reflects an ontic force that emerges from the depth of the human soul and substantiates the perfectability of the individual. Bosanquet is at pains to extricate faith and religion from any kind of belief in the supernatural. His main thesis is absolutely clear and consistent with the overall immanentist standpoint. He asserts that in the values of love, beauty and truth:

our unity is solid and plain - our unity with God and with the whole of

being. We must not do anything to throw these into the background,

and place our unity in remote events (Bosanquet, 1920a: 28).

Faith is a distinct dimension of human experience that enables the finite-infinite

being to realise what it really is. Therefore, it is pointless to formulate questions

which do not address issues referring to human experience as articulated in the

context of conditions and determinations of the present life. Bosanquet constantly

emphasises that the unity of man with God and with the whole of being (the unity

between the Self and the World) should not be projected into a future life as an

occurrence that transcends the historicity of the finite-infinite being. The spiritual

world is a reality within the world of human experience and realisation: it embodies

the world of value affirmed by human thought and action. Bosanquet's theorising on

religion excludes features which do not reflect the spirit of the human condition.[12]

The idea of the spiritual does not include the supernatural. In the third chapter of

What Religion Is which is entitled "Unity with God, Man and Nature" Bosanquet

clarifies the issue:

Unity with God, as a character of human spirit, involves, it is plain,

unity with man. And here again many questions offer themselves.

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[12]"We are human in as far as we love and trust. It is no use to compare ourselves with other things, which we understand but imperfectly, and ask whether we can be isolated or united in modes which apply to them. We possess the mode which applies to us, and for religion that is all we want" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 19).

What forms does this unity imply, historical, terrestrial, beyond the grave? Is there to be a millennium, a reign of peace and happiness on earth? What, in truth and reality, is the communion of saints? That spirits in unity with God must in the end be in unity with one another seems guaranteed by the very essence of religion. But what does "in the end" mean? Are we to ask more? and if we ask more, is it really asked in a religious spirit and interest? People who pray too much - it is an old folk-saying - pray themselves through heaven and out on the other side, and are set to herd the geese there. People who ask too many questions, *claiming to be religious in asking them* - it seems much the same. The shrewd old wives felt and saw perhaps that particularity and curiosity may harm the religious spirit (Bosanquet, 1920a: 28-29).

To recapitulate. Bosanquet defines religion as : (a) unity of man with God, Man, and Nature; (b) unity of man with God and with the whole of being; and (c) unity, in love and will, with the supreme good (Bosanquet, 1920a: 25-33). The term "man," in the context of the linguistic conventions of Bosanquet's time, refers to the human individual; the term "Man" refers generically to the human essence as a universal substance found in the nature of each particular individual. The human individual wills and realises this unity which affirms in every particular case Bosanquet's conceptual pattern of unity between the World or object and the Self or

subject. Faith "justifies" the human being in his/her firm belief that the reality of the good is the only reality and that this reality can be thoroughly affirmed and realised in life. The doctrine of "Justification by Faith" affects the way in which we perceive ourselves in the larger order of things and underlies the spiritual reshaping of the finite-infinite self. The culmination of one's unity, in love and will, with the supreme good is the defeat of atomistic isolation and exclusiveness which characterise the condition of finitude. The spiritual overcoming of finiteness corresponds to salvation. The next sub-section is devoted to an analysis of the function of prayer and worship in the apprehension of the essence of religion and in the attainment of salvation.

1c. Prayer and Worship

Prayer and worship are traditionally regarded as important elements associated with the realisation of the spirit of religion in the individual's life. In *What Religion Is* Bosanquet discusses their significance and reflects on their function in the overall scheme of theorising the essence and meaning of religion. He focuses on the proper way of understanding prayer and worship as structural elements of the phenomenon of religion and discerns how they should be effectively incorporated into a discourse on religion that holds fast to its fundamental spirit. We have already seen that Bosanquet's definition of religion revolves around the idea of unity. The state of unity that religion refers to is: (a) unity of man With God, Man, and Nature; (b) unity of man with God and with the whole of being; and (c) unity, in love and will, with the supreme good. Religion also presupposes faith in the reality of the good as the only

reality - a belief that relates to the affirmation of the spiritual or suprasensuous world within the visible world of our everyday experience. Thus the essence of religion is realised in the finite-infinite being's unity with the supreme good. This is a spiritual unity that signifies a felt and lived experience of the human individual and refers to his/her salvation, self-realisation and self-perfection. What is the part played by prayer and worship in this spiritual process of self-realisation and ontological completion? Does Bosanquet theorise religion as a soul-moulding experience that is independent of praise and supplication? I argue that in *What Religion Is* Bosanquet recognises the instrumental value of prayer and worship. This position is consistent with the general spirit of his earlier views on the topic that I have discussed in the previous chapter. There is thus theoretical continuity. I now turn to a brief analysis of this issue.

Bosanquet recognises that prayer and worship play an important part in religion, yet he does not accept them unconditionally. Prayer and worship and, consequently, "systems of creed and ritual" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 71) do not have real value unless they contribute to human beings' efforts to realise the essence of religion and affirm in their lives the spirit of unity and perfection. Prayer and worship have instrumental value, namely, their value depends on what they help to realise and on their contribution to the attainment of an end. The end is the human being's spiritual unity, in love and will, with the supreme good. Bosanquet explains:

Prayer and worship seem to be of the most intimate essence of

religion. And just for this reason, when separately argued about and insisted on, above all its other features they tend to become distorted. Prayer, I suppose, *is* the very meditation which *is*, or at the very least which enables us to realise and enter into, the unity which is religious faith. Worship, inward or outward, is in principle the same. It is some direction of feeling, thought, or ritual which renews and fortifies, perhaps with the aid of sympathetic communion, the faith and will which is religion (Bosanquet, 1920a: 67-68).

Prayer and worship are expressions of religious feeling and manifestations of the finite-infinite being's spirituality. Prayer is meditation for the sake of attaining the desirable unity that realises the spiritual overcoming of finiteness. Meditation involves reflective introspection which enables the human being to think from a new perspective and judge his/her life in relation to the potentials of moral development and spiritual completion. Prayer is a "confrontation" of the self with an inward aspect of itself during the process of self-reflection aiming at the self's salvation. Bosanquet emphasises that neither prayer nor worship should degenerate into forms which express inadequately the religious feeling. The inadequate expression of religious feeling implies that religious faith has weakened and distorted and therefore it cannot be articulated inside mind in its pure spiritual form. To me, Bosanquet wants to introduce a criterion of distinction between two types of prayer and worship: a proper one, and its deviation. In brief, the defective form of religious observance is

associated either with anthropomorphic conceptions of the divine element or with questions that do not enable mind to concentrate on the real meaning of religion. This point must be elucidated.

The purpose of prayer and worship is to help the finite-infinite being to affirm its unity, in love and will, with the supreme good and thus to defeat isolation and reach salvation. This is a spiritual process which does not require for its realisation a representational structure. In other words, it does not need the physical existence of supernatural bodies towards which we stand in an objectified relation that involves any kind of personal communication. Bosanquet writes:

> With the growing distinction and remoteness of the human and divine factors the whole nature of prayer and worship transforms itself. It comes to be modelled on the normal relations between an inferior and a superior in the asking of favours and the rendering of honour (Bosanquet, 1920a: 70).

The unity of man with the supreme good is a spiritual enterprise. It presupposes faith, will, and love: a set of psychical predispositions deriving from the finite-infinite being's spirituality. The object of unity is neither a person nor a distinct ontological unit. The personification of the object of religious faith is a problematic situation that changes the nature of religious experience and distorts its meaning. And, subsequently, our expectations are both distorted and misguided. The spiritual nature

of the complex trans-and-intra-subjective process that asserts the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite being and refers the symbolic overcoming of finitude must not be reduced to the constraining materiality of a fictitious representational state. It is true that the semantics of this representational linguistic structure might help our imagination and intellect to capture the feeling of religious faith. This fact does not mean, however, that the whole meaning of religion is exhausted in the structures of symbolic representation. And, moreover, this representational structure can be proven fatal to the proper apprehension of the essence of religion. There is a kind of prayer and worship, Bosanquet warns,[13] that acquires the potential for becoming misleading: this type of supplication is sustained by the individual's tendency to follow sometimes a wrong pathway in order to come closer to the spirit of religion, to ask the wrong questions and, as a result, to receive wrong answers.[14] It is important not to deviate from the real spirit of religious experience. How can we avoid going astray? We have already seen that Bosanquet's advice is: (a) to question if any

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[13]"We are only concerned to note the warning that prayer and worship certainly change their nature as we pursue curiosity and metaphor along paths which lead us away from what religious faith most strictly implies" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 70-71).

[14]Chapter III of *What Religion Is* deals with this issue. Bosanquet distinguishes the essential from the unnecessary in an illuminating passage: "What is united with the eternal is eternal. But how, how far, how transformed, or with what kind of consciousness, if consciousness is the right name at all, can we expect to know in particular, and, *for religion*, can it very much matter?" And he continues: "Unity with God, as a character of human spirit, involves, it is plain, unity with man. And here again many questions offer themselves. What forms does this unity imply, historical, terrestrial, beyond the grave? Is there to be a millennium, a reign of peace and happiness on earth? What, in truth and reality, is the communion of saints?" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 27-28).

doctrinal or other certainty offered to us in the form of a religious idea affirms in reality the state of unity, in love and will, with the supreme good; and (b) to trust our ability to judge and to use common sense.[15] The individual must think for himself: the target is to realise the objective of religious faith. Religion opens the road to salvation and spiritual rebirth. Prayer and worship have instrumental value: they are the means to the *telos* of religion that is spiritual unity with the reality of the good. Individuals, as thinking and acting moral agents, are able to attain this desirable end by believing wholeheartedly in the reality of good as the only reality, by devoting effort and determination to the realisation of this end and, finally, by discerning the real meaning and spirit of religion beyond symbolic formulas and metaphors.

The right way of approaching religion and of affirming its spirit of salvation and self-realisation in our lives depends on the ability of mind to extricate itself from its dependence upon familiar, yet limited interpretative structures and to experience the message of religion.[16] The essence of religion as spiritual unity, in love and will, with the supreme good and as affirmation of the spiritual world of value in our lives is the topic of the second section of this chapter.

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[15] See Bosanquet, 1920a: viii; 8; 18-19; 28; 32-33.

[16] Bosanquet does not clarify, however, under what conditions mind retains its capability of holding fast to the essence of religious faith.

2. THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

In a word, religion *is* just the weld of finite and infinite (Bosanquet, 1920a: 62).

This sentence, "[i]n a word, religion *is* just the weld of finite and infinite," epitomises the gist of *What Religion Is* and emphasises the importance of Bosanquet's metaphysics for the analysis and assessment of his views on religion. The definition of religion as the weld of finite and infinite presupposes knowledge of Bosanquet's metaphysical theorisation. The meaning of this definition is that the apparent exclusivity and particularity which characterise the self under the condition of finitude are eliminated and transformed into a new state of selfhood in the spiritual unity of the finite self with the infinite world. Let me explain how I understand the function of the infinite world in Bosanquet's discourse on religion. The infinite world extends in three dimensions. First, it refers to the "invisible" spiritual world of truth, beauty and goodness that embodies a cluster of impersonal values which determine the soul-moulding activity of the human individual and characterise the content of the true self. Second, it reflects a state of unity that in "The Evolution of Religion" (1894-1895), Bosanquet defined as the unity between the World or object and the Self or subject. In *What Religion Is* the same conceptual pattern appears as unity of man (the human individual) with Man, God and Nature. In experiencing this unity, the self discovers the truth of its being through a simultaneous two-dimensional process of

going deep inside the ceaselessly restructured content of its own constitution and of

reaching out to the formative influences of the surrounding world. One can discern

that self and the "other" are fundamentally and logically intertwined within the content

of the finite-infinite being and that there are no fixed limits marking their spiritual

intercourse. This happens because the contents of the two "units"[17] stand in an

ongoing and ever-expanding dialectical relation characterised by fluctuation, inclusion,

internal dynamic and absorption into a more comprehensive whole which, however,

does not abolish the distinctiveness of individuality. And, finally, with respect to the

articulation of religious consciousness, the infinite world of spiritual

comprehensiveness substantiates the being's unity of love and will with the supreme

good that is the meaning of religion and the foundation of the real self. This unity -

the human being's oneness, in love and will, with the supreme good - effectuates

salvation and an overall new understanding of the human condition:

> In the unity of love and will with the supreme good you are not only
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> "saved," but you are "free" and "strong." Action, initiative, even
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> courage, flow from you like a spring from its source. The source may
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> be fed from a deep reservoir in the hills; but none the less its flow is
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> its own. You will not be helped by trying to divide up the unity and

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[17]I use the term "units" for analytical reasons. In the context of Bosanquet's metaphysics of the self, self and non-self or the "other" are not really separate and distinct formulations at the level of spiritual articulation. Self and non-self are dialectically interwoven, as we will see, within the spiritual content of the finite-infinite being. Therefore, I use the term "unit" having this qualification in mind.

tell how much comes from "you" and how much from "God." You have got to deepen yourself in it, or let it deepen itself in you, whatever phrase expresses the fact best to your mind. The fact, as we said, taken altogether simply *is* religion. If you could break it up and arrange it in parts you would have destroyed it (Bosanquet, 1920a: 20-21).

Infinity is thus the spiritual world of truth, beauty and goodness. It also refers to the "place" at which the unity between the self and the world is affirmed and to the situation in which the inclusion and discovery of "otherness" or the non-self inside the finite-infinite self reveals the true nature of the human individual. Finally, infinity in its specific manifestation as: (a) unity between the self and the world; (b) affirmation of the apparent non-self within the substance of the finite-infinite self; and (c) representation of one's unity, in love and will with the supreme good, refers to the articulation of religious consciousness. Bosanquet's definition echoes Henry Jones conception of religion as the affirmation of life structured around the features of universality and comprehensiveness.[18]

Throughout his theorisation of the essence of religion, Bosanquet reflects constantly on the issues of isolation, salvation, unity, morality and re-moulding of the

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[18]For Jones, religion "is the life given away as particular and exclusive in its ends, and taken up again as universal and comprehensive" (Jones, cited in Boucher and Vincent, 1993: 59).

self from the perspective of the dialectical interaction between the spiritual contents of the finite-infinite self and its world. The fact of religious experience presupposes the spiritual unity of self and non-self that characterises the fundamental nature of the being of the self perceived from the standpoint of a comprehensive ontological formation. The otherness is the non-self that ontologically enriches the meaning of the self and spiritually "dwells" within finite consciousness as a source of the self's comprehensive realisation. Religion, or the religious consciousness, signifies the individual's spiritual need to overcome the restrictive condition of his/her apparent atomistic isolation, to expand the frontiers of the self, and to attain a state of unity that affirms the immanence of the spiritual world within the world of concrete human experience. This is a state of unity that, during its gradual realisation, re-defines the content of the self and, subsequently, changes the way in which the human individual relates to his/her surrounding environment. The overcoming of finiteness presupposes a reflective moral agent who consciously wills unity with a more inclusive reality and acts in order to achieve this goal. In this context, the overcoming of finiteness presupposes both morality (faith in the reality of good) and religion (faith in the reality of good as the only reality). Yet, religion is the most important variable of this enterprise. Why is that? This is so because religion is the ultimate and more comprehensive assertion of the reality of good:

Religion - religious faith - is different [from morality]. For it, the good is indeed real, as morality claims that it should be; but there is

something more; for in the end nothing else is real. And so you can be good, though you are not good, because as you are and as you stand, you yourself are not real. By worship and self-surrender you repudiate and reject your badness, and will and feel yourself as one with the supreme goodness (Bosanquet, 1920a: 11).

To overcome spiritually the limits of finiteness means to be prepared both to "fight" and "suffer" as the will is re-creating itself (Bosanquet, 1920a: 49). According to Bosanquet, in our endeavour to realise the true self and thus to experience a deeper and more substantial level of being and inner fulfilment, we are convinced that the true self is a reality which can definitely be actualised through our effort and will despite appearances: "This, which I am, is not really I. I am *bona fide* other, and this self, though I am it, I reject and disown" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 48-49). Thought, will, love, decision, and action substantiate our continuous effort to crystallise the ideality of the real self in our life as members of a spiritual community that is consistent with the *a priori* sociality characterising human nature as such. The finite being wills the "revelation" of the spiritual world - the infinite world - inside its own constitution. In fact, the realisation of the real self is premissed on both the existence of the spiritual world and the capability of the human agent to find, realise and affirm it in his/her self-transcending experience characterising the battle for the good. It is the condition of the finite-infinite being to will unity, to break the boundaries of its finite aspect and thus to defeat isolation and exclusion that impede salvation and freedom.

Bosanquet's thoughts on the essence of religion unfold in two interdependent conceptual frameworks, the uniting element of which is the dialectical relation between the finite and the infinite aspects of human experience. The first conceptual framework refers to the fundamental experiences of salvation and freedom. The second notional scheme is premissed on the human individual's oneness or unity with the reality of good which, for Bosanquet, signifies the end of man's spiritual odyssey. Bosanquet, however, does not regard these frameworks as referring to separate units of investigation. They are not treated separately because their systemic interconnection is vital, necessary and indispensable to the clarification of the nature of religion. They are logically interdependent, despite the fact that they can be analysed in two complementary levels. The main point in this analysis is that the meaning of religion is associated with the content of human experience and with the apprehension of the essence of the true self. I now turn to an examination of the two conceptual schemes.

The first issue related to religion that Bosanquet inquires into is the state of salvation achieved by the efforts of the individual. How does he theorise this complex process of self-transcendence and self-realisation? The entire discourse is centred in the spiritual enterprise of overcoming the limits of finitude. The desirable outcome is unity with a more inclusive reality that provides the human being with a new sense of strength, awakening and freedom which can be regarded as a more definite sense of self-assertion. This new sense of self-assertion makes the human being richer in

spiritual content, stronger in determination and self-maintenance, and completer in his/her overall spiritual constitution. The finite self, without being abolished, is transformed into a more comprehensive unit demonstrating a stronger affirmation of its infinite aspect. The moment at which the self reaches beyond the limits of its apparent exclusivity for the realisation of a deeper level of completion and individuality is a significant moment for the individual's life. The content of the individual reflects the reality of spiritual changes characterising a state of invisible transformation "within." To start with, religion brings about salvation and thus attainment of freedom. In this context, freedom refers to a state of spiritual "liberation" that accompanies the human being's symbolic entrance to the "other" world while remaining in this visible one. The human being defeats his/her finiteness by rising into the infinite world of spiritual relations that includes and transforms the content of finite determinations. How does this re-structuring activity affect the destiny of the finite-infinite self? The finite-infinite self does not abolish its finite aspect; it transforms its initial constitution. In other words, the self-transcending process that defies exclusivity and isolation does not refer to a state of radical ontological transfiguration which could signify a total change of substance.

To recapitulate. The finite-infinite being does not cease to be finite, yet as its aspect of infinity is firmly affirmed, its content changes because the limits of finiteness fluctuate and a deeper degree of reality is acquired. The change undergone is a change within the consciousness of the human individual and results in his/her attaining a new perspective of comprehending reality and, more especially, of

understanding his/her position in the world. Salvation derives from the development of a spiritual predisposition inherent in the reality of the self. This predisposition needs to be activated through the individual's will and effort and it is dynamically articulated in the self-transcending experience of the finite-infinite self. The process of self-transcendence brings together the defeat of isolation and the spiritual actualisation of unity with "something greater, something inclusive" (Bosanquet, 1920: 19). Bosanquet asserts: "We are saved, if we must have a word, from isolation; we are saved by giving ourselves to something which we cannot help holding supreme" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 6).

The issue of salvation, which is also a cardinal concern in the philosophy of Christian theology, occupies a central position in Bosanquet's analysis of religion. Salvation transforms life, gives a more dynamic direction to the overall story of the individual's self-realising endeavour and, finally, refers to the realisation of the true self. Bosanquet's conception of salvation can be clearly illustrated by the use of an analytical framework consisting of two successive moments that characterise the realisation of this process. The first moment corresponds to the spiritual act of "breaking" the shell of the restrictive condition of isolation. This is a decisive movement for the actualisation of the individual's inherent potential of self-realisation. The second moment refers to a new state of selfhood, a state of spiritual rebirth that reveals the "liberating" potentials of the finite condition. In this context, religious faith is the force that both motivates and sustains the entire process of salvation, unity, and spiritual rebirth of the self. Obviously, the kind of faith discussed here does not

correspond to the common or usual conception of religious faith. In the analysis of *What Religion Is*, religious faith is faith or belief in the ability of a human being to overcome the limits of his/her finiteness and to affirm in his/her life the reality of the spiritual world as it is gradually, yet definitely, revealed in the re-structuring processes of self-transcendence and self-assertion. Religious faith refers to a firm belief in the inevitable unity with the reality of the good which presupposes determination, devotion, will and effort that transform the apparent inevitability of unity into a felt reality. The attainment of the good requires (human) effort. Let me analyse this issue.

To achieve the good is a spiritual battle - a battle which, when it is viewed from the particular standpoint of religious consciousness, is in itself a victory because "through all appearances good is supreme" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 41). The battle for the good is premissed on the anatomy of the will. In a very important passage, Bosanquet elucidates his point:

> Thus the very working out of the good is a battle, in which our will actually fights against itself. The false will, which is disowned and condemned, which faith rejects and repels, none the less is there in fact , and opposes the will of faith in which the soul is saved and at home through religion. And this is sin; for it is the persistence in the religious man of the very will which as religious he disowns (Bosanquet, 1920a: 46).

"The will of faith" reflects the real will that Bosanquet elucidates thoroughly in his ethical, social and political theorising. The being substantiates gradually and firmly the essence of its nature as its will restructures and redefines its own constitution. The self is in conflict with itself in the crucial battle of reality against appearance that occurs throughout its being and mirrors the teleological dynamics of consciousness. The will of faith, which opposes the false will, is not the will of another being: it is a development, a more comprehensive and "real" affirmation of the will of the individual who seeks self-realisation and self-perfection while striving for the realisation of the good. This soul-making endeavour that the processes of self-transcendence and self-realisation signify is not an easy task. To realise the good is both an individual and a universal affair: it requires the apprehension of the idea of good and the personal battle and effort of each individual to actualise the spirit of this idea. I wish to emphasise here that the realisation of the good requires the fact of ethical life and the spiritual membership of each one of us in the community of human beings. The good needs a form of sociality and co-operation which reflect the fundamental nature of the human individual. Bosanquet's idea of sociality refers to the individual's participation in a common life which does not threaten the essence of distinct individuality. Our spiritual membership in the community of human beings crystallises the specific nature of our individual commitment to the realisation of the good. Bosanquet refers to the idea of good as a spiritual value and to the particular individual efforts through which this idea is substantiated. He emphasises our awareness of the idea of good - our ability to grasp the principle - which, in practical

terms is translated as personal effort to realise it in our world. Each individual follows a different pathway in his/her attempt to realise the good: the personal effort is characterised by the particular circumstances in which one finds oneself. The situations which shape one's life form the context of one's environment and, to a certain extent, determine the way(s) in which one will fight for the good. However, each individual effort, though different and from a different standpoint, contributes to the overall realisation of the idea of good in society. The crucial point here is that the good is not given in the form of clear guidelines that can be learnt and repeated. There is no substantive idea of good clearly defined and thus easily internalised. Bosanquet does not refer to a definition of the good that can "moralise" one's life if one follows passively the directions of its actualisation. The moralisation of the self is achieved through the self's spiritual battle to substantiate the real self within the context of its being. In doing so, the self asserts its firm belief in the reality of the good as the only reality. This specific "moment" signifies the moment of spiritual transference from the territory of morality to the domain of religion. The individual is convinced that there is the idea of good: this is an ultimate presupposition deriving from the facts of sociality and spirituality. To realise the good is a commitment that we all have because of being human in our finite-infinite constitution. We do have an awareness of the good because of our spirituality that enables us to affirm the spiritual world - the infinite world of value - in the context of our particular lives. We try to achieve the good from the different "stations" we occupy in life. Each individual's station revolves around a cluster of roles, functions, and commitments that shape - to

a great extent - the particular context and content of his/her life. The station involves

duties and rights and it is not static and unchangeable for it refers to the facticity and

reality of a human being. We should not forget, however, that one's character-

formation and shaping of life depend on circumstances as well. I will briefly comment

on this issue drawing upon Bosanquet's own writings and, the, I will continue with the

"station and its duties" inquiry.

Bosanquet discusses this issue (the issue of character and circumstances) in

his contribution to a Symposium entitled "Are Character and Circumstances Co-

Ordinate Factors in Human Life, or Is Either Subordinate to the Other?" which was

published in the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. Bosanquet does not deny

that circumstances influence character. He emphasises, however, that we must

develop an insight in order to apprehend properly the relation between character and

circumstances. This insight refers to a methodological condition that must guide our

way of conceiving the self. The focal-point is the idea of a"higher or larger self" that

reacts "on the lower or less organised self - relatively speaking circumstance"

(Bosanquet, 1895-1896: 114). The starting-point is not, Bosanquet argues, an "inner"

self undermined by "outer" circumstance. One can retort, that Bosanquet over-

emphasises the power of the individual to shape his/her life entirely and to rise above

material conditions, obstacles and circumstances: this is true. Yet, Bosanquet makes

an interesting point. The self, being regarded as conscious and rational, is able (in

principle, I would add) to transform the external conditions, to react on their

influence, to be in a dialectical relationship with its environment. Of course, this is a

much contested issue and, here, I develop only a possible dimension of Bosanquet's theorising. I do believe, however, that Bosanquet says something that is relevant not only to contemporary debates about the structure and agency problem, but to the issue of the importance and value of individuality which is another perplexing issue for Bosanquet's critics. I understand Bosanquet's position as follows. The individual self has the power, ability and capacity to react as a whole on the determinations of "externality" and to organise them within itself while confronting their immediacy. The difference between "character" and "circumstance" is the element of organisation through the constructive work of consciousness that Bosanquet attributes to the former.[19] In my view, the interesting point in Bosanquet's reflections is that self-consciousness and the rational capacity of the human being give him/her a certain power over the "material" of the circumstances. The self is, firstly, to a greater or to a lesser extent, an organised whole in itself; and, secondly, it is characterised by the data-transforming dynamics of consciousness, by the constructive nature of self-consciousness, and by spirituality and rationality. It is exactly because of the interrelation of all these characteristics that the self can influence circumstances:

The points of view, then, from which the self may be regarded as

Character and as Circumstance respectively, may each of them be

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[19]Bosanquet writes: "What the data are in the self is what they are for the self; and what they are for the self depends on the work of self-consciousness in constructing a life and purpose out of them. The self is character, when regarded as an organised whole; it is circumstance when regarded as a congeries of details" (Bosanquet, 1895-1896: 114).

applied throughout the whole of the content of the self; and it would be a mistake of principle to deny that circumstances in any sense bear upon character. But the point of view of character is the true point of view, and, strictly speaking, circumstance bears upon character not as *mere* circumstance, but only as involved in that relation to the whole which is taken account of in the point of view of character; and by being involved in this relativity circumstance undergoes a transformation which is not formal, but actual, and altogether revolutionises its nature and its reactions (Bosanquet, 1895-1896: 115).

I continue now the analysis of "my station and its duties" in relation to the realisation of the good. One's station might be to be a daughter, a wife and mother, a lawyer, and a volunteer in a charity organisation. This station is different from the station of another individual who is a brother, a husband and father, an MP and an activist in ecological organisations. In our example, each individual can fight for the good from the standpoint of his/her own distinct station in ethical life. We have, of course, different battles for the good because we have different individuals who fight for it from their different positions. Yet, despite the differences, there is a common element that is found at the basis of their efforts. The common element is the belief in the reality of the good that can make them reflect on the particularity of their interests and discover a point of harmonisation and creative co-existence that will assert the

features of togetherness and unity (in differentiation) against the features of division, sterile opposition, and narrow (anti-social) particularity. That is why, as we will immediately see, Bosanquet refers to the continuity of the battle for the good which is characterised, however, from heterogeneity and from "diverse missions" that reflect the plurality of agency. In discussing these issues, we should never deviate from the ideas of sociality and spirituality that sustain the entire project of the individual's quest for the good. Bosanquet writes:

> Perhaps we may add, without straying too far from simplicity, that in keeping up this grasp on the complex fact of religion we are led to see that "good" is a hard thing both to appreciate and to realise. It is not some plain decalogue, some clear white against black. It is a life, a spirit, a meaning, to be wrought out and to be fought out. To each of us, religion seems to say, it is and must be offered in our own individual form. My battle is continuous with yours, but it is not quite yours; yours helps me in mine, but it is not quite the same. We are sent on diverse missions, and all of them are necessary to the good (Bosanquet, 1920a: 42).

The spiritual unity with the supreme good presupposes an acting and thinking moral agent who, in the context of a social whole, desires and wills this unity that represents the ultimate state of his/her ontological completion and fulfilment. The

world of values is both revealed and realised in the actual world of the human being's experience. One's unity with the supreme good derives from the immanentist project of religious theorising. This is a project that affirms the divine as a celebration of the reality of the good achieved by the individuals' will and effort in this life and in every area of self-realisation, mainly in the context of ethical life. The spiritual world (the world of values) is premissed on the intricacies of the human condition and asserted through the conflict with opposing forces:

> He is never out of reach of the world of values, revealed to him and in him. Religion does not say, I think, that he is to believe in an order of values some day to be attained without intermixture of what seems hostile to value (Bosanquet, 1920a: 39).

Salvation abolishes the condition of fear which stems from the inescapable fact of being's finitude. Conflict and struggle accompany the conscious and, sometimes unconscious, effort of the individual "to go out of himself." As a result the desirable spiritual unity that both dignifies and completes individuality is neither an easy nor a "painless" affair. "Salvation," Bosanquet forcefully writes, "is the entrance to the strait gate and the thorny path" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 4). Salvation means defeat of isolation, but the completion and remoulding of the self that it helps to realise is a self-restructuring process which is deeply felt by the finite-infinite being. Religious faith may result in salvation which can be described as an "idyllic" situation of personal

fulfilment and peace,[20] yet it "does not seem to promise exemption from suffering" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 53). To use Bosanquet's own words:

> It is crude and pagan, perhaps, to say that all good comes by suffering, and I do not say it. But religious faith seems to mean a going out of oneself, which may be exultant, but can hardly fail at times to put the finite being on the rack (Bosanquet, 1920a: 61-62).

In fact, Bosanquet devotes the sixth chapter of *What Religion Is* to the topic of suffering (Bosanquet, 1920a: 53-63). The notion of suffering is important for his analysis of the meaning of religion and, also, for his theorisation of the finite-infinite relation in the metaphysics of the self. Why is that? How does Bosanquet conceptualise the genesis and function of suffering and how does he integrate it into the logic of his discourse on salvation, self-transcendence and self-realisation? I now turn to a discussion of this issue. I wish, however, before starting my analysis, to clarify my position with respect to Bosanquet's theorisation of suffering. The issue of suffering is huge and complicated. My analysis in this chapter does neither exhaust the topic nor examines the whole array of the possible dimensions of Bosanquet's theory. I discuss the notion of suffering from a perspective that can highlight some of the interesting points that Bosanquet makes, despite the difficulties and the

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[20]"In other words, we are at peace, at rest. Not that we have not to fight; but now the battle itself is the victory. We are certain in our mind. We are convinced of the supreme good, and that it is one with the supreme power" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 5).

complexity of the issue. In sum, I argue that Bosanquet theorises suffering in metaphysical terms as an aspect of the human condition that is embedded in the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite being. Suffering should be understood as the counterpart of conflict that is both a subjective and a universal fact. In the context of religion, conflict culminates in victory. Religion, we must not forget, is the firm and overwhelming faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. Victory is the spiritual rebirth of the self as the finite-infinite self constructs itself out of itself. I now turn to the analysis proper.

Bosanquet presents suffering as a fact. He understands it as a universal and inescapable fact deriving from the nature of the finite world. Suffering "belongs on the one hand to the religious spirit, and on the other to the finite world" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 59-60). Suffering is a fact independent of the qualities of either good or bad. I think that we must emphasise this point in order to avoid misinterpretations of the sort that Bosanquet does advocate suffering as a good thing which should exist to achieve a life worth living. To me, Bosanquet discusses suffering from a metaphysical standpoint, namely, from a standpoint enabling one to reflect on what the function of a principle, notion, or state is in the overall scheme of reality. This means that the focus is neither on particular cases of suffering, nor on aspects of suffering and how they can be eliminated, nor on a "moralistic" overview of suffering related to the development of the moral self. One can argue that Bosanquet, for purely analytical reasons, should have provided us with a more comprehensive analysis of the concept of suffering in order to cover in detail the entire range of particular cases and, in

consequence, to avoid possible misconceptions. To some extent, this is true. However, I think that Bosanquet offers us enough evidence to understand both his point and the entire direction of his analysis. I argue that Bosanquet's discourse refers to the meaning of suffering for the ontological constitution of the finite self : his theorisation of suffering relates to his familiar theme of the hazards and hardships of finite selfhood. The notion of suffering that Bosanquet discusses relates to the ontological structure of being as such and not to cases of inhuman, degrading, or self-humiliating acts. There are plenty of instances that can testify to this interpretation. The death of a beloved person causes suffering, yet death is a biological fact that cannot be avoided.[21] Death makes us reconsider our world-view and our relation to the person we lost and this gives us the opportunity to achieve new dimensions of moral development, spiritual awakening and self-realisation. One's struggle against addiction to drinking or smoking means opposition to a strong desire to do something that causes happiness in the short term, but affects negatively the individual's overall well-being (including the well-being of one's family and friends). The individual of this example experiences suffering when he fights against the desire that is dictated by his bad will - the will to do something which, under rational deliberation and reflection, he would disown. Through suffering, he discovers his real will - the will

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[21]I theorise death here only as a biological fact. I do not consider more complicated cases, such as murder, accidents, war, death because of rape, torture and other violent actions. As I stated at the beginning of this discussion, this is one of the most complicated issues in Bosanquet's theory and I cannot cover any possible dimension. To testify to my views, I follow a specific line of interpretation that can, I think, prove the point of my argument.

that corresponds to the real self - and, consequently, he acquires a more comprehensive degree of perfection and self-realisation. The battle against the desire causes suffering for one is not always ready to disown one's bad self and realise the good. But the battle itself is (the promise of) victory and one is motivated by faith in one's ability to achieve the desirable end and win the battle.

In my examples, death and desire are facts characterising the condition of finiteness that is associated - to a great extent - with the human condition. Death and desire[22] exist because we are human and thus, in Bosanquet's words, incomplete and imperfect. The genesis of suffering is metaphysically related to the finite condition, yet the source of suffering is the source of salvation and rebirth. The finite-infinite being, because of its self-transcending dynamic, is able to communicate with more comprehensive levels of its own constitution and make the most of its inherent potentials for self-realisation. The structural feature of the self's ontological

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[22]There are many kinds of desire. I do not mean that the notion of desire in itself refers to something which is either "bad" or "imperfect" and thus desire always signifies a bad state. After all, there is the desire to do good and to realise our real self. In this example, however, I use a conception of desire that refers to the limitations of finite selfhood in the narrow sense of the word. I use this further qualification because one can argue that the desire to do good, or to realise the true self, or to affirm the self-transcending experience exists because *we are finite and thus incomplete*. This means that, although the three aforementioned examples of desire refer to positive situations which explicitly assert the real self, the real will, and the infinite aspect of selfhood, they do occur because we are still finite. In the context of my interpretation of Bosanquet's thought, I think that this issue can be better clarified if we introduce two conceptions of desire. The first conception refers to a desire to do something that asserts the finite aspect of the finite-infinite being. The second conception describes a desire to do something that affirms the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite being and defies imperfection. Both conceptions, however, derive from the condition of finitude.

constitution as finite-infinite implies suffering. This is a kind of suffering that derives from the individual's ceaseless effort to guarantee self-maintenance, self-remoulding and self-realisation. Both suffering and transcendence belong to the teleology of being's ontological constitution.

Bosanquet construes suffering as the spiritual counterpart of conflict or as the result of conflict. The world itself is characterised by conflict because separate, opposing, self-asserting forces exist and affirm themselves within the universe independently. Conflict, the fundamental structural element of the world's constitution, transforms itself into suffering when it is articulated in the invisible domain of consciousness which is also the shrine of the spiritual world. Bosanquet writes: "If things apparently indifferent to one another's interests assert themselves in the same world, there must be conflict, and, with consciousness, suffering" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 53). Conflict in the natural world appears as suffering, or results in suffering, in the spiritual realm of consciousness. The dialectic of the finite-infinite within the boundaries of the self not only implies but presupposes conflict and suffering. The moment of transcending finiteness is a moment of spiritual struggle between two tendencies. The first tendency is the individual's tendency to retain his/her apparently exclusive individuality. The second tendency is the individual's tendency to overcome the limitations of his/her finite condition and to set out for self-perfection. This is an anticipated logical development deriving from the fundamental structure of being. Bosanquet explains:

Life and mind can do nothing by themselves. Their whole structure and way of working is to throw themselves into something greater, something inclusive" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 18). The conflict brings both suffering and victory.[23]

Here is the anatomy of the conflict. The actual or exclusive self wants to retain its finiteness; the real self emerges gradually and changes the structure of the ontological landscape. Salvation means to recognise the real self and to affirm it. The realisation of the real self is associated with a painful spiritual process of going out of, and giving oneself to something more inclusive. The emergence of the real self is premissed on the "dying to live" idea. The real self is acquired because the individual truly believes in it and has faith in the reality of good as the only reality. This is religious faith:

Religious faith does not seem to promise exemption from suffering. On the contrary, it almost seems to suggest that it is inevitable. We saw what a tremendous working contradiction faith involves between the true reality and the actual appearance. This seems to imply the possibility at least of a very fiery trial, though different no doubt for different natures and circumstances (Bosanquet, 1920a: 53-54).

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[23]Bosanquet qualifies the word "victory": "A word like "victory," or "in the end," becomes deceptive if we press it as meaning an event, an occurrence. What it means to say is, I take it, that through all appearances good is supreme" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 41).

Salvation is an internal awakening that changes the way in which the individual: (a) perceives the ethical dimension of his/her being; and (b) relates to the world. Salvation is an endogenous transformation that affects the content of finiteness as it motivates all the potentials for overcoming the limitations imposed on the individual by his/her finite condition. This endogenous transformation does not change the fundamental ontological structure of being which remains partly finite but with a remarkable sense of infinity within its constitution. In Bosanquet's philosophical project, religion relates both to metaphysics and to social theorising. We saw that salvation signifies the birth of the real self - the self that the actual self appears to contradict. Salvation stands for the individual's spiritual battle to defeat finiteness and to overcome the restrictive isolation. It takes place within the finite world, in the soul of the individual who rises above appearance and beyond the finite predetermination in order to attain unity and a deeper degree of self-completion. Salvation belongs to the immanentist project of affirming the divine element in the context of the historicity of the finite-infinite being.[24] It is important to notice at this stage the delicate dynamic of the spiritual interplay between the infinite reality and the finite world that motivates a process of major ontological significance for the overall constitution of the finite-infinite being. The universal content of the finite-infinite relation is crystallised as a concrete and self-transforming experience inside the soul. Salvation is made possible because of the finite being's need to conquer a deeper

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[24]The philosophy of religion of the idealistic school emphasises the immanence of the religious element (Webb, 1933: 109).

level of reality and perfection. The spiritual act of re-creation and redefinition of the self enables the individual to expand the context of his/her relations and determinations by adding new elements or by seeing under new light the existing ones. Salvation means salvation from isolation and not salvation from the ever-present condition of finiteness. The saved self is free, yet as free as it can be within the *ultimate* limits of its ontological constitution. It is a central thesis in *What Religion Is* that:

> In religion, man acknowledges his finiteness; it is essential to the basis
>
> of the experience, though it is not the whole basis. Religion says, You
>
> are victorious in the victory of good. It does not say that you can in
>
> the world of time, cease to be a finite and defective being (Bosanquet,
>
> 1920a: 37-38).

At the metaphysical level, religion captures a moment of spiritual complexity. It captures the moment in which a state of apparent deprivation is gradually transformed into a state of completion. This is a transformation representing the change within the self. The self, which is part of the world, experiences its unity with it through a complex scheme of relations between the outer and the inner. The religious experience which refers to the manifestation of the spiritual world within the finite-infinite self presupposes will, intentionality and action on the part of the individual in order to be comprehensively articulated. The felt experience of the

spiritual world reflects the immanence of infinity. The immanence of infinity relates to the metaphysics of the self for it affects the formation of the self and it is affected by the activity of human agency. The realisation of the immanence of infinity largely depends on the individual's will to seek salvation and freedom at the spiritual level.

The finite-infinite being seems to be teleologically predisposed to will unity with something broader, completer and more inclusive. Unity - or the potential of unity - enables the individual to transcend the boundaries of the finite condition and assert his/her spiritual continuity with reality and infinity within this world. For Bosanquet, the spirituality of the self enables it to affirm the suprasensuous world of value within itself. The affirmation of the spiritual world enables the finite-infinite being to manifest a symbolic negation of the finite condition, yet the latter is never finally abolished. The spiritual birth of the real or true self "occurs" during this complex process of recurrent negation and affirmation.

The reborn self relates to the unity of being with the reality of good. The content of the reborn self is enriched by continuous drastic transformations which affect the inner dynamics of the self and the organisation of its content. The self re-creates itself as a new state of being emanates from a previous state of being that carried latent in its substance the potentials for the anticipated spiritual change. What is the part "played" by religion, or the religious consciousness, in this private yet universal drama of the finite-infinite being's self-realisation? Religion refers to the human being's spiritual unity with the supreme good: "To be one with the supreme good in the faith which is also will - that is religion; and to be thus wholly and

unquestioningly is the religious temper" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 79).

Self-transcendence is necessary for the apprehension of the supreme good. The realisation of the true self presupposes self-transcendence that enables the self to affirm the reality of the good as a felt experience. None of these processes and relations occurs in a vacuum. On the contrary, the metaphysics of the self is premissed on love, loyalty, community and on the spiritual bond with the non-self that these facts imply.[25] In loving and trusting the individuals assert their spiritual membership in the community of human beings that provides the framework of sociality and ethical life.[26] At the root of the unity between the self and the non-self is found the unity between the self or subject and the world or object. The facts of sociality and community generate a broader and more inclusive relational framework. The self, in being placed within the context of this framework, does not abolish - on the contrary, it enriches and firmly affirms - its distinct individuality. The spiritual bonds that human beings develop in the context of a community determine the content of their social and ethical life and affect the process of self-realisation. These spiritual bonds form the dynamic of a complex transcendental interconnectedness which defines the nature of the finite-infinite being.

The moral agent does not follow the path of self-realisation without personal

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[25]"...I say that any one who considers human nature in the light of the facts of love, loyalty, community, will see that the character which in religion comes to a climax, is its very essence or centre or vital knot. Nobody is anything excepts as he joins himself to something" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 12).

[26]"We are human only in as far as we love and trust" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 19).

effort. One must will completion and perfection. The realisation of the true self depends on the human being's active involvement in the whole process. The human being must: (a) reflect on his/her condition; (b) have awareness of his/her potentials; and (c) will to affirm his/her humanity. The affirmation of one's humanity involves the inclusion of the non-self or otherness in the reflective activity of the finite consciousness.

How does Bosanquet theorise the non-self in *What Religion Is*? He does not provide us with a clear definition. We can make an attempt to reconstruct his views, however. The non-self, from the self's standpoint, is the "other," the object: it is a substance, an idea, a spiritual content, Nature, another human being that can make the self will to overcome its atomistic particularity, its apparent exclusivity and restrictive finiteness. The "other" embodies the negation of exclusivity that enables consciousness to reflect on, perceive and pursue the supreme good. The human being realises the true or real self only when he/she is in unity and oneness with the reality of the good. Religion is faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. According to Bosanquet, both religion and morality aim at the good, but there is a difference. For morality, "the good is partly real," - it is what "ought to be." The human being strives to realise the good which becomes real during this process. For religion, the good is real and "in the end nothing else is real."[27] Religious consciousness means faith in the reality of the good and certainty that only the self's spiritual oneness with the good can realise the truth in the soul of the human being. The real self manifests

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[27]See Bosanquet, 1920a: 10-11; 37-38; and 45-49.

a state of transcendence in immanence. Self-transcendence activates the will of the self to defeat isolation and exclusion and, consequently, to re-affirm with new strength and determination the individual's commitment to, and spiritual membership in, the human community. Bosanquet explains:

> Wherever a man is so carried beyond himself whether for any other being, or for a cause or for a nation, that his personal fate seems to him as nothing in comparison of the happiness or triumph of the other, there you have the universal basis and structure of religion (Bosanquet, 1920a: 5-6).

Bosanquet does not give a thorough and systematic account of the nature of the supreme good.[28] He offers, however, adequate information about the content of the concept in order to assess its meaning and function in the articulation of religious consciousness. Bosanquet's main point is simple and clear: the content of the self's unity with the supreme good is the human being's experience of love, beauty, and truth which is imbued with the spirit of loyalty, trust, and community. The experience of love, beauty, and truth makes the finite being participant in the reality of the spiritual world which is characterised by inclusion, wholeness, completion and perfection. Love, beauty, and truth are the eternal manifestations of the Spirit. In

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[28]He also does not differentiate between "the good" and "the supreme good." It seems to me that he uses the term "supreme good" for reasons of emphasis.

being united with the eternal and infinite, the human being transcends finiteness and realises his/her true nature. According to Bosanquet's own words:

> In these [love, beauty, truth] our unity is solid and plain - our unity with God and with the whole of being. We must not do anything to throw these into the background, and place our unity in remote events (Bosanquet, 1920a: 28).

The affirmation of the spiritual world within the world of our everyday experience expands the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite self, and the self is re-defined. The finite-infinite being is re-defined when the self, after having been submerged in the content of the suprasensuous world, comes back or returns to itself affirming the overwhelming strength of an inner metamorphosis effected by a change within. Salvation is precisely the self's spiritual victory over the atomistic isolation that keeps the human being away from the truth of his/her being. Salvation throws a new light on our understanding of selfhood. The finite consciousness becomes aware of this inner awakening that transforms the way in which the self perceives its potential and its true nature:

> Something has happened ... Something has changed within us. We are different, or at least, awakened. And now we are saved, absolutely, we need not say from what. We are at home in the universe, and, in

principle and in the main, feeble and timid creatures as we are, there

is nothing anywhere within the world or without it that can make us

afraid (Bosanquet, 1920a: 4-5).

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I offered a critical assessment, a new interpretation, and a

systematic reconstruction of Bosanquet's views on religion in *What Religion Is*. I

argued that in this short treatise Bosanquet confirms and elaborates further the

fundamental elements of his discourse on religion in its relation to the metaphysics of

the self. The idea of religion, which sustains the entire process of self-realisation, is

located at the heart of Bosanquet's theorisation of the self. The realisation of the true

self requires the dynamics of religious consciousness that substantiates the potential

of spiritual rebirth and the entrance to a completer dimension of being. Religion is

indispensable to the dialectics of the human being's self-realising endeavour that

presupposes self-transcendence and aims at self-perfection. My analysis was based

on a close textual investigation which had three aims: (a) to assess Bosanquet's

thoughts by inquiring into what he really wrote; (b) to reveal Bosanquet's message

concerning the meaning and importance of religion for the individual's self-realisation

and moral development in the context of ethical life; and (c) to prove that Bosanquet

had a great deal to say about both the importance of religion and the necessity of

understanding its meaning properly. This chapter continued and completed the

analysis of Bosanquet's views on religion that I started in the previous chapter. My interpretation of *What Religion Is* should be regarded as a conceptual anatomy of a single text that both affirms and reinforces the conclusions I reached in the previous chapter. This new evaluation of Bosanquet's philosophy of religion suggests that his views on religion should be given more prominence.

My analysis had six main purposes. First, to show how Bosanquet's theorisation of religion is based on the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. Second, to reconstruct and assess Bosanquet's views on the essence and significance of religion for the human being's self-realisation and self-perfection. Third, to prove that the ideas elucidated in *What Religion Is* are consistent with Bosanquet's reflections on religion expressed in his earlier writings on the topic. Fourth, to demonstrate that Bosanquet's analysis of religion is an integral part of his moral and social ontology, the essence of which is that the idea of good is the only real end of the individual's struggle for self-realisation and self-perfection. Fifth, to show that Bosanquet defends from the idealistic standpoint a theory of religion that reveals in an original way the meaning of religious consciousness for the ethical life and moral development of the individual. And, finally, to prove that Bosanquet's metaphysics provides a unique perspective of theorising religion that has not been fully explored and analysed.

In "The Right Way of Approaching Religion" I argued that Bosanquet's account of religion offers a new interpretation of a phenomenon that is an existential need of the human soul, namely, a need which derives from the human being's self-

realising dynamics. Bosanquet regards religion as a fundamental psychical predisposition that exists in the inmost part of the human soul and relates to the potential of salvation and freedom. He theorises religion as an experience that substantiates the real, or the true, self and he inquires into the essence of religion despite the plurality of its manifestations. Bosanquet's perspective is broader than the explanatory framework formed by the analytical categories of the traditional theological discourse. To Bosanquet, religion is faith in the perfectability of the human being: religion refers to the affirmation of the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite self. Through religion, the boundaries of the finite self's atomistic isolation are broken. Bosanquet defends from his immanentist perspective a position of social theology that exhibits two main features. First, it relates to his discourse on moral and social ontology that describes the human being's sociality and spirituality. Second, it is a position that does not affirm the traditional conception of God as used by the proponents of orthodox theology. The traditional conception of God is the idea of God as an independent Being, an intelligence who "masters" the universe and stands in an interactive and objectified relationship with the human being. Bosanquet, on the contrary, denies personality in God and defines the idea of faith in God as faith in the reality of the good (ethical faith).

I demonstrated that the right way of approaching religion depends on three methodological conditions: (a) to ask the right questions; (b) not to confuse (religious) faith with science and logic; and (c) to understand properly the meaning and value of prayer and worship. Bosanquet's intention is to create a firm

methodological foundation which will sustain his reflections on the essence of religion. I now epitomise the content of the three methodological conditions, the clarification of which should precede any discussion of the essence of religion.

The right questions are questions which reflect the individual's common sense, personal judgment, and intellectual ability to discern the truth with sincerity and purity of heart. The meaning of religion should not be regarded as a given content that can be passively apprehended. The proper understanding of religion requires a moral agent who exercises personal judgment and reflexivity. The thinking moral agent is the only authority. Bosanquet denies the authority of either the clergy or of a philosophical priesthood to give "final" answers, to interpret the sacred texts, and to structure the guidelines of ethical life. The right questions are questions about the essence of religion defined as the human being's spiritual unity, in love and will, with the supreme good. Questions about religion should reflect the spirit of inquiry into a state of being that substantiates the ideal of the good life which is the end of self-transcendence and self-realisation. According to Bosanquet, our investigation of religion should neither confirm nor derive from certain preconceptions that can be perilous to the proper understanding of the meaning of religion. There are three things that religion does not do. First, religion cannot guarantee the attainment of a state of spiritual fulfilment without the active involvement of the moral agent. Second, religion does not provide us with "ready" answers that might discourage the exercise of personal judgment. And, finally, the spiritual world that religion both presupposes and affirms does not refer to the supernatural element. The spiritual

world is the suprasensuous world of values that dwells within our visible world and signifies its ultimate meaning.

The second methodological condition characterising the right way of approaching religion is not to confuse faith with science and logic. Religion refers to an experience which is different in kind from the type of experience that science and logic describe. Science and logic focus on the particular. Faith is an ontic force that permeates throughout finite consciousness and substantially re-creates the being of the self out of itself. Religion is something more comprehensive and essentially different from the plurality of particular religious beliefs. Religion also refers to assurance that one can develop an insight into truth: this is a belief that goes beyond the "scientific" validity of specific religious creeds. Religion is essential to the development of human consciousness for it reveals in mind the reality of the spiritual world. Bosanquet emphasises that any inquiry into the nature of religious faith should focus on the importance of religion for the individual's self-perfection and self-realisation and, also, on the universal message of religion for humanity. The mythological aspects must be left aside. In this context, Bosanquet (a) introduces a criterion of judging the truth of religion; and (b) emphasises the importance of faith for both the articulation of religious attitude and the conceptualisation of religious consciousness.

The criterion of judging the truth of religion is one's unity, or oneness, in love and will, with the supreme good. I showed that our spiritual unity, in love and will, with the supreme good is the absolute or ultimate presupposition that (a) substantiates

the spirit of religion in our lives; and (b) sustains Bosanquet's entire discourse on religion. As an ultimate presupposition, it is the starting-point of any discussion concerning the essence of religion. The nature of this transcendental, yet immanent unity cannot be proved "technically": it requires faith. Any logical anatomy of faith is surpassed by the power of its overwhelming message. I understand faith as an instinctive ontic force that pushes back the boundaries of finiteness inside the being of the finite-infinite self. This is an ontological fact that describes an unpremissed reality of being. In sum, we need faith in order to apprehend the truth of religion and realise its essence in our lives.

In Bosanquet's "metaphysics" of religion, religion refers to the trans-subjective unity of the "subject" with the "object." The "object" is the non-self from the standpoint of the self or "subject." The non-self (God, Man and Nature) abolishes its state of otherness and transubstantiates its content in the spiritual unity with the being of the "subject." The prerequisite of this spiritual act is faith. Faith has two interdependent functions. First, it enables us to apprehend the spiritual unity between the self or subject and the world or object. Second, it sustains the belief that the reality of the good is the only reality. The essential feature of religion that differentiates it from morality is the specificity of the nature of faith: in religion, faith is faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. Bosanquet asserts that the Pauline doctrine of "Justification by Faith" epitomises the meaning of religion. Faith justifies our certainty that the reality of the good is the only reality, that our unity with it is real, and that salvation, freedom and spiritual rebirth are possible.

Faith and religion do not refer to the supernatural. I proved that Bosanquet's position is absolutely consistent with his immanentist standpoint. Our unity with God and with the whole of being is found in the values of love, beauty and truth. The spiritual world is the world of impersonal values affirmed in human thought and action. One's unity, in love and will, with the supreme good marks the spiritual defeat of atomistic isolation that characterises the condition of finitude. The spiritual overcoming of finiteness corresponds to salvation and freedom. Hence faith is indispensable to the metaphysics of the self.

The third methodological condition refers to the proper understanding of prayer and worship. Both prayer and worship are expressions of religious feeling and manifestations of the human spirituality. I argued that Bosanquet recognises the instrumental value of prayer and worship. The value of praise and supplication depends on what they help to realise and on their contribution to the attainment of the end. The end of religion is the human being's unity, in love and will, with the supreme good and, thus, the realisation of salvation, freedom and spiritual rebirth. The unity of man with the supreme good is a spiritual enterprise which presupposes faith, will and love - the components of religious feeling. Bosanquet points out that prayer and worship should not degenerate into forms of religious experience that express inadequately the religious feeling. The inadequate expression of religious feeling means that religious faith has not only weakened and distorted but, first and foremost, it has lost its pure and true spiritual focus. Prayer and worship must enable the human being to reach salvation and real spiritual rebirth without encouraging the

development of misleading expectations of personal communication with the divine element on the basis of objectified and interactive relations. Prayer should help the individuals to achieve that sort of reflective meditation which will sustain their efforts to apprehend and realise the essence of religion.

Bosanquet's theorisation of religion is structured around the idea of unity. He defines religion as: (a) unity of man with God, Man, and Nature; (b) unity of man with God and with the whole of being; and (c) unity, in love and will, with the supreme good (Bosanquet, 1920: 25-33). At the level of Bosanquet's metaphysical discourse, religion is "just the weld of finite and infinite" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 62). The conception of religion as the weld of finite and infinite is the foundation of Bosanquet's philosophy of religion and the most comprehensive notional formulation concerning the essence of religion. This phrase, which epitomises the uttermost essence of religion, shows the importance of Bosanquet's metaphysics for the interpretation of his views on religion and the relation between his discourse on religion and the metaphysics of the self. Religion, being defined as the weld of finite and infinite, means that the apparent exclusivity and particularity which characterise the self under the condition of finitude are eliminated and transformed into a new state of selfhood in the spiritual unity of the finite self with infinity.

The infinite world has three dimensions. First, it refers to the spiritual world of truth, beauty, and goodness. Second, it reflects a state of unity between the world or object and the self or subject. In the context of this experience, the self discovers the truth of its being through a simultaneous two-dimensional process of going deep

inside the realm of its own constitution and of reaching out to the formative influences of the surrounding world. And, finally, in regards to the articulation of the religious consciousness, the infinite world of spiritual comprehensiveness substantiates the human being's unity in love and will with the supreme good. This state of being is the foundation of the real self. The human being's oneness with the supreme good effectuates salvation and, consequently, an overall fresh understanding of the human condition.

In *What Religion Is* Bosanquet elucidates his thesis that religion is the ultimate and more comprehensive assertion of the reality of the good. The issues of the real self, of salvation, freedom and suffering, and of the spiritual integration of the non-self inside the self are discussed in the context of the essence of religion. I argued that religion signifies the individual's spiritual need to overcome the restrictive condition of his/her apparent atomistic isolation, to expand the frontiers of the self, and to attain a state of unity that affirms the immanent dwelling of the spiritual world. The spiritual overcoming of finiteness presupposes a reflective moral agent who wills unity with a more inclusive reality and acts in order to achieve this goal. The realisation of the real self is premissed on the existence of the spiritual world and on the human being's ability to find, realise and affirm this infinite world during the spiritual battle for the good. The human being's endeavour to realise the good and thus to affirm the real self leads to salvation.

I demonstrated that the issue of salvation occupies a central position in Bosanquet's analysis of religion. Salvation is the culmination of the self-restructuring

activity that accompanies self-transcendence. The continuous restructuring of the self that comprises the self-transcending process and effectuates salvation represents the symbolic defeat of exclusion, isolation and particularity. Salvation marks the entrance to an ontologically richer state of being. However, this spiritual activity does not correspond to a radical ontological transformation which would signify a total change of substance. Salvation should be understood as an endogenous transformation that enriches the meaning of life, affirms powerfully the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite being of the self, and marks the spiritual battle of the individual to realise the good. Human beings follow different pathways in their endeavour to realise the good which, however, contribute to the overall realisation of the good in society. The realisation of the good requires the matrix of ethical life and the spiritual membership of each one of us in the community of human beings. In other words, sociality and spirituality are the prerequisites of self-realisation. Because of our spirituality, we develop an awareness of the idea of good and grasp the constructive potentials of its self-remoulding dynamic. The good is not given in the form of clear guidelines that can be learnt and passively repeated. There is not a substantive notion of the good that can moralise one's life. The moralisation of the self is a personal endeavour revolving around the ability of the human individual to grasp the meaning of principles and to interpret their message during an interactive process of communication with other individuals in the context of ethical life. The moralisation of the self is an intra-and-trans-subjective process of negation and affirmation that both sustains and characterises the individual's spiritual battle to substantiate the real self within the

being of the individual's actual self. The defeat of isolation and the substantiation of the real self correspond to salvation. Salvation gives spiritual fulfilment and defies finiteness, yet the spiritual victory over finitude entails suffering.

The issue of suffering is huge and complicated. My analysis in this chapter did not purport to exhaust the topic. I offered, however, some thoughts on the notion of suffering in its relation to Bosanquet's theorisation of religion. Needless to say, I developed only one of the several possible dimensions of his analysis. I discussed the dimension that, to me, seemed to express adequately what Bosanquet wanted to say without claiming that I resolved all the difficulties associated even with this theoretical stance. As I have already said, the notion of suffering in Bosanquet's philosophy is a huge and much contested issue and I think that he should have elaborated a more comprehensive analysis of this notion in order to eliminate misconceptions and puzzling issues. This does not mean, however, that one cannot find both interesting and valuable points in his discussion of suffering. In this chapter, I argued that Bosanquet regards suffering as a fact deeply embedded in the human (finite) condition. He focuses neither on particular cases of suffering, nor on aspects of suffering and how they can be eliminated, nor on a "moralistic" overview of suffering concerning the development of the moral self. Bosanquet understands suffering as a universal and inescapable fact deriving from the nature of the finite world. Bosanquet construes suffering as the spiritual counterpart of the conflict of opposing forces either in the human psyche (at the subjective level) or in the world (at the universal level). To some extent, suffering is also the result of conflict.

I argued that Bosanquet regarded suffering as a reality associated with the ontological constitution of the finite self. I developed his theory towards this direction and not towards the direction of conceptualising suffering as the result of inhuman, degrading, or humiliating acts. I therefore understand suffering as a psychical feature embedded in the condition of finiteness that characterises the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite being. Suffering exists because we are finite and thus imperfect and incomplete. The source of suffering, however, is the source of victory. Victory is the triumph of the real self and of the real will that refers to a deeper affirmation of our individuality. We strive to realise the real self and the real will because as we stand we are not real. The processes of self-transcendence, self-realisation and self-perfection occur within a spiritual unit that endeavours to attain throughout its life a greater degree of reality and a more comprehensive level of realisation of its potentials. The ontological structuration of being as finite-infinite implies suffering. This kind of suffering derives from the individual's endless effort to sustain self-maintenance and self-realisation. Religion explains the self-transcending dynamic of the finite-infinite being that enables it to break the boundaries of its atomistic isolation and to substantiate the spirit of infinity within. The self emerges reborn out of its self-restructuring matrix and returns to itself affirming the overwhelming power of an inner spiritual metamorphosis.

To recapitulate. In *What Religion Is* Bosanquet elaborates his views on the essence of religion and on the importance of religious consciousness for the metaphysics of the self. In this chapter, I offered a critical exposition and a re-

assessment of his theorisation of religion as developed in his short treatise. My analysis was based on the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. I discussed *What Religion Is* in the context of Bosanquet's overall philosophy of religion and I proved that there is theoretical continuity and conceptual convergence between his views on religion in *What Religion Is* and his earlier reflections on this topic. It has been argued that Bosanquet allocates a central position to religion in his metaphysics of the self. Religion enables the individual to reach salvation and freedom and to affirm the infinite aspect of his/her finite-infinite constitution. Bosanquet is at pains to indicate the right way of approaching religion in order to understand properly and effectively its meaning. Religion, or the religious consciousness, is indispensable to the realisation of the true self that signifies the overcoming of atomistic isolation and the affirmation of the spiritual world in the life of the individual. The realisation of the real self presupposes: (a) the existence of the spiritual world; (b) the context of ethical life; and (c) the individual's faith in the reality of the good as the only reality. I argued that Bosanquet's immanentist perspective makes his views on religion essential to his moral and social ontology. His definition of religion as unity of the self or subject with a more inclusive and comprehensive reality and, especially, as one's unity or oneness, in love and will, with the supreme good, generates important implications for his theory of the real self. By drawing on his metaphysics, Bosanquet describes religion as the weld of finite and infinite.

I demonstrated that Bosanquet's analysis of religion is not structured around the conventional discourse of traditional theology. Bosanquet propounds a unique

interpretation of religion that stresses the importance of faith for the ontological completion and spiritual fulfilment of the human being in the context of sociality, spirituality, and personal judgment. He relates the essence of religion to the spirit of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation and he regards religious consciousness as manifestation of one's firm belief in the spiritual transcendence of finitude and in the ultimate inner metamorphosis of the finite-infinite self. Bosanquet's discourse on religion emphasises the centrality of the idea of good in the individual's life and action. In defining religion as, primarily, the human being's spiritual unity of love and will with the supreme good, Bosanquet focuses on the significance of religion for the human being's salvation and for the affirmation of the real self.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE STATE, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND THE BEST LIFE: A REASSESSMENT OF THE "BOSANQUET-HOBHOUSE" CONTROVERSY

INTRODUCTION

1. A General Overview

The Philosophical Theory of the State, which was first published in 1899, is Bosanquet's major contribution to political philosophy. It is also a landmark in British Idealist political thought.[1] Watson opens his review of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* with the following remark: "This is the most recent, and on the whole the best, exposition of the idealistic conception of the State" (Watson, 1900: 320). Watson's conclusion epitomises both the significance and scope of the book:

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[1] *The Philosophical Theory of the State* went to four editions: 1899, 1910, 1920 and 1923. It was also reprinted more than four times. Gaus and Sweet (2001) provided a new edition of the book with some of Bosanquet's related essays. The extensive and informative Introduction and the detailed annotations found in this edition help the reader to understand better Bosanquet's analysis and to apprehend the ideas in context. Thomas, in his review of Sweet's *Idealism and Rights*, writes that *The Philosophical Theory of the State* is "on two counts, a landmark in the history of political thought." Firstly, "it is the most elaborate, systematic, and comprehensive statement of political theory produced by the late nineteenth-century school of British Idealism. It has only one serious rival [T. H. Green's *Principles of Political Obligation*] ... But Bosanquet's book covers a broader range of topics than Green's." The second reason is that The Philosophical Theory of the State "signalled the close, till well into the second half of the twentieth century, of a tradition [a tradition which run "from Hobbes to Bosanquet"] in which, as a matter of course, mainstream philosophers produced works of political theory and the discussion of political theories was a staple of philosophical debate" (Thomas, 1998: 115).

Every intelligent citizen ought to be familiar with a work of such force and comprehensiveness. He will not find in it a ready-made answer to all political problems, but he will find what is much better, the discussion of the principles by which those problems ought to be solved (Watson, 1900: 322).

Nicholson writes that *The Philosophical Theory of the State*

was quickly acknowledged as a classic statement of the Idealist view of politics. Consequently it was criticised by all who espoused rival political philosophies. It was attacked, on different and sometimes contradictory grounds, by individualists and followers of Herbert Spencer; by Pluralists; by all who found Hegel's political thought unacceptable and morally reprehensible; by the early exponents of psychological and sociological approaches to politics; by socialists; and indeed by anyone seeking to define his or her own position by measuring it against a major contemporary landmark. The main period of hostile comment, when Bosanquet's political philosophy was prominent and notorious, was from shortly before the First World War up to the beginning of the Second World War (Nicholson, 1990: 198).

R. M. MacIver, L. T. Hobhouse, C. D. Broad, Morris Ginsberg, William McDougall,

G. H. Sabine, C. E. M. Joad, H. J. Laski, A. D. Lindsay, E. F. Carritt, and J. P. Plamenatz were among the critics.[2] Bosanquet's political philosophy "was stigmatised as undemocratic and authoritarian, subordinating the individual to the State" (Nicholson, 1990: 198). The most damaging of all these critiques was the critique of Hobhouse. Hobhouse published *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* in 1918 and provided "the fullest, most vociferous, and most damaging and influential statements of these criticisms" (Nicholson, 1990: 198-199).

Before proceeding to my critical assessment of some specific issues that derive from what I call the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy, I will present a detailed summary of Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*. This account will enable us to acquire a precise idea of Hobhouse's accusations, to clarify the main points of his argument, and to see what Hobhouse tries to both defend and protect in his book. In *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* Hobhouse embarks on the project of revealing the true face of Hegelianism expressed in the political philosophy of Hegel and Bosanquet. His main points of criticism and his principal objections to these philosophers (and especially in the case examined in this thesis, to Bosanquet), are the following: (a) Hegelianism, or "the metaphysical theory" of the State, relates directly to German militarism and to the World War; (b) Bosanquet, following Hegel, expounds a theory of the State which is authoritarian, undemocratic, anti-humanitarian, conservative, and opposed to progress; (c) Bosanquet confuses the

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[2]My main sources of information for these introductory remarks are Nicholson (1990) and Sweet (1997b).

notions of society and the State and gives the State an omnipotent role at the expense of the individual: the State becomes an end in itself; (d) Bosanquet's political philosophy is an application of the theory of the Absolute to human affairs: this application has disastrous implications for the development and expression of individuality; (e) the State is portrayed as "the working model of an Absolute" and the individual is totally subordinated to an almighty and uncontrollable power which completely disregards the former's interests, happiness and life; (f) Bosanquet finds the realisation of the ideal in the existing and established order of things, despite injustice, evil and wrong, and thus, he justifies the sources of human misery as elements in a perfect ideal; and (g) Bosanquet identifies, first, freedom with law and, second, the real will of the individual with the general will that is the will of the State. I now turn to the summary of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* which is also a description of Hobhouse's project.

Lecture I of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* is entitled "The Objects of Social Investigation" and plays a strategic part in Hobhouse's overall project. Hobhouse explains the fundamental features of the "metaphysical method" (that is the method of Idealism, i.e., the method that is expounded by Hegel and Bosanquet), in contrast with the "true social method." According to Hobhouse, the metaphysical method does not distinguish between facts and ideals: "it starts with and never corrects the fundamental confusion of the ideal and the actual" (Hobhouse, 1918: 23) and regards the ideal as being enshrined and realised completely in the actual (which for Hobhouse is the real). In the context of Hobhouse's discourse, the ideal refers to

the best and the most desirable and signifies a situation that might never be realised. The ideal describes people's hopes and aspirations for a better future. Hobhouse does not follow the notion of the ideal that Philosophical Idealism uses. The ideal of Philosophical Idealism refers, in brief, to the apperception of the whole illuminated by reason, intuition, feeling and the spirit of logic. Furthermore, he does not recognise the idealist distinction between the actual and the real and identifies the actual with the real. Hobhouse, in following his own conceptions of the ideal, the actual and the real, describes Bosanquet's views on these topics in their relation to the method of Idealism and, as a result, he develops a wrong account of the idealist treatment of society and the State. What does Hobhouse do? First, he identifies the actual with the real. Second, he defines the real as the actually existing. And, third, he infers that Hegel and the Hegelian Bosanquet are satisfied with affirming the ideal (the idea that, for Hobhouse, signifies the hope for a better future not yet realised) in the real (the idea which, for Hobhouse, refers to the actual). His conclusion is that, for Hegel and Bosanquet, the ideal is realised in any existing and established order of things despite miseries, injustices, misfortunes, and wrongs. In fact, Hobhouse asserts, all those features are for the Hegelian necessary elements "in a perfect ideal" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). This leads us to the second point of Hobhouse's argument which is the description of the spirit and nature of what he calls "the metaphysical theory" of the State. According to Hobhouse, the metaphysical theory of the State is authoritarian, evil, undemocratic, illiberal, reactionary, opposed to true progress and to the betterment of the human condition, anti-humanitarian, conservative and

irrational:

> This theory is commonly spoken of as idealism, but it is in point of
> fact a much more subtle and dangerous enemy to the ideal than any
> brute denial of idealism emanating from a one-sided science
> (Hobhouse, 1918: 18).

The metaphysical theory of the State is founded on the theory of the Absolute because, as Hobhouse infers, "to the idealistic school, social philosophy is an application of the theory of the Absolute to human affairs" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). Hobhouse describes vividly a series of consequences and implications deriving from this situation: reason is hypnotised; human beings are mere pawns in the hands of the Absolute and live under its shadow; individuality and personal independence are annihilated; critical thinking and initiative to work for the betterment of life fade away and they are replaced by "a passive adulation of the Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 18-20). This is Hegel's and Bosanquet's "metaphysical theory" of the State: a dangerous way of theorising that justifies the negation and sacrifice of the individual for the sake of a powerful State that is beyond any criticism and that is an end in itself.[3] We have

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[3]"The political reaction began with Hegel, whose school has from first to last provided by far the most serious opposition to the democratic and humanitarian conceptions emanating from eighteenth-century France, sixteenth-century Holland and seventeenth-century England. It was the Hegelian conception of the state which was designed to turn the edge of the principle of freedom by identifying freedom with law: of equality, by substituting the conception of discipline; of personality itself, by merging the individual in the state; of humanity, by erecting the state as the supreme

reached now the fourth, and final, point of Hobhouse's account elaborated in Lecture I: there is a direct and dangerous connection between Hegelianism and German militarism. The Hegelian teaching nourished Bismarckian ethics and its most overwhelming result is the World War. Hobhouse reflects on the dangers of Hegelian Idealism:

[Hegelianism] has permeated the British world, discrediting the principles upon which liberal progress has been founded and in particular depreciating all that British and French thinkers have contributed. Perhaps it has been none the less dangerous because it has captivated men of real humanity, genuinely interested in liberal progress, so much so that in the hands of T. H. Green the Hegelian theory was for a time transmuted into a philosophy of social idealism, a variant which has a value of its own and does not lack distinguished living disciples. But as a fashionable academic philosophy genuine Hegelianism has revived, and the doctrine of the state as an incarnation of the Absolute, a superpersonality which absorbs the real living personality of men and women, has in many quarters achieved the position of an academic orthodoxy. For academic purposes, indeed, it is a convenient doctrine; its bed-rock conservatism is proof against all criticisms of the existing order. It combats the spirit of

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and final form of human association" (Hobhouse, 1918: 23-24).

freedom in the most effective method possible, by adopting its banner and waving it from the serried battalions of a disciplined army. It justifies that negation of the individual which the modern practice of government is daily emphasizing. It sets the state above moral criticism, constitutes war a necessary incident in its existence, contemns humanity, and repudiates a Federation or League of Nations. In short, we see in it a theory admirably suited to the period of militancy and regimentation in which we find ourselves (Hobhouse, 1918: 24-25).

The next three lectures are devoted to the discussion of specific topics relating, especially, to the conceptual framework of Bosanquet's political philosophy: "Freedom and Law"; "The Real Will"; and "The Will of the State." The Reformation and the Enlightenment questioned the legitimacy of the established authority and emphasised the importance of the individual for socio-political discourse. Hobhouse argues that, in discussing society, "we are liable to two fallacies" (Hobhouse, 1918: 29): exaggerated individualism that tends to disregard the social fabric, and the metaphysical theory of society (Hegelianism) that sets up the State as

a greater being, a spirit, a superpersonal entity, in which individuals with their private consciences or claims of right, their happiness or their misery, are merely subordinate elements (Hobhouse, 1918: 27).

In this context, the individual has neither independent value nor independent life: his/her selfhood is exhausted in his/her absorption in the organised whole that exemplifies a rational order. Freedom is not the absence of constraint but it is expressed "in the positive fact of self-determination" (Hobhouse, 1918: 33). Freedom relates to the rational order which is embodied in the law. For Bosanquet, more specifically: (a) conformity to the real will means freedom or true individuality; (b) the real will is the general will which is expressed in the State; and (c) the State "is the true self in which the mere individual is absorbed" (Hobhouse, 1918: 43 and 71). The metaphysical theory is based on the idea that man's social nature is bound up with the State: this is an idea understandable only by the German mind. Needless to say "Bosanquet's own ideas are mostly derived from Germany" (Hobhouse, 1918: 76).

Lecture V of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* is entitled "Varying Applications of the Metaphysical Theory." In this lecture, Hobhouse's argument develops in two main directions. First, he states that the political philosophy of T. H. Green, although it belongs to the tradition of the metaphysical theory of the State, should be regarded as a notable exception from Hegelianism: the most faithful exponent of Hegel is Bosanquet. Second, he comments on Hegel's and Bosanquet's attitudes to International Politics and he is at pains to show the illiberal and anti-humanitarian character of their views. Hobhouse mentions that Green developed the idealistic conception of the State towards the direction of "an organic theory of society" which stresses that the ethical basis of the State is a common good "which at the same time is the good of each individual citizen" (Hobhouse, 1918: 96). In

other words, Green, unlike Hegel and Bosanquet, does not subordinate the individual to the State but seeks to realise the ideal "of a harmony between the state and the individual" (Hobhouse, 1918: 96).[4] Hegel, Bosanquet's source of inspiration, contemplated, yet he did not carry through "the organic conception of the state" because his political theorisation is undemocratic. Hobhouse asserts:

> Had Hegel carried through the organic conception of the state, he would have found room for the conception of liberty, equality and democracy; but his state system is a negation of all these (Hobhouse, 1918: 97).

According to Hobhouse, in the province of International Politics, Hegel and Bosanquet follow the same line of theorisation. Unlike Kant, who is described as "a great humanitarian thinker" (Hobhouse, 1918: 101), Hegel regards war as a positive situation and repudiates Kant's proposal of a League of Peace. Bosanquet adheres to the idea of state absolutism, regards the nation-state as "the last word in political development" and thus implicitly rules out the possibility of a world-state, and

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[4]Hobhouse points out that Green's theorising is not altogether "clear" from the idealistic presuppositions; Green accepts, for instance, that "what is real must somehow be in the minds of men" (Hobhouse, 1918: 120). There is enough evidence, however, to show that Green cares for, and respects, the individual: " ... Green's conception of the common good, far from overriding the individual, assumes his participation as an individual, and, far from ignoring his rights, jealously preserves them as conditions under which he is a free and rational being to achieve a good which is his own as well as the good of society" (Hobhouse, 1918: 120). It is easy to infer that, for Hobhouse, this is exactly what the Hegelian Bosanquet does not do.

opposes the League of Nations. Bosanquet's opposition to the League of Nations

relates, Hobhouse asserts, to his theory of the Absolute: the Absolute is perfection;

evil is necessary to perfection and is a part of the permanent scheme of things; the

League of Nations "threatens" to eliminate evil and wrong. As a result, the possibility

of the League of Nations should be ruled out: the disappearance of evil is, to the

idealist, "sheer blasphemy against the Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 116).

This was an outline of Hobhouse's central points expounded in *The*

Metaphysical Theory of the State which was written, mainly, as a critique of

Bosanquet's *The Philosophical Theory of the State.*[5] Tyler writes that in *The*

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[5]Collini, in his article "Hobhouse, Bosanquet and the State: Philosophical Idealism and Political Argument in England 1880-1918" (1976: 86-111), attempted to understand the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy in its historical context. I do not think that his analysis is very illuminating. In plain language, Collini affirms the thesis that an inquiry into Bosanquet's work in its historical context, or setting, proves that Bosanquet is wrong and inconsistent and Hobhouse is right. To me, it is not clear how a historical reading of Bosanquet's political philosophy would show that Hobhouse has a fair point to make against Bosanquet's philosophy beyond the usual explanation that *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* was written during a crucial period in European history characterised by a general anti-German feeling. Furthermore, I do not understand how an analysis of the texts in historical context can transform the precise meaning of the terms of a specific philosophical discourse into "ambiguities" (Collini: 1976: 91) without endeavouring to understand the notions in the context of the conceptual framework to which they belong. Collini follows Hobhouse's line of interpretation, and uncritically accepts Hobhouse's way of dealing with the vocabulary of Philosophical Idealism; a notable example of this is Collini's affirmation of Hobhouse's accusations concerning the term "real." Collini writes: "Idealism is committed to using certain words in a technical sense whilst giving the appearance, or at least reserving the possibility, of using them in their ordinary sense as well. Hobhouse pointed out how misleading the Idealist use of 'real' could be; for example, it could easily be used to obscure the way in which having our actions directed to accord with our real - meaning ideal - self could involve considerable coercion against the wishes of our real - meaning existing - self" (Collini, 1976: 104). Also I do not think that Collini has successfully provided reasons that "in contesting Bosanquet's claims for the achievement of the state, Hobhouse could quite properly

Metaphysical Theory of the State "Hobhouse portrayed Bosanquet as a conservative and repressive collectivist, and the image gradually stuck" (Tyler, 1999: 379). Sweet notes that the length of Hobhouse's attack is evidence to the "central role played by Bosanquet in British idealist political thought" because "the classical criticism of this tradition, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* ... is principally a critique of Bosanquet" (Sweet, 1997b: 4).[6] Bosanquet had some supporters against Hobhouse (R. F. A. Hoernlé, J. H. Muirhead, H. Haldar, and A. E. Taylor). However, in Nicholson's words:

> none of them have had anything near the same impact as Hobhouse.
> As a result, Bosanquet's political philosophy has become generally
> neglected, either reduced to an inaccurate and unbelievable stereotype
> or else ignored altogether (Nicholson, 1990: 199).

It is obvious that a defence of Bosanquet's political philosophy expressed in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* should start with a defence of Bosanquet against Hobhouse's accusations.

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and consistently refer to Hegelianism's 'bed-rock conservatism'" (Collini, 1976: 110).

[6]Sweet also notes that "Hobhouse's (and later, Herbert Marcuse's) assimilation of Bosanquet's position to that of Hegel was, at the very least, oversimplified and polemical. While Bosanquet would not have denied the influence of Hegel, his work is better seen (as many of his contemporaries recognised) as reflecting insights found in classical Greek philosophy" (Sweet, 1999b: xxii).

2. The Objectives of my Analysis

There have been some attempts to "rescue" Bosanquet from Hobhouse's hostile criticism and prove that Hobhouse misunderstood Bosanquet's theory at crucial points. In 1936, Pfannenstill wrote *Bernard Bosanquet's Philosophy of the State: A Historical and Systematic Study*. Pfannenstill argues that "Hobhouse shoots far beyond the mark in his criticism, in that he confuses a special method of philosophy with an empirical method of sociology" (Pfannenstill, 1936: 4). Bosanquet is a representative of the "ethico-normative," or "philosophical," method and Hobhouse did not get the point. Yet the book is not devoted entirely to the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy. In my view, when Pfannenstill deals with Hobhouse, he restates Bosanquet's (especially) metaphysical views. Pfannenstill does not focus precisely and specifically on the exact points of Hobhouse's misunderstanding and misrepresentation. In 1990, Nicholson in Study VI of his *The Political Philosophy of the British Idealists* focused on the main concept that animated Hobhouse's vociferous critique, the concept of the General Will. Nicholson (a) explained the reasons for Hobhouse's misunderstanding; (b) showed that Hobhouse did not develop an insight into Bosanquet's theorisation of the General Will because he did not understand the semantic framework of Bosanquet's philosophy; and (c) provided the definitive analysis of Bosanquet's ideas of the Actual, the Real, and the General Will in relation to Hobhouse's accusations. However, Nicholson's analysis: (a) focuses on, and addresses specifically, the issue of the General Will; and (b) inquires into Bosanquet's political philosophy without utilising at the same time

Bosanquet's metaphysical views. In 1997, Sweet, sixty-one years after the publication

of Pfannenstill's book, offers the second comprehensive monograph on the political

philosophy of Bosanquet.[7] Sweet, however, has as his focal-point the theory of rights

in Bosanquet's political thought. Although he refers to Hobhouse at several points

and affirms the damage caused to Bosanquet's philosophy by Hobhouse's unjust

critique, Sweet's purpose is to elaborate an Idealist theory of rights founded in

Bosanquet's philosophy. To me, the crucial point is that Sweet acknowledges and

affirms the importance of Bosanquet's logical and metaphysical views for a complete

understanding of Bosanquet's moral, social and political philosophy. At this stage, I

turn to a brief discussion of the objectives of my analysis in this chapter.

This chapter focuses on the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy and

endeavours to offer a conceptual anatomy of this central episode in the history of

British Idealism, the implications of which affected the understanding of the

theoretical foundations of Philosophical Idealism. I situate my analysis in the broader

perspective that was inaugurated by Pfannenstill, Nicholson, and Sweet. They all

endeavoured to defend Bosanquet and to prove that his political philosophy has

important things to say. I affirm the truth of this interpretation and I build on their

own previous attempts to demonstrate the richness and importance of Bosanquet's

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[7]There is a discussion of the views of Bosanquet and Hobhouse on the State in
Meadowcroft's *Conceptualizing the State* (1995). His discussion is found in Chapter
III entitled "Bernard Bosanquet, Leonard Hobhouse and the State" (Meadowcroft,
1995: 113-166). I did not find his analysis very helpful. He offers a general survey
of the two thinkers from a historical point of view, and he does not proceed to a
thorough inquiry into the nature of their perspectives.

philosophy. Yet my analysis elucidates a new perspective of looking at, and assessing, the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy. I use the conclusions I reached and the ideas I developed in the previous chapters in order to demonstrate why Hobhouse did not get the point. I employ my analysis of Bosanquet's metaphysics, which is epitomised in the doctrines of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite, to address Hobhouse's criticisms concerning the meaning, content, and use of the philosophical foundations of Bosanquet's project. In particular, I claim that Hobhouse both misunderstood and misrepresented Bosanquet's views concerning the State, Society, the Individual, institutions as ethical ideas and the real self because he did not understand the philosophical assumptions which are found beneath the theorisation of these concepts. The philosophical assumptions beneath these concepts refer to a rich metaphysical content that should be understood in the context of coherence, systematicity and unity that characterise Bosanquet's philosophical project. It is of utmost importance to understand what Bosanquet says in the context of his own system of theorisation that refers to a specific framework of conceptual semantics. I now turn to a more detailed analysis of my methodology and my objectives.

Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* attacks the political philosophy of Hegel and of "his most modern and most faithful exponent, Dr. Bosanquet" (Hobhouse, 1918: 18). Hobhouse refers frequently to both Hegel and Bosanquet in his endeavour to articulate a comprehensive indictment against the fundamental principles of Philosophical Idealism in its Hegelian version. My analysis

focuses only on Hobhouse's discussion of Bosanquet's views that can be found either separately or in relation to the critique of Hegel's philosophy. I need to state from the outset that this is a difficult task because Hobhouse examines neither systematically nor comprehensively the theories of the two philosophers. In my view, *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* offers only a defective outline of some aspects of Philosophical Idealism expressed in Hegel's and Bosanquet's philosophies. I do not think that *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* provides us with a reliable critical assessment and with a successful "deconstruction" of Absolute Idealism as Hobhouse thought that he did. Hobhouse understands both Hegel and Bosanquet as asserting an identical line of theorisation in two senses: (a) they defend the same views; and (b) they complement each other. However, his analysis gives us enough evidence to assert that "Dr. Bosanquet" holds a prominent place in the entire critique and that the term "metaphysical theory" alludes to an interpretation of Bosanquet's "philosophical theory" of the State.

My purpose in this chapter is not to offer: (a) a review of Hobhouse's presentation of Hegel's philosophy; and (b) a review of Hobhouse's understanding of Bosanquet's philosophical discourse in its relation to Hegel. This methodology would probably offer a more comprehensive account of the topic, yet an endeavour of this scale is beyond the scope of the thesis. In this chapter I will concentrate on Hobhouse's presentation and interpretation of Bosanquet's political philosophy found, especially, in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. My analysis will be assisted by frequent references to Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures, *The Principle of Individuality*

and Value and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*. Three reasons justify this strategy. First, Hobhouse refers to Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures in order to clarify his points (Hobhouse, 1918: 19; 54-55; 69-70; 82; 150-153). Second, it is the aim of my analysis to show that, at crucial points, Hobhouse misinterpreted and misrepresented Bosanquet's doctrines which were developed both in the Gifford Lectures and in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. And, third, I believe that an inquiry into Bosanquet's political philosophy expounded in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* will become more comprehensive and completer if the insights elaborated in his metaphysical treatise are systematically taken into account.

I claim that Hobhouse's attack on *The Philosophical Theory of the State* is based on: (a) an erroneous interpretation of Bosanquet's fundamental concepts; (b) a misrepresentation of Bosanquet's views and on, sometimes, fictitious claims; and (c) a problematic and suspect overall pattern of reasoning. In my view, Hobhouse, in his attempt to "deconstruct" Bosanquet's political philosophy, adopted a threefold strategy. First, he dislocated ideas from their textual and contextual frameworks, he used them independently of their context(s) and thus he "proved" their problematic character. In other words, he destroyed the coherence of Bosanquet's notional schemes, he separated the ideas from their semantical matrixes and, finally, he attempted a "reconstruction" of Bosanquet's project according to his own interpretation of the system. Second, Hobhouse proceeded to a "critical assessment" of Bosanquet's views without stating clearly, at each point, that this was his own understanding of the content and the systematic relations of the ideas under

consideration. And, finally, he constructed a meta-narrative of notional clusters found in Hegel's and Bosanquet's writings which he identified with the theories of the philosophers.

In this chapter, I aim at defending Bosanquet against Hobhouse's false accusations. I also aim at offering a reassessment of Bosanquet's theory in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* based on a close textual investigation and on his metaphysical views from the Gifford Lectures. I argue that Hobhouse's analysis is premissed: (a) on a fundamental misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of Bosanquet's thoughts; and (b) on an erroneous apprehension of the nature, content and meaning of the central concepts of Bosanquet's logic and metaphysics. These concepts are also found in the philosophical discourse of Philosophical Idealism. Hobhouse's failure to ascertain the real nature, meaning and function of these concepts in the logic of Bosanquet's philosophical project created another problem in his analysis. Hobhouse's first misunderstanding led to another one. He failed to discern the nature of the State, society and the individual in Bosanquet's project and thus he erroneously claimed that for Bosanquet the State is an end in itself. To sum up, Hobhouse failed to apprehend the constitutive elements of Bosanquet's philosophical project in their proportion, coherence, unity, systematicity and logical interdependence. In my view, Hobhouse's critique can be addressed from two fronts. The first front refers to the standpoint of a close textual investigation which aims at discerning what Bosanquet really wrote and at clarifying the meaning of his notions in the logic of his philosophical system. The second front

refers to an explanatory perspective that is structured around the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite infinite.

3. Chapter Outline

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is entitled "Hobhouse's Conception of a 'Metaphysical Theory' and Bosanquet's Philosophical Theory of the State." In this section I argue against Hobhouse's account of Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State. I demonstrate that Hobhouse develops an erroneous account of Bosanquet's political philosophy for seven main reasons. First, he fails to discern the meaning and use of logic and metaphysics in Bosanquet's entire philosophical project. Second, he fails to understand what a "philosophical theory" is and thus proves that he did not pay enough attention to the first chapter of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* where Bosanquet explains thoroughly his standpoint. Third, Hobhouse does not follow Bosanquet's definition of the State, which is a definition wider than what Hobhouse understands by the term "State." Fourth, he fails to see that Bosanquet refers to the idea of the State *qua* State and thus his theory does not justify any actual (existing) order of things as perfect in its actuality. Fifth, he fails to understand that in Bosanquet's philosophy the "real" is not identified with the "actual." Hobhouse does not differentiate between the "actual" and the "real" and as a result infers that the "actual" is for Bosanquet the "real." Sixth, he fails to recognise the theory of the social being of the self that substantiates the political life of man and the philosophical theory of the State. And, finally, he fails to

discern the differentiation between the social dimension of being (objective mind; institutions as ethical ideas) and the ultra-social dimension of human experience (art, philosophy and religion).

The second section of this chapter is entitled "The Concept of the State and the End of the State in Bosanquet's Philosophical Theory of the State." This section is further divided in two sub-sections. The first sub-section is devoted to the topic "The Idea of the Absolute and Bosanquet's Concept of the State." In this sub-section I argue that the State, in Bosanquet's philosophy, cannot be identified with, or cannot be seen as a model of the Absolute in human affairs (as Hobhouse asserts) because the Absolute, in Bosanquet's philosophy, has features that the State, in Bosanquet's philosophy, does not have. I demonstrate my thesis by embarking on an extensive textual investigation. My analysis consists in four interrelated steps. In the second sub-section of the second section of this chapter, I discuss "The End of the State." This sub-section is further divided in three parts. In the first part, which is entitled "Hobhouse's Version of Bosanquet's Argument," I examine how Hobhouse presents Bosanquet's argument concerning the end of the State and I show which are the points that he failed to grasp. The second part is entitled "The Relation Between the State and the Individual." I argue that Hobhouse erroneously builds his critique of Bosanquet on the assumption that there is, first, an opposition between the individual and the State - an opposition that Bosanquet finally "resolves" because, in his theory, he subordinates the individual to the State. Hobhouse fails to apprehend properly the nature of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite in Bosanquet's

theory of individuality. The third part is entitled "Means, Ends, and the Best Life."

I argue against Hobhouse's view that, for Bosanquet, the State is an end in itself. I

draw on Bosanquet's own words in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* and I

demonstrate that Bosanquet states clearly that the end of the State, of society and of

the individual is the realisation of the best life.

1. HOBHOUSE'S CONCEPTION OF A "METAPHYSICAL THEORY" AND BOSANQUET'S PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY OF THE STATE

1a. Introductory Remarks

Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* is a critique of Hegel's

political philosophy and, especially, of Bosanquet's *The Philosophical Theory of the*

State. Not only does the title itself sound like a reply to Bosanquet's book, but the

main argument that underlies Hobhouse's critique is that Bosanquet's philosophical

theory of the State is, in fact, a metaphysical theory which is based on the

metaphysical method - the method of idealism. The metaphysical method is the

opposite of the "true social method" which, for Hobhouse, is the method that social

science should adopt and, also, the method which guides "the democratic or the

humanitarian view" of theorising the State in contrast to "the metaphysical view."

Hobhouse epitomises the gist of each view in the Conclusion of *The Metaphysical*

Theory of the State. It is interesting to note the way in which he manipulates the terminology in order to make his point more powerful. Hobhouse does not contrast the "metaphysical" view of the State with the "anti-metaphysical" view or with a theoretical perspective that is appropriate for social science. The "metaphysical" view contrasts with the "democratic or humanitarian" view: Hobhouse's usage of the words implies that the "metaphysical" view is both undemocratic (and as a consequence, illiberal and conservative) and anti-humanitarian. Hobhouse writes:

> In the democratic or humanitarian view it [the state] is a means. In the metaphysical view it is an end. In the democratic view it is the servant of humanity in the double sense that it is to be judged by what it does for the lives of its members and by the part that it plays in the society of humankind. In the metaphysical view it is itself the sole guardian of moral worth. In the democratic view the sovereign state is already doomed, destined to subordination in a community of the world. In the metaphysical view it is the supreme achievement of human organization. For the truth let the present condition of Europe be witness" (Hobhouse, 1918: 137).

Hobhouse does not explain how and why the proper method of investigating the social facts and the structure of political organisation - a way of theorising that asserts the "is" - develops into a discourse that affirms specific qualities of ethico-normative

character which describe, one can retort, the "ought to be" or the "ideal." He also does not take into account the possibility of the erosion of democracy that views which subordinate the sovereignty of the State to a vague "community of the world" might express. The culmination of Hobhouse's analysis seems to confuse the "is" with what "ought to be": a confusion which, according to one of his previous statements, characterises the discourse of Idealism. Idealism, in his words, is "a form of social theory" that repudiates in principle the foundation of true social method:

> The foundation ... of true social method is to hold the ideal and the
> actual distinct and use our knowledge of the one as a means to
> realizing the other. We may pursue the two investigations, if we will,
> side by side, for we have seen how very closely they are interwoven.
> But every question that we ask and every statement that we make
> ought to be quite clearly a statement as to fact or an assertion of what
> ought to be, and never a hybrid of the two (Hobhouse, 1918: 16-17).

From this front, the front of "true social method," Hobhouse launches his attack on "the metaphysical theory of the state" of Hegelianism. The attack is substantiated through a complex of particular accusations which are based on a misinterpretation of the conceptual scheme of Philosophical Idealism. The aims of his attack are three: (a) to affirm the Absolute as both the background and the operative spirit of Bosanquet's political philosophy; (b) to suggest that the State seems to the actuality

of the Absolute in human affairs; and (c) in the general assessment of Hegelianism, to identify implicitly the State with the idea of God.[8]

Hobhouse's attack is based on the premise that metaphysics is a form of theorising, or a method of inquiry, that is inadequate and highly problematic for the discipline of politics. More specifically, metaphysics seems to be harmful when it comes to the discourse on the State. The metaphysical theory of the State, Hobhouse asserts, is a specific kind of social and political theorisation: a method of theorising on politics which is not true to the facts. It is a method which is not true to the facts because it is deductive in its nature and dogmatic in its application: it proceeds to the analysis of a specific topic reasoning from "general truths" about reality. These general truths about reality are, however, assumptions of the metaphysical thinker who has a mission: his mission is to persuade us that the ideal, the good, and the perfect are found in the existing order of things despite evidence to the contrary:[9]

This, then, is the metaphysical theory of the state. It is the endeavour

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[8]"The best and the worst things that men do they do in the name of a religion. Some have supposed that only supernatural religion could mislead. The history of our time shows that if men no longer believe in God they will make themselves gods of Power, of Evolution, of the Race, the Nation, or the State" (Hobhouse, 1918: 134). Russell in his "The State God" [1918] - a review, among other books, of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* - will follow the same line stressing the point further: "... in philosophy, 'idealism' is associated with all that is reactionary, and in particular with sophistries designed to bolster up traditional forms of violence and injustice" (Russell, 1995: 435)

[9]In Russell's words: "... all is well with the world in spite of its apparent evils" (Russell, 1995: 435).

to exhibit the fabric of society in a light in which we shall see it, in or through its actual condition, as the incarnation of something very great and glorious indeed, as one expression of that supreme being which some of these thinkers call the Spirit and others the Absolute. There is no question here of realizing an ideal by human effort. We are already living in the ideal. It does not much matter whether we are rich or poor, healthy or enfeebled, personally aware of happiness or misery; nay, it does not seem to matter very much whether we are just or unjust, virtuous or depraved, for we all are integral parts in something much wider and nobler than the individual life, something to which mere human good and evil, happiness or misery, are small matters, mere constituent elements that, whatever they may be for each one of us, play their part right well in the magnificent whole (Hobhouse, 1918: 18).

Hence metaphysics gives the metaphysician, who is disguised as a political philosopher, licence to invoke the power of an embodied Absolute, to let it operate as an almighty entity, and finally to annihilate the individual. Metaphysics provides political science with a dangerous gloss of moralisation and with a superficial aura of ethical thinking according to which, ideals are transformed into principles that describe the actual situation and justify the established order of things. Metaphysics is a strange and unclear mixture of what "is" with what "ought to be" which

culminates in the assertion that what "is" is exactly what "ought to be": the "real"[10] is the rational and the good ultimately expressed despite imperfections and injustices. The imperfect, the unjust, and the evil are transformed into perfection, justice and goodness because the metaphysician defines them as such. This is, in brief, Hobhouse's understanding of Bosanquet's philosophical perspective. Is this, however, a true and honest representation of Bosanquet's view? I argue that what Hobhouse asserts has nothing to do with Bosanquet's understanding of metaphysics and with his concept of the philosophical theory. In what follows, I will explain what is Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State, what is its relation to his metaphysics, and how the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite can provide us with an explanation of the social being of the individual in the context of ethical life that the State represents.

1b. Some Thoughts on Metaphysics

Metaphysics is the study of ultimate reality, or it is an inquiry into the ultimate reality. Metaphysics "attempts to tell the ultimate truth about the World" (Van Inwagen, 1993: 4). In particular, it is the study that aims to give answers to the following interrelated questions. First, "what are the most general features of the

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[10]Hobhouse discerns no difference between the "real" and the "actual." For him, the "real" is the "real" of the everyday language which, in turn, is the "actual" of the Idealist philosophers. Nicholson, in discussing Hobhouse's conception of Bosanquet's idea of the Real Will, identifies the problem: the dispute "between Hobhouse and Bosanquet stems in part from their different usages of the word 'real'" (Nicholson, 1990: 206)

World, and what sorts of things does it contain? What is the World *like*?" Second,

"why does a World exist?" Third, "what is *our* place in the world?" (Van Inwagen,

1993: 4). This is a general and widely accepted definition of metaphysics. For

Aristotle, metaphysics is understood as a universal science. According to him,

metaphysics is not only the investigation of first causes, it is the discipline that studies

being *qua* being (Loux, 1998: 3-4). In Bosanquet's case, metaphysics is not only an

inquiry into the ultimate reality. Metaphysics has a more specific orientation which

is related, yet not identified with logic. Metaphysics is an investigation that aims to

ascertain how far finite minds, which for logic sustain the universe, can be said to

sustain the universe. Metaphysics shows "that finite minds which for Logic sustain

the universe, are ultimately organs moulded by it and through which it sustains itself"

(Bosanquet, 1911 / II: 316). There is a subtle, yet fundamental interdependence

between the finite mind and the universe. In answering the question, "how far *we*, we

as finite fragmentary minds, can be said really to sustain the universe[?]," we are

driven "a little nearer to metaphysic." The answer is, Bosanquet says,

> that we sustain the universe not only for ourselves, in the sense that
>
> it is through our own experience, and under its limitations, that we
>
> have to play our part in it, but in the more metaphysical sense that
>
> supposing a given mind and its states not to be, the universe would
>
> actually be the poorer, however inappreciably, by certain elements of
>
> its self-revelation peculiar to the experience of that finite mind

(Bosanquet, 1911 / II: 316).

For Bosanquet, metaphysics is an ontological investigation aiming at ascertaining the nature of being and consciousness as substantiated in the finite-infinite nature of the self within the context of relations, and the logic of social dynamics. In Bosanquet's view, ontology is not an inquiry into a pure being. He explicitly states that being cannot being conceived apart from a consciousness which, in his *Logic*, is defined as "a single persistent judgment" (Bosanquet, 1911 / I: 4; 21). Consciousness signifies and systematises the living experience of mind into a coherent whole which is re-adjusted and restructured every single moment. The expansive power of mind enables the self to construct itself out of itself: the self's restructuring dynamics both affects, and it is affected, by the complex network of spiritual relations that constitutes the content of the concrete universal that is the world of a particular finite human individual. Bosanquet elaborates the notion of the concrete universal in Lecture II of *The Principle of Individuality and Value*. I think that Bosanquet theorises the concrete universal from two perspectives which, to my view, are not mutually exclusive. The first perspective refers to the embodiment of the concrete universal in the Individual which is "one in idea with the true infinite" (Bosanquet, 1912: 72). I do not deal with it. This refers, I think, to the concrete universal as content of the Absolute. The second perspective refers to the concrete universal in its particular individual forms expressed in the finite-infinite being of the particular human individuals. In this sense, the concrete universal is a descriptive term for the content

of our individuality. In *The Essentials of Logic*, Bosanquet identifies the concrete

universal with the individual universal (Bosanquet, 1920b: 118). Bosanquet also uses

for the concrete universal the term "logical universal": "the true embodiment of the

logical universal takes the shape of a world whose members are worlds" (Bosanquet,

1912: 37). Bosanquet differentiate the concrete, or logical, universal from the

abstract universal which is the universal in the form of a class. The abstract universal

does not refer "to diversity of content within every member" and thus it cannot give

a description of "a macrocosm constituted by microcosms" which "is the type of the

concrete universal" (Bosanquet, 1912: 38). The concrete universal, viewed from the

standpoint of the finite-infinite self, is a world inside the boundaries of the self as we

live and experience it: it is "a macrocosm constituted by microcosms" which reflect

the diversity of content within every member (Bosanquet, 1912: 38).[11] The logical,

or the concrete, universal is different from the abstract universal   My view of the

second sense of the concrete universal as an idea that describes the distinct content

and the potentials for development of each particular individual is asserted by

Bosanquet's own words in his concluding remarks:

The object of the present lecture has been to remove from various

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[11]An informative account of the concrete universal has been given by Ross: "The concrete universal is any individual or whole that contains or approximates the basic character of Reality; it is an existent that holds together in some kind of unity the diversities and tensions of its elements. In British Idealism, the concrete universal is perhaps best thought of as a system whose parts are so bound together logically that each of them is entirely dependent on the others and on the system" (Ross, 1963: xiv).

points of view the prejudice which sees in the individual not a positive

cosmos, with its own logic and organisation, expressive, in spite of its

immediate unity, of a determinate being, but an empty and exclusive

point, whose spontaneity and purposiveness mean an initiative that

draws upon no positive source, and focusses in itself no positive

striving of the universe (Bosanquet: 1912: 80-81).

I now discuss briefly Milne's conception of the concrete universal. I agree

with Milne that the notion "of the concrete universal is complex and cannot be neatly

summed up in a few sentences or even paragraphs" (Milne, 1962: 15). I do not

agree, however, with his interpretation of the concrete universal in Bosanquet's

philosophy. I understand his intention: Milne wants to "rescue" the concrete

universal from any relation to the Absolute. The Absolute is both a difficult and a

problematic concept, the concrete universal is pregnant with meaning and its

significance can be better proved if we manage to extricate it from the Absolute. I

think that his view of the concrete universal as "an individual achievement of

rationality" (Milne, 1962: 259) does not capture the richness of the concrete universal

in its entirety. To me, Milne's view refers to the concrete universal as a feature of the

individual. In my view, the concrete universal is the ceaselessly restructuring and

expanding content of the self that is premissed on the finite-infinite nature of being.

The concrete universal refers to the spiritual content of the individual self as

constituting a "world," namely as returning to "the full depth and roundness of

experience" (Bosanquet, 1912: 55-56) through its impulse towards the whole. The concrete universal, from the standpoint of the individual, is the "world" of the finite-infinite being - a macrocosm of microcosms including the organising principle that provides the structure and content of this world with coherence and unity. In other words, the "whole story" of the concrete universal in its individuation revolves around "the logical spirit":

> The logical spirit, the tendency of parts to self-transcendence and absorption in wholes, is the birth-impulse of initiative, as it is the life-blood of stable existence (Bosanquet, 1912: 24).

In his essay "The Philosophical Importance of a True Theory of Identity," Bosanquet asserts that an individual human being, as an identity that means "a meeting-point of differences, or synthesis of differences," is a concrete universal (Bosanquet, 1899c: 165; 171). The substantiation of the concrete universal is possible because of the human individual's sociality and spirituality. The self as a moral self, namely the self as a social being, consists in a system of universals, or identities including difference. This system of universals, Bosanquet continues, means "the consciousness of certain relations, which, as identities in difference" unite the self with family, friends and fellow-citizens (Bosanquet, 1899c: 172). We have seen, in the analysis of religious consciousness, that because of our sociality and spirituality, we are able to affirm the spiritual world of value within the self. The affirmation of infinity, the affirmation of

truth, beauty and goodness, refers to a state of being that a particular finite mind can attain as it expands and reaches deeper levels of self-realisation at the social and meta-social spheres of human realisation. The affirmation of infinity is a process that refers to the soul's spiritual journey being structured by the teleological dynamics of consciousness. This spiritual journey aims at enabling the finite-infinite being to conquer greater and deeper degrees of reality through its self-transcendence that means both self-maintenance and continuous self-perfection.

To recapitulate. Bosanquet's metaphysical views refer to a way of theorising the self in the world which has nothing to do with the ideologically dangerous justification of an established order of things as the embodiment of goodness, perfection and truth. We saw that Bosanquet's views on metaphysics and logic show a remarkable degree of interdependence. We saw, for instance, that his ontological theory is premissed on a principle that derives from his logical theory. I do not wish to discuss this subject further for it refers to issues of systematicity and structural organisation of Bosanquet's philosophical project which is not the topic of my research. The point I want to emphasise, however, is that Bosanquet had a rich and complex view of metaphysics which was neither adequately described nor critically assessed by Hobhouse. The richness of Bosanquet's philosophical project and the complexity of its structure require theoretical receptivity and intellectual patience on the part of the critic. To achieve an insightful reading of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, one must be able to see the systematicity, interdependence and logical connections of the fundamental analytical categories of the discourse. The real will,

for instance, relates to the real self which is a development of the actual self. The actual will is a less-developed version of the real will: "the two wills are not separate" (Nicholson, 1990: 205-206). The realisation of the real self is premissed on the sociality and spirituality of the human individual who, in its fundamental structure, is a finite-infinite being. The ability to grasp principles and to organise one's life accordingly depends on the self-formative dynamics of culture and education and on the development of the capacities of mind. The quest for perfection characterises the nature of being as both social and spiritual and it is meaningfully asserted in the context of institutions as ethical ideas, the function of which is to sustain and promote the development of character and the development of the social whole. I now turn to a further elaboration of what Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State is. My main aim is to show that Bosanquet offers exactly what he says in the title of his treatise and to prove that to understand it we must first clarify how he apprehends philosophy.

1c. What the Philosophical Theory of the State Is

I do not claim that Bosanquet's political philosophy *derives* from his metaphysics.[12] I claim that some aspects of his political philosophy can be better

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[12]A similar point is made by Gaus who analyses the views of Green and Bosanquet in the light of the philosophy of coherence. Gaus's main claim is that "the epistemological project leads to the metaphysical": the discussion of this issue is beyond the scope of the thesis. I wish to mention, however, his attitude to the issue of "derivation" and to the way in which we should understand the connection of doctrines. He writes: "... do their moral and political philosophies [the philosophies of the British Idealists] derive from their metaphysics? My answer should not be

understood if one takes into account Bosanquet's metaphysics, or if one is aware of

the interdependencies and the systematic structure that characterise his philosophical

project.[13] *The Philosophical Theory of the State* presupposes a set of metaphysical

assumptions concerning the ontological formation of the self and the underlying

meaning of the social institutions which has been described as "social ontology."[14]

Yet a "philosophical theory" is broader in perspective than a "metaphysical theory":

Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State is not limited to the metaphysical

aspects of the discourse. Bosanquet's own use of the term "philosophical" clearly

suggests a perspective more inclusive and more comprehensive than a metaphysical

point of view. Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State is what he claims it to

be: philosophical. Bosanquet clearly defines his perspective, as we will see at the end

of this section, and we must respect it. The philosophical treatment of a subject is

broader and completer than its mere metaphysical treatment. Metaphysics is one of

the branches of philosophy. A philosophical analysis can incorporate and use

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surprising: talk of 'derivation' is misleading. Their accounts of the self, moral perfection, the common good, general will and the State are all applications of the ideal of coherence. This is not to say they are unrelated to the other elements of their philosophy; the analysis of reason, knowledge and reality lends plausibility to, and helps justify, their moral and political doctrines. In true coherentist fashion, the various doctrines are mutually reinforcing and justifying" (Gaus, 1994: 414).

[13]"Bosanquet's political philosophy is not to be regarded as an isolated part of his philosophy in general. Its position can perhaps be described best by saying that it is the focal point to which his fundamental philosophical ideas have been brought" (Pfannenstill, 1936: iii).

[14]I borrow the term "social ontology" from Sweet's analysis. The term "social ontology" refers to a "metaphysical theory of the nature of social reality" (Sweet, 1997b: 2).

constructively insights from logic, epistemology, ethics, metaphysics and aesthetics. In the discourse of Philosophical Idealism this formal classification of the areas of philosophical inquiry does not mean that the branches of philosophy stand in isolation as separate worlds. On the contrary, there is a vital structural and conceptual interdependence between them. As happens in the coherence theory of truth, the theory of truth expounded by the Idealists in logic, everything is related to everything else.[15] Bosanquet's philosophical project testifies to this view. For Bosanquet, philosophy is an inquiry into the nature of reality as experienced and felt by finite consciousness. Philosophy attempts to discern the "informing life and spirit" of "the theoretical structure" (Bosanquet, 1912: 2) and to attain a coherent view of value, reality and coherence.[16] Philosophy enables one to develop an insight that goes beyond the immediacy of the facts and to discern the nature of a thing - to reveal what a thing really is: "Philosophy is the formal embodiment of the 'penetrative imagination'; it deals with the significance of things; and transforms them, but only by intensified illumination" (Bosanquet, 1912: 12-13). To me, a very important point in Bosanquet's views on philosophy is that the essence of philosophy is to enable us to apprehend reality and to enter into a more comprehensive understanding of the nature

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[15]Gaus and Sweet note: "A principal feature of idealism was its emphasis on unity and coherence. For Bosanquet, as for Green, philosophy in its various guises has completion and harmony as its goals: epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, and political philosophy all reflect the search for coherence and comprehensiveness" (Gaus and Sweet, 2001: xxi-xxii).

[16]Pfannenstill argues that, for Bosanquet, the task of philosophy is to find the unity. Philosophy tries to comprehend the object in its entirety (Pfannenstill, 1936: 25).

of things. He elaborates:

> Everywhere to possess reality is an arduous task; stability and solidity
> are not in the beginning, but, if anywhere, only in proportion as we
> enter upon the larger vistas of things (Bosanquet, 1912: 7).

The achievement of this goal is not strictly confined to the formal study of philosophy. On the contrary, it is an attitude of mind which is developed both through the soul-making process of the human individual and through, of course, culture and education which provide the soul-making process with a definite purpose. To possess reality and to enter upon the larger vistas of things, we need to cultivate what Bosanquet calls "the real philosophic spirit." Bosanquet explains what "the real philosophic spirit" is in the last paragraph of *The Essentials of Logic*:

> Determine always to know the truth; welcome all information and all
> suggestion, but remember that truth is always systematic, and that
> every judgment, when you scrutinise it, demands a fuller and fuller
> connection with the structure of life. It is not cleverness or learning
> that makes the philosopher; it is a certain spirit; openness of mind,
> thoroughness of work, and hatred of superficiality. Each of us,
> whatever his opportunities, can become in a true sense, if he has the
> real philosophic spirit, in Plato's magnificent words, "The spectator of

all time and of all existence" (Bosanquet, 1920b: 167).

I now discuss Bosanquet's conception of the philosophical theory of the State. Bosanquet conceives the philosophical theory of the State as an inquiry into the idea of the State. He theorises the idea of the State as articulated in the experience that this idea represents to mind. For Bosanquet, the State refers to a framework more comprehensive than society: the idea of the State encompasses both society and government and sustains the self-realisation of the individuals through the organisation of life in the context of its institutions. The State is a unity (Bosanquet, 1925: 238). This is a very crucial point that needs to be emphasised from the outset in order to avoid Hobhouse's accusation that underlying "Bosanquet's account, in fact, there is a serious confusion between the state and society" (Hobhouse, 1918: 75-76). I agree with Nicholson who writes:

I do not think that Bosanquet's definitions of "State" and "society" are confused, though one can appreciate that they might seem so to readers who refused to relinquish different definitions. It is noticeable that Bosanquet's critics view "State" precisely in the narrower sense which he repudiates, as simply one part of "society", its government or political organisation. This reverses his definitions by making "society" more inclusive than "State". For Bosanquet, the State is "society" as defined by his critics *plus* "State" as they define it. I do

not accept that he uses "State" ambiguously, as is sometimes alleged.

When Bosanquet discusses "State" action and its limits, for instance,

he is not shifting to another sense, the narrow meaning of

"government", but still means society acting politically, "society

armed" (Nicholson, 1990: 213).[17]

The point that we need to understand is that Bosanquet gives a wide definition

of the State (under different formulations) and he maintains this view throughout his

political philosophy. For him, the State is not only the government or executive with

all its bureaucratic organisation and administration. The State is that broader and

inclusive whole which, in the Hegelian terminology, substantiates the ethical life: it

includes the entire society as a whole.[18] Bosanquet writes:

I use the term "State" in the full sense of what it means as a living

whole, not the mere legal and political fabric, but the complex of lives

and activities, considered as the body of which that is the framework.

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[17]Interesting information about Bosanquet's theorisation of society and the State can be found in an exchange of letters "On 'Society and the State': Bosanquet-MacIver Letters" (Bosanquet, 1999b [1969]: 261-270).

[18]Nicholson asserts that Bosanquet's conception of the State has fundamental characteristics of Hegel's view of the State. These features, that Nicholson takes from Wallace's elucidation of Hegel's view, are: (a) "the State is the society in its entirety and as a whole"; (b) "politics or government (what others call the 'state', and thereby unduly narrow it) is the overall coordination of social life"; and (c) "the State has the purpose of enabling its members to live well" (Nicholson, 1990: 212). See, for instance, Bosanquet, 1925: 141-143; 171-172; 172-173; 174-176; 238; 298-299.

"Society" I take to mean the same body as the State, but *minus* the attribute of exercising what is in the last resort absolute physical compulsion (Bosanquet, 1912: 311, n. 1).

The State must offer opportunities for the development of character and must enable the individual to realise the essence of his/her social being in the context of ethical life. The term "ethical life" needs some clarification to avoid possible misunderstandings. Ethical life reflects a moral dimension: it is the pursuit of the best, or the good, life and the contribution to the common good. Both ideals, the realisation of the best life and the contribution to the common good, characterise the notion of citizenship. Yet this moral dimension derives from, and is substantiated through, the sociality, spirituality and rationality of the human being. The moral dimension, in other words, does not refer to a fixed set of moralistic prescriptions that either tell us how we should live our lives or provide us with ready-made rules of moral conduct. The State as the culmination of ethical life includes three types of experience: the family, the civil society and the state as government - including the dimension of international politics (Hegel, 1991: 199-380). For Hegel, this is the second phase of self-realisation described either as ethical life (in the *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*), or as objective spirit (in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*). For Bosanquet, Hegel's theory has a three-fold function. First, it gives an account of the modern State which is far more complex in its nature and organisation than any ancient form of the State. Second, it completes the account of the political experience

of man that the Greek philosophers (Plato and Aristotle) first discerned and theorised extensively.[19] And finally, it completes the account of the General Will that Rousseau initiated (Bosanquet, 1925: 218-311). What is the essence of the philosophical theory of the State that Bosanquet elaborates and how does he theorise the affirmation of individuality and of the social being of the finite-infinite self in the context of the State? There is a unique, logical and essential connection between the individual and the State for "the State is a name for a special form of self-transcendence, in which individuality strongly anticipates the character of its perfection" (Bosanquet, 1912: 316). Yet self-transcendence, as we will see, is not exhausted in the social framework - the territory of the State. Art, philosophy and religion are characterised by an ultra-social, or a meta-social, dimension. "The State," Bosanquet explains, "is a phase of individuality which belongs to the process towards unity at a point far short of its completion" (Bosanquet, 1912: 312).

1c/i. The State and the Political Life of Man

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[19]"Hegel's analysis of the modern State as Mind Objective" is "a magnified edition, so to speak, of Plato's *Republic*" (Bosanquet, 1925: 237). Bosanquet also writes: "The modern philosophy of the state, as we found it, for example, in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, may best understood by regarding it as the theory of Plato's *Republic* expanded and differentiated in accordance with the deeper individuation and fuller integration of a modern community" (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 207). Bosanquet was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, especially by the work of Plato and Aristotle. I cannot deal with this issue here. For more information about this topic see: Nicholson, 1990; Sweet, 1995; Sweet, 1997b; and Sweet, 1999b The continuity of British philosophy with Greek philosophy is discussed by J. H. Muirhead in *The Platonic Tradition in Anglo-Saxon Philosophy* (1931). For the reception of Plato in Victorian Britain, see Frank M. Turner's *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* (1981).

I clarified that the philosophical theory of the State is by no means limited to the formal study of government. Government and its institutions belong to the systemic and external organisation of the State. The State is a unity beyond it: a unity that includes government, yet has a more comprehensive and substantial nature. As a result, the philosophical theory of the State must inquire into its comprehensive and substantial nature. The philosophical theory of the State is based on a comprehensive perspective of dealing with its subject: it endeavours to capture the unity of the State, to theorise the coherence that underlies the "living whole" that is the essential nature of the State. The philosophical theory focuses on discerning the kind of experience that the institutions as ethical ideas, the institutions that substantiate the essence of the State, represent to mind in the context of an organised and living whole. Bosanquet himself defines the object of his philosophical inquiry as an investigation into the nature of "the political life of man" (Bosanquet, 1925: 2).[20] The political life of man "has a nature of its own, which is worthy of investigation on its own merits and for its own sake" (Bosanquet, 1925: 2). The political life of man is premissed on the spirituality, rationality and social nature of the human being. Bosanquet acknowledges that he asserts a truth concerning the relation between the State and the

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[20]The term "man" refers to the human individual in general, male or female. The use of the term "man" here does not imply that Bosanquet excludes women; it simply has to do with the linguistic conventions of his time. Throughout his writings, there are numerous references to the importance of women as moral, social and political beings, and he himself praised their contribution to the overall progress of society and civilisation. He also supported their full participation in education and in intellectual life. Helen Bosanquet's memoir contains substantial information about this issue (Bosanquet, 1924: 26; 38-39; 40-41).

individual that was expressed for the first time in Greek political philosophy:[21]

> The fundamental idea of Greek political philosophy, as we find it in
> Plato and Aristotle, is that the human mind can only attain its full and
> proper life in a community of minds, or more strictly in a community
> pervaded by a single mind, uttering itself consistently though
> differently in the life and action of every member of the community
> (Bosanquet, 1925: 6).

I wish to note at this point that Hobhouse fails: (a) to recognise the importance of Bosanquet's reflections on the political life of man for the overall system of his political philosophy; and (b) to see the importance of the social whole for the development of the moral, social and political being of the finite-infinite self. Instead of apprehending the dialectic between the individual and his/her environment in the context of the State - the framework that sustains the political life of man - Hobhouse discerns once again the pernicious function of the state in the discourse of "the metaphysical theory." He asserts that "the metaphysical theory" sets up "the state as a greater being, a spirit, a superpersonal entity, in which individuals with their private consciences or claims of right, their happiness or their misery, are merely

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[21]He also writes in an article on the Philosophy of the State: "... Aristotle, like Plato, regarded the good for man as, in its nature, capable of realization only in a community of souls or selves, and did not think of separating the study of the good of the individual from the study of the good of the community" (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 203).

subordinate elements" (Hobhouse, 1918: 27). I now continue my discussion of the political life of man in the context of Bosanquet's political philosophy.

The political life of man needs a foundation or a framework that will enable it to develop and flourish. It presupposes the existence of a social whole. The political life of man presupposes the *polis* of Greek political philosophy, or the State of modern political thought.[22] The political life has two main characteristics. Firstly, the political life of man is not an isolated phenomenon independent of "the general world of life and knowledge" (Bosanquet, 1925: 2). In addition, it relates to the overall content and experience of human life and it affirms at every single moment the ceaseless movement of restructuring activity that spiritually transforms the substance of the finite-infinite self. The political life of man is structured around the processes of self-transcendence, self-perfection and self-realisation that constitute the "dying-to-live" reality of Bosanquet's philosophical discourse. And, secondly, the political life of man should not be regarded as a state of self-realisation that can be adequately analysed and apprehended in terms of the meaningless methodological dichotomy between "the self" and "the others." This distinction between "the self" and "the others," which corresponds to the "individual" and "society" respectively, is expounded by the theories of "the first look." The theories of "the first look" are the theories of J. Bentham, J. S. Mill and H. Spencer who are regarded as the exponents

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[22]Nicholson rightly observes that "Like Hegel, and like all the British Idealists, Bosanquet is not concerned to consider every kind of political organisation, in the comprehensive manner of a political scientist, but concentrates upon the State as it has emerged in modern Europe" (Nicholson, 1990: 212).

of the atomistic individualism (Bosanquet, 1925: 50-75).

The political life of man cannot be adequately described by atomistic individualism which is based on an artificial distinction between "the self" and "the others" and thus it cannot capture and theorise the spiritual reality of shared value, relations, meanings, and interdependencies which characterise the social being of the finite-infinite self.[23] The political life of man refers to a nexus of relations, contents, and restructured states of selfhood that derive from the fact of the human being's social existence and self-maintenance in the world. All these elements in their conscious and unconscious interrelation characterise both the development and self-realisation of the individual in the context of the State being regarded as the framework of ethical life and the most concrete embodiment of the objective mind. In other words, the political life of man includes modes of experience that derive from the social nature of the individual. Sociality, spirituality and rationality, the trans-subjective and intra-subjective relations that characterise the moral being, the elements of interdependence, mutual recognition, interaction, reflexivity and judgment, and a conception of a common good that keeps the community together, all develop and flourish in the comprehensive framework of the State. The political life of man, which is ethico-social in its nature, reflects the individual's endeavour for self-realisation and self-perfection through self-transcendence. In the ethical system, self-transcendence primarily aims at the realisation of the best, or the good, life and at the contribution

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[23]Sweet writes that, for Bosanquet, the individual "is fundamentally a social being; its self-awareness, moral consciousness, and personal development are dependent upon social life and the influence of others" (Sweet, 1995a: 373).

to a common good recognised as valuable by the people who share spiritual membership in a particular social whole.

In *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, Bosanquet regards the political life of man as a state of self-affirmation that occurs mainly at the institutional level of the social organisation. The idea of self-affirmation, however, does not refer to the human being's self-realisation in its atomistic isolation. This is a defective and incomplete idea of the individual which does not take into account the double nature of the individual as a finite-infinite being. In addition, the perspective of atomistic individualism cannot describe properly and in their comprehensiveness the elements of sociality and spirituality that define the substance of the true individuality. The philosophical theory of the State offers a new understanding of the nature of institutions that substantiate the life of the individuals in a social whole. From this perspective, the institutional level of social organisation does not refer to a framework of structural arrangements which is imposed on the life of the autonomous and "independent" individuals and thus restricts their development. If something is restricted, this is the animal aspect of human nature that puts obstacles to the realisation of freedom. In other words, the institutions being considered as ethical ideas do not refer to a system of norms, regulations and structural arrangements that is imposed on the life of the individuals and restricts freedom and self-development. On the contrary, the institutions as ethical ideas are logically and indispensably associated with the concrete experience, life and spirit of the finite-infinite being who is a member of the moral, social and political community. Institutions derive from the

need of mind to articulate its self-consciousness and self-development within a social whole that sustains and promotes the realisation of the true individuality. The philosophical treatment of the State situates mind in a community of minds and reflects on its adjustment, expansion, affirmation, and spiritual restructuring within the context of ethical life and - to an extent - beyond it. Ethical life, or institutions as ethical ideas, refers to a nexus of relations, arrangements and interdependencies, the function of which is to enable the finite-infinite being to affirm the infinite aspect of its ontological constitution and, thus, to attain a deeper level of self-realisation. The attainment of a deeper level of self-realisation signifies the affirmation of a greater degree of reality inside the finite-infinite self. The affirmation of a more comprehensive substantiation of the infinite world, the spiritual world of value, inside the finite-infinite self pushes back the frontiers of finiteness and renders the self more inclusive, more perfect, more real:

> What I am urging is rather that our true personality lies in our
>
> concrete best, and that in desiring its development and satisfaction we
>
> are desiring an increase of our real individuality, though a diminution
>
> of our formal exclusiveness (Bosanquet, 1913: 284)

The philosophical theory of the State is substantiated through a multiplicity of foci and culminates in an impressive synthesis. First, the philosophical theory of the State focuses on the life of the finite-infinite human being which is spiritually self-

restructured and self-constructed within the reality of the institutions as ethical ideas that reflect the organising principles of mind. Second, the philosophical theory of the State focuses on the ideal of the best, or the good, life that is premissed on the idea of the common good. The particular minds, which correspond to the plurality of the finite-infinite beings in the context of the State, strive to substantiate the ideal of the best life. The realisation of the best life is possible because of the elements of spirituality and rationality that characterise the ontological constitution of the finite-infinite self. The attainment of the good life and the contribution to the common good are achievements that give us a better insight into the duties of citizenship and enhance our understanding of "the art of living together." Citizenship is an idea running throughout the context of ethical life from the family and the church to the trades and the neighbourhood (Bosanquet, 1895: 7-8). Third, the philosophical theory of the State understands society not as an aggregate of individuals, but as a unity of individuals who, despite their differences and their distinct personalities, share values and meanings and participate in the spiritual community of minds. Society is sustained by what unites us in the affirmation of the world of values. Society is a unity of individuals who constantly transcend the borders of their apparent exclusivity in order to achieve a more comprehensive communion with infinity. Infinity, as we have already seen, describes the spiritual world of the values of truth, beauty and goodness which is substantiated within the self-transcending finite-infinite being. The double nature of the self sustains the dialectical relationship between the finite and infinite aspects of the nature of being. This dialectical relationship of the contents of

individuality is substantiated within the finite centre and simultaneously restructures and re-affirms the content of the self both at the social and the ultra-social, or meta-social, level of self-realisation. Hobhouse, in his assessment of Bosanquet's philosophy, fails to apprehend the human individual in his/her double nature as a finite-infinite being. Hobhouse's conception of Bosanquet's idea of the individual is not what Bosanquet actually propounds. For Bosanquet, the individual is a finite-infinite being that is realised in both the socio-ethical and purely spiritual areas of human self-realisation. Hobhouse, who does not understand the function of the infinite aspect in the nature of the finite-infinite being, insists upon the hierarchical, one-sided and monolithic relation between the "particular" and the "universal" and fails to discern the dialectical movement that realises the essence of the finite-infinite being. Hobhouse fails to grasp the self-affirming dynamic of self-transcendence and insists upon the annihilating action of the Absolute.

Throughout his Gifford Lectures, Bosanquet makes clear that he theorises the human individual as a finite-infinite being. The double nature of being is, we can say, an absolute or ultimate presupposition in Bosanquet's metaphysics. The infinite aspect of being is affirmed through the process of self-transcendence that characterises the ontological formation of the self. The self-transcending experience of the individual is a dynamic process of attaining a deeper degree of reality. Both the communion of the self with the non-self and the overcoming of limitations of finitude are continuous spiritual processes that describe the ceaseless restructuring of the self within itself. The self reconstructs itself out of itself. Instead of focusing on the

dialectical movement of the self, Hobhouse discerns two units - the particular and the universal - which stand in a fixed, hierarchical and monolithic relationship towards each other. Hobhouse does not analyse the particular and the universal in terms of content: he does not refer to the subtle dimensions of the worlds of content inside both the particular and the universal. Furthermore, he does not grasp the function and importance of microcosms inside a world that can be either a particular or a universal. Here is a sample of his understanding of Bosanquet's metaphysics of the self:

> In the first place, the particular, as such, is unreal. Every particular
> must be a case of the universal, a manifestation of the universal. Thus
> the particular man, as particular, has no real existence. He is only a
> phase in some universal (Hobhouse, 1918: 68).

Hobhouse fails to understand crucial methodological aspects of Bosanquet's philosophy. First, as I have already noted, he does not understand the "real" as it is defined in the discourse of Philosophical Idealism. For him "actual" and "real" are identical terms and as a result what is not "real" is "unreal" and deprived of "real" existence. He does not understand that there are degrees of reality in every real. Second, he understands the "particular" and the "universal" as opposing units which stand in a fixed, strict and anti-dialectical relation towards each other. He fails to recognise that between the particular and the universal there is a dialectical movement of spiritual affirmation and interdependence which proves that his conception of the

particular and the universal is wrong. And, finally, he does not understand the nature of the idea of the whole in Bosanquet's philosophy. I will comment briefly on these issues and, then, I will discuss the terms "ideal" and "real".

I argue that in Bosanquet's philosophy, there is a dialectical relationship between the part and the whole, between the particular and the universal. Bosanquet describes it under different formulations.[24] The occurrence of the dialectical movement happens within the context of the finite-infinite self: it does not refer to the transcendental territory of "some universal" which is unrelated to the actual life and existence of the human individual. Reality is affirmed in the constitution of the finite world - the world of our everyday life and experience. The finite world, however, because it realises within itself the spiritual world of values, contains also the dimension of infinity. Reality is not separated from thought and thought is substantiated within the finite-infinite mind which is the source of judgment. The part may be a part of the whole (otherwise we would not have coherence, dialectic, systematicity, and restructuring movement), but as A. Simhony showed, we do need to understand this relation from the standpoint of idealist relational organicism. The idealist relational organicism is different in kind from the holistic organicism (Simhony, 1991: 515-535).[25] According to Simhony, the relational organism is a

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[24] See, for instance, Bosanquet, 1912: 37-38; 55-56; 66; 68-69; 190; 376-377; 378; 382; and Bosanquet, 1913: 67-68; 85-86; 205; 212; 220; 224-225; 228.

[25] I use in my analysis Simhony's explanatory framework to prove my point which is that in Bosanquet's philosophy we must understand the mutual interdependence between the part and the whole, between the particular and the universal. I do not comment here on her remarks concerning the position of Bosanquet's philosophy

whole in which: (a) the parts are mutually interdependent; (b) the parts and the whole are mutually interdependent; and (c) "mutual interdependence of whole and parts reveals itself in the mutual interdependence of the parts" (Simhony, 1991: 520). To understand the relation between the particular and the universal, we must apprehend that their relation is a non-reductive relation. We have here a non-reductive relation because they are equally constitutive of each other, they enter into each other, and none of them has real existence independent of the other. This describes my view of the particular and the universal in Bosanquet's philosophy. The universal does not possess an independent existence: it is spiritual content related to, revealed in, and realised through the particular. The particular is itself a microcosmic universal not because it is a replica of it, but because of the complexity, differentiations, and content of the trans-subjective and intra-subjective relations which characterise its being. Hobhouse concludes that the particular is a "phase" in "some universal." Two points here. Hobhouse (a) introduces a methodological dichotomy that does not enable one to see the notions in their logical interrelation; and (b) leaves his claim without any further qualification concerning the nature of each one of the units. He does not proceed to any further substantial analysis of the nature of the units - the particular and the universal - because if he did it, he would have faced the problem of

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within: (a) the context of the philosophical discourse of British Idealism; and (b) the context of her analysis. Simhony develops this explanatory framework in order to theorise the kind of relation between the part and the whole in the philosophy of the British Idealists in general. I think that her model has a very important heuristic function and unique explanatory power. I incorporate this model in my own analysis in order make my reply to Hobhouse's critique clearer.

apprehending them in their dialectical and mutual interdependence. To apprehend (a) the particular and the universal ; and (b) the particulars among themselves, in a state of dialectical and mutual interdependence means to comprehend their meaning and to provide the overall structure of this discourse with meaning for the human life. This is something that, for strategic reasons concerning the systematicity of his claim, Hobhouse has to avoid.

To recapitulate. Hobhouse fails to recognise: (a) the dialectic of the phases of being inside the substance of being; and (b) the degrees of reality characterising the spiritual constitution of the finite-infinite being. The source of reality is not exogenous. Reality is not outside thought - outside mind. The spiritual world of values is an immanent feature of the finite-infinite being that needs to be affirmed and realised through the efforts of the human individual to reconstruct himself or herself during the die-to-live process. Hobhouse does not include in his analysis: (a) the mechanism of spiritual transformation that operates throughout consciousness, or mind, at any given moment; (b) the transformative and self-restructuring nature of the finite-infinite being; and (c) the dynamics of the dialectical movement that operates throughout the "microcosms" that constitute a "macrocosm." Hobhouse understands the "real" and the "actual" as identical terms and thus he captures neither the meaning that the "real" has for the Idealists, nor the idea of the degrees of reality. For him, the Idealist philosopher sees the "actual" which for Hobhouse is the "real" as the ultimate embodiment of the "ideal" - that is perfection and goodness. Hobhouse accuses the Idealist philosopher of holding views that derive from the common usage of the terms

"real," and "ideal." However, the Idealist philosopher does not use the words "real" and "ideal" as we use them in everyday life and, furthermore, he uses the term "actual" which describes what Hobhouse means by "real."

1c/ii. The Ideal

Hobhouse means by the term "ideal" the - sometimes - simplistic nature and content of ideas classified as ideals in the sense of aspirations and wishes referring to the betterment of social conditions. In this context, the "ideal" refers to lack of predicament and to the almost naive resolution of problems. In fact, there is nothing wrong with that, especially when it is understood as an aspiration that motivates action and reinforces belief in the betterment and improvement of the human condition and in the perfectability of humankind. Hobhouse makes a very dangerous connection. Hobhouse understands Bosanquet as claiming that this "ideal," the ideal of the best possible society, has in fact already been realised in the existing order of things. For the Idealist, Hobhouse asserts, the "ideal," that common sense understands as something good, yet as something that "has never been realized and perhaps may never be realized" (Hobhouse, 1918: 14-15), is "real": what Hobhouse sees as "real" here is the "actual" of the Idealist. But, because Hobhouse does not recognise the differentiation between the "real" and the "actual" in the discourse of Philosophical Idealism, he identifies the "real" with the "actual" and, as a result, things become confusing. Hence, Hobhouse continues, despite evil and injustice, the Idealist thinks that what we have (in its actual form) at any given moment is identical to the "ideal"

meaning the best possible: "There is no question here of realizing an ideal by human effort. We are already living in the ideal" (Hobhouse, 1918: 18). The immediate implication of this view is that Bosanquet justifies the existing order of things and any establishment as perfect, good, and "ideal" - meaning ultimately best. There is no need for change and reform because what "is" means for the Idealist what "ought to be."[26] This suggests that because we have reached what "ought to be" there is no need to change the established order of things. Thus Hobhouse accuses Hegelianism of "bed-rock conservatism": "its bed-rock conservatism is proof against all criticisms of the existing order" (Hobhouse, 1918: 24). I think that this statement applies equally to Hegel and Bosanquet for it belongs to the concluding remarks of the first chapter of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State*, where Hobhouse discusses both philosophers and, especially, "Dr. Bosanquet" as Hegel's "most modern and most faithful exponent" (Hobhouse, 1918: 18).[27] What is the "ideal" for Bosanquet? He

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[26]For a discussion and analysis of how seriously Bosanquet takes the need for change and reform, see Nicholson, 1990: 218-221.

[27]Nicholson and Sweet have forcefully argued against the attribution of conservatism to Bosanquet. For detailed analyses see Nicholson, 1976: 76-83; Nicholson, 1990: 198-230; Sweet, 1996: 403-408; Sweet, 1997; Sweet, 1999b: xi-xxxvii; and Sweet, 1999c: 99-114. See also, Vincent and Plant, 1984; Carter, 1999: 674-694; and Armour, 2000: 18-45. The standard view of Bosanquet's conservatism is repeated in Morrow, 1984: 91-108. Gaus, in *The Modern Liberal Theory of Man* (1983) develops the thesis that"the liberalisms of J. S. Mill, T. H. Green, L. T. Hobhouse, John Dewey, John Rawls and Bernard Bosanquet" attempt to combine and reconcile individuality and sociability (Gaus, 1983: 2). Helen Bosanquet writes that "for from the days of T. H. Green's influence he was always an advanced Liberal, with a strong sympathy for Labour aspirations, and at election times was one of the leaders of a hopeless attack upon the Conservative forces of the district" (Bosanquet, 1924: 97-98).

writes:

> The great enemy of all sane idealism is the notion that the ideal
> belongs to the future. The ideal is what we can see in the light of the
> whole, and the way in which it shapes the future for us is only an
> incident - and never the most important incident - of our reading of
> past, present, and future in their unity (Bosanquet, 1912: 136).

For Bosanquet, the word "ideal" is not a descriptive term for a set of conditions promising an almost utopian betterment of human life. Furthermore the "ideal" does not refer to a state of social organisation where problems are resolved and overall happiness has been restored, so that there are no worries and struggle. The "ideal" refers to the capacity of the moral and thinking agent to "see", to develop an insight into, the nature of things in their manifestation and interrelation within the context of a more inclusive reality. The ability to discern the ideal is the ability of "the true philosophic spirit" to ascertain the connections in the structure of life (Bosanquet, 1920b: 167). The ideal describes not an immediate perception, but an insightful judgment about reality that relates to consciousness and to the ability of mind to affirm a larger, a more comprehensive picture of reality. Yet, in discussing Bosanquet's "ideal," Hobhouse follows a completely different direction. Although he purports to "deconstruct" the metaphysical theory, he does not seem to understand the notions in the light of their metaphysical articulation.

As mentioned before, Hobhouse advances a dangerous and misleading claim. The claim is that Bosanquet portrays in his theory an existing order of things (under the term State) that represents the "ideal" society. "Ideal" refers here to its common usage. This claim plays a strategic role in Hobhouse's overall argument. If this is true, if Bosanquet thinks that his theory gives an account of the ideal society found in the existing order of things, then he shows lack of sensitivity and insight. This line of interpretation suggests that, despite the problems we face in our lives (problems such as war, injustice, poverty, exploitation, suffering, scarcity of resources), the existing order of things is in itself the "ideal": we have the best we can possibly have. The existing State is the "ideal" State: what is now is what ought to be. The existing states, even bad states, are true embodiments of the ideal.

Hobhouse does not take into account the fact that Bosanquet usually qualifies the idea of the State, by insisting on the phrase "the State *qua* State." What does it mean? It means the State when it is true to its nature as a State. The State is true to its nature as State, namely, it is true to its idea, when it provides the conditions for the realisation of the good life. Obviously, we have here the idea of the State and not the "ideal" State that can correspond to a State that does not exhibit the features that are characteristics of a State.

The philosophical theory of the State is thus an inquiry into the idea of the State: an inquiry into the essence of the concept of the State. To apprehend the idea of the State means to embark on an inquiry into the nature of the State in order to conceptualise the essence of the idea of the State. Bosanquet, in his theorising of the

State, focuses on the self-realisation and moral development of the individual as citizen. He also analyses the function of the State in the context of ethical life. Ethical life reflects the complex organisation of human capabilities and potentialities within the institutional framework that systematises social experience. The systematisation of social experience, in this context, provides life with a new dimension. This new dimension of life refers to the spiritual overcoming of finiteness. The spiritual overcoming of finiteness signifies the transcendence of particularity and exclusivity and the opening up of a pathway that refers to more complex structural arrangements deriving from the fact of living together. All these issues relate to the idea of the State. Bosanquet identifies clearly the level of his discourse on the State. He will not deal with the plurality of the empirical cases. He will focus on the fundamental principles that underlie political life. Bosanquet both clarifies and justifies his standpoint in the Preface of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*:

The present work is an attempt to express what I take to be the fundamental ideas of a true social philosophy. I have criticised and interpreted the doctrines of certain well-known thinkers only with the view of setting these ideas in the clearest light. This is the whole purpose of the book; and I have intentionally abstained from practical applications, except by way of illustration. It is my conviction, indeed, that a better understanding of fundamental principles would very greatly contribute to the more rational handling of practical problems.

But this better understanding is only to be attained, as it seems to me,

by a thorough examination of ideas, apart from the associations of

practical issues about which a fierce party spirit has been aroused

(Bosanquet, 1925: vii).

Before proceeding to the analysis of the term "real" in the philosophy of

Bosanquet, I need to clarify another issue that is related to the term "ideal." I am

referring to the "ideal" states of utopianism. The "ideal" states of utopianism are

based on definite and substantial prescriptions of how their subjects should live their

lives. The utopian states are products of a particular mode of theorising that has

nothing to do with what Bosanquet defends. The utopian states offer blueprints of

political life which dictate the thought and action of individuals. Every group in

society is provided with instructions of how it must contribute to the happiness of the

community. These guidelines monitor the behaviour of the individuals by establishing

a constitution of rules that determines in every detail the personal life of the

individual. This has nothing to do with the "ideal" of Bosanquet's philosophy.

In "the rhapsodic utterances of a metaphysical dreamer," Hobhouse asserts,

"the state assumes in the modern world a position which earlier ages might have given

to the church or to the Deity Himself" (Hobhouse, 1918: 23; 25). Implicitly, yet with

remarkable precision, the State is identified with God. It can easily be inferred that

the "State-God" to which the "ideal" of Philosophical Idealism refers, is heavily

involved in the substantive definition of the good life. In this case, the State ordains

how we should conduct our lives by defining a set of detailed, substantive and explicit instructions that correspond to an "ideal." This is, of course, an "ideal" that the State defines as "ideal" regardless of the misery and injustice (and other bad conditions) that might accompany the "ideal" situation. Can this situation describe the idea of the good, or the best, life that Bosanquet theorises? Can this "State" be identified with the idea of the State in Bosanquet's philosophy? The answer is "no." To see why, one must read the eighth chapter of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* which is entitled "Nature of the End of the State and Consequent Limit of State Action." In this chapter Bosanquet puts forward the formula of the State as hindrance to the hindrances of the best life. The State cannot promote the common good by force. State action involving compulsion, which means interference of automatism with intelligence and volition, can only be justified when it sets free capacities for development and growth. State action interferes with will, intelligence and consciousness. Will, intelligence and consciousness relate to spirituality and rationality that characterise individuality. Automatism interferes with qualities and dispositions that refer to the substantiation of the higher life. State action should promote the development of individuality and not to hinder its flourishing. Bosanquet writes:

> The State is in its right when it forcibly hinders a hindrance to the best
>
> life or common good. In hindering such hindrances it will indeed do
>
> positive acts. It may try to hinder illiteracy and intemperance by

compelling education and by municipalising the liquor traffic. ... On every problem the question must recur, 'Is the proposed measure *bona fide* confined to hindering a hindrance, or is it attempting direct promotion of the common good by force?' For it is to be borne in mind throughout that whatever acts are enforced are, so far as the force operates, withdrawn from the higher life. ... We ought, as a rule, when we propose action involving compulsion, to be able to show a definite tendency to growth, or a definite reserve of capacity, which is frustrated by a known impediment, the removal of which is a small matter compared to the capacities to be set free. For it should be remarked that every act done by the public power has one aspect of encroachment, however slight, on the sphere of character and intelligence, if only by using funds raised by taxation, or by introducing an automatic arrangement into life. It can, therefore, only be justified if it liberates resources of character and intelligence greater beyond all question than the encroachment which it involves (Bosanquet, 1925: 178-180).

The above quotation can, of course, raise many questions concerning the definition of the "hindrance" to the best life, the exact "measurement" of the growth of individuality that can either be suppressed or promoted, and the interference with intelligence and volition in cases where there is no a visible growth of capacities and

individuality - in the sense that Bosanquet understands these notions.[28] All these are

legitimate objections. Yet the point I want to emphasise here is that the conception

of the State that the above passage from *The Philosophical Theory of the State*

conveys has nothing to do with the Hobhouse's version of Bosanquet's idea of the

State. For Hobhouse, Bosanquet defends the idea of "the state as a totality" which

is "the working model of an Absolute": a suffocating matrix that destroys the free

development of individuality. In Hobhouse's own words:

> For the thoroughgoing idealist, all the conscious beings that live under
>
> the shadow of the Absolute seem to have just as much or as little title
>
> to independent consideration as the cells of the human body
>
> (Hobhouse, 1918: 19-20).

In Bosanquet's theory the ideal of the good, or the best, life refers to an ideal

that enables the members of the social whole to direct their will and action towards

the realisation of the common good. The articulation and definition of both the good

life and the common good depend on human individuals' rational capacity, ability to

grasp principles and capability of affirming and realising values. Neither the common

good nor the best life can be prescribed in a rigorous and substantive way by any

recognised or self-appointed "law-giver." The ideal, in this context, describes the

apprehension and affirmation of reality. Bosanquet writes in 1896: "... there is no true

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[28]I am referring, for instance, to State action in order to ban vivisection.

Ideal other than the reality made transparent" (Bosanquet, 1896: 421). One might

object, however, that Hobhouse was likely to have problems even with this definition

of the "ideal." I do not deny it. I also do not deny that any attempt to define the term

"ideal" is a very difficult task. But, I think, we can always make an effort to

apprehend what a philosopher wants to say.[29]

Bosanquet relates the term "ideal" to the organising principle of mind, to the

immanence of the spiritual world (the world of the values of truth, beauty and

goodness), to the realisation of the nature of a thing (realisation of the real self), and

to the apprehension of the logical features of relation, coherence and unity which

underlie reality beyond immediacy. Relation, coherence and unity are gradually

revealed to our minds through the discursive and intuitive aspects of thought:

The ultimate tendency of thought ... is not to generalise, but to

constitute a world. It is true that it presses beyond the given,

following the "what" beyond the limits of the "that." But it is also true

that in following the "what" it tends always to return to a fuller "that."

If its impulse is away from the given it is towards the whole - the

world. And as constituting a world it tends to return to the full depth

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[29]The term "ideal" in Bosanquet's theory does not refer (a) to an uncritical vision of a better society, the realisation of which is projected into an indefinite future (utopianism) (b) to emotions, sentiments, ideals and aspirations that can inspire human thought and action to realise a better vision of life (the "ideal" of the everyday language); and (c) to the justification of a particular established (political and social) order as the best we can have - a form of theorising that implies resistance to reform or change (conservatism).

and roundness of experience from which its first step was to depart (Bosanquet, 1912: 55).

In this sense, the ideal is within our world, yet not as Hobhouse thinks that Bosanquet theorises it. The ideal refers to a deeper degree of apprehending reality, of making reality "visible" to the human mind. This explains why "the limits of our normal self cannot be applied as limitations to our ultimate self": "the expansive power of mind" is found beneath the conceptualisation of the ideal within our world.[30] Bosanquet reveals the secret of this dimension of human consciousness in the first lecture of *The Principle of Individuality and Value*. We possess a greater degree of reality "as we enter upon the larger vistas of things" armed with the "penetrative imagination" (Bosanquet, 1912: 7; 13).

1c/ iii. The Real

In Bosanquet's philosophical project reality stands in contrast to actuality. However, this does not mean that what is not real becomes automatically actual. There are degrees of reality, but transient phases of actuality. The "destiny" of actuality is to be overcome in the spiritual transition to deeper levels of reality. The "destiny" of reality is to be gradually attained and apprehended through the constructive activity of mind. Reality should be regarded as embedded in the

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[30]The phrases that I quoted come from *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (Bosanquet, 1912: 378).

movement towards the realisation of the nature of a thing. This movement describes a complex recurrent process of attaining deeper and more substantial levels of self-affirmation and individuality. For instance, the "truth" of the finite-infinite self is the real self. The real self should be regarded as a more advanced, more developed, phase of the self towards completion and perfection: there are degrees of reality. The actual should be regarded as an element in the crystallisation of the real - a state of momentary being, or a succession of different momentary articulations, that is ceaselessly negated and surpassed during the very process of realising the real. The different phases of actuality embody different degrees of reality. The actual is premissed on the dynamics of transition and transformation deriving from the teleology of things. The actual can have a definite and concrete historical form: it can be the "real" which is not "real enough." I have discussed in the metaphysics of the self in its relation to religion, how one's own self as standing in the here and the now is not regarded as real from the standpoint of religious consciousness. Religious consciousness is the firm belief that the actual self has the ability to realise a more comprehensive, more perfect and inclusive dimension of being. We gradually develop the real self as we firmly believe in the reality of the good as the only reality. From the standpoint of religion, the real self is substantiated in our unity, in love and will, with the supreme good. The real self is not a different entity independent of our actual self: it is our self having conquered a greater degree of reality that signifies a deeper, more comprehensive, and a more substantial communion with the spiritual world. The spiritual world is the infinite world of values (of beauty, truth and

goodness). I now turn to an analysis of the word "real" in Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State in relation to Hobhouse's accusations.

Hobhouse thinks that the Idealist philosopher has a naive view of the world as good despite evidence to the contrary. Idealism "starts with and never corrects the fundamental confusion of the ideal and the actual" (Hobhouse, 1918: 23). Hence, uncritically or suspiciously, the Idealist identifies the ideal with the actual. Hobhouse uses the terms "real" and "actual" as identical, yet what he means by the term "real" is what the Idealist means by the term "actual." From the standpoint of Idealism, although the ideal is found in our world (the spiritual world of value and reality is immanent in our own world), it does not mean that the world expressed in a particular existing order (a despotic State, for instance) is the ideal. Hobhouse fails to see the difference which is based on the subtle differentiation in the usage of the terms "real" and "actual." This is Hobhouse's conception of the Idealist's (read Bosanquet's) idea of the State: we live in the ideal; everything is perfect, everything is as it should be; there is no reason to be active for attaining a different state of things because we are powerless in front of the omnipotent Absolute. If this is true, how can Hobhouse explain Bosanquet's emphasis on education and culture and on the idea of enlightened citizenship? If everything is ideal, there is no need to try for more perfection and for a more substantial realisation of value in our lives. We will see that, according to Hobhouse, "atrophied" will and "hypnotised" reason are the characteristics of the individual in the context of the Hegelian conception of the State. Yet Hobhouse fails to understand that this dim picture of individuality does not cohere with the ideas of

the development of individuality and the growth of capacities that Bosanquet is so anxious to safeguard against the automatism of State interference (Bosanquet, 1925: 178-180). For Hobhouse, the Idealist believes that the existing State we are in is the ideal. In this context, individuality is passively annihilated, the ability to judge is destroyed:

> But when we are taught to think of the world which we know as a good world, to think of its injustices, wrongs and miseries as necessary elements in a perfect ideal, then, if we accept these arguments, our power of revolt is atrophied, our reason is hypnotized, our efforts to improve life and remedy wrong fade away into a passive acquiescence in things as they are; or, still worse, into a slavish adulation of the Absolute in whose hands we are mere pawns. These, it may be said, are questions of general rather than social philosophy, but the point is that to the idealistic school, social philosophy is an application of the theory of the Absolute to human affairs (Hobhouse, 1918: 19).

One would expect that immediately after the above statement, Hobhouse would offer more concrete evidence concerning the predominance of the theory of the Absolute in Idealism. Hobhouse's next sentence, however, refers to something different. Hobhouse, of course thinks that he thoroughly justifies his claim. He writes: "As Dr.

Bosanquet tells us, 'the treatment of the state in this discussion is naturally analogous to the treatment of the universe' " (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). Obviously, the situation becomes rather confusing and the reader is puzzled. A quotation from *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (Bosanquet, 1912: 311) is extracted from the coherent body of the discussion there and it is provided as a proof of the pernicious influence of the Absolute in the Idealist philosophy. Underlying Hobhouse's arguments is a dangerous assumption. The assumption is that, for Bosanquet, the State is something more than we think it is. Bosanquet's idea of the State, in other words, refers to an entity that it is more comprehensive and more total even from Bosanquet's own conception of it. I will discuss Hobhouse's misconceptions about the State and the Absolute in the next section. Here, I wish to discuss briefly another point. The point is an aspect of Hobhouse's strategy in his critique of Bosanquet's philosophy of the State. In my view, Hobhouse not only asserts how total is Bosanquet's idea of the State. He also tends, implicitly yet with remarkable precision, to identify the idea of the State with a greater reality than even the total conception of the State he gives us, would allow one to think. The State has been implicitly identified with God (Hobhouse, 1918: 25); it has been seen as "the working model of an Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19); it has been theorised as an order analogous to the universe. I wish to note here that, in following this strategy, Hobhouse magnifies and maximises the idea of the State and thus proves its self-annihilating power in the context of Idealism. Yet, he misses a point: he cannot account for such modes of experience as art, philosophy and religion that, clearly and definitely, in the philosophical discourse

of Hegelianism constitute the embodiment of the Absolute Mind that belongs to an ultra-social dimension beyond the Objective Mind. I now return to the treatment of the State "as naturally analogous to the treatment of the universe."

The passage that Hobhouse quotes comes from Lecture VIII of *The Principle of Individuality and Value* that is entitled "Individuality as the Logical Criterion of Value" (Bosanquet, 1912: 291-317). This lecture also contains the wide definition of the State which, as I have stated earlier in this section, is the definition of the State that Bosanquet accepts and uses throughout his philosophical treatment of the State. The sentence "The treatment of the State in this discussion is naturally analogous to the treatment of the universe" is the sentence that we find in the opening paragraph of a discussion concerning, among other things, the differentiation between individuality and successive states of consciousness (Bosanquet, 1912: 311-317). Individuality refers to the idea of the human being from the standpoint of its completion. The standpoint of its completion does not refer to a future projection of an anticipated or probable completion but to the nature of the individual. The nature of a thing describes what a thing fundamentally is. What a thing fundamentally is refers to what a thing is in its mature completion that can be understood logically as growth and development of its inherent potentialities. Sweet rightly observes that Bosanquet draws on classical Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle (Sweet, 1997b: 98). The nature of a thing is its end: the end is logically prior and determines the development. The nature of the individual refers to a kind of a systematic coherence and unity - the individual implies the whole. The whole is present in the finite

consciousness not as a lifeless replica of the whole that contains the individual, but as a world inside the world of the finite individual. The world of the finite individual is continuously restructured, reaffirmed and reconstituted as the finite-infinite self constructs itself out of itself within the immanent world of human experience that contains the infinite dimension of the spiritual world of values. The soul-making process is a succession of states of consciousness which, however, cannot be identified in their particular and successive manifestations with the individuality of the human individual. Personal consciousness implies a whole which contains the successive states of consciousness in their systematic unity and coherence: the successive states of consciousness as such and separately taken are not wholes:

> [N]othing has value which is not in some sort a personal consciousness ... [I]n a personal consciousness we have already accepted a standard that goes beyond the states of consciousness of a conscious being. By a person, or a being partaking in individuality (even if we include in our idea animals and young children), we presumably mean some sort of a whole; and the states of consciousness as such are not wholes (Bosanquet, 1912: 312).

The human individual is in a state of a continuous transcendence that enables him/her to expand beyond the limits of the self as given in each particular moment and thus to return to himself or herself having acquired a deeper and fuller experience of being.

Human individuals because of their sociality and spirituality find themselves and develop their capacities and thus their individuality in the context of a social whole. This social whole is defined by Bosanquet as the State in the full sense. The term "State" in the full sense means "a living whole, not the mere legal and political fabric, but the complex of lives and activities, considered as the body of which that is the framework" (Bosanquet, 1912: 311, n. 1). In this sense, the State contains the individual and sustains his/her maintenance in the world through, among other things, the institutional arrangements which organise and structure life in a civilised community. In the context of this discussion, the treatment of the State "is naturally analogous to the treatment of the universe" (Bosanquet, 1912: 311). This happens in the area of the Objective Mind in which the idea of the State is taken to mean the whole of the ethical life - in the sense that Idealism understands ethical life. Bosanquet continues, and his analysis anticipates a further development: the State is "a phase of individuality which belongs to the process towards unity at a point far short of its completion" (Bosanquet, 1912: 312). The State is a phase of individuality: it is not the individuality. From the standpoint of personal consciousness, the finite-infinite being strives to achieve completion and thus to affirm a deeper degree of individuality. In the context of the State, the finite-infinite being realises a part of the essence of individuality. The State (as family, civil society, class in the sense of vocation, neighbourhood, government together with the spirit of relations and affinities that all these imply) contributes to the self-realisation of the individual. Yet it cannot give full self-realisation: it is a phase of individuality. The human individual's

perfection is realised in another sphere of spiritual development: art, philosophy and religion will complete the task. At this level of self-realisation, the "universality" of the State is transcended. This does not mean, however, that it stops having value: it was through its framework, after all, that the self-transcendence and self-realisation of the human individual took a concrete and coherent form. The following quotation proves the complex interrelations between the State, the individual and the ultra-social manifestations of human experience that Bosanquet recognises. Hobhouse did not follow Bosanquet's argument to its final step:

> In all finite individuals there is self-transcendence, and therefore translocation of the point of reference in valuing; but not all self-transcendence is primarily social. It is therefore untrue to say that all good as such is social good, and it is well that this common incorrectness should have challenged criticism. It is the paradox of humanity that the best qualities of man himself, and the forms of experience in which he is most perfect, are not at first sight very widely distributed. Art, philosophy, religion, though they bear to society the relation above indicated, are not immediately concerned with the promotion of social relations, and are not specially moulded to the promotion of social ends. The doctrine which we have been opposing is probably a reaction against the exaggerated claims of social good to be the only good, but it seems a mistake to push it so

far as to deny that the State is a name for a special form of self

transcendence, in which individuality strongly anticipates the character

of its perfection (Bosanquet, 1912: 316).[31]

Hobhouse's assessment of the spirit of the philosophical theory of the State

erroneously puts forward the view that for the Idealist every State (in the past, the

present and the future) is an incarnation of the "perfect ideal." The "metaphysical

theory" of the State describes the destruction of the ability of the individual to judge,

to reflect and to act for the improvement of the conditions of life. In Hobhouse's

own words, "our power of revolt is atrophied, our reason is hypnotized, our efforts

to improve life and remedy wrong fade away into a passive acquiescsence in things

as they are" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). A philosopher who defends a point of view like

this is either naive or ideologically dangerous. Does this view correspond to what

Bosanquet really says? If the real is good, perfect and ideal, does Hobhouse's version

of Bosanquet's conception of the real, or the ideal, describe adequately Bosanquet's

views? Hobhouse does not seem to be aware of the subtle differentiations of meaning

that Bosanquet's words have in the context of his philosophical system. For instance,

Hobhouse did not notice that Bosanquet mentions Hegel's conception of the Greek

city-state as not being "ideal enough" in the sense of lacking complete individuality

and complete assertion of freedom (Bosanquet, 1925: 255). The Greek city-state

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[31]The spirit of this passage is also affirmed in the last pages of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (Bosanquet, 1925: 309-311).

expressed in mind explicitly and powerfully, for the first time in human history, the experience of the political life of man. Yet, the Greek city-state was not perfect and absolutely real: it was not "ideal enough." The Greek city-state contained people who were not citizens, that is to say, people who were not enabled to realise their freedom and assert their individuality. In Sweet's words: "Bosanquet believed that Greek classical philosophy did not adequately protect the value of the human individual" (Sweet, 1997: 5). Furthermore, one could add that the institutions of the Greek city-state did not have the same scope and meaning that they have in the modern state. Viewed from this perspective, the Greek city-state was less real than the modern state; yet it does not mean that the modern state embodies the ultimate real. The modern state is more real than the ancient state, but still there are different degrees of reality at the different levels of the discourse. To sum up. The real refers: (a) to the overall development of capacities and to the idea of completion and perfection; and (b) to the ultimate realisation of the nature of a thing.

To recapitulate. The State embodies an ethical idea (Bosanquet, 1925: 298-305). The State refers to a spiritual and structural whole that unites the rational principle of arrangement and organisation with the will and consciousness of the individual. The State as an ethical idea synchronises the movement of consciousnesses towards the realisation of the best life. Hence there is a logical, essential, and fundamental relation between the State as an ethical idea and the social being of the finite-infinite self. Individuals affirm their social being by contributing to the best life while seeking self-realisation within the social whole. The specific

experience that the State substantiates for the individuals as agents conscious of the social good is that the moral self develops thoroughly in a social whole. The characteristic feature of the social whole is that it is mainly built on the will and intelligence of the human beings who constitute it. Bosanquet inquires into these issues in his *Psychology of the Moral Self* which was first published in 1897. In this book, he theorises the moral self as the outcome of minds working together in society which should be seen as the matrix that must enable the possibilities of human nature to develop. I have tried to show that the starting-point for the development of the possibilities of human nature is the recognition of sociality and spirituality:

> [H]istorically speaking, no doubt the human individual does not originate in isolation, but reflects some sort of community, so that from the first the self goes beyond the bodily unit. ... It is this feeling of self-assertion, in which the self is approved of, which seems to constitute the essential element in the moral consciousness; and this would begin practically with a society in which action was directed to the common welfare, for not only does such action constitute a great part of the self-assertion which meets with self-approbation, but that approbation is also intensified by its reflection in other minds (Bosanquet, 1904: 87-88).

In the State, the individual relates his/her self-realisation to a broader conception of

life that includes the self-realisation of the others. The spiritual co-ordination of the self-realisation projects is shaped in the logic of the insitutions that enable the genesis of the social self through the development and continuous realisation of the moral consciousness. Self-transcendence sustains the movement of consciousness towards deeper levels of self-realisation during its shaping and transformation in the context of institutions as ethical ideas. The realisation of social ends, however, is not the final end of the development of the possibilities of human nature. Bosanquet clarifies this issue in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (309-311), in *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (316), and in the *Psychology of the Moral Self* (95-96). The complete realisation and development of the possibilities of human nature refers to the province of art, philosophy, and religion which can be understood as embodying the ultimate real of what a human being can reach. Any given social organisation is not the ultimate: it is a stage in the scale of the realisation of value and the affirmation of reality in mind. Truth, beauty and goodness, "the greatest possibilites of human nature" (Bosanquet, 1904: 96), dwell in the ultra-social, or the meta-social, level of Reality. Yet, and this is the crucial point, the ethico-social framework of the State sustains and enables the movement of mind towards the deeper and ultimate levels of realisation and affirmation that the aforementioned experiences signify. In other words, the State enables the human being to develop capacities and possibilities of self-realisation which affirm the spiritual world of value within the world of everyday experience. In Hegelian terms, "the absolute spirit" is not confined to the borders of "the objective spirit." However, the framework of ethical life supports, secures and

maintains its trans-historical realisation. This perspective originates from the standpoint of the development of mind: it should not be understood as describing what a particular institutional system and society do. Furthermore, it does not suggest that the State in its particular manifestations is a prior good and it always operates in this way. World history has many incidents of states which inhibit, or have inhibited, the free development and realisation of thought, art and religion. Bosanquet's theory does not imply that, despite evidence to the contrary, the State fulfils its function to promote the development of spirit. The point I wish to emphasise is that the system of ethical life (the State *qua* State), offers the living framework, the matrix, that enables art, philosophy and religion to flourish. This happens because the institutions as ethical ideas provide a substantial and concrete structure for civilisation and culture to develop and flourish.

Hence for Bosanquet the State is the culmination of the ethical life.[32] The State, through its institutions conceived as ethical ideas, represents an order that transforms the actuality of the particular individual will into a form of will that is characterised by a deeper degree of reality as it relates to the more inclusive state of social being and realisation. The process of transformation derives from the rational capacities of the moral agent who, as a social being, affirms inside himself or herself a spiritual bond that "unites" his/her being with the other selves in society. Hobhouse regards Bosanquet's idea of the State as embodying a set of inflexible imperatives

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[32]I use as identical the terms "ethical life," "ethical system," and "institutions as ethical ideas."

imposed on the individual and, in this context, he understands the State as something indifferent to the experience and the actual lives of its members. We saw that this is a wrong conception. Bosanquet regards the overall framework of ethical life as the creation of the reflective consciousness in its long spiritual journey towards self-realisation in the world of thought and action. The State is essentially, logically and indispensably related to mind. The reflective consciousness systematises in a coherent whole the features of the experience of living together which is embodied in the political life of man. The order and systematicity implied in the institutions as ethical ideas create a normative condition that provides civilisation with a structural foundation and enables its development and flourishing transhistorically. The State *qua* State represents the spirit of coherence and unity of the social whole at the level of the objective mind. As the level of the discourse moves towards the spiritual world, the world of truth, beauty and goodness that philosophy, art and religion substantiate, the State is transcended. We move from the "social" to the "ultra-social." Yet the State is the matrix that sustains the life of spirit in the social realisation of the finite-infinite self.

1d. Concluding Remarks

Hobhouse claims that Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State provides a justification of a particular existing ethical order: this is wrong. Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State is an inquiry into the Idea of the State as both a fundamental constituent and the culmination of ethical life which is the political life

of man. We need to clarify this point because although Bosanquet can be criticised

for elaborating an essentialist account of the State, he should not be accused of

justifying the perfection and goodness of a particular existing order. In brief,

Hobhouse does not seem to have read the first chapter of *The Philosophical Theory*

of the State wherein Bosanquet defines what a philosophical theory is in comparison

to other modes of human inquiry. A philosophical theory seeks to ascertain the full

significance of the object under investigation. Bosanquet states in the beginning of

the first chapter of *The Pilosophical Theory of the State*:

> First, it will be well to indicate, in a very few words, what is implied
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> in a "philosophical theory," as distinguished from theories which make
>
> no claim to be philosophical. The primary difference is, that a
>
> philosophical treatment is the study of something as a whole and for
>
> its own sake. In a certain sense it may be compared to the gaze of a
>
> child or of an artist. It deals, that is, with the total and unbroken
>
> effect of its object. It desires to ascertain what a thing is, what is its
>
> full characteristic and being, its achievement in the general act of the
>
> world (Bosanquet, 1925: 1).

The second chapter of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* is devoted to a

comparative study between sociological theory and philosophical theory. Although

the second chapter does not primarily deal with the philosophical theory of the State,

I regard it as a continuation of the theoretical line that Bosanquet developed in the

first chapter. I regard the second chapter as connected with the first for three main

reasons. First, the discussion elaborates further what a philosophical theory is by

pointing out methodological and theoretical features which are characteristic of

theories that are not regarded as philosophical. Second, the analysis does not diverge

from the general principles discussed in the first chapter. "Philosophy," Bosanquet

writes, "is critical throughout; it desires to establish degrees of value, degrees of

reality, degrees of completeness and coherence" (Bosanquet, 1925: 47). And, finally,

the philosophical theory of the State is the culmination of the philosophical theory of

society. The philosophical treatment of society:

> has to deal with the problems which arise out of the nature of a whole
>
> and its parts, the relation of the individual to the universal, and the
>
> transformation by which the particular self is lost, to be found again
>
> in a more individual, and yet more universal form (Bosanquet, 1925:
>
> 48).

In 1902 Bosanquet re-asserts his views about the philosophical theory of the

State and re-emphasises the critical aspect of the philosophical inquiry:

> The philosophy of the state is 'critical ' throughout, in the sense in
>
> which philosophy makes use of that term. Its leading idea is the

estimate of degrees of completeness, degrees of self-expression, degrees of harmonious life. Historical and economic explanations, laws and causes of progress and decadence, are not as such its primary problems. It asks about the state what other forms of philosophy would ask about science or fine art or religion, viz. how far are they respectively examples of a perfect or harmonious experience, and if not themselves examples of it, how far they throw light on what such an experience would be? (Bosanquet, 1999b [1902]: 206).

The philosophical treatment of a subject is an investigation from a specific standpoint: from the point of view of value, reality, completeness and coherence. The philosophical perspective refers to a way of reflecting on the whole. The philosophical theory has two interrelated aspects: (a) a framework that conceptualises the logic of its methodology; and (b) an array of questions articulating the spirit of the philosophical investigation. The logic of the philosophical theory revolves around the fundamental categories of the particular with the universal. It refers to their interdependence, interrelation and to their dialectical movement. The dialectic of the particular and the universal refers to the substantiation of the real with its different degrees of completion and coherence. For Bosanquet the perspective characterising this method of inquiry is called "teleological" (Bosanquet, 1925: 48-49). The concept of the "end" (telos) refers to what a thing fundamentally is - to what a thing is in its essential nature. Teleology describes the realisation of the nature of a thing.

2. THE CONCEPT OF THE STATE AND THE END OF THE STATE IN BOSANQUET'S PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY OF THE STATE

2a. The Idea of the Absolute and Bosanquet's Concept of the State

In the first section of this chapter I argued against Hobhouse's erroneous account of Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State. I demonstrated that Hobhouse develops a wrong account and interpretation of Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State for the following main reasons. First, Hobhouse fails to discern the meaning and use of metaphysics (and of logic) in Bosanquet's philosophical project. Second, he fails to understand what a "philosophical theory" is and hence proves that he has not paid enough attention to the first chapter of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* where Bosanquet explains the fundamental structure, logic and spirit of his investigation. Third, he does not follow Bosanquet's wide definition of the State, a definition that Bosanquet uses coherently, consistently and systematically in the entire spectrum of his political philosophy. The consequence of Hobhouse's inability to "read" what Bosanquet really said and stated about the concept of the State is he erroneously discerns a "serious confusion between the state and society" in Bosanquet's political philosophy (Hobhouse, 1918: 75-76). Fourth, Hobhouse does not understand that the idea of the State that Bosanquet elaborates is not a justification of a specific established order of things which, in spite of imperfections, injustices, and evil, is (in its actuality) what "ought to be" - the good, the ideal, the real, the perfect. Fifth, Hobhouse fails to discern how Bosanquet, and the Idealist

philosopher in general, uses the terms "actual," "real," and "ideal." Hobhouse does not differentiate between the "actual" and the "real" and as a result infers that the "actual" is for Bosanquet the "real." If the "real" is perfect, good, rational and ideal, then Bosanquet justifies the existing order of things as he attributes to it all these characteristics. Yet Hobhouse's entire story is based on a different usage and understanding of the term "real": a different conception of the "real" in comparison to Bosanquet's idea of the "real." Sixth, Hobhouse fails to see the theory of the social being of the self that substantiates the political life of man and the philosophical theory of the State. And, finally, Hobhouse fails to see how Bosanquet theorises the State in the overall system of his philosophy and, subsequently, he cannot discern the fundamental differentiation between the social dimension of being and the ultra-social dimension of human experience. Art, philosophy and religion take the movement of spirit beyond the State (which resembled "the universe" in the context of the ethical life). As a result, Hobhouse fails also to see the specific kind of relation between the social and the meta-social level of experience that Bosanquet elucidates.

In this sub-section I want to confront Hobhouse's account from another perspective. I refer to the perspective of the Absolute and the State in Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State. The issue is important and the alleged use of the idea of the Absolute in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* must be clarified. Ideas should be understood in their proportion, coherence and systematicity. To understand what Bosanquet argues we must embark on a textual investigation: otherwise. we run the risk of applying to his theory an explanatory framework that either he has not

chosen to use at a specific point, or it does not relate to what he writes on a specific topic.

I explain briefly the structure of this sub-section. First, I will discuss how Hobhouse presents the theory of the Absolute in its relation to Bosanquet's political philosophy in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. Second, I will mention what Bosanquet says about the idea of the Absolute in his Gifford Lectures which contain his theory of the Absolute. Third, I will present how Bosanquet uses the term "absolute" in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. Fourth, and in relation to the third step, I will show that Hobhouse makes a false connection between the Absolute and the State in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. I will argue that Hobhouse makes a false connection between the State and the Absolute because he confuses the idea of the Absolute expounded in the Gifford Lectures with the term "absolute" as Bosanquet uses it in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. These four "steps" are interrelated. The main assumption that I use throughout my analysis is that the State, in Bosanquet's philosophy, cannot be identified, or cannot be seen as a model of the Absolute in human affairs (as Hobhouse asserts) because the Absolute, in Bosanquet's philosophy, has features that the State, in Bosanquet's philosophy, does not have. I now turn to the analysis of these issues.

Hobhouse asserts that the "metaphysical theory" of the State is essentially and fundamentally structured around the Absolute.[33] In the Idealist's conception of the

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[33]"Dr. Bosanquet's theory of the state is so intimately bound up with his general theory of Reality, that a discussion of his social philosophy can hardly be complete without some reference to his conception of the Absolute as contained in the two

State, the individual is passively annihilated in the transforming activity of an almighty Absolute. People are "mere pawns" in the hands of the Absolute and their reflective judgment - if there is any for, in this context, "our reason is hypnotized" - is exhausted in "a slavish adulation of the Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19-20). Hobhouse paraphrases Bosanquet, who writes that the State is "a working conception of life" (Bosanquet, 1925: 141), and asserts that the State is "the working model of an Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19) and an "incarnation of the Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 24). One can easily discern the characteristics that Hobhouse erroneously attributes to the idea of the Absolute: personhood, ontological existence, an almost visible materiality and force, and an implicit identification with God. In brief, according to Hobhouse, "the metaphysical theory" of the State is a vindication and a product of this way of theorising:

> The theory of society on this view is not to be detached from general metaphysics; it is an integral part of the philosophy of things. Just as in a simple form of religion, the powers that be are ordained of God, so with the metaphysician who starts from the belief that things are what they should be, the fabric of human life, and in particular the state system, is a part of an order which is inherently rational and

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volumes of his Gifford Lectures ... Indeed, for him the state seems in a manner to be the medium, it is certainly one of the media, by which the individual comes into contact with the Absolute. The Absolute is sovereign Lord, but the state is its vicegerent here and now" (Hobhouse, 1918: 150).

good, an order to which the lives of individuals are altogether subordinate (Hobhouse: 1918: 17)

The above quotation refers to a general description of Hegelianism as a theory of social and political reality. In the next page, however, Hobhouse makes a direct and explicit link to his main target - Bosanquet's political philosophy:

Such, then, is the spirit of the metaphysical theory of society which I propose to examine in the shape given to it by its founder, Hegel, and his most modern and most faithful exponent, Dr. Bosanquet. This theory is commonly spoken of as idealism, but it is in point of fact a much more subtle and dangerous enemy to the ideal than any brute denial of idealism emanating from a one-sided science (Hobhouse, 1918: 18).

Hobhouse discerns a fundamental connection between Bosanquet's conception of the State and the function of that "utterly inhuman, without bowels of compassion" (Hobhouse, 1918: 152) entity, which is known as the Absolute. Which are the facts and how does Hobhouse distort and misrepresent Bosanquet's words?

The first thing that I need to mention here is that Bosanquet does not use the idea of the Absolute in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. As I will point out later in this sub-section, Bosanquet uses the term "absolute" as an adjective to qualify

something different from what Hobhouse asserts. I will demonstrate this by a thorough textual examination of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. Bosanquet develops his theory of the Absolute in his Gifford Lectures, *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912) and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913). It is not my purpose to assess and critically discuss Bosanquet's theory of the Absolute. A critical assessment of the idea of the Absolute is beyond the scope of the thesis and, in addition, it does not relate to my argument here. I will mention only some of the features of the Absolute in Bosanquet's philosophy.[34] The list with the features of the Absolute that I give here is extensive, yet not exhaustive. However, it gives an indication of the characteristics of the Absolute as it appears in the Gifford Lectures. I note again: I do not deal critically with these elements here. To understand what each one of these phrases, or words, means, implies and conveys, we must put everything in perspective and analyse the content of the concepts within the semantic framework that Bosanquet's philosophy provides. Otherwise, we will end up with such misunderstandings as Hobhouse's confusion with Bosanquet's terms "real" and "ideal." I mention these features in order to show that the State is neither an approximation, a working model, a replica and an incarnation of the Absolute, nor

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[34]All the characteristics I will mention come from Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures. In particular, I quote, or I use information, from the following pages of *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (1912) and *The Value and Destiny of the Individual* (1913). Bosanquet, 1912: 19; 27-29; 250; 377-378; 382. Bosanquet, 1913: 58-62; 68, n. 3; 212-213; 217; 226; 229; 249; 251.

implicitly "an Absolute" for the very simple and obvious reason that it does not have these characteristics. Here are some of the features describing the content of the Absolute. The Absolute is "the principle and pervading spirit of our world" and we experience it throughout life. It is the "one profound characteristic" that "runs through the whole." The Absolute, being a characteristic, cannot be the entity, the "inhuman" entity, of Hobhouse's description (Hobhouse, 1918: 152). The Absolute is an experience articulated in human life because of the expansive power of mind and the finite-infinite nature of the self. The Absolute is perfection and completeness.[35] The Absolute is "a perfect union of mind and nature." The Absolute as "the perfect experience it is more than beautiful, more than pleasant, more than true and than good." The possession of the Absolute as such, which means "to be the Absolute," would provide the human individual with "the perfect satisfaction" because he/she would be the embodiment of all value. The Absolute is perfection in which evil is absorbed: it is "the whole considered as perfection in which the antagonism of good and evil is unnoted."

I repeat. Bosanquet does not refer to the Absolute in *The Philosophical Theory of the State.* He does not refer to the theory of the Absolute because he has to clarify issues which are related to the nature and the idea of the State *qua* State.

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[35]Gaus and Sweet write: "For Bosanquet, complete coherence is 'the Absolute' - involving the systematization and completion of finite minds. ... This Absolute is not, however, anything separate or over and above finite things or appearances, but the totality or full realisation of them. For Bosanquet, it is a system in which all things are arranged and understood in their multiple relations to one another" (Gaus and Sweet, 2001: xxii).

Bosanquet focuses on the idea of the State and examines it as a whole and for its own sake. To understand Bosanquet we must respect the way he has chosen to present the development of his thought. I can only suggest that the Absolute can "enter this picture" from a specific macro-and-meta-theoretical perspective in order to account for the development and movement of spirit throughout and beyond the frontiers of the State. Yet this is something that Bosanquet, at that stage and in 1899, chose not to do. He probably chose not to because he would have had to explain in detail all the aspects, elements, implications, semantic differentiations and connotation of the theory of the Absolute. He endeavoured to accomplish this task in his Gifford Lectures. *The Philosophical Theory of the State* has a specific and well-defined focus: the political life of man, that is the life of man as a social being in the context of institutions as ethical ideas. The social being of man is fully realised in society which is "a structure of intelligences so related as to co-operate with and to imply one another" (Bosanquet, 1925: 195). State is society as exercising absolute power.

In my view, the use of the Absolute in Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* serves a strategic purpose. Hobhouse, in using throughout the idea of the Absolute as the culmination of Bosanquet's social and political philosophy, makes his critique more "dramatic" and more "forceful" especially for those readers who are, in general, unsympathetic to Bosanquet's style of philosophy. In addition, there are others who are not familiar with Bosanquet's philosophy in its entirety, unity and coherence: for those, surely, an "Absolute" presented in Hobhouse's way is a highly problematic and mystifying concept. Hobhouse seems unclear to me as to what

exactly is the relation of the State to the Absolute. He uses, we saw, a plurality of terms and hence appears to be, finally, undecided about the exact nature of the relation. Is the State a "God," a "vicegerent" of the Absolute as "sovereign Lord," an "expression" of "that supreme being [Spirit or the Absolute]," "the true self in which the mere individual is absorbed," or "the working model of an Absolute"?[36] We saw that the Absolute is not used in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* and, more important, in the context and with the meaning that Hobhouse attaches to it.

The only explicit indication of an "absolute" that we have in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* is the "absolute" as an adjective. A close textual investigation of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* showed that Bosanquet uses the word "absolute" about nine times (Bosanquet, 1925: xxviii; xxix; 24; 85-86; 116; 158; 171; 172). Twice, the term "absolute" refers to (a) "the absolute central control in which the perfection of an organism consists..." - Bosanquet discusses Spencer (Bosanquet, 1925: 24); and (b) "the absolute opposition between self and others" which describes the prima facie idea of society expressed in "the theories of the first look" (Bosanquet, 1925: 116). Once the term "absolute" refers to the nature of the community as a whole when Bosanquet discusses Rousseau's *Contrat Social*: "The community as a whole is therefore absolute" (Bosanquet, 1925: 85-86). The remaining six uses of the word "absolute" describe (a) the characteristic of the State as the absolute power of adjustment; and (b) the State as society exercising absolute (physical) power. One might retort however, that even in this case, Bosanquet still refers explicitly or

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[36]Hobhouse, 1918: 18; 19-20; 25; 43; 134; 150.

implicitly to a state of social organisation that involves something which is regarded as "absolute." I briefly mention two points here. First, to claim that the State is the absolute power of adjustment and that the State is society as exercising absolute power (in the context of social life) is different from claiming that the State is either "the working model of an Absolute," or "the vicegerent" of the Absolute which is the "sovereign Lord" and whose hands human beings are "mere pawns" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19; 150). Second, although the State is the predominant concept in Bosanquet's political philosophy, it does not mean that he was indifferent to ideas concerning the supranational organisation of the human community. On the contrary, he showed interest in, and reflected on, this issue.[37] He writes in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*:

> It must be remembered that our theory does not place Sovereignty in
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> any determinate person or body of persons, but only in the working of
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> the system of institutions as a whole. There is therefore no technical

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[37]I am referring to Bosanquet's writings on International Politics: "The Teaching of Patriotism" (delivered in 1911, printed in 1914 and reprinted in 1917 in his *Social and International Ideals: Being Studies in Patriotism*); "Patriotism in the Perfect State" in *The International Crisis in Its Ethical and Psychological Aspects* (1915); "The Function of the State in Promoting the Unity of Mankind," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, XVII (1916-1917) - reprinted in *Social and International Ideals* (1917); "The Wisdom of Naaman's Servants," in *Social and International Ideals* (1917); and "How the Theory Stands in 1919," in the 3rd edition (1920) of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, pp. xlv-lxii. See Nicholson, 1976: 78, n. 1. A discussion of Bosanquet's views on the State and International Politics is found at C. Delisle Burns, Bertrand Russell, and G. D. H. Cole, 1915-1916: 290-325. For Bosanquet and International Relations Theory, see Boucher, 1994: 671-694; and Boucher, 1995: 73-89.

difficulty in the modification of the Nation-state towards larger forms of authoritative co-operation, so long as it is made clear to what system of authorities every separate human being is subject in respect of the ultimate adjustment of claims upon him. And it would seem that there must always be at least a machinery making this clear (like the Court which interprets the constitution of the U.S.A.), if civilised life is to be possible. The all-important point is that the recognition of the Real or General Will should be maintained (Bosanquet, 1925: xxix-xxx).[38]

I now turn back to the State and the Absolute. We saw that Hobhouse is eager to create a fundamental and indispensable connection between the State and the

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[38]Note Bosanquet's point that any kind of political organisation above the Nation-state must be based on the recognition of the General Will. He also expressed some thoughts concerning the function and limitations of "the idea of a universal language" (Bosanquet, 1925: 307). Bosanquet's philosophical perspective in dealing with these issues is presented in a distorted way by Hobhouse. Here is Hobhouse's own "version" of Bosanquet's views: "But below the idea of humanity, which he [Bosanquet] deems merely a confusion, Dr. Bosanquet detects a darker and more dangerous aspiration. He 'suspects' current ideas of the international future to be seriously affected by popular notions of progress and an evanescence of evil, which should 'compensate for the wrongs and sufferings of the past'. To the idealist this is sheer blasphemy against the Absolute. Dr. Bosanquet tells us that he personally believes in a nobler future, but since the Absolute is perfection and since evil exists, evil is necessary to perfection and its evanescence seems 'altogether contradictory'. Its disappearance is certainly a remote danger. The world need not be under the apprehension of a premature drying up of the springs of misery and wrong. In the meanwhile it is instructive to find that in the last resort the gospel of state absolutism and opposition to the League of Nations rests on the necessity of evil as a part of the permanent scheme of things" (Hobhouse, 1918: 116).

Absolute in Bosanquet's political philosophy. A textual inquiry into *The Philosophical Theory of the State* showed that Bosanquet does not use the term "the Absolute" there and that he uses the word "absolute" in a clearly different way. Hobhouse's intention is to create the impression that, after all, the State is the embodiment of the Absolute in the world of socio-political organisation. The State has been described by him as "the working model of an Absolute," and as "the vicegerent" of the Absolute. Apart from the fact that Bosanquet does not present his theory in the way that Hobhouse asserts, Hobhouse fails to see that, for reasons related to the theoretical consistency of Bosanquet's project, Bosanquet's concept of the State cannot have the features that he (Hobhouse) attributes to it. Hobhouse fails to discern the difference. The difference between the two ideas (the Absolute and the State) is of utmost importance. The Absolute is characterised by completion, lack of contradiction and perfection. The State, however, as Bosanquet himself emphasises and Hobhouse obviously seems to ignore, is still incomplete, imperfect, and contradictory (Bosanquet, 1925: 141). The State is the culmination of that specific sort of social organisation that is implied in the function and experience of institutions as ethical ideas. In Hegelian terms, the State is the ultimate embodiment of the objective mind. The State represents the politico-ethico-social aspect of the "whole": it is not a comprehensive embodiment of the "whole." The State, however, refers to a kind of a whole in relative terms.[39] The State, being the social whole (the

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[39]The State "includes the entire hierarchy of institutions by which life is determined, from the family to the trade, and from the trade to the Church and the University. It includes all of them, not as the mere collection of the growths of the country, but

system that both sustains and animates ethical life), is completer, namely, more comprehensive and real, than the civil society for the latter is included in the former. Yet there are some areas of human realisation (art, philosophy, and religion) which have a social and a definite meta-social, or ultra-social, dimension.

The State is "a working conception of life" (Bosanquet, 1925: 141). How should we understand this idea? The State cannot escape the condition of finiteness: it is, after all, a product of human mind. The State, we have seen, "is a phase of individuality which belongs to the process towards unity at a point far short of its completion" (Bosanquet, 1912: 312). The State refers to self-transcendence and to the dialectic of the finite-infinite. The State plays a central part in the experience of the human individual who seeks self-realisation and self-completion through self-transcendence. The State as an idea is "situated" in the dramatic setting that marks the endeavour of the finite-infinite being to achieve self-assertion and self-maintenance in the world and to contribute to the realisation of a civilised life: "The end of the State, we repeat, is assuredly good life or the excellence of souls..." (Bosanquet, 1925: xxxix). This goal is more effectively achieved in the context of the institutional framework of the arrangements that substantiate the spirit of ethical life: "An institution implies a purpose or sentiment of more minds than one, and a more or less permanent embodiment of it" (Bosanquet, 1925: 277). Hence the State includes the family, the civil society, the neighbourhood, or district, and the State as

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as the structure which gives life and meaning to the political whole, while receiving from it mutual adjustment, and therefore expansion and a more liberal air" (Bosanquet, 1925: 140).

government.[40] Bosanquet introduces the idea of "neighbourhood" or "district" and makes an addition to the Hegelian classification:

> The District or Neighbourhood, in short, as an ethical idea, is the unity of the region with which we are in sensuous contact, as the family is that of the world bound to us by blood or daily needs. Local self-government, for example, acquires a peculiar character from the possibilities of intimate knowledge of each other among those who carry it on (Bosanquet, 1925: 286).

In my view, "neighbourhood" is, for Bosanquet, a very important concept. It gives a concrete idea of the ethical citizenship in an area of self-realisation which stands between the definite emotional and sentimental bonds of family and the more emotionally detached relations which develop in the context of civil society. The neighbourhood also offers a concrete "microcosmic" picture of the "macrocosm" of the social whole described by the ethical life. In the next page, Bosanquet emphasises how the idea of an ethical purpose in the context of one's neighbourhood enriches our life as a whole:

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[40]In discussing Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* in Chapter X of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, Bosanquet affirms the fundamental divisions of Hegel's Ethical Life. He writes: "... Hegel's analysis regards the social whole or system of social ethics from three points of view. First, in respect of the Family; secondly, in respect of what he has entitled Bourgeois Society; and thirdly, in respect of the Political Organism, or the State in the strict sense" (Bosanquet, 1925: 250).

The total disregard of an ethical purpose connecting us with the

surroundings nearest to us in bodily presence, tends to deprive the

general life of its vitality, its sensuous health, strength, and beauty

(Bosanquet, 1925: 287).[41]

Ethical life refers to a highly organised nexus of institutional materiality,

spiritual content and structural complexity. As a living experience and a framework

of life enriches, affects and synchronises the intertwined dimensions of morality,

sociality and spirituality that characterise the nature of the finite-infinite being. The

highest spiritual experiences of beauty, truth and goodness that are substantiated by

art, philosophy and religion are found beyond the actual organisation of the social

whole. They are related to its framework because the invisible world of value that

provides with meaning and scope the world of our everyday experience is within our

visible world. However, the spiritual world that is substantiated by art, philosophy,

and religion and which, in its totality, refers to the absolute spirit of the Hegelian

classification, has a definite ultra-social dimension. The spiritual world refers to a

realm of contemplation and apprehension of values that enables the finite-infinite

being to realise both citizenship and individuality. Hence, we refer to a state of self-

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[41]Another interesting point that results from Bosanquet's classification and from his theorisation of the district is the connection that one can make with contemporary debates about the role of the neighbourhood in the overall development of local life. I am referring to such ideas as participation, inclusion and citizenship in their relation to the more "structural" issues of the effectiveness of local government, and the different discourses of power associated with the different narratives of public management.

transendence that aims at self-perfection which is partly related to the institutions as

ethical ideas, namely, the State. There is continuity between the spiritual world of

the highest experiences and the institutions as ethical ideas. The latter structurally

sustains the former; yet the former is not identified with the latter. In the penultimate

paragraph of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* Bosanquet writes:

> Neither the State, however, nor the idea of humanity, nor the interests
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> of mankind, are the last word of theory. And even political theory
>
> must so far point ahead as to show that it knows where to look for its
>
> continuation. We have taken Society and the State throughout to
>
> have their value in the human capacities which they are the means of
>
> realising, in which realisation their social aspect is an inevitable
>
> condition (for human nature is not complete in solitude), but is not by
>
> itself, in its form of multitudes, the end. There is, therefore, no breach
>
> of continuity when the immediate participation of numbers, the direct
>
> moulding of life by the claims and relations of selves, falls away, and
>
> the human mind, consolidated and sustained by society, goes further
>
> on its path in removing contradictions and shaping its world and itself
>
> into unity. Art, philosophy, and religion, though in a sense the very
>
> life-blood of society, are not and could not be directly fashioned to
>
> meet the needs and uses of the multitude, and their aim is not *in that*
>
> *sense* "social." They should rather be regarded as a continuation,

within and founded upon the commonwealth, of the work which the commonwealth begins in realising human nature; as fuller utterances of the same universal self which the "general will" reveals in more precarious forms; and as in the same sense implicit in the consciousness of all, being an inheritance which is theirs so far as they can take possession of it (Bosanquet, 1925: 309-310).

We are inheritors of the spiritual world of value (the world of truth, beauty and goodness). However, the reality of the spiritual world is neither passively apprehended nor effortlessly realised. The affirmation of the spiritual world occurs within consciousness, within the boundaries of the finite-infinite self which is spiritually restructured and reconstituted each time that a more comprehensive level of infinity is achieved. Infinity refers to the values of truth, beauty and goodness, the apprehension of which enables the self to get closer to perfection and to attain a greater degree of reality and completion. The affirmation of values restructures the landscape of the self : the self becomes truer and more real as its substance emerges enriched beyond the transient phases of actuality. Values are impersonal, yet they are substantiated in persons during the soul-making process that affirms the spirit of individuality.[42] We are inheritors of the ultra-social, or meta-social, world of value because of our spirituality. I must emphasise here that, despite some superficial

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[42]Bosanquet discusses the issues of the impersonality of values and of their being experienced in mind in his *Some Suggestions in Ethics,* 1919: 7; 10; 12; 49; 55; 60.

evidence to the contrary,[43] Bosanquet asserts the value of the finite individual. This

argument is sustained by a three-fold evidence stemming from Bosanquet's views.

First, the substantiation of the spirit of infinity occurs within the mind of the finite-

infinite being. Second, the spiritual world is not a supernatural world of unknown

powers and disembodied spirits, but the world of values expressed in human mind.[44]

And, finally, the real, or the true, self is not an entity separate from the self which

embodies our being. The concept of the real self relates to the idea of the "real" in

Bosanquet's philosophy. The real self is a spiritual development of the actual self

based on a fundamental restructuring and transubstantiation of the content of the

actual self. The transubstantiation of the content of the actual self occurs within the

spiritual boundaries of the finite-infinite being and derives from the self-transformative

dynamics of the human being. Bosanquet mentions in the Gifford Lectures that the

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[43]See Lecture I of *The Principle of Individuality and Value* (Bosanquet, 1912: 20, n. 2). Bosanquet writes that: "The principal thing that matters is the level and fulness of mind attained. The destiny and separate conservation of particular minds is of inferior importance and merely instrumental to the former" (Bosanquet, 1912: 20). He immediately explains further his position (p. 20, n. 2) and gives us the clue to understand his statement: "Of course experience involves being 'lived' by some being. But this is quite different from saying that finite persons are ultimate values. To identify the conservation of values with the permanence or survival of given personalities, as Professor Varisco appears to me to do, is to my mind an extraordinary assumption." To understand this statement, we need: (a) to clarify how Bosanquet theorises value in the logic of his philosophical system; (b) to see how he relates the idea of the individual to the idea of value; and (c) to discern what was the claim to which he replied. I agree: he could have phrased his standpoint in a "milder" way. Yet he clarifies his position while replying to another standpoint which does not refer to the value of the individual as such: we must understand things in perspective and in their coherence.

[44]I have explained in the previous chapters how Bosanquet defines faith in God as faith in the reality of the good and what this means for the metaphysics of the self.

self constructs itself out of itself. We have here not only the dimensions of development and transformation, but also the symbolic "die to live" experience that signifies the nature of self-transcendence in Bosanquet's philosophy.[45] In the passage from *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (pp. 309-310) that I have quoted, Bosanquet asserts the following points. First, there is continuity between the social world (the world that contains the institutions as ethical ideas) and the spiritual world. Second, this continuity: (a) provides the institutions with meaning; and (b) goes beyond the limits of ethical life. The essence of the spiritual world is expressed dialectically in human experience. There is a continuous unfolding and a gradual movement of the self from the social level to the ultra-social level. The social nature of being is premissed on its self-transcending dynamic. Self-transcendence substantiates the dialectic of the finite-infinite in the human individual. In the social whole, the State of Bosanquet's philosophy, the self prepares itself for identification with more comprehensive states of perfection and individuality.

For Bosanquet, the ability of the human individual to realise in his/her life the spiritual world is sustained and nourished in the framework of the State, in the context of institutions as ethical ideas. Ethical life represents a more comprehensive and rational adjustment of the mere points of view: it refers to an adjustment that seeks to realise the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite constitution of the nature of being. During this process of spiritual reconstitution, the particular - which is in itself a

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[45]"Die to live; for thou who hast not Made this law thine own, Art but an embarrassed novice In a world unknown." Bosanquet quotes it from Goethe in *Some Suggestions in Ethics*, 1919: 161.

"microcosm" - partakes more assertively in the nature of the universal. As the

particular develops the dimension of infinity inside, it becomes more real for it attains

a deeper degree of completion and individuality. The particular retains its distinct

differentiation, yet it is spiritually transformed or enriched within. The spiritual

enhancement of its content is premissed on the development of the rational principle.

An ethical system which is true to its idea encourages and supports the development

of the rational principle which is a characteristic feature of the ontological constitution

of the finite-infinite self. A particular form of the rational principle is the idea of the

rational will. The rational will exists as an intrinsic potentiality in the psychical

constitution of the human individual. For Bosanquet, the cultivation of the rational

will is indispensable to freedom. The attainment of freedom is the culmination of self-

transcendence. In this context, Bosanquet introduces and discusses the idea of

culture.[46] How does culture fit to the logic of Bosanquet's project? This is how I

understand this issue. Culture is a means of attaining freedom. Culture is a many-

sided phenomenon that refers to the individual's endeavour to realise the true self

through self-transcendence. In my view, culture involves the "die to live" formula that

Bosanquet finds at the heart of the formation of individuality.[47] Culture sustains the

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[46]Sweet writes: "Much of Bosanquet's work was concerned with culture, though he never wrote explicitly on the topic." But, if we put Bosanquet's work in perspective, we will recognise that there is "little associated with the term 'culture' that Bosanquet did not study" (Sweet, 1998: 1-2). This is true. The "explicit" discussion of the idea of culture to which I am referring here relates to Bosanquet's discussion of Hegel's theory (Bosanquet, 1925: 255). One can reflect on, and theorise, the connections.

[47]An interesting analysis of the "die to live" maxim is found at Bosanquet's, "Plato's Conception of Death" (Bosanquet, 1999b [(1903-1904)]: 443-454).

reflective activity of the individual, underlies the formation of judgment, and enables the finite-infinite being to transcend the incomplete phases of will and to achieve the substantiation of the real will. Culture does play a significant part in the metaphysics of the self. Bosanquet, in discussing Hegel's theory, defines culture as:

[T]he liberation from one's own caprices, and the acceptance of a universal task. It is a severe process, and therefore unpopular, but it is necessary one if we were to have freedom (Bosanquet, 1925: 255).

Bosanquet's main point is clear: culture moulds the character and introduces the individual mind to the achievements of civilisation and to the spiritual heritage of humanity. Culture presupposes sociality and spirituality which, as we have seen, enable the finite-infinite being to realise the spiritual world. Culture restricts the animal or the irrational aspects of human nature and moulds the soul. For instance, culture enables one to direct the feelings of revenge for a wrong that one has suffered to a way of dealing with the situation through the formal administration of justice. This is a function operated by a third party which constitutes an agency separate from both the offended and the offender. Culture is not confined to the formal education we receive. Culture refers to a broader and more substantial experience: it is the cultivation of mind through art, philosophy and religion. These are modes of

experience that open a new horizon of life for the individual.[48] To use Bosanquet's

unique phraseology, culture enables the individual to acquire the "true perception of

the other world." In other words, culture enables mind to develop its potentials for

deep insightful knowledge, spiritual sensitivity and ability to grasp principle and to

discern in everything the spirit of the whole. Culture effects the development of the

individual's intellectual capacities and sustains his/her capability of critical reflection

and judgment. It is indispensably related to the ability of mind to grasp universal

principles and to realise values. The ability to grasp principles substantiates the

passage from the mere point of view to more reflective judgments. Hence the ability

to grasp principles and form insightful critical assessments are prerequisites for

citizenship.

2b. The End of the State

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[48]Bosanquet forcefully describes how art enables the individual to appreciate beauty and thus to develop further his/her ability "to see" things as he/she never saw before: "The perception of beauty implies, above all things, an awakened mind. It consists in an active sympathy and insight, a fresh and vigorous spirit, that apprehends the expression, and the life, or truth, of all that it meets with, just as a great portrait-painter seizes a face or a figure. And so, when the sense of beauty is ever so little aroused, the mind has acquired a new organ. Nature, in the first place, with all its forms and movements and colours, becomes an endless source of interest. Experience shows, what we should expect, that plain country boys can thus have their eyes opened and see what they never saw before. You have a country wheelwright, who can carve a panel of oak leaves from nature, and who becomes an enthusiast for naturalistic design. This means that he has acquired the love of form, and the world is a different place to him after his eyes are thus opened. And, in the second place, this same awakening of the mind involves an appreciation of beauty in art" (Bosanquet, 1899d: 76-77).

The second sub-section of the second section of this chapter is divided into three parts. The first part is entitled "Hobhouse's Version of Bosanquet's Argument." Under this heading I examine how Hobhouse presented Bosanquet's argument concerning the end of the State and I show which are the points that he failed to grasp. The first part is further divided into three parts: (a) "Happiness and Goodness" [sub-division: 2b/i(a)]; (b) "Totality and the State as a 'Totality'" [sub-division: 2b/i(b)]; and (c) "Perfection" [sub-division: 2b/i(c)]. These three parts correspond to specific aspects of Hobhouse's attack on Bosanquet's theorisation of the end of the State. I critically assess what Hobhouse claims and why his understanding of Bosanquet's ideas is both limited and mistaken. In "replying" to Hobhouse, I draw on Bosanquet's own theory, I explain which is Bosanquet's perspective and I endeavour to see his ideas in their coherence and unity as they stand in the logic of his philosophical project. The second part is entitled "The Relation Between the State and the Individual." I argue that Hobhouse erroneously builds his critique of Bosanquet on the assumption that there is, first and foremost, an opposition between the individual and the State: an opposition that Bosanquet finally "resolves" because, in his theory, he subordinates the individual to the State. I argue that Hobhouse "reads" Bosanquet wrongly because he fails to see the dialectic between the State and the individual, and the dialectical movement of the individuals themselves within the context of the State. Hobhouse's error is that he discerns "units" as the ultimate categories of discourse and not the "web of experience" that makes the definition of individuality more complex and richer than the definition of the individual of the

atomistic individualists. In sum, Hobhouse fails to discern and properly apprehend the exact nature of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite in Bosanquet's theory of individuality. The third part is entitled "Means, Ends, and the Best Life." This part is devoted to an extensive discussion of Hobhouse's view that, for Bosanquet, the State is an end in itself. I draw on Bosanquet's own words in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* and I demonstrate that Hobhouse did not pay attention to Bosanquet's statement that the end of the State, the society and the individual is the realisation of the best life.

2b/i. Hobhouse's Version of Bosanquet's Argument

> As Dr. Bosanquet tells us, "the treatment of the state in this discussion is naturally analogous to the treatment of the universe." The happiness of the state is not to be judged by the happiness of the individual; the happiness of the individual must be judged by the goodness of the state. It is to be valued by the perfection of the whole to which he belongs. In the conception, therefore, of the state as a totality, which is an end in itself, an end to which the lives of men and women are mere means, we have the working model of an Absolute (Hobhouse, 1918: 19)

Hobhouse's version of Bosanquet's views concerning the end of the State and, subsequently, the relation between the State and the individual is designed to prove that Bosanquet's main thesis is ideologically dangerous and utterly suspicious when it comes to political and social philosophy. One can easily discern the link: Hegel and Bosanquet belong to the same tradition of theorising. They both assert "a slavish adulation of the Absolute in whose hands we are mere pawns" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19), and they can be regarded as advocating State Absolutism and State-worship. Hobhouse mentions the "direct connection between Bismarckian ethics and Hegelian teaching" (Hobhouse, 1918: 24), and warns against the dangers of State-worship that his contemporaries witness:

> The state is a great organization. Its well-being is something of larger and more permanent import than that of any single citizen. Its scope is vast. Its service calls for the extreme of loyalty and self-sacrifice. All this is true. Yet when the state is set up as an entity superior and indifferent to component individuals it becomes a false god, and its worship the abomination of desolation, as seen at Ypres or on the Somme (Hobhouse, 1918: 136).[49]

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[49]I wish to comment on something that I find interesting in this quotation. Hobhouse writes that to regard the State as "a great organization" the service of which "calls for the extreme of loyalty and self sacrifice" is "true." I wonder, was he aware of the implications of this statement, if one does not accept (as Bosanquet does) the distinction between the State *qua* State and the plurality of empirical cases? Bosanquet sets a standard according to which the actual States should be judged: the standard is the idea of the State that must be embodied in every State *qua* State. The

I now turn to the quotation at the opening of this part. In my view, this is a very important passage that needs to be discussed. It contains, linguistically and conceptually, the most powerful theoretical "weapons" that Hobhouse uses in order to "deconstruct" what he calls "the metaphysical theory of the State."[50] As we will see, however, at the end of this second section, Bosanquet's views are not only misinterpreted but, and this is worse, misrepresented. Three issues that require clarification arise from this statement. The first issue refers to the ideas of "happiness" and "goodness" in relation to the State and the individual. The second issue refers to the idea of "the state as a totality." And, finally, the third issue deals with the idea of perfection in its relation to the philosophical theorisation of reality and to the metaphysics of the self. The three issues are interrelated.

2b/i (a). Happiness and Goodness

Hobhouse fails to see how the individual, society and the State relate to each

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idea of the State is not an "ideal" absent from actual human affairs: it is, on the contrary, the essence of the nature of the State. Hobhouse, who does not not understand the difference between the "actual" and the "real" - in this case, the difference between States and States which are true to their idea *qua* States - says, in fact, that every state is " a great organization." Bosanquet would retort that a State is a great organisation when it is true to its idea, when it realises its nature, namely, when it realises what it fundamentally is.

[50]Hobhouse has more to say about this theory. The underlying assumption is that, in "the metaphysical theory of the State," the individual as rational being does not exist: "The method followed by this theory is not ethical because it does not seek to find reasons for human conduct in any ultimate goal of human duty. It does not seek these because it denies that the reflective reason of the individual is the method by which the truth about ideals is to be ascertained" (Hobhouse, 1918: 20).

other in the continuous "web of experience" that the State represents in Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State. Hobhouse, in criticising Bosanquet, presupposes the fundamental assumptions of the atomistic individualist theorists (Bentham, Mill and Spencer) that Bosanquet repudiates. As a result, Hobhouse criticises Bosanquet's project without having understood how Bosanquet uses the concepts and what is the content of the concepts in the framework of his notional scheme. The phrase "the happiness of the individual" implies that the end of the individual is the attainment of happiness. Yet the happiness of the individual has no connection with the happiness of the State. The State aims at a kind of happiness too, which is its own happiness. Finally, the State realises its happiness at the expense of the happiness of the individual: the State in its totality seems to be explicitly indifferent to the happiness of the individual. Hobhouse implicitly asserts that each unit (the State and the individual) seems to be, ultimately, an end in itself, but the State's end definitely takes precedence over the individual's end.

Hobhouse does not notice that, in Bosanquet's theory, society, the State and the individual aim at an end which is not the prevailing end of a particular unit in its atomistic isolation and independence. In addition, he does not discern the different levels of reality which are involved in the end of the individual as such. I am referring to the notions of the real will and the real self which are articulated in the mind of the finite-infinite being because of the individual's sociality, spirituality and rationality. Hobhouse fails to ascertain how the individual, society, and the State are articulated in the logic of Bosanquet's project.

In the logic of Bosanquet's project, neither the State is an end in itself, nor society is an end in itself, nor the individual is an end in itself. The individual, society, and the State are the fundamental constituent components of ethical life. Ethical life refers to the life of the individuals as social beings. Ethical life presupposes the social whole and it is premissed on the spirituality of the finite-infinite beings who sustain the social whole. Society, the State and the individual aim at an end that should be understood as their ultimate end despite the plurality of particular ends that differentiations allow. The characteristic of sociality is to make human individuals aware of their social being : the self-consciousness of sociality derives from the spiritual nature of the finite-infinite self. Sociality and spirituality enable the human individual to transcend the limits of the private self and to realise his/her nature within a social whole that sustains and enriches the content of the self. The end of the State, society and the individual is the attainment of the best, or the good, life that is realised in the more inclusive framework of the institutions as ethical ideas. The best life has a trans-subjective orientation and it is not determined by the particular end of a particular "unit" - however comprehensive this unit appears to be. In the context of the State, Bosanquet writes:

> All individuals are continually reinforced and carried on, beyond their
>
> average immediate consciousness, by the knowledge, resources, and
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> energy which surround them in the social order, with its inheritance,
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> of which the order itself is the greater part (Bosanquet, 1925: 143).

To sum up. Hobhouse asserts that for Bosanquet the State represents in an *a priori* way the characteristics of goodness and perfection despite actual evidence to the contrary. Furthermore, the State of "the metaphysical theory," being an end in itself, seeks its own "happiness" at the expense of the individuals' happiness. Hobhouse does not clarify the content of the terms "happiness," "goodness," and "perfection." He does not explain how he understands these terms in the semantic framework of his own project - the project that he uses to address and identify the weaknesses of Bosanquet's project. Hobhouse plays with the words "happiness," "goodness," and "perfection" without providing us with a hint of a definition. Even worse, he seems to be unaware of the way that Bosanquet both uses and defines those terms in the logic of his philosophical project. Hobhouse does not clarify what is the relation between "happiness," "goodness," and "perfection" in his own discourse. How and under which conditions does one feature lead to the other? What is the meaning that Hobhouse attributes to each one of these characteristics? How are these notions defined in relation to the social being of the individual as a part of a more inclusive whole that sustains and promotes his/her individuality? No clue is provided.

To me, Hobhouse's account has two main characteristics. First, he claims that, for Bosanquet, the State (any state in its actual empirical manifestation), is *a priori* the embodiment of goodness, perfection and happiness. This is, of course, a position that Bosanquet never holds in the way that Hobhouse elaborates it. And, second, he concludes that Bosanquet theorises the State as an end in itself. Hobhouse develops this claim, despite the fact that Bosanquet states clearly that the end of the State, of

society and of the individual is the best life.[51] As a result, Hobhouse proves his

inability: (a) to offer an insightful reading of Bosanquet's conception of the

philosophical theory of the State; (b) to elaborate a constructive criticism of

Bosanquet's metaphysical project - the main elements of which seem "to inform" his

entire critique of Bosanquet's views; and (c) to understand *The Philosophical Theory*

of the State in an interpretative framework enlightened by Bosanquet's metaphysics.

2b/i (b). Totality and "the State as a Totality"

The conception of "the state as a totality" presupposes an insight into the idea

of totality. "Totality" is a term that Bosanquet uses at different places in his logical

and metaphysical analyses. Hobhouse's conception of Bosanquet's idea of totality is

misleading. In Hobhouse's view, the idea of totality seems to refer to a static unit

structured around a cluster of given, fixed, and pre-established relations of power and

normative determinations. Hobhouse forgets that the spirit of totality, the spirit of the

whole, reveals a dynamic relation with the world and refers to coherence and unity

which are logical categories that enable mind to systematise the content of

consciousness on the basis of judgment. The inclusion of all possibilities and their

transformation into a systematic whole transcends time in the sense that it transcends

the boundaries of fixed, pre-given and pre-established relations and determinations.

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[51]See, for instance, Bosanquet, 1925: 102-103; 142-143; 169-171; 173; 174-175; and 298-299.

Sweet writes that for Bosanquet, who draws on Aristotle, the end "is no stasis - it is no *'terminus ad quem'* where something ceases to be. It is rather, a 'protracted terminus' ... where activity continues" (Sweet, 1997b: 100). My point is this: a unit conceived as a "totality" does not refer to a "stasis": it is not a finished project imposed on mind - it is a spiritual content revealed in mind. A "unit" conceived as a "totality" has two characteristics: (a) its "totality" is relative, i.e., it refers to the idea of a whole in the particular context of a specific order of things; and (b) "totality" is not a finished project - a "fossilised" content arrested in time that defies dialectic and spiritual transformation and adjustment.

We saw that Hobhouse asserts that for Bosanquet the State is a totality which is an end in itself (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). I argue that only a "totality" which is static, monolithic, lifeless, arrested in a specific moment of temporality can be an end in itself because, in this case, it refers to a finished project that has severed relations with the dynamics of living experience. Had Hobhouse been more attentive to the logic of Bosanquet's philosophical system, he would have been able to recognise that the unit of the State as a totality is situated in a very specific place with the framework of what Bosanquet calls "institutions as ethical ideas" that refers to the reality of ethical life. In this context, Bosanquet develops the idea of the State as the social whole which refers to the culmination of the system of ethical life that includes all these institutions on the basis of which the spirit of the ethical life is realised. These institutions are: the family, the civil society, the district or neighbourhood, and the state as government. The State that Bosanquet theorises is the modern European

State. Philosophically speaking, this State refers to structures and ideas that belong to the discourse of European civilisation, the spiritual foundations of which derive from the fundamental conceptions of life that Hellenism and Christianity bequeathed to humanity. Let us see how the State, in this context, is a "totality."

The State, being understood in this way, includes and protects the family. Without the protection of the State, family as an ethical institution and as a fundamental component of the ethical life cannot exist and develop without impediments:

> [T]he family or household as an ethical structure is not anterior to the State, but is rather a growth dependent on the spirit and protection of the State, and intentionally fostered by it as against forms of kinship which do less justice to the ethical possibilities of parentage (Bosanquet, 1925: 279).

Family needs to be situated in a more comprehensive framework of legal and structural arrangements which can protect the fundamental features of its function and enable this institution to develop according to its nature. For instance, in the context of the family, issues of inheritance, divorce, abuse of one of the partners, or abuse of the children, can arise: these issues need to be resolved from an authority other than the parts involved. The resolution of these problems, in the context of the civilised life, requires a recognised system of rights and a legal system associated with an array

of other structural and institutional arrangements that can enforce action and formulate particular policies.[52] Hence we see that the State, in this case, is a more comprehensive unit than the family. The State refers to a "totality," or a completer whole, in relation to the family. The family is a kind of "totality" (a whole) in itself, yet it substantiates a "totality" less comprehensive than the "totality" of the State.

I epitomise the points discussed in this part and I move to the third issue, the issue of perfection. The State describes a conception of life that is more comprehensive than the conceptions of life represented by the institutions which constitute its overall content. The spiritual interconnection and the structural interdependence of the modes of experience that the State contains in its matrix contribute to the building up the very idea of comprehensiveness embodied by the State. The spirit of totality encapsulated in the Absolute refers to a totality that is more real and more comprehensive than the "totality" represented by the State. This happens because in the Absolute, as this idea is elucidated in Bosanquet's Gifford Lectures, we have the overall realisation of the spiritual world of value. The spiritual world of value is expressed in art, philosophy and religion and refers to the values of beauty, truth and goodness. At this level, which substantiates a further movement of the realisation of consciousness, the reality of the spiritual world has a more comprehensive and complete form than its manifestation in the context of ethical life. This conclusion leads me to the discussion of the idea of perfection.

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[52]Sweet (1997b) offers an extensive critical analysis of Bosanquet's account of rights and a comprehensive assessment of Bosanquet's theory of rights.

2b/i (c). Perfection

Bosanquet writes that perfection cannot be described:

We cannot describe perfection; that is we cannot enumerate its components and state their form and connection in detail. But we can define its character as the harmony of all being (Bosanquet, 1913: 194).

Bosanquet uses systematically throughout his philosophical project such ideas as perfection, completion, and reality. He speaks, however, of degrees of perfection, completion and reality. This is a crucial point that evades Hobhouse's attention. For Bosanquet, we achieve, as sentient and rational finite-infinite beings, different degrees of perfection, completion and reality. For instance, the individual, in realising the real self, extends the spiritual limits of the self and passes through different states of being while coming closer to the reality of the good. The formation of the real self is premissed on the crystallisation, assertion, and dynamic movement of the real will that is a growth of the individual self. Mind itself is characterised by different degrees of reality, completion and perfection. According to Bosanquet, mind is always shaped and restructured by the new material that it critically, apprehensively, consciously or unconsciously includes during its dialectical relation with externality. The expansive power of mind makes self-transcendence possible. The finite-infinite self conquers different and deeper levels of reality during the individual's participation in,

engagement with, and exposure to: (a) the complex web of institutions and structures that substantiate the reality of ethical life; and (b) the spiritual activity which develops and affirms the infinite aspect of the finite-infinite nature of the self.

For Bosanquet the self constructs itself out of itself. The realisation of the real, or the true, self, means the substantiation of a deeper and greater degree of reality, completion, and perfection. Completion, reality and perfection fundamentally relate to self-transcendence. Self-transcendence is the impulse of the self to transcend the limitations of its finite condition and to throw itself beyond the actuality of the given (at any moment) self. Hence self-transcendence is the prerequisite to attaining reality, completion and perfection. Self-transcendence is both a conscious and unconscious spiritual process that runs through the dialectical movement of the self and characterises the substantiation and unfolding of the different phases of selfhood. Self-transcendence refers to a ceaseless process that signifies the finite-infinite being's self-maintenance, self-realisation and self-perfection.

2b/ii. The Relation Between the State and the Individual

I contend that Hobhouse's conception of the relation between society, the individual and the State in Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State presupposes an assumption that underlies the methodological standpoint which is sharply criticised by Bosanquet in his assessment of "the theories of the first look" - the theories of Bentham, Mill and Spencer. I need to clarify further. I do not claim that Hobhouse argues that Bosanquet holds the same views on the State, society and the individual

as Bentham, Mill and Spencer. What I say is that Hobhouse, when he assesses Bosanquet's theory, understands the State and the individual, at first and before the "subordination" of the latter to the former, as opposing units. This is exactly the point that Bosanquet objects to in his discussion of the theories of the first look" or "*prima facie* theories" (Bosanquet, 1925: 50-95). Yet Hobhouse develops this idea in another direction: these "units" finally represent an unequal "relation." Their "relation" refers to the subordination and annihilation of the substance of the particular (the individual) in the context of the "universal" (the State). This is a very subtle issue, and I need to explain in detail.

Bosanquet argues that J. Bentham, J. S. Mill, and H. Spencer, who were the exponents of what he calls the "theories of the first look," emphasise two points: (a) the fact of the physical separation of the human beings; and (b) the distinction between the individual as an impervious self-complete unit and society as the embodiment of laws, rules, and normative conditions which are imposed on the human being and thus restrict its development and individuality. "Society," understood in this sense, appears to be a foreign body with respect to "the individual": "society" must be kept always at a safe distance from "the individual." Bosanquet has a different perspective. He retorts that the physical separation of the individuals is an undeniable fact, yet this is the first impression of a reality which is deeper and more complex than it appears to be. Human beings are something more than their physical separation as living organisms: the contents of mind, the web of experience, consciousness, our awareness of being, our spiritual constitution (language, sentiments, beliefs, ways of

understanding, and relating to, the world) extend spiritually beyond the frontiers of the physical materiality of the separate self as a unit distinct from other selves. In other words, the self appears to be a unit isolated and separate from other selves, yet, in reality, it is something more than that:

> Individuals are limited and isolated in many ways. But their true individuality does not lie in their isolation, but in that distinctive act or service by which they pass into unique contributions to the universal. True individuality, as we have said, is not in the minimisation which forbids further subdivision, but in the maximisation which includes the greatest possible being in an inviolable unity. It is not, therefore, the intrusion upon isolation, as such, that interferes with individuality; it is the intrusion, upon a growing unity of consciousness, of a medium hostile to its growth (Bosanquet, 1925: 170).

Our distinct selfhood is based on a creative internalisation, criticism, affirmation, negation, readjustment and judgment of a body of experiences that expand the frontiers of a "fixed" self beyond the "shell" of its apparent (visible, physical) isolation. This is very briefly Bosanquet's critique of the theory of atomistic individualism.

In my view, Hobhouse, in attacking Bosanquet, erroneously builds his critique on the assumption of the opposition of the individual and the State. Yet there is a differentiation as he elaborates his views: his theory develops in a different direction -

in the direction of subordinating the individual to the State. In replying to Hobhouse, I attempt an anatomy at the meta-theoretical level of the architecture of his entire critique. This anatomy tries to discern the formative basis behind: (a) the conceptual presuppositions and assumptions of Hobhouse's project; and (b) the theoretical structures that sustain the spirit of his contentions. What I say is this: in order to obliterate the individuality and to subordinate the human being to the "totality" of the State (as Hobhouse argues that Bosanquet does), one needs to assume first that these units (say in a primordial state of being) stand in opposition to each other. Then, the more powerful imposes on the less powerful a condition of submission and subordination. This view does not take into account the social being of the finite-infinite self which is the starting-point of Bosanquet's theory. The structure of Hobhouse's account has thus two steps. First, for Hobhouse, Bosanquet presupposes that the "powerless" unit of the individual stands in opposition to the "powerful" unit of the State. Then, the "unit" of the individual becomes subordinate to the State which is understood as "the working model of an Absolute" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). The question is: what does Hobhouse fail to understand?

Hobhouse fails to understand a point that Bosanquet emphasises throughout his analysis. Hobhouse does not see the dialectical relation, mutual (logical and essential) interdependence between the State and the individual in the context of a social whole, the movement of consciousness towards deeper degrees of self-affirmation, the dynamic movement of the self that constructs itself out of itself in the act of a continuous self-transcendence. Instead of the dialectic, Hobhouse sees an

one-sided imposition of power and fatal dependence. Hobhouse does not pay attention to the fact that, in Bosanquet's theorisation of the State, the State (that includes society) and the individual are situated in a continuous web of experience. Hobhouse stops at the moment of the formal, or analytical, separation of the two "units" and does not develop an insight into their dialectical movement. In other words, he does not perceive the spiritual continuity, the interdependence of contents, and the restructuring and transformation of contents that occurs on the basis of adjustment, organisation, and judgment. Hobhouse insists upon the hierarchical relation between the "universal" and the "particular" which, in the context of his analysis, have lost their real meaning and the former is falsely regarded as imposing an annihilating power on the latter. Hobhouse does not understand properly the "particular" and the "universal" because he disregards the elements of the internal dialectical movement and of mutual interdependence and interpenetration that characterise the "particular" and the "universal" in Bosanquet's philosophical project.

From the standpoint of the metaphysics of the self, the philosophical theory of the State can be regarded as a theory describing the realisation of the moral being, which is a self-judging being (Bosanquet, 1913: 197), in the context of institutions as ethical ideas. Bosanquet does not theorise the State and the individual as, primarily, opposing "units," the "relation" of which is finally based on the submission of the particular end to the end of a more inclusive unit. Hobhouse regards the State (the more inclusive unit of our discussion) as an end in itself. So, for Hobhouse,

Bosanquet's conception of the State embodies an end that is independent of, and indifferent to, the reflective action and purposes of the individuals. According to Hobhouse, Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State advocates a kind of "relation" between the State and the individual which has two characteristics. First, it is a "relation" of passive submission and subordination on the part of the individuals. Second, it is a "relation" that refers to an abstract, one-dimensional, monolithic, and vertical imposition of rule on the part of the State over the individuals who, being elements of this "State," have lost any sense of "individuality." Yet Hobhouse develops an erroneous account of Bosanquet's political philosophy because he fails to discern the following. In *The Philosophical Theory of the State* the relation between the State and the individual is not elaborated in the way he thinks that it is. The relation between the State and the individual is not premissed: (a) on the operation of an active agency (the State) which materialises its existence through the administration of force; and (b) on the the obedience of a passive agency (the individual) who submits to law in a condition of "hypnosis" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19), oppression, and obliteration of individuality.[53] In Hobhouse's presentation of Bosanquet's theory, the human agent embodies a state of defective "political" being that derives from the suppression of will and intelligence.

In Bosanquet's theory, the relation between the State and the individual is premissed on a spiritual foundation that makes life together possible. Between the

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[53]Hobhouse uses such phrases as: "our power of revolt is atrophied, our reason is hypnotized, our efforts to improve life and remedy wrong fade away into a passive acquiescence in things as they are" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19).

individual (as a member of the State) and the State (as the social whole) operates the spirit of unity (unity in difference) that substantiates the real nature of sociality. The spirit of unity refers to the harmonisation of multiple differentiations within a framework of relations which are characterised by continuity, complexity, and endless restructuring. The spirit of unity is substantiated in the idea of an objective good, the common good, that enables the flourishing of individuality in the context of ethical life. Both self-affirmation and self-maximisation find a more real and a more comprehensive expression in the matrix of the social whole that provides the self with, among other things, a nexus of relations, institutions, structures, and organising principles that can sustain the development and flourishing of human potentialities.

The State *qua* State, that is to say, the State when it is true to its nature, lawfully exercises absolute physical power over the individuals and acts as an ultimate power of adjustment in the context of the institution as ethical ideas. There is, however, a principle operating as a normative prerequisite for the justification of the exercise of absolute power on behalf of the State within the social whole. The State is true to its idea only if the exercise of force is in accordance with the attainment of the end which is the best life. The crystallisation of the idea of the best life presupposes the individual's reflective activity and judgment. Thought leads to insights concerning the place of the individual in the world and sustains the transformation of the actual wills into more comprehensive forms of substantiating the real. The ability of the individual to substantiate the real and thus to realise his/her nature is premissed on his/her fundamental ontological constitution as a finite-infinite

being throughout. The apprehension of the common good and the realisation of the

best life in the social whole is possible because of the individual's self-transcendence

and the dialectic of the finite-infinite that characterises the being of the self. I now

turn to the analysis of the best life in Bosanquet's philosophy.

2b/iii. Means, Ends, and the Best Life

According to the course of thought which we have been pursuing, the

distinction between the individual on the one hand, and the social or

political whole on the other, is not relevant to the question where the

"end" of man in Society is to be sought. For the conceptions of

Society and the individual are correlative conceptions through and

through; at whatever level, therefore, we take the one, we are bound

to construe the other as at the same level; so that, to distinguish the

one element from the other as superior from inferior, or as means from

end, becomes a contradiction in terms (Bosanquet, 1925: 167).

In my view, this is a very important quotation. Bosanquet clarifies that society and

the individual are neither identical terms nor do they stand in a kind of hierarchical

order. He emphasises that society and the individual are correlative terms and that we

ought to construe and theorise them at the same level. What does "to correlate"

mean? To correlate means to have a mutual relation, connection or association: to have a relation of, especially affecting or depending on each other. The phrase "correlative terms" is not the product of a meta-theoretical explication of Bosanquet's views; on the contrary, the phrase exists in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. Hobhouse, if he really wanted to offer an honest assessment of Bosanquet's theory, ought to have paid attention to this passage. Going back to *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, we can follow the development of Bosanquet's reflections. He elaborates further:

> The antithesis [between society and the individual] is really, however, absurd. There are not two opposable sets of contents concerned in the matter at all; but a single web of content which in its totality is society and in its differentiations the individuals. To make the totality the means to the differentiations or *vice versa* is like making a drama the means to the characters, or the characters to the drama (Bosanquet, 1925: 168).

Bosanquet's philosophical project is characterised by systematic use of the words and subtle semantical differentiations and distinctions that altogether make it coherent, consistent, and well-organised. One needs to read attentively and to let oneself follow the flow of Bosanquet's thoughts and thus make intuitive and logical connections with all the aspects of Bosanquet's theorising. Furthermore, one must apprehend the

meaning of concepts in the context of the discourse of Philosophical Idealism. I have demonstrated so far that Hobhouse, who seemed to have no doubts about his competence to understand and "deconstruct" Bosanquet's philosophy, neither paid attention to what Bosanquet really wrote, nor did he apprehend the ideas in their context and in their systematicity.

I now comment on "the drama and its characters metaphor" that Bosanquet mentions in Chapter VIII of *The Philosophical Theory of the State*. It is worth noting that the metaphor of the drama and its characters that corresponds to society ("totality") and the individuals ("the differentiations") respectively has a heuristic function. This metaphor, in my view, has a two-fold purpose. First, it provides us with a dramatic description of the correct way in which we should conceive of society and the individuals. Second, it indicates the most effective way of unravelling Bosanquet's argument, of capturing the idea beneath the structure of his project, and of assessing his thoughts on this topic. What I claim is this. Had Bosanquet stopped the development of his thoughts at the "totality and its differentiations" moment, he probably would not have managed to make his position entirely immune to the standard kind of criticism that Hobhouse addressed. I have in mind, for instance, Hobhouse's contentions that, for Bosanquet, any individual is but an insignificant element in the great society, or that the individual possesses no independent life of his own (Hobhouse, 1918: 30-31). Someone who is not thoroughly familiar with the way that Bosanquet uses such concepts as the particular and the universal, the finite and the infinite, the part and the whole, can easily infer that the "differentiations" of a

"totality" are identical in content and insignificant in value moments of the greater totality. Hobhouse does not explain, however, how something which is so valuable and important in itself consists of insignificant component parts; yet this is another story. Why is the idea of the drama and its characters important for understanding Bosanquet's reflections on this topic? To me, the idea of the drama and its characters adds to the "single web of content" the spirit of differentiation inside the differentiations. The differentiations of a "totality," therefore, should not be viewed as monotonous, identical and insignificant replicas of the one great picture, but as a plurality of "microcosmic" totalities themselves. The contents of the "differentiations"are endlessly reshaped and restructured and reaffirmed being in a ceaseless dialectical relation with themselves and with what is beyond and beneath them. This double process of formation and reconstitution provides the self-transcending nature of the "differentiations" as "characters" in a "drama."

As we will see, Bosanquet uses the "means and ends" discourse in a consistent way throughout. There are means to the attainment of the good life (education, culture, art, good health, and so on), but human beings are not regarded as means to an end. The concept of the end is substantiated through the reflective consciousness, moral being, will and judgment of the individuals and it transcends the limitations of particularity in its momentary actual manifestation(s). How does it happen? The individuals as social beings, that is to say, as moral and self-judging beings, are involved in the system of institutions as ethical ideas which constitute the formative matrix of the civilised life. As they are realising their social being within society, the

individuals reflect on their actual wills and proceed consciously and unconsciously to

extensive and deep processes of criticism,[54] re-evaluation, reassessment,

restructuration and reconstitution.[55] The art of living together involves an insight into

the idea of the common good that Bosanquet regards as identical to the best life

(Bosanquet, 1925: 178).[56] I take Bosanquet's statement to mean that the idea of the

common good relates logically, essentially and fundamentally to the idea of the best

life. The common good is the idea that sustains the life of the community and makes

it real, that is to say, more complete, more comprehensive, more perfect. The idea

of the common good is substantiated in the reflective adjustment and organisation of

contents according to a rational principle which occurs in the consciousness of the

finite-infinite being. The idea of the best life that indispensably relates to the idea of

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[54]"Such a process of harmonising and readjusting a mass of data to bring them into a rational shape is what is meant by criticism" (Bosanquet, 1925: 111).

[55]The best life "can only be realised in consciousness, that being the medium of all satisfaction and the only true type of a whole in experience" (Bosanquet, 1925: 169). Note the essential, logical and fundamental connection of the end of the social whole with the focal point of all thought and action, that is to say, with consciousness. We must not forget that: (a) consciousness relates to the life of the individual; and (b) Bosanquet uses as co-extensive the terms "mind" and "consciousness." For a conceptual clarification of the terms "mind" and "consciousness" in his philosophy, see Bosanquet, 1887-1888: 12-16.

[56]In Lecture V of *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* entitled "Varying Applications of the Metaphysical Theory," Hobhouse mentions T. H. Green and asserts that he developed the idealistic theory of the State towards the direction of a common good which must be seen as "the ethical basis of the state" (Hobhouse, 1918: 96). T. H. Green, according to Hobhouse, is absolved from the guilt of Bosanquet's Hegelianism. I do not wish to comment on this issue. What I want to point out is that Hobhouse seems not to have read an extensive theorisation of the idea of the common good, and of its philosophical foundations in Chapter V of *The Philosophical Theory of the State* (Bosanquet, 1925: 102-103).

the common good refers to the realisation of the social being of the finite-infinite self during its communion with the other selves within the institutional framework of ethical life. Sweet rightly observes that an individual's good "has as its 'end' the 'common good' precisely because it is the context in which the individual good appears and is possible" (Sweet, 1997b: 107). As we have already seen, the institutions as ethical ideas enable the individual to realise what fundamentally he/she is. Bosanquet admits that: (a) the idea of the realisation of the nature of a thing; and (b) the idea of apprehending mind in a community of minds, have a common source. Both ideas refer back to the fundamental principles of Greek political philosophy which sought to understand and theorise the political life of man as having value in itself and for its own sake (Bosanquet, 1925: 6-7; and 68, n. 2).

Hobhouse clearly asserts that, for Bosanquet, the State "is an end in itself" (Hobhouse, 1918: 19). I argue that the concept of the State as an end in itself is an idea totally alien to Bosanquet's theory. One does not need to embark on extensive investigations to find evidence against Hobhouse's contention. Bosanquet states clearly his position in *The Philosophical Theory of the State*:

> For us ... the ultimate end of Society and the State as of the individual
>
> is the realisation of the best life. The difficulty of defining the best life
>
> does not trouble us, because we rely throughout on the fundamental
>
> logic of human nature *qua* rational. We think ourselves no more
>
> called upon to specify in advance what will be the details of the life

which satisfies an intelligent being as such, than we are called upon to specify in advance what will be the details of the knowledge which satisfies an intelligent being as such. Wherever a human being touches practice, as wherever he touches theory, we find him driven on by his intolerance of contradictions towards shaping his life as a whole. What we mean by "good" and "truth" is practical and theoretical experience in so far as the logic which underlies man's whole nature permits him to repose in it. And the best life is the life which has most of this general character - the character which, so far as realised, satisfies the fundamental logic of man's capacities (Bosanquet, 1925: 169).

The end of the State, society and the individual is the attainment of the best life. The best life is realised in the context of institutions as ethical ideas and by no means is identified with the particular end of a particular "unit." The ideal of the best life emerges from the mind of the human individuals as social beings and it is premissed on a continuous reflective process of criticism, adjustment, negation, and affirmation of aims and purposes under the organising principle of reason that is a distinct characteristic of the human individual. The ideal of the best life relates to the art of living together which refers to the articulation of a common good. At the root of the common good we have the idea of affirming our being and distinct sense of selfhood without inhibiting our fellow citizens to do so. The meaning of sociality is

to find a way of living together harmoniously, to create, to achieve goals, to realise spiritual purposes which affirm the moral being of the self, to develop the highest possibilities of the self, and to contribute to the movement of civilisation. The individual seeks to realise the ideal of the best life which, as an ideal Bosanquet would say, makes reality more transparent to the eyes of the finite-infinite being. The nature of the State as an ethical idea is to enable the individual to realise the end, that is to say, the idea of the best life. Bosanquet does not regard the State and society as ends in themselves. He argues that the State, society and the individual aim at an end which is the realisation of the best life. The ideal of the best life is neither pre-given nor imposed on the individuals. The best life is realised through the will and rational capacity of the finite centres, the human individuals. Yet, in Hobhouse's misrepresentation of Bosanquet's views, the human individuals are regarded as "mere pawns" in the hands of the Absolute.

Hobhouse constantly and systematically ignores the continuity between mind and institutions as ethical ideas. This continuity shows the spiritual nature of the structures and institutional arrangements. He also ignores the fact that there is a continuous "web of experience" (an idea similar to the single persistent judgment that sustains the life of mind), which shows the interdependence between mind and the external structures of ethical life. Hobhouse fails to discern the spirit of unity that runs through society and the individual. In this context, society and the individual are regarded as correlative terms and as interdependent units of the web of experience that sustains and signifies life. Hobhouse should have noticed that Bosanquet neither

denies the facticity of the physical separation of individuals, nor overlooks the significance of the individuals' differentiation at the different levels of self-realisation and self-expression. Hobhouse's account of Bosanquet's conception of the individual does not explain Bosanquet's concern for the development and flourishing of individuality and for the formation of character. I argue that Bosanquet emphasises throughout his analysis an idea that Hobhouse fails to understand. Bosanquet argues that despite the plurality of factors and characteristics that differentiate the individuals, the human beings as moral and rational agents are able to exercise their rational will and to find ways of adjusting, organising and harmonising their conflicting views. This state of social being can enable them to achieve a more comprehensive and substantial view of life and a greater degree of self-perfection. Despite the fact that there are differences, conflicts, opposing views and claims, and tendencies to retain particularity and exclusivity, Bosanquet believes that there is an idea of a common good that unites human beings and sustains the movement of mind towards the affirmation of impersonal values.[57] Human beings are capable of achieving self-completion and real individuality because it is their natural condition to seek realisation through self-transcendence. Self-transcendence and sociality enable the human being to seek and realise the (objective) common good that is fundamentally related to the realisation of the best life.

The realisation of the best life is not the product of a will and intelligence outside human mind. On the contrary, it is premissed on the will, judgment,

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[57]For the nature of values, see Bosanquet's *Some Suggestions in Ethics* (1919).

intelligence and reflexivity of the moral being. In this context, the State promotes an end which is not itself. The end is a kind of life that satisfies the rational nature of the self and it is conducive to the maximum development of the individual's capacities. The State thus is not a self-indulgent, super-personal entity, but the framework that sustains the articulation of a non-substantive moral purpose based on the self-reflective and spiritual nature of the rational self. The State *qua* State, being the matrix for the maintenance and development of the civilised life, organises spheres of activity and endeavours to harmonise, resolve, and regulate conflicting claims which are crystallised and expressed in the relational complexity that constitutes the web of experience.

The State can be seen as a "super-personal" unit only in a specifically qualified sense. In the sense of its inclusive nature, harmonising function, and ability to adjust, integrate and regulate. Bosanquet never defends an idea of the State as representing a separate ontological entity that can impose on the individuals its will through the operation of an annihilating dynamic that hypnotises the individuals and leads to the atrophy of reason. Hobhouse forgets that Bosanquet emphasises the idea of citizenship. Obviously, this is an idea that cannot co-exist with the idea of the insignificant mass of individuals which is Hobhouse's understanding of Bosanquet's conception of individuality.

In my view, Bosanquet's way of theorising the end of the State owes much to Aristotle's philosophy in *Politics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle asserts at the beginning of *Nicomachean Ethics* that every art and every inquiry aims at some good

which it is considered to be its end. Political science, that is the art of ruling, aims at the realisation of the good, or the happy, life. The good, or the happy, life is the life lived according to reason (Aristotle, 1985: I:1094a-1095a; X:1176a-1178a). Aristotle's conception of happiness is not the hedonistic or utilitarian conception of happiness. For Aristotle, happiness is *eudaimonia*. Happiness is a good desired for itself and it is deeply situated in the condition of human nature. Happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with perfect virtue (Aristotle, 1985: I: 1102a). The student of politics, Aristotle warns, must study the soul (Aristotle, 1985: I: 1102b). The soul is the place where a rational principle opposes an irrational one. The soul is the source of both the moral and intellectual virtues. Bosanquet affirms this line of theorising. The real self is crystallised inside the finite-infinite self in the realm of the soul. The dramatic encounter of the dimensions of selfhood, the battle and the victory, occur in the soul. The soul is also the meeting-point of the finite and the infinite.

Bosanquet's philosophical theory of the State addresses questions concerning the individual as a social being and the State as the social whole. The philosophical theory of the State seeks to ascertain the essential nature of the political life of man. The philosophical theory synthesises in a coherent whole the political life of man, the metaphysics of the self and the dimensions of sociality and spirituality that characterise the nature of the finite-infinite being. The philosophical theory of the State focuses on the institutions as ethical ideas. The institutions as ethical ideas presuppose and imply a type of mind and a certain mental disposition. The philosophical theory of the

State is the study of the political life of man from the point of view of reality, completion, coherence and perfection. The logic of the philosophical theory of the State presupposes the dialectical interdependence of the particular and the universal as represented in the dynamics of consciousness. In the ethical life, the institutions as ethical ideas synchronise the capacities of mind into a systematic whole that refers to an objective order. The institutions describe the combination of the external organisation and systematicity with the normative condition of reason that derives from the mind of the finite-infinite being. Institutions as ethical ideas are the meeting-point of the individual minds between themselves and, also, the meeting-point of the individual minds with the reality of the spiritual world.

CONCLUSION

This chapter was devoted to a new and comprehensive reassessment of the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy. My analysis offered a new perspective of looking at, and assessing, this central episode in the history of British Idealism. I used a conceptual framework of Bosanquet's metaphysics in order to address Hobhouse's criticisms and to identify the untenable points in his position. The conceptual framework of Bosanquet's metaphysics refers to the doctrines of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite that I have identified and thoroughly explained in the previous chapters. I claimed that Hobhouse both misunderstood and misrepresented Bosanquet's views concerning the State, Society, the Individual,

institutions as ethical ideas and the real self because he had not understood the philosophical assumptions of Bosanquet's project. I argued that Hobhouse's attack on *The Philosophical Theory of the State* was based on: (a) an erroneous interpretation of Bosanquet's fundamental concepts; (b) a misrepresentation of Bosanquet's views; and (c) a problematic and highly defective pattern of reasoning. In this chapter, I aimed at: (a) defending Bosanquet against Hobhouse's false accusations; and (b) offering a reassessment of Bosanquet's theory in *The Philosophical Theory of the State* based on a close textual investigation and on his metaphysical views from the Gifford Lectures. I demonstrated that Hobhouse failed to apprehend the constitutive elements of Bosanquet's philosophical project in their proportion, coherence, systematicity and logical interdependence. I addressed Hobhouse's critique from two fronts: (a) from the standpoint of a comprehensive textual inquiry that aimed to discern what Bosanquet really wrote and to clarify the meaning and systematicity of his conceptual scheme; and (b) from the standpoint of the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. In sum, I demonstrated that Hobhouse's analysis was premissed: (a) on a fundamental misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and misrepresentation of Bosanquet's thoughts; and (b) on an erroneous apprehension of the nature, content, and meaning of Bosanquet's logical and metaphysical views.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis I offered a new interpretation of Bosanquet's philosophy based on the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite. My usage of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite was assisted by two other notional clusters: (a) the metaphysics of the self; and (b) the genealogy of selfhood. Both notional clusters refer to the dynamics and conceptual structure of Bosanquet's discourse of the ontological formation of the self in the context of a social whole that logically, essentially and fundamentally relates to the spiritual world of value. I applied the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite to Bosanquet's metaphysics and to his theory of individuality, to his views on religion and morality and, finally, to his political philosophy. I reassessed the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy and I demonstrated that Hobhouse failed to understand Bosanquet's theorisation of the State because he did not comprehend the philosophical assumptions which sustain Bosanquet's entire philosophical project. I elaborated the meaning, function, and logic of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite and I claimed that these principles offer a powerful explanatory framework for the study of Bosanquet's philosophical system.

Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite were used to explain the formation of the real self and the soul-making process which are central issues in Bosanquet's theorising on individuality. Bosanquet's theory of individuality is premissed on sociality and spirituality which are both articulated through a complex nexus of relations that characterise the nature, content and meaning of the human

individual who is regarded as a finite-infinite being. The principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite show how, in Bosanquet's metaphysics of the self, the idea of individuality relates to inclusiveness, completeness and perfection and not to the concept of pure ego which minimises the real content of individuality and does not account for the expansive power of mind. The principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite capture the complex dynamics of the self with its environment and describe the nature, condition and potentials of the finite consciousness.

I used the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite in order to elaborate, systematise and develop Bosanquet's views on religion as they are expressed both in his essays on the topic of religion and in his short treatise *What Religion Is*. For Bosanquet, religion, or the religious consciousness, refers to faith in the reality of the good as the only reality and to the human individual's oneness in love and will with the supreme good. Religion signifies the realisation of the spiritual world of value within the context of the finite life that describes the finite being's situatedness in the social whole. Self-transcendence and the dialectic of the finite-infinite enable the individual to transcend the limitations of his/her finite condition and to make possible the realisation of the spiritual world of value within the context of his/her life. In other words, the spiritual overcoming of finitude which opens the pathway to self-perfection, self-realisation and salvation, in the context of Bosanquet's discourse on religion, depends on the spiritual processes of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite.

The principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite, together with a general overview of Bosanquet's logic and metaphysics, enabled me to offer a comprehensive reassessment of Hobhouse's *The Metaphysical Theory of the State* which was written mainly as a response to Bosanquet's The Philosophical *Theory of the State*. My analysis was focused on the conceptual foundations of Hobhouse's attack and I offered a detailed anatomy of what I call the "Bosanquet-Hobhouse" controversy. I demonstrated that Hobhouse proceeded to an overall misrepresentation and misinterpretation of Bosanquet's main theses because he did not understand the meaning, content, and function of Bosanquet's fundamental analytical categories which derive from the conceptual framework of Philosophical Idealism.

The interpretation that I have established could be used to elaborate, systematise and develop further topics in Bosanquet's philosophy. A new reassessment of his theory of the Real Will, freedom and citizenship could be based on the explanatory framework that has been structured around the principle of self-transcendence, the dialectic of the finite-infinite, the genealogy of selfhood and the metaphysics of the self. Freedom, citizenship and the Real Will, which are central concepts in Bosanquet's political philosophy, could be analysed and assessed against the background of his metaphysical and logical views. My analysis of the principles of self-transcendence and of the dialectic of the finite-infinite could offer a comprehensive reassessment of Bosanquet's political philosophy and demonstrate the value, significance and strength of the philosophical foundations of his moral, social

and political philosophy.

APPENDIX

Actual Self

The term "actual self" refers to a state of self that is not characterised by completeness and perfection. The actual self describes the content of the self as it stands in its immediacy at any given moment. The actual and the real self are interrelated and refer to the same ontological unit as the latter (the real self) is a development of the former (the actual self).

Appearances

In Bosanquet's discourse, the word "appearances" relates to the nature of the finite world and to the finite condition. The finite condition is characterised by lack of completeness, perfection, unity and (ultimate) reality. The term "appearances" also relates to the immediate impressions stemming from the actual material world without the completion and spiritual depth given to it by the world of value. See *What Religion Is* (Bosanquet, 1920a: 41-42; 60).

Concrete Universal

Bosanquet uses the concrete, or logical, universal to refer to the idea of a "world" or "cosmos" constituted by microcosms which signify the content of individuality. Individuality means "a world self-complete" (Bosanquet, 1912: 68) and the concrete universal "embodies the nisus of thought to individuality" (Bosanquet, 1912: 54). The

concrete universal refers to the unity of the whole. In Bosanquet's words:

> [T]he true embodiment of the logical universal takes the shape of a world whose members are worlds. ... The universal in the form of a world refers to diversity of content within every member, as the universal in the form of a class neglects it. Such a diversity recognised as a unity, a macrocosm constituted by microcosms, is the type of the concrete universal (Bosanquet, 1912: 37-38).

Dialectic

I use the term "dialectic" in the sense of interconnection, interdependence, interrelation and spiritual exchange of contents. I use the word "dialectic" in the phrase "the dialectic of the finite-infinite." My usage of the term "dialectic" derives neither from the Hegelian nor from the Marxist use of the word "dialectic."

Ethical Idea

For Bosanquet, institutions as ethical ideas signify the relation between mind and the social whole (Bosanquet, 1925: 275-311). In this context, the term "ethical idea" refers to institutions as elements of mind. Bosanquet discusses the following institutions: (a) the Family and Property; (b) the District or Neighbourhood; (c) Class; and (d) the Nation-State. Bosanquet introduces the discussion of institutions as ethical ideas as follows:

It is unnecessary to insist on the external aspect of institutions as facts in the material world; but it will be worth while to gather up the leading conceptions of our analysis by tracing the nature of some prominent "institutions," as ideas, constituent elements of the mind, which are also purposes; that is, as ethical ideas (Bosanquet, 1925: 276).

Genealogy

I use the word "genealogy" in the phrase "the genealogy of selfhood," not related to Michel Foucault's "genealogy." The genealogy of selfhood describes the "historicity" of being in the context of Bosanquet's ontological project. The genealogy of selfhood describes the fact that the sources of the self are found "beneath" and "beyond" the apparent exclusive limitations of the finite self. This means that the discernible particular, the so-called finite self, stands out as the meeting point of universal determinations which originate from "beneath" and "beyond" the apparent limitations of finitude. Language, particular sets of beliefs, our leading ideas, the country we are in, the values of truth, beauty and goodness can be apprehended as universal determinations. Therefore, the self is defined from the outset as a finite-infinite self. The genealogy of selfhood refers to the finite-infinite being's quest for completeness, perfection and self-realisation.

Ideal Self

The idea of the ideal self relates to Bosanquet's discussion of the moral self and revolves around the dimensions of sociality and spirituality. Bosanquet states that the ideal self is a larger and more comprehensive unit than the private sensitive self (Bosanquet, 1904: 68). Bosanquet does not elaborate an explicit definition of the ideal self, but he points out that "all the great contents of developed human self - truth, beauty, religion, and social morality - are all of them but modes of expression of the ideal self (Bosanquet, 1904: 95).

Infinite

Bosanquet uses the terms "infinite" and "infinity" to refer to the spiritual world - the world of mind which is, however, present and concrete and exists as an actual and organised whole. The infinite is "the distinctive predicate of what is most real and most precious in life" (Bosanquet, 1905: xxiv). The infinite is not remote, abstract and unreal but present, concrete and real. For Bosanquet, the infinite "is individual, and bears the character of knowledge, achievement, attainment" (Bosanquet, 1905: xxviii). The meaning of the infinite is better understood in its contrast to the finite:

> The finite is that which presents itself as incomplete; the infinite that which presents itself as complete, and which, therefore, does not force upon us the fact of its limitation. This character belongs in the highest degree of self-conscious mind, as realized in the world above sense;

and in some degree to all elements of that world - for instance, to the State - in as far as they represent man's realized self-consciousness. It is the nature of self-consciousness to be infinite, because it is its nature to take into itself what was opposed to it, and thus to make itself into an organized sphere that has value and reality within, and not beyond itself. If false infinity was represented by an infinite straight line, true infinity may be compared to a circle or a sphere (Bosanquet, 1905: xxvii).

Nature

Nature for Bosanquet is "complementary to mind, *i.e.*, [it is] an external system, continuous with our minds, through which the content and purposes of the universe are communicated" (Bosanquet, 1912: xxxvi). See further Bosanquet, 1912: xxxv-xxxvii and 358-386.

Real

For Bosanquet, the word "real" refers to completion, perfection, inclusiveness, coherence, wholeness and individuality. The real is not the existent of the immediate perception, but what exhibits the character of self-consistency that is based on the working of the nisus to the whole within. He writes, for instance, that "the only unconditioned real is the whole itself within which all conditions are included" (Bosanquet, 1913: 14).

Real Self

The real self refers to a state of selfhood that emerges from the depths of being and belongs to the teleological dynamics of the finite consciousness. The real self is a development of the actual self and describes the content of the finite-infinite being from the standpoint of completion, perfection and self-realisation. The realisation of the real self is situated in Bosanquet's soul-making discourse and refers to what the self fundamentally is.

Religion

I follow Bosanquet's own definition of religion. Bosanquet's discussion of religion is characterised by immanentism which signifies the demythologising and anti-supernatural perspective. Bosanquet uses both "religion" and "religious consciousness" to describe religion. Bosanquet defines religion as: (a) unity of man with God, Man, and Nature; (b) unity of man with God and with the whole of being; and (c) unity, in love and will, with the supreme good (Bosanquet, 1920a: 25-33). This is Bosanquet's most precise definition of religion: "In a word, religion *is* just the weld of finite and infinite" (Bosanquet, 1920a: 62).

Self-Realisation

Bosanquet uses the term "self-realisation" in relation to his discourse on the destiny of the self, the dynamics of mind, and the concept of self-transcendence. Self-realisation refers to the process of attaining what the self fundamentally is from the

standpoint of logic that substantiates the spirit to the whole. Self-realisation refers to completeness, perfection, and self-consistency. Self-realisation embodies the impulse, or nisus, to the whole and it is premissed on self-transcendence. See Bosanquet, 1913: 6 and 12.

Self-Transcendence

Self-transcendence refers to the impulse towards the whole that characterises the ontological constitution of the self and substantiates the ontic force to unity. The impulse towards the whole means a movement towards self-completion, self-perfection and self-realisation. Self-transcendence occurs because of the double nature of the finite being. I regard self-transcendence as being made possible because of the dialectic of the finite-infinite that is premissed on sociality and spirituality. See Bosanquet, 1913: 16 and 25.

Sensitive Self

Bosanquet uses the term "sensitive self" in his *Psychology of the Moral Self* (1904). He refers to this notion in discussing "The Moral Emotions" in Lecture VI: Feeling (Bosanquet, 1904: 58-69; 66-69 in particular). The term "sensitive self" describes the self from the standpoint of its private particularity as the bodily unit that is the centre of sensation and feeling. Bosanquet contrasts "the private sensitive self" with "the larger ideal self" (Bosanquet, 1904: 68).

Society

Bosanquet regards Society as an inclusive whole that substantiates the ethical life. For political philosophy, Society is "an achievement or utterance of human nature" (Bosanquet, 1925: 47). Society means the same as the State, but it does not include the exercise of "what is in the last resort absolute physical compulsion" (Bosanquet, 1912: 311, n. 1). The exercise of "absolute physical compulsion" belongs to the province of the State. In *The Philosophical Theory of the State*, Bosanquet writes:

> We have hitherto spoken of the State and Society as almost convertible terms. And in fact it is part of our argument that the influences of Society differ only in degree from the powers of the State, and that the explanation of both is ultimately the same. ... By the State, then, we mean Society as a unit, recognised as rightly exercising control over its members through absolute physical power (Bosanquet, 1925: 172).

State

I follow Bosanquet's usage of the word "State." Bosanquet uses a wide definition of the State. For him, the State is not only the government or executive with all its bureaucratic organisation and administration. The State is that broader and inclusive whole which, in the Hegelian terminology, substantiates the ethical life: it includes the entire society as a whole. Bosanquet's most complete definition of the State is found

in *The Principle of Individuality and Value*:

> I use the term "State" in the full sense of what it means as a living
> whole, not the mere legal and political fabric, but the complex of lives
> and activities, considered as the body of which that is the framework.
> "Society" I take to mean the same body as the State, but *minus* the
> attributes of exercising what is in the last resort absolute physical
> compulsion (Bosanquet, 1912: 311, n. 1).

Teleology

For Bosanquet, teleology substantiates the spiritual communion and the fundamental
interconnectedness of the finite and the infinite aspects characterising the nature of
being in the world. Teleology operates through the finite consciousness, yet it goes
beyond mere purposiveness and stands above finite consciousness. Teleology refers
to the realisation of individuality which is defined along the lines of unity, completion
and coherence:

> Teleology is not the immediate translation into fact of fancies drawn
> from nowhere. It is the unity of a real individual, for whose parts,
> there is nothing undignified in framing and disciplining themselves to
> a definite conformity with the whole (Bosanquet, 1912: 178).

Ultra-Social

I use the term "ultra-social" to refer to art, philosophy and religion which are the provinces of mind that embody the values of the spiritual world - the values of beauty, truth and goodness. As Bosanquet argues, art, philosophy and religion are not thoroughly confined to the social dimension of life. Their aim is to show the continuity of mind between sociality and the reality of the spiritual world and thus they are not in the strict sense of the word "social." They refer to the unity of mind beyond society which, however, is nourished and protected in the inclusive framework of the social whole. See Bosanquet, 1925: 309-310.

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