James Connelly and **Stamatoula Panagakou**, eds.
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This edited volume provides an insightful and informative perspective on all aspects of contemporary concern with idealist philosophy. As Connelly and Panagakou remind us in the introduction, because for idealist philosophers each part of philosophy was connected to every other, to write about one part was implicitly to write about the whole. Hence the book is impressively wide and comprehensive in its scope.

The volume is a welcome addition to the expanding literature on idealism and is particularly helpful in displaying its variety and inter-connectedness, along with its impact and relevance to today. The papers examine the works of Bradley, Green, Bosanquet, Royce, and Caird, as well as later thinkers such as R.G. Collingwood and Michael Oakeshott. Recent and contemporary idealists are also represented with essays by Leslie Armour and Timothy Sprigge. As many recent discussions on idealism seem to give a primary role to moral and political philosophy, it is particularly pleasing to see that this volume also gives prominent consideration to idealist metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of religion, and aesthetics.

James W. Allard's opening paper argues that idealists were central to a transformation of logic. For Green and Bosanquet, scientific knowledge has metaphysical presuppositions. Logic thus becomes a study of the structural unity of judgements and inferences and their interrelationships—which in turn are constitutive of reality and knowledge. Allard argues that this logic was modified by Bradley and that the modification was embodied in the philosophical revolution of Moore and Russell which inaugurated analytical philosophy.

Elizabeth Trott's paper raises the question 'is the Absolute obsolete?' Trott answers this question negatively, and defends Leslie Armour's philosophy, according to which there are not two separate domains of logic and experience—there is only the on-going dialectical process of discourses creating the world. The world is likened to a work of art, where no one description exhausts the potential for meaningful encounters. The 'absolute' is also the subject of Leslie Armour's essay, which argues that we cannot grasp nature, except by transforming it into knowledge and so exhibiting it as a work of mind. Armour's 'absolute' theory is pluralistic rather than unitary: each distinct thing reveals a unity with a different focus. For Armour, the 'Absolute' is the full achievement of dialectical individuality. Entities are most fully individuated when they most clearly reflect the whole from a particular point of view. But this unfolding of the highest order determinable is an unending process.

The idealism of Josiah Royce provides a solution to the metaphysical problem of 'the one and the many', according to Joseph P. McGinn's paper. McGinn seeks a 'middle way' between the ontologies of monism and pluralism, and Royce's view of selfhood shows how a unity can express itself as a real multiplicity. For Royce, the Absolute constitutes an infinite self-

representative system in which finite selves exhibit and embody the same self-representative structure that is exhibited and embodied by the system as a whole. Efraim Podoksik's essay, on the other hand, argues that although idealism was a factor in Oakeshott's very early thought, he departs from idealism from the publication of *Experience and its Modes* onwards. Podoksik argues that Oakeshott became influenced by Neo-Kantianism in the 1920s, which led him to abandon the idealist notion of the spiritual unity of experience. *Experience and Its Modes* was Oakeshott's reconciliation with modernity by perceiving it as radical plurality.

Quite a different approach is taken by Jan Olof Bengtsson, whose paper intriguingly contrasts idealism with the perspective of Eric Voegelin. For Bengtsson, Hegel is a Gnostic thinker and Voegelin's secularisation thesis has been 'massively confirmed' (110). The process of immanentisation of the eschaton took the shape of modern rationalism and romanticism, and this transformation of the Western worldview can best be described as a pantheistic revolution. However, Bengtsson argues that modern idealism, particularly Personal Idealism, contains philosophical insights and resources which enable us to reach beyond romantic-rationalistic modernity to an 'alternative modernity' and a creative traditionalism (129).

The immanentist approach that Voegelin was so critical of is evident in Bernard Bosanquet's views on religion and moral philosophy, as explored in Stamatoula Panagakou's paper. Bosanquet, as Panagakou explains, shifts focus from the transcendent and the supernatural to the ethical nature of social existence, through which we participate in the divine, with society providing the framework for self-realisation. The idealist approach to religion is also central to Timothy Sprigge's essay, which discusses the traditional theological problem of evil. Sprigge sketches an idealist metaphysics, according to which all the evils in the world are essential to the existence and perfection of the Absolute, which is timeless and eternal. Sprigge argues that everything which happens does so of necessity, and that the good could not exist without the evil.

Karim Dharamsi discusses Collingwood's philosophy of mind, comparing it to Donald Davidson's, and showing how Collingwood's holistic and historical approach resolves and transcends the 'cause-reason' debate. Dharamsi points out that, for Collingwood, to discover the thought expressed in an event is sufficient to understand it. For Collingwood, the logic of mind is that it dictates and adjudicates 'objectivity' by its ability to share thoughts and rethink them, and there is no truth that is independent of history. Collingwood's philosophy of mind was also central to his moral theory, which Timothy Lord refers to, in his paper, as hierarchical moral pluralism. Collingwood rejected realist and intuitionist theories because of their failure to account for the complexity of morality. Lord outlines Collingwood's three kinds of goodness: utility, right, and duty. Duty is linked with historical consciousness, and in any given situation my duty is an individual unique act necessitated by my particular circumstances. Lord, however, finds this unsatisfactory, arguing that Collingwood is led to adopt a 'veiled intuitionism' (212).

Idealist social and political theory is the subject of the next two papers. Derrick Darby defends New Liberalism and communitarianism from the charge that they do not take individuals seriously enough. Retrieving new liberalism from the shadows of the liberal tradition reminds us that liberalism and perfectionist politics are not necessarily opposed to one another. A social recognition conception of rights, Darby asserts, bridges gaps between contemporary liberals and

communitarians. Recognition is also central to Bosanquet's social theory, as discussed by Chris Colgan. For Colgan, the scientific approach is problematic as it leads to difficulties in accounting for the humanistic values that are essential to social work. Colgan then argues for a new way of understanding 'facts' in social theory, based on idealist philosophy, according to which facts are incomplete, subject to debate, fixed through discussion and agreement, but always open to later revision.

Collingwood's affinities with Hegel are examined in Gary Browning's essay. For Browning, rethinking is central to Collingwood's philosophy—both to the historian's activity in understanding the past and to the philosopher's activity in explaining the inter-connections of human conduct and thought. However, in Browning's view, despite their similarities, Hegel provides a conception of history that tends to underplay alternative interpretations, contingency and complexity, while Collingwood recognises alternative forms of civilisation and acknowledges the contingency of liberal civilisation. Sverre Wide also defends a Hegelian interpretation of Collingwood. Wide claims that the argument of Collingwood's *An Essay on Metaphysics* is only valid for natural science. While scientific concepts are closed, philosophical concepts are open, in the sense that their meaning is not determined once and for all but always submitted to an inner development. For Wide, following Hegel, philosophical concepts are attributes or dimensions of the world, and at least partially reflect the true nature of the world. From their partial falseness truth arises through a dialogical process.

T.J. Rosser examines affinities between Collingwood and Heidegger in the philosophy of art. Both Collingwood and Heidegger distinguish art from craft. Both argue that art is the founding of truth, and see art as having a role in redeeming humanity from the vulgar and dehumanising aspects of modernity. However, for Heidegger only great artists can bequeath the rest of us new possibilities of being, while Collingwood believes that people can bring about their own redemption through artistic activity—a more satisfactory approach in Rosser's view. Collingwood's philosophy of art is also the subject of Marie-Luise Raters' paper. Raters argues that in attempting to combine the idealist claim for the truth of the beautiful with an understanding of the work of art driven by the aesthetics of feeling, Collingwood departed from idealism. The absolute truth claim of idealist aesthetics is reduced to the claim which one can place on the subjective honesty of an individual artist. This, however, is a reasonable limitation, according to Raters.

The concluding paper by Philip MacEwen makes some insightful observations about the nature of language and scholarship while discussing Edward Caird's writings on Kant. MacEwen draws upon Northrop Frye's distinction between descriptive, conceptual, rhetorical, and *kerygmatic* language—each of which is used in Caird's work. However, the early twentieth century saw a descriptive turn in British philosophy and Caird's approach became outdated. MacEwen argues that philosophy needs to have a place for *kerygma* and rhetorical language, as a predominantly descriptive approach makes philosophy the arena of a few technical experts from which most people are excluded.

In conclusion, despite its decline in influence and fragmentation in the early twentieth century, there has been a recent re-emergence and re-evaluation of idealism. As this edited volume shows, it is still a philosophical tradition that has much to offer to us today. The

impressive breadth of philosophical approaches here demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of idealism and how it can cast light on many different areas of contemporary philosophical debate, while also drawing together these various strands into a cohesive view of philosophy overall.

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