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BORDEN PARKER BOWNE AND AMERICAN PERSONALISM

American personalism did not emerge as a random phenomenon. Firstly, it was shaped by political, social, and importantly, economic factors. Secondly, this personalism has always been closely linked to its historical roots, particularly with German theological schools, a connection it has consistently maintained. The fact that many American scholars and philosophers, as well as the majority of representatives of the personalism school, received their education extensively in Europe, especially in Germany, is not coincidental. Moreover, their ongoing relationships with Europe's scientific environment further confirm this fact. It is known that Methodism is primarily a Protestant movement widely spread in the United States and Great Britain. Although Borden Parker Bowne's system of personalism developed primarily within a philosophical paradigm, it was largely an idea – personalism – that also drew heavily from theology. In this sense, his teachings on personalism primarily emerged as a liberalizing phenomenon. In the United States, the personalism promoted by the Boston School formed in alignment with Protestantism, liberalism, and historically established traditions, responding to the modern conditions, demands, and challenges of the time, as well as serving as an intellectual response to pragmatism (alongside and in certain respects influenced by it), market economics, secularization, and events stemming from this context. Thus, American personalism also arose against the backdrop of social problems and conflicts within society, which prompted its emergence. Looking at the Western European philosophical milieu, it is evident that it had the potential to generate spiritual crises such as existentialism and personalism. Furthermore, as noted earlier, the foundations of American personalism were also shaped by European philosophical teachings, directly drawing nourishment from them. These European teachings chronologically span a period of 200 years from the 17th to the 19th century.

Key words: European personalism, idealism, American personalism, Bowne's "Personalism" work.

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БОРДЕН ПАРКЕР БОУН І АМЕРИКАНСЬКИЙ ПЕРСОНАЛІЗМ

Американський персоналізм виник не як випадкове явище. По-перше, це було сформовано політичними, соціальними і, що важливо, економічними факторами. По-друге, цей персоналізм завжди був тісно пов'язаний зі своїм історичним корінням, зокрема з німецькими теологічними школами, зв'язок який він постійно підтримував. Те, що багато американських учених і філософів, як і більшість представників школи персоналізму, здобули широку освіту в Європі, особливо в Німеччині, не випадковий. Крім того, їхні постійні стосунки з європейським науковим середовищем додатково підтверджують цей факт. Відомо, що методизм – це переважно протестантська течія, яка широко поширена в США та Великій Британії. Хоч система персоналізму Бордена Паркера Боуна розвивалася переважно в межах філософської парадигми, це була здебільшого ідея персоналізму, яка також багато черпала з теології. У цьому сенсі його вчення про персоналізм передусім постало як лібералізаційне явище. У Сполучених Штатах персоналізм, пропагований Бостонською школою, сформувався в узгодженні з протестантизмом, лібералізмом та історично сформованими традиціями, відповідаючи на сучасні умови, вимоги та виклики часу, а також слугуючи інтелектуальною відповіддю на прагматизм (поряд і певним чином під впливом цього), ринкова економіка, секуляризація та події, що впливають із цього контексту. Так, американський персоналізм також виник на тлі соціальних проблем і конфліктів у суспільстві, які спонукали до його появи. Дивлячись на західноєвропейське філософське середовище, стає очевидним, що воно мало потенціал породжувати такі духовні кризи, як екзистенціалізм і персоналізм. Крім того, як зазначалося раніше, основи американського персоналізму також були сформовані європейськими філософськими вченнями, безпосередньо живлячись із них. Ці європейські вчення хронологічно охоплюють 200-річний період із XVII до XIX століття.

Ключові слова: європейський персоналізм, ідеалізм, американський персоналізм, творчість Боуна «Персоналізм».

Introduction. “Borden Parker Bowne’s (1847–1910) personalism was shaped under the influence of Berkeley, Leibniz, and Lotze. Bowne sought to reconcile Protestant theology not only with new advancements in science but also with growing concerns over social issues such as increasing poverty and tensions among church members” (Anderson, 2004, p. 30).

The initiative to establish the personalist school in the philosophy faculty of Boston University was taken by Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910), a student and friend of Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–1881). “Bowne’s thought was a liberalizing ferment in the heart of traditional theology, especially in the Methodist world, of which he was a part” (Giussani, 2013, p. 76). From another perspective, “Bowne is the systematizer of personalism” or the “founder of systematic methodological personalism” (Bengtsson, 2006, p. 59). In other words, Bowne’s primary activity, as the creator of the Boston school of personalism, was to systematize American personalism and philosophically substantiate its methodological basis. At first glance at his system, one encounters the notion: “Bowne’s system is based on the superiority of practical reason” (Pochmann, 1907, p. 319). This is because Bowne believed in the possibility of regulating people’s daily lives and thoughts through a lifestyle based on personalism. In this sense, he prioritized practical reason because he believed in the practical application of personalism.

“The American philosopher Borden Parker Bowne, a student of Lotze, developed a unique type of philosophy known as personalism” (Macquarrie, 2002, p. 65). But what does this specific objective entail? Bowne’s establishment of the Boston personalism doctrine represents a philosophical system with a distinct methodological foundation and forward-looking goals. One of the key aspects distinguishing American personalism from its European counterpart is its depth and long-term objectives. Additionally, influenced by Lotze, one of the most prominent figures in the German (Protestant) theological school, Bowne aimed to reform American Protestantism to better prepare it for future challenges. His goal was to make religion more resilient and rational to prevent it from being eclipsed by evolving economic relationships in society. Nonetheless, it should be noted that “the most serious attempt to establish a theological system based on Lotze’s philosophy of personalism

was made by Albert Cornelius Knudson” (Giussani, 2013, p. 78).

From another perspective, “Bowne’s personalism is grounded in an idealist tradition that balances theory and practice... Young church members and intellectuals perceived personalism as a satisfying way to integrate their intellectual, religious, and social interests into their daily lives” (Anderson, 2004, p. 31). In other words, during the period when personalism emerged as a school in America, it served as a unifying factor. It acted as a cohesive element, bringing together people from various social strata and spheres of interest around a common purpose. The rapid development of American personalism into a formal school and its transformation into various schools in different regions of America can be understood based on this unifying characteristic.

Degree of Research on the Problem. Extensive research on this topic has been conducted by American personalist philosophers such as A. Douglas, B.P. Bowne, and C. McGuire, as well as by European scholars. This article addresses these perspectives in detail.

Objectives and Tasks. The objective of this article is to investigate American personalism, particularly the ideas of B.P. Bowne on personalism, using comparative analysis to elucidate its essence. Additionally, the task includes analyzing Bowne’s work “Personalism” to demonstrate its philosophical significance.

Methods. The research employs the method of comparative analysis. Additionally, a systematic approach and the method of analysis-synthesis have also been utilized in the study.

Main Section

1) Analysis of Bowne’s “Personalism”

In analyzing Borden Parker Bowne’s “Personalism” (1908), the founder of American personalism and the Boston school, we note the following point from the work: “Despite all its shortcomings, philosophy is worthy of humanity’s grace. It dispels nightmares and allows us to see visions. Only good philosophy can replace bad philosophy” (Bowne, 1908, p. 9). How can this be understood? For instance, contrary to the disparaging definitions and assessments of Western and American philosophy during the Soviet era, American philosophers also valued philosophy. During the Soviet period, the stereotype was that American pragmatism deemed philosophy unnecessary

and sought to eliminate it. In his work, Bowne initially approaches his system as follows: "We are, first of all, in our individual world, and all objects are connected to this world by an indivisible system" (Bowne, 1908, p. 25). This indicates that B.P. Bowne favors and represents the idealist school. In fact, this idea demonstrates that American philosophy and personalism are more idealistic compared to their European counterparts.

When approaching the concept of personalism as a cognitive process, Bowne states: "The cognitive process is extremely complex. An object becomes an object for us only through our constructive activity. Through this constructive activity, we gain the object for consciousness. However, this fact does not itself confirm phenomenalism. Because after this, we must also consider the phenomenality of the physical world. This is one of the fundamental steps in establishing personalism" (Bowne, 1908, p. 111). In other words, B.P. Bowne, from the perspective of idealism, argues that the objective world (as it exists for us or as we perceive it) is a product of our rational construction. He also accepts the objective world's independent existence in reality. Therefore, personalism, as an individual cognitive construction, ensures our personal perception by examining and understanding just a moment of the infinite and incomprehensible objective world within the cognitive process. In B.P. Bowne's philosophical system, personalism is the individual actor in the cognitive process occurring between the subject and the object.

This personalism is less a critique of the period or a manifesto and more an organic unity of the cognitive process. For B.P. Bowne, personalism is an individual experience that regulates the process of individual understanding, functioning as a mechanism. Unlike E. Mounier and other Western personalists, the problem of personalism in the American-Boston school of personalism is an element that ensures cognitive processes and individual understanding. In short, personalism is more a social factor in the West and a purely philosophical factor in America. According to another of Bowne's ideas, "according to common sense, the world of things exists independently, at this moment, without the aid of cognition. However, upon reflection, it becomes apparent that this world is a function of cognition; without thought, it has neither existence nor meaning... Only the existence of space and time is phenomenal; they exist

only for and through cognition. Thus, the conditions of personalism are also fulfilled" (Bowne, 1908, p. 158).

This means that the world, as a thing-in-itself, must be divided into parts and understood to become a thing for us. The process of understanding is not capable of comprehending the entire world but rather specific segments, particular events, and processes. In this regard, understanding the world without rational thought is impossible. Rational thought comprehends something when it is focused on that specific thing. The objective existence of space and time is also due to cognition. We have no knowledge of their objective existence outside of cognition. Space and time become instruments for cognition when focused on a cognitive event, process, or specific issue, existing discretely (divided into parts). At that moment, they gain existence for cognition. Otherwise, the world, time, and space exist independently of us. Therefore, cognition can only truly understand them when they become objects of cognition. According to B.P. Bowne, this realization and cognitive transformation are what constitute personalism. In other words, the world, time, and space become individualized for cognition when a person comprehends them. Otherwise, human limitations cannot address this. According to B.P. Bowne, personalism is the process of individualizing comprehended things for cognition.

"When we consider the world as an object of cognition, we arrive at personalism as the only acceptable perspective. Similarly, when we examine the world from the cause-and-effect standpoint, we again come to personalism as the sole viable viewpoint" (Bowne, 1908, p. 216). In essence, according to B.P. Bowne, anything that must be understood cannot be comprehended unless it becomes individualized for us and our attention is focused on it. For Bowne, cognition is inherently and directly an act of individualization. In this respect, cognition is personal, that is, personalism. In Bowne's philosophical system, personalism constitutes, regulates, and actualizes the cognitive process as the essential cognitive actor or the sum of processes. Unlike European philosophers, American philosophers regard personalism as a pure cognitive phenomenon. American philosophers classified the problem of personalism, which European philosophers did not even consider a philosophical doctrine, as the beginning,

continuation, and culmination of the cognitive process. In Bowne's system, personalism promotes individuality, which is the foundation of the cognitive process.

Regarding the concept of the "self", Bowne states: "Of course, many questions can be asked about the "self" that we cannot answer, but as the subject of psychic life, the "self" experiences itself as identical in its living and changing experiences. The "self" is the most reliable knowledge we possess" (Bowne, 1908, p. 88). In other words, Borden Parker Bowne believes that the most secure and trustworthy source for a person is directly concentrated in their individual, personal, and unique aspect, that is, in the "self". Although there is no unequivocal answer to the question of what constitutes the purely personal phenomenon of the "self", it exists within a person, acting as their personal aspect. It is inseparable from the person. The individual becomes personalized through the "self". While the "self" guides thought, emotions, and, in short, all spheres of life, it cannot explain its own nature or essence. In this sense, Borden Parker Bowne asserts that "the intellect explains everything except itself" (Bowne, 1908, p. 215).

2) Comparative Analysis of European and American Personalism

In the analysis of Bowne's "Personalism", we encounter the following idea: "We always remain where we begin, in the world of personal experience, and our belief that the world cannot be explained without personalism grows stronger. The world of experience exists for us because of the conscious spiritual principle that we can replicate in our thoughts. The world of experience exists separately from us only through the conscious spiritual principle upon which it depends and the conscious nature it expresses. This is a step towards personalism" (Bowne, 1908: 110). As seen, unlike European personalism, American personalism is very close to idealism, and in some sense, it is idealism. Borden Parker Bowne argues that everything we can understand and comprehend is limited to the extent that our personal capabilities allow. A person understands what their "self" and individual thought can grasp. Beyond this, their capacity falls short. Concepts such as knowledge, the universe, God, etc., are understood not objectively but within the framework of one's intellectual abilities and, most importantly, in a purely subjective-personal manner. Unlike

European personalism, American personalism is a subjective and idealist philosophical movement. The Boston school, largely idealist, exemplifies this approach. However, it is acknowledged that the pinnacle of idealism is found in the California school. Despite this, there are significant similarities and resonant points between the two schools.

In Bowne's work, we encounter a theological perspective: "The world has a history and existence apart from us. God's cosmic activity is not confined to the creation of ideas within us. His activity is directed towards the creation of a great cosmic order that exists independently. Thus, the world does not remain merely a thought but becomes a thought expressed in action. This is God's idea, God's work" (Bowne, 1908, p. 160). From another perspective, this does not exclude the concept of God. Unlike European personalism, American personalism is closely intertwined with theology. While European personalism emerged as a political program, a protest manifesto, and a stream of critical thought, American personalism developed within the realm of theology, directly drawing from it, remaining faithful to classical German philosophy, particularly in the idealistic direction as seen in many philosophical doctrines of the 20th century.

In this regard, it can be said that "American personalism was cultivated in the soil of German idealism. Until the mid-19th century, few in America discussed the ideas of German philosophers such as Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. Later, interest grew for various reasons. As the demands of academic life increased, young American philosophers completed their philosophical education by spending a year or two studying in Germany. When they returned, they enthusiastically explored idealist philosophy, no longer bound to old Scottish orthodoxy" (8, p. 646). In other words, "Personalism, a distinctive form of American idealism, flourished and was brilliantly represented by Charles Howison (1834–1916), William Ernest Hocking (1873–1966), Borden Parker Bowne (1847–1910), Edgar Sheffield Brightman (1884–1953), and Peter Anthony Bertocci (1910–1989) from Boston University" (Stuhr, 2000, p. 646).

Additionally, Borden Parker Bowne adheres to the idea of God within the context of subjective idealism because, according to him, humans are the creators of their knowledge. The objective state of the world remains unknown to them. In

this sense, the idea of God appears compromised because human thought does not fully encompass or understand it. This raises the question, within the context of subjective idealism, whether God is also a creation of human perception. While European philosophers might answer this question affirmatively, American philosophers maintain that God remains an independent, objective divine principle. Interestingly, there are also studies criticizing the amalgamation of idealism and theism. For instance, it is noted that “In the United States, a group of philosophers artificially combined idealism and theism, and they are referred to as 'personalists' or sometimes 'Boston personalists' due to their affiliation with Boston University” (Yandell, 2002, p. 372).

Borden Parker Bowne, who considers the coexistence of idealism and theism possible, primarily criticizes impersonalism, which he views as the antithesis of personalism. He states in his work: “Impersonalism, whether in the lower form of materialistic mechanisms or in the abstract form of idealistic ideas, is a failure. The philosophy of personality is the real and sole principle that enables rational steps in philosophy” (Bowne, 1908, p. 263). Additionally, he asserts, “The concept of impersonalism has no positive meaning. Impersonalism is a baseless form of thought that, when critically examined, completely disintegrates. When considering what contributions impersonalism makes to the problem of experience, we find nothing but tautology and infinite regression. Such a theory is certainly not worth relying on. The only alternative to impersonalism is personalism” (Stuhr, 2000: 267). In essence, impersonalism, which aims to unify and homogenize everything without leaving room for the personal, is fundamentally flawed. Bowne regards the problem

of persona as the central criterion of philosophy, asserting that philosophy itself is a product of individual consciousness and, by its nature, is personal and individual. American personalism, as a philosophical doctrine, is synonymous with philosophy itself.

3) Conclusion

In characterizing personalism as a system within American philosophy, what did Borden Parker Bowne primarily focus on? Which issues were considered the primary criteria for personalism? When seeking answers to these questions, it becomes apparent that “the main issues that captivated B.P. Bowne revolved around science and religion” (Stuhr, 2000, p. 646). Analyzing this idea, we realize that personalism also stemmed from the specific realities of 20th-century America. Since the greatest needs of that era were science and religion, philosophers aimed to investigate these two problems. B.P. Bowne’s philosophy of idealistic personalism was remarkably successful in this regard, as he continued to address both issues in a coherent manner. Additionally, Bowne’s central principles of personalism emerge from his thoughts and are further developed by those who continued this school of thought. These principles include personal life as a philosophical starting point, radical empiricism, knowledge, personality as the key to reality, and ethics. Overall, the philosophical issues raised by B.P. Bowne continued to guide American personalism in subsequent periods, with the main concerns of personalism being directed towards these topics. In conclusion, it is noteworthy to state that “B.P. Bowne can be considered the founder of American personalism. Personalism is one of the two distinct doctrines of American philosophy, the other being pragmatism” (Stuhr, 2000, p. 651).

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