

Reinstatement of Philosophy

(1). What is its mission; who needs it?

What is philosophy and why do we need it? Philosophy is a completely general inquiry into the nature of Reality and Existence:

".....Philosophy is a free inquiry into the limits of human knowledge and into the most general categories applicable to experience and reality." Stuart Hampshire, 'The Age of Reason'

".....Just as physics is not about physics, but about Nature, so also philosophy is not about philosophy but about Reality understood in the light of philosophical principles."
Etienne Gilson, 'The Spirit of Thomism'

What is it 'for'? Its prime mission is to confront and find answers (however tentative) to the Great Questions. A sample list of these already presented is repeated below:

1. Who am I?
2. Why am I Here?
3. What is the Meaning of Life?
4. What is the Significance of Death?
5. What is the Huge Material Cosmos 'for'?
6. What is the Essential Nature of Reality?
7. What are Infinity & Eternity?
8. What is 'Being' and its Relation to Non-Being?
9. What is the Significance of Pain, Anguish and Evil?

This makes of philosophy a cultural -if not always a personal- necessity. As Whitehead has insisted, no civilisation can advance beyond the limits prescribed by its philosophical *Weltanschauung*. The ideas which it embodies provide the context within which cultural change and progress must be envisaged and chartered. It is a looking-glass within which man views both himself and the larger Reality beyond. It provides a high-level language by means of which internal dialogue becomes possible -where the character of reality and our relation to it may be meaningfully interrogated. Our deepest intuitions, lurking somewhere in the twilight of consciousness may be brought into the light of day and given definitive form.

Philosophy is in the vanguard of history, and whether they know it or not, its practitioners join Francois Joseph Leclerc du Tremblay as *eminences Grises*. The outpourings of their labours flow like a secret river beneath the flux of events, nurturing the evolution of institutions and the canons of art; the history of philosophy is the history behind history. There is, however, nothing inevitable about its progress. Its waters may become muddied and polluted, sometimes to the point where what should be a pure mountain stream comes to resemble an open sewer.

Our own nihilistic times offer sobering testimony of the consequences of philosophy's demise:

".....I have said that the fundamental cause of a culture's disintegration is the collapse of philosophy which leaves men without intellectual guidance."
Ayn Rand

For those of philosophical persuasion, and above all, those who are active in advancing its horizons, philosophy will exert a fascination for the vision of truth which it promises.

".....Living without philosophy is like keeping one's eyes shut without ever trying to open them; and the pleasure of seeing all the things which our vision discloses cannot be compared to the satisfaction found through the knowledge that philosophy gives."

".....This study is more necessary for the conduct of our lives than is the use of our eyes in guiding our steps" Rene Descartes

Despite the deep consolations which its study may -and should- bring, is a perversion -as it is also of religion- to centre its *raison d'etre* in the provision of anodynes and analgesics.

".....The Sankhya system, which regards philosophy as a whole as no more than a search for the means to avoid the three-fold suffering.....such a standpoint, where it makes its appearance in philosophy, is everywhere a symptom of exhaustion. Philosophy is originally based on a pure desire for knowledge, and it knows no other aim than the search for truth. Only when this desire is weakened does philosophy become a mere means to an end, a *remedium* for the suffering of existence. This was the case in Greece in the schools that succeeded Aristotle; it was also true in India in the Sankhya system and in Buddhism."

Paul Deussen

".....Religion is not a means to any end beyond itself. Only in its decadence can it be supported on the ground that it contributes to the good of society.....one does not worship in order to achieve some good. One worships because that which he dimly apprehends evokes worship."

John B. Cobb Jr

(2) The Character of the Enterprise

It is an articulate, intellectual endeavour whose primary aim is the erection of an *edifice of ideas*. But the abstract analogues of bricks & mortar are not enough; the building must live. The cognitive *understanding* which it offers should evoke an intuitive *illumination*; -that which the Bhagavad Gita would designate as true knowledge. This could hardly come about were it not for the fact that the discipline must address *mysteries* as well as *problems*. Mysteries are categorically distinct from problems -even those which are insoluble; more than unfathomable, they are simply bottomless. More than this, they are absolutely ejective of attempts at scrutiny; this means that whatever else, no progress is to be gained by brute force of cognitive ratiocination. They are, however, *connected* to problems of which, in fact, they are the ultimate source, and something may be gleaned about their nature through backward extrapolations across the *interfaces* between the two categories. Some mysteries, at least, may be directly known in the most intimate way possible, to those who have achieved the mastery of inwards-turningness. Above all, philosophy must address that mystery of mysteries, Being itself, and the nameless *pas de deux* which it executes with its Non-being alter ego

But this generalised, global 'view from nowhere' must be complemented by the 'view from somewhere'; the reaches of time, space and eternity must be complemented by the existentialism of the moment -which is the only place at which *manifest* value is ever to be found. Much of the history of modern philosophy has to do with the tension between these two viewpoints, which have yet to be successfully brought into a single unified vision. The great system builders, culminating in Hegel, paid scant heed to the intrinsic value of the individual person or to the significance of the stream of consciousness which fills his life.

".....Western philosophy has suffered its tragic defeat as a consequence of the fondness of its great masters for the problems of cognition. Guided by the assumption that he who knows how to think will know how to live, philosophy has, since the days of Socrates, been primarily a quest of right thinking. Particularly since the time of Descartes, it concentrated its attention on

the problems of cognition, becoming less and less aware of the problem of living. In fact, the less relevant to living a problem was, the more respectable and worthy of exploration it appeared to philosophers."
Abraham
Joshua Heschel

This state of affairs was to provoke Kierkegaard into founding modern existentialism, which was equally one-sided in its disregard of the larger systemic context. For the likes of Sartre, individuals were to become ontological dangles, essentially absurd, and forever in danger of being drawn into and swallowed up by the landscape of perception.

Breadth of coverage is essential which should preserve some degree of uniformity, bearing in mind that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link. But if it is truly to have a cutting edge, it must be written from a particular point of view, expressing the personality of its author. The success of the endeavour may be measured partly by the extent to which its major ideas exhibit *portability* into the thought of colleagues operating with different philosophical dispositions and temperaments. That is to say, it should hint, significantly, at deeper, more general truths lying behind the particular perspective which it offers.

".....I must believe that one never does or can find the whole in all its aspects, and that there never will be a philosopher who did not reach his truth, after all, except by some partiality or one-sidedness, and far from mattering, this is the right and only way".
C.D. Broad, in a letter to Bertrand Russell.

More than this, however, the calling of philosophy is subject to its own very characteristic hazards:

".....No subhuman speechless animal is a mere optimist or a mere pessimist. It expects both good and evil and acts accordingly. Only *thinking* animals get into one-sided views, such that all apparent evil is really but good in disguise, or that all good is but evil in disguise (Schopenhauer). Charles Hartshorne

It was Charles Hartshorne, I believe, who expressed this in the form of the syllogism: If door hinges are good on one side, let us have them on both.

Was it C.D. Broad who remarked that there is no theory too one-sided or idiotic as to be serious supported by some philosopher of eminence somewhere?

(3) Other Disciplines -Competing & Complementary

Theology, in proportion as it breaks free from sacerdotals and the inerrancy of revelation and sacred texts seeks to cover much the same ground as philosophy -which it also resembles in being primarily a cognitive discipline. Unlike philosophy, theology comes as an extended intellectual after-thought to a faith having its origins in myth and the disclosures of internal contemplation. While resembling philosophy in its breadth of coverage it differs from it in its point of departure and the distribution of its emphasis:

".....Philosophy begins with man's question; religion begins with God's question and man's answer."
Abraham Joshua Heschel

"..... The one is incomplete without the other. The goal of philosophy may be truth, and the goal of religion God; but in the final experience, God and Truth are one and the same reality, religion insists on Faith, philosophy emphasises reason."..
Nikhilananda

Although these quotations reflect a theistic theology, their meaning carries over to any ontology which need presuppose no more than an affirmation of a *warm* Transcendence. Theology concentrates its efforts upon the ontologically denser regions and aspects of reality, to provide a transcendental context within which its understanding of the 'real world' within which we find ourselves, is brought into focus.

Science, also a cognitive discipline, properly to be regarded as an important contributor to philosophy, is widely touted as a *substitute* for it. It is based upon the null metaphysic of physicalist materialism, dogmatically excluding whole areas of discourse inseparable from legitimate philosophical inquiry. Notwithstanding, its advocates are apt to regard themselves as pre-eminently and perhaps uniquely qualified to pronounce upon all of the great themes which intrude upon everyday human thought,

“.....Philosophy is filled with black envy of positive science, so prosperous and successful. This envy leads to no good and results in a loss of dignity both for philosophy and the philosophers.....Philosophy has been expected to conform either to theology or to science and even to mathematical physics. Only at brief intervals has philosophy been able to breathe the air of freedom. Emancipating itself from the crushing power of theology it fell into still worse slavery, to autocratic and despotic science.....science was once born of philosophy and grew out of it, but the child rose against its mother. No one denies that philosophy must reckon with the growth of the sciences and take their results into consideration. But this does not mean that it must subordinate itself to particular sciences in its higher contemplations or try to imitate them, tempted by their striking outward success.”

“.....The historical method which overloads memory and objectifies ideas, regarding them entirely from the outside, is as fatal to philosophy as is subjective idealism or naturalism. The spiritual devastation that results from these three ways of approaching philosophy is truly terrible. They result in a relativism which is made absolute.....it is enslavement of philosophy by science –scientific terrorism.”

“.....To objectify is to destroy meaning; in order to understand meaning, one must enter into it, and this communion is not objectification”
Nicholas
Berdyaev

It is surprising to me that the writing was so clearly on the wall, back in the days he was writing. Or was he casting along shadow?

Answers to the great questions are also sought by *artists* (at least those of Apollonian persuasion), *poets*, *mystics*, and through the intimacy of the dialogue of *Ciceronian friendship*; while *lovers* discover deep secrets in each other's gaze. But all of these converse, discuss their findings in a language of more intuitive sort; such may be instrumental in bringing about personal regeneration and a deepening in the sense of self-identity. One might say they seek reality through the verities of beauty and goodness while philosophy is guided by that of truth. Philosophy conveys its meaning in terms of articulate knowledge, and as such is able to absorb the offerings of artists and others into its comprehensive vision of truth. In exchange, philosophy may deepen the understanding of the artist by telling him something about the Reality for which his art is surrogate while providing earthly love deeper meaning and resonance currently lacking -by means of which Eros may be lifted onto the higher plane of Agape.

In summary, there is simply no substitute for philosophy.

(4) Where We Stand at Present

Philosophy is no longer being 'done' in the grand style of Descartes, Leibniz, Kant or Hegel. In fact, within the present century only one name comes readily to mind, namely that of A.N.Whitehead, and there seem to be none anywhere on the horizon as the third millennium comes into view. The grand sweep of its traditional concerns has imploded into empirical materialism, with 'philosophy' surviving as little more than a name as the 'philosophy of science'.

The historical causes are plain enough. Over a period of several centuries, and at an accelerated rate, Western religion and the philosophical tradition which it nurtured were to lose their authority. Unfortunately, and perhaps inevitably, the baby got thrown out with the bath water (or alternatively the wine with the lees, according to one's point of view), bringing us to our present juncture of spiritual insolvency and intellectual destitution. Not only are many of the grand themes no longer being addressed, but have been placed, dogmatically, beyond the pale of serious inquiry.

".....It is not surprising that many would argue that science has superseded philosophy, which lingers on as a quaint relic of a pre-scientific age. When a working scientist says of some problem or theory 'let the philosophers worry about that' she suggests that the matter is not only beyond the resources of scientific method but is also beyond the radius of what is worthy of serious attention. Let the philosophers worry about it, for all the difference it will make".

Moody (1993)

Predictably the soul or psyche was an early casualty; it has been summarily dismissed:

".....All science (wissenschaft) however is a function of the soul in which all knowledge is rooted. The soul is the greatest of all cosmic miracles, it is the conditio sine qua non of the world as an object. It is exceedingly astonishing that the Western World (apart from very rare exceptions) seems to have so little appreciation of this being so. The flood of external objects of cognisance has made the subject of all cognisance withdraw into the background, often to apparent non-existence."

Jung -quoted by Schrödinger.

-While psychology, which by definition addresses the interiority of mind and its owner has undergone a surreal transmutation into the 'science of behaviour'. Ethics could hardly hope to escape. "...Even now", complained Crick, writing in [date], "very few professors of ethics approach their subject from this (Darwinian) point of view". I hope Crick has been heartened by the subsequent flowering of 'sociobiology' dedicated to the systematic trashing of ethics (or *rectification*, in the view of its advocates). Teleology and purpose, which fairly shout at us from the saga of evolution, have been disposed of by a piece of nimble prestidigitation. It has been renamed 'teleonomy' which proclaims that teleology isn't really teleology but merely *looks* like it. This evokes a distinct deja entendu; didn't the literati finally decide that Shakespeare's plays weren't written by Shakespeare at all, but by another man of the same name?

In a celebration of impotence, the underlying rationality of the Physicists' own domain and their ability to cope with its paradoxes have been called into question. Steven Weinberg was the recent author of a much celebrated aside, that the more we understand the universe, the more meaningless it becomes; decades earlier, J.B.S.Haldane had remarked not only is the universe more mysterious than we suppose, but perhaps it is more mysterious than we *can* suppose.

In the latter half of its golden era, the speculative philosophy of the West was to become increasingly pre-occupied by the hazards to which its pursuit is subject -in particular by the pitfalls of language and the linguistic process of argument:

".....Language was originally made by men who were not psychologists and most men today employ almost exclusively the language of outward things."

William James

".....It seems to be curious that language should have grown up as if it were designed to mislead philosophers."

G.E.Moore

The philosopher Leibniz as mathematician had long hungered after a general reasoning process, in philosophy, which would enjoy the same rigour as the deductive process so successful in guiding progress within mathematics. Leibniz had a dream, that natural language itself could be recast into such an instrument through which philosophical conjectures could be unambiguously evaluated. 'Let us discuss' was to give way to 'let us

calculate'. Leibniz himself, however, eventually came to hold doubts about whether his proposed 'Characteristica Universalis' could ever be brought from out of the dream world into the light of day.

Undaunted, latter-day philosophers came to pin their hopes upon 'symbolic logic' -in its various forms of the predicate calculus [??], Boolean algebra, and so forth, could impart to philosophical argument just the rigour which was felt to be lacking. The 'analytical' philosophy which was brought into being came to dominate the philosophical landscape; it came to *replace* rather than *police* the systematic, speculative philosophy from which it had originally taken origin. The *architects* have been chased out by the *accountants*. I shall have more to say about this in the section which follows.

Within the past decade or two, there has been some retreat from the extremes of Logical Positivism and the Vienna Circle. In particular, a blind eye is no longer being turned to the ugly blemish of *consciousness* which so disfigures the physicists' landscape and offends his sensibilities. However, at the time these words are being written, there is scant evidence that it is to be allowed back on anything approaching its own terms. After all, consider the danger; if consciousness, then mind, then the soul, and before you know it, God Himself will be back in. Hence the need for vigilance and circumspection; no more than a small hole may destroy the dyke of secular science, and when the flood waters have subsided, we may find ourselves back in the company of Tertullian and Augustine. In consequence, they have found it necessary to purge consciousness of most of its essential attributes; all that remains is an epiphenomenal, non-efficacious presence posing no threat to the autonomy of physics. It is as though, upon awakening, the brain comes to emanate some kind of malodorous phosphorescence which we have chosen to call consciousness. But let us be thankful for small mercies; at least the stench is now granted to be *truly there*, and not just a figment of our 'folk psychology' imaginations. Generalising from this instance, one might say that philosophy itself has been granted a grudging readmission, but on the strict understanding that it be pursued as *extrapolated science*. It is to be securely tethered, or, like Galileo kept under close house arrest.

Somewhere within the wings, safely removed from the spotlight of stage centre, the great issues of philosophy are still being addressed. Though of high quality these endeavours are mostly preoccupied with reviews of the great ideas, systems, and personalities of the past. They are apt to be weighed down by the dead hand of scholarship; the reader must take care lest he fall asleep. So many of the authors, in supporting their particular exegeses and points of view seem to be executing an intellectual minuet within one of those mazes of mirrors, clear glass & open doorways. How one longs for true novelty, for passion, for a sense of movement into virgin territory behind which the horizon forever retreats. Ayn Rand's aside on the matter continues to carry the ring of truth:

".....There is an air of impoverished drabness, a tired routine, a stagnant monotony in all of our cultural activities -from stage to screen, to literature and the arts, to the allegedly intellectual publicity and discussions. There is nothing to see and hear. Everything produces a deja vu or deja entendu. How long since you have read anything startling, different, fresh, unexpected?"

Ayn Rand

There *are* some bright sparks around, to whose ideas I am much beholden; many of their comments are to be found illuminating the present volume. Few, however, share my belief concerning the depth and breadth of the paradigm change which our present plight absolutely demands.

(5) Conducting the Enterprise: Principles of Guidance

For a start, it is essential that one be a plane man first and an intellectual second. Above all, one's native common sense should always be the final arbiter; nothing should ever be accepted -for any reason whatsoever, which fails to past muster. There has been no greater source of mischief, in modern times than the willingness to decouple one's intellectual engine from the sense of fitness and plausibility which common sense alone can provide. This important matter is treated at length in a separate appendix.

The reasoning process under which ideas are explored and elaborated must be 'informal' rather than following the canons of strict deduction. Descartes favoured the latter, taking Euclid to offer the paradigm under which philosophical reasoning should proceed. Charles Saunders Peirce, to the contrary urged that philosophy:

" '....should trust rather to the multitude and variety of its arguments than to the conclusions of any one. Its reasoning should not form a chain which is no stronger than its weakest link, but a cable whose fibres may be ever so slender, provided they are sufficiently numerous and intimately connected' "

Melvin Rader [title & date?]

In other words, in contrast to symbolic logic, the reasoning canon must not separate the contents of *meaning* from the processes of inference, regardless of the well known hazards to which such 'soft' logic exposes us. It would be nice if syntactics could be cleanly separated from semantics, or if natural language could be transmuted into Leibniz's dream of the characteristica universalis, a discipline which allow philosophical reasoning to be guided after the manner of strict mathematical deduction. Since neither is the case, we can but fall back upon reasoning of more traditionally sort, though chastened by an understanding of the kind of errors to which these processes are subject. Symbolic logic which ignores the meaning of the entities which it manipulates does have a role to play, though limited to 'critical' philosophy, having little to offer the architect in his creation of 'edifices of ideas'.

Because philosophy, unlike mathematics, must address areas of discourse outside of those which conventional logic-mathematics is competent to handle, it may be necessary to call upon *metaphors* as a means of bridging the gap between *modalities*; willy nilly a means must be found of bringing order within those categories which are foreign to those upon which strict logic is comfortable; things have to get a bit poetic at times. Here we have to be doubly on our guard¹.

“.....Since students of the logic of mathematics have not been able to agree upon the axioms of set theory, nor, in spite of Quine to agree that such questions are ultimately factual, with what right can anyone rule out the possibility that metaphysical questions are neither factual nor trivially analytic, but in some subtle and difficult sense questions of meaning and consistency?
Charles Hartshorne

In coming to terms with transcendent modalities, one must contend with the paradoxes of infinity and eternity, and with the mystery of Being itself (and the categories which somehow manage to flow from it en route to the creation of the 'real world'). This may well call for a departure from the canons of the predicate calculus in coming to terms, for example, with the mysteries of modal 'symmetry breaking']. Something resembling Hegelian logic may be called for; this matter will be taken up again in chapter 4.

We now arrive at the all-important question of *guidance*; how are we to police our progress? Most of philosophy's concerns lie outside the domain of science hence putting the acid test of empirical verification beyond reach. In their absence, other principles must be pressed into service. What are some of these?

First are questions of intuitive appeal. Is the emerging corpus of ideas elegant, unclouded and aesthetically satisfying? Equally important is the matter of *cohesion*. Are its basic notions relatively compact and simple -so that *much* is explained by *little*? In other words is the system formally clean-cut with a well-ordered logical compactness? Of even greater importance is the way in which these attributes evolve over time. Does the set of grounding principles *shrink*, so that *more* is explained with *less*? Or is the reverse the case, in which the system is in need of repeated rescue through ad hoc patching? The first provides definite grounds for encouragement while the latter suggests one is on the wrong track and that the lines of inquiry in question should be abandoned. But most heartening of all is the sudden emergence of an almost implosive clarification in which what was formerly foggy and nebulous suddenly snaps into sharp focus.

Do explanations conceived to solve problems in one area of discourse turn out to be of value in related areas? In other words does the growing coherence *propagate*? This measure of excellence may be thought of as

the internal equivalent of the *portability* already touched on, in which colleagues of other metaphysical persuasions find that they can adapt some of these ideas to their own purposes?

As in judging art, an important test is *time*; Can what is hopefully an authentic vision of truth be lived *with*, and, more importantly, *by*?

".....If you want to know whether a theory of any kind is true, try believing it and see whether satisfactory results ensue: that is the brief summary that led some to hail James as a saviour and others to caricature him brutally. It is the key to his attempted reconciliation of science to religion, and the origin of Peirce's decision to disassociate himself from the doctrine by rebaptising his own view 'pragmatism'."

Morton White

In summary, guidance is largely a priori, unlike the a posteriori process of empirical verification so central to the scientific enterprise. Yet many of the more seminal innovators of science have also testified to the importance of elegance and beauty in guiding their thoughts; as Dirac was to remark, he would rather have beauty in his equations than truth [??]. I had always assumed -till Davies [date] drew attention to my error, that Einstein conceived special relativity with the express purpose of meeting the empirical challenge of the Michelson-Morley speed of light paradox -whereas actually he was driven by his obsession with Machian metaphysics. Schrödinger's famous equation, when first conceived, didn't quite fit the facts as then known, so, reluctantly, he patched it up to make it fit. Then, low and behold, Dirac discovered the spin on the electron, and the equation snapped back into its original elegance [check]. Not wishing to be unkind; in pointing the finger of a priori reproach at philosophy, isn't the pot calling the kettle black? Our cosmogonists weave out their mathematical phantasies decoupled from empirical verification; too much theory, one might say, chasing too few facts. And the cancellation of the super-conducting super-collider would seem to put a ceiling upon the kinds of experiments we would need to run to discipline arm-chair speculation. Quite regardless, there are absolute limits which must forever block how far back in time we can reach back into cosmic history. To probe the character of the 'Planck Time' would demand a particle accelerator of astronomical proportions -perhaps one which circled the Andromeda nebula.

My object here is not at all to disparage such speculations but only to insist that there be one rule for all; if the a priori be allowed in physics, it is not to be denied to philosophy.

Actually, there are domains of philosophical concern which are, in principle, open to empirical probing. I can think of no better example here than speculations upon the division of labour between the mind and cortex underlying the ongoing stream of conscious thought. Any authentic theory of mind must say something about just what it is that the cortex doing. Maybe it will predict subtle changes in the physical state of cortical protoplasm which should be open to non-intrusive inspection, or perhaps predict the occurrence of patterns of neural events within widely separated areas of the cortex to display instantaneous formal correlations very hard to account for given the size of the time lags imposed upon neural communications between the areas in question. It is of great interest to note, in passing, that Benjamin Libet's theory of mind (Libet [date]) couched in terms of cortex-wide mental fields is open to experimental probings which are of a kind falling within the current state of the art). If such predictions are experimentally born out, you can be sure that the mainstream intellectual will leave no stone unturned to explain away the consequent embarrassments; anything, *anything*, but to allow mind back in.

My own Mind/Brain theory makes a number of predictions of the kind listed above. I can only say that I feel in no hurry to check in at the local neuroscience laboratory. there to don the white coat of the neurosurgeon or neurophysiologist -even if I possessed the hands-on skills which this sartorial badge of office presupposes. I would rather wait until my ideas had matured to the point where they led to forecasts of empirical events not merely unanticipated by the banality of orthodoxy but were also were downright startling; as the later Popper was to urge, it is only the confirmation of *risky* predictions which truly impress.

A final word is in order concerning the character of the alliance between philosophy and science. As previously made clear, not only is science no substitute for philosophy; also, it is a subset of philosophy rather

than vice versa. It is its job to establish a proper division of labour between problems which are scientific in character, and those which are not. In particular, it is neither good science nor good thinking to seek to extend the borders of the science empire, to invade domains which are no part of its legitimate empire. There is to be no built-in bias here; one simply judges each problem on its merits; there is to be no *default* privilege in science's favour.

Within the above paragraphs, I have sought to do no more than define an envelope of procedures appropriate to the conduction of the philosophical enterprise. In point of fact, each investigator must find out for himself just what it is that he needs; one can only learn by doing; not by sitting in the university lecture hall. To speak of my own experience; I have found the greatest problem to be the way in which the whole field of inquiry hangs together; it is very hard to prise away subregions which can be safely worked on in isolation, without fear that any progress made will send an expanding ripple of destabilisation throughout the enveloping context. Willy nilly one must somehow contrive to maintain the whole, within the back of one's mind, while at work upon any one part. It does not make for sound repose -to the point where I have been tempted to subtitle the present volume 'ten thousand sleepless nights'.

".....The individual [philosopher] has the ability to tolerate internal conflict, a willingness to suspend judgment. He is not uncomfortable in the presence of unanswered questions, or of unresolved differences....

"....It may well be that the creative individual could not tolerate such a wild profusion of ideas and experiences if he did not have profound confidence in his capacity to bring some new kind of order out of chaos.....He has faith in his capacity to do the things that he wants and needs to do in the area of his chosen work."
J.D.Gardner

Phillip Johnson [date?] asks rhetorically ".....Can something be non-science but true, or does non-science mean nonsense?" (p.4). Of course it can, but one simply has to accept that the guide lines are less sharply drawn, and convergence of opinion far harder to achieve than within the monolith of science. Science has long chided philosophy for its lack of any enduring sense of direction or to exhibit the kind of *convergence* which graces the scientific enterprise. Womens' hemline go up and down as demanded by fashion, and we seem to witness much the same in the cycling of the various schools of philosophy. There are many philosophies, but only one science.

But difficulty really has nothing to do with it. One studies philosophy because of the values it addresses, and that civilisation cannot prosper in the absence of the insights which it offers. There is no substitute for a carpe deum[?]. As Gordon Allport has urged:

".....We have the freedom to commit ourselves to great causes with courage, even though we lack certainty. We can be at one and the same time half-sure and whole-hearted"

There can be absolutely no excuse for its abandonment. If one fails, then one tries again; it's as simple as that. As Raymond Tallis has urged: ".....if something is really worth doing, it is worth doing even badly"².

(6)Handling Philosophical Contention

Perhaps there is no better place to start than with Whitehead's resounding affirmation on the subject:

".....A clash of doctrines is not a disaster; it is an opportunity....". Under certain circumstances, one might even say that the greater the clash the more each party has to gain, provided only that an authentic dialogue can be set in motion. Dialogue is to be sharply distinguished from its bastard substitute -the debate- in which the thirst for victory comes to preempt a hunger after Truth. One does not waste time with an adversary to whom philosophy provides an appropriate arena within which to exercise rhetorical skills, or to whom the inquiry is no more than the Times crossword written large.

I can think of nothing more exciting or vibrant with promise than to encounter for whom one has profound professional respect, yet who has come to conceive and elaborate a *weltanschauung* which is poles apart from one's own. In coming to terms with such a koan shock, certain conditions, I believe, would have to be met equally by both the adversaries (I will not say 'opponents'). First, it is essential that the default posture be adopted, that each has probably obtained about an equally firm foothold upon truth, and that the divergence between them are to be accounted for in terms of muddle but more especially of differences in philosophical temperament and disposition. Perhaps one way of putting it would be to say that Al speaks in alleneese while Bob must express himself in robertese. That is, what they really *mean* is the same; it is their modes of *expression* which puts them on a collision course. They view Reality through goggles which are differently tinted and where each is blemished by its own particular form of astigmatism.

The line of argument which I have been pursuing above, very much rests upon the assumption that there is but one Truth 'out there' to which all have some access, and that one's particular philosophical temperament and disposition *modulates* rather than *straight-jackets* the kind of *weltanschauung* which one comes to elaborate. Under the skin, we are really brothers, or perhaps cousins; we are all but variations upon a common theme.

What might be the outcome of a diligently pursued dialogue? Most devoutly to be wished is the bringing into existence of a more comprehensive understanding which is being seen from two different viewpoints. Each of our adversaries, in himself has, so to speak, a flat monocular view of Reality. It is as though Allen sees only through the right eye and Robert through the left. But when these views, through a process of dialogue, come to be shared, each will now enjoy a binocular vision within which a higher stereoscopic Reality snaps into view. Clearly, what is thereby gained goes far beyond a peaceful coexistence or the discovery and delineation of areas of common ground.

Much more likely are more modest, but nonetheless very worth-while gains which might include:

- O There will be some *portability of ideas* between the two viewpoints, in which each gains through an adaptation of some of those of the other.
- O Each may come to see that an idea or two is fundamentally misconceived, and should be abandoned or replaced.
- O Both, through the process of dialogue will have been driven to put his house in order, dispelling muddle and bringing things into better focus.
- O Just occasionally the exchange between them will be asymmetric, in which Allen, for example comes to believe that he needs to take a substantial stride in Robert's direction. But the aim of dialogue must ever be that of *illumination*, never of *proselytisation*

Authentic dialogue calls for courage, imagination and perseverance, if convergence is not to be purchased at the unacceptable price of a loss of cutting edge. This has always seemed to me to be the great weakness of ecumenical movements within Christianity.

(7) The Way Ahead: How to Go About it

First and most important is to confront the fact that nothing less than a most drastic shift in outlook and viewpoint will suffice; a massive reconstruction involving ontology, metaphysics and even extensions to the scope of the lex naturalis. No amount of extrapolation from, or fine tuning of, any current or past philosophical system will suffice; nor will the goal be reached by any mere eclectic convergence*. In a word, the present paradigm is bankrupt, and as ever, those intellectuals who best prosper within the status quo are precisely those least able,

and above, all least willing to conceive of a completely new order of things and to shoulder the burden needed bring this about.

".....'Wrench' [to free ourselves from Logical Positivism] is not too strong a word; for Positivism is subtly entangled with our thinking at all points on almost all subjects. A rather similar wrench was required of the Western mind at the close of the Middle Ages.....For it is a mistake to suppose we are more open-minded to-day; we are merely open-minded about different things."

Barfield

Owen

".....In a sense, everything starts from zero, and a philosopher is not worthy of the name unless he not only accepts but wills this harsh necessity.....This perpetual beginning again which may seem scandalous to the scientist or technician, is an inevitable part of all genuinely philosophical work; and perhaps it reflects in its own order the fresh start of every new awakening and every new birth."

Miguel de Unamuno

What we need, then, is neither growth nor elaboration of the status quo but *regeneration* -which goes beyond an equivalent of *Ecdysis* in ontogeny or *Paedomorphosis* in phylogeny. Although it is certainly true that we are currently languishing at an ontological ebb-tide, what is needed is not the recovery of some supposed earlier -and happier- status quo, but something much more radical and far more exciting -to find out truly who we are and the direction in which we are supposed to be heading, and to discover, for the first time, what our meaning and destiny really is. The needed paradigm is to be reached by any extrapolation from the present, nor by returning to some past high water-mark from which to execute a recule pour mieux sauter:

".....One is tempted to cry again, as so many others have done in the past, 'Back to Kant!' But this would be as futile as the comparable cries 'Back to Plato!', 'Back to Aristotle!', or 'Back to Aquinas!' which we hear so often in these days. As Hegel has taught us, we can never go again; we can only try to do for ourselves and for our own culture what these great men attempted for their own ages."

Henry D. Aiken

Obviously, ideas and concepts evolved over thousands of years of philosophical speculation will be found to be detachable from their origins and adaptable to our needs; to insist that we are in need of a new paradigm is not to say that we should start from a tabula rasa. But we need to be circumspect, casting no more than a glance or two back over our shoulder, lest we suffer the fate of Lot's wife; for the most part, the past must be rediscovered in the future. Perhaps the wheel will get reinvented in the process, but don't grieve over lost time; it won't be the same wheel.

If not the incumbents, then who is to undertake the job? Willy nilly, as with artistic creation, it must come from the mind of an individual, or from many individuals acting independently; this is positively no place for committee work. Dialogue will become increasingly valuable in proportion as a sufficient grounding has been firmly established. They will be largely outsiders, working, you can be sure on bootlegged time and with bootlegged money, or burning the midnight oil in remote attics somewhere.

There are those, obsessed with increasing specialisation and the 'information explosion' who declare the job is too big for one man. This is nonsense. What is called for are generalists with good peripheral vision who have mastered the art of reading to the middle depth and of having the wits to recognise and sift out the essentials from inconsequential detail:

".....For this, it is necessary to survey a wide range of scientific concepts. If we are to find any meaning inherent in the cosmos, it must be of the entirety; deeper comprehension requires the synthesis of all major aspects. What we learn of the mind is quite as relevant as what we learn of the electron. Hence this work touches, in successive chapters, on fundamentals of physics,

biology, history, and psychology, and in a final chapter draws some moral consequences. Modern science demands specialisation and looks askance on the superficiality of excessive breadth; this book, however, to fulfil its purpose, has to be unconventionally broad.

"Yet it is not excessively difficult to arrive at a broad vision by surveying the chief aspects of our complex being. One can appreciate the thrust and principle conclusions of modern physics without mastering higher order differential equations and grasp the essentials of what is known of the mind without delving into details of neurology. The fundamentals of modern astronomy, biology, and psychology are at least as accessible as a Joycean novel and require no more concentration than a good chess game. The non specialist, moreover, has advantages of perspective over the professional engrossed in a particular speciality."

Robert Wesson (Cosmos and Metacosmos.. Preface p.X/XI)

Regardless of individual differences in philosophical temperament and disposition, there are certain basic givens which all must accept at the outset of the journey. First, a belief that Reality is deeply meaningful, that the news is ultimately good and that we have what it takes to make significant progress:

".....Logically as well as psychologically, inquiry does not begin with an empty mind but involves beliefs as the presuppositions of inquiry. Just what these presuppositions are must be discovered through inquiry; but an investigator who doubted his memory, the principles of logic, the reliability of reason, and all the evidence of his senses would be completely hamstrung. The moment one advances beyond the first 'self-evident' premise ('I think, therefore I am'), one must employ some of the very beliefs one has pretended to doubt."

Melvin Rader³

".....A philosophy which begins with radical doubt must end in radical despair. It was the principle of dubito ut intelligam that prepared the soul for modern doctrines of despair. 'Philosophy begins in wonder' [Plato, the Theatatus]....."

".....To set limits on speculation is treason to the future." A.N.Whitehead

".....The essence of optimism is that it takes no account of the present" Dietrich Bonhöffer

Optimism runs counter to the fashionable nihilism of the times. Those who adopt this posture quickly find themselves dismissed as 'wishful thinkers', that is to say people who have suffered a failure of nerve depriving them of the courage needed to look reality squarely in the face.

".....It is quite true that nothing exists merely because we wish it, but it is not true that something cannot exist if we wish it. Feuerbach's whole critique of religion and the proof of his atheism, however, rest on this simple argument, that is, on a logical fallacy." E. Von Hartmann

Some affirmation of the Transcendent realm must be made at the start. This need be seen as no more than a *numinous* eternal Source necessary to account for the origin of the cosmos, the ongoing de novo creativity and self-organisation so characteristic of life and mind, and finally the direct experience of mystical encounter. Some may choose to envisage Transcendence in terms of a theistic God in one of its many forms but this is an option we are under no obligation to accept. Robert Wesson expresses the kind of thing I have in mind:

".....The result of this line of thought, as laid out in the following pages, is a non-theistic non-determinism. This lies midway between the two traditional, fundamental ways of thinking about what are called 'higher things': the belief that the world is the work of a great personality who watches over it and perhaps intervenes on occasion to set things right; and the theory that material particles are the totality of existence for the reality and basic properties of which there

can, and need be no accounting. Both of these views are incomplete and unsatisfactory for those who are unable to take answers on faith, but who are impressed with the inadequacy of materialistic interpretations. The most reasonable approach seems to compromise between fideism and materialism: the material cosmos came out of, and is profoundly related to a transcendental essence."

Robert Wesson. *Cosmos and Metacosmos*. Open Court, LaSalle Illinois 1989. page x1

I take it to be self-evident that *personhood*, that is to say vibrant conscious life is what Reality is ultimately all about. In consequence those denying theism must make whatever reconstructions may be needed in coming to terms with eternal life; seemingly implied here is an acknowledgment that the issue of *eschatology* need be tabled for discussion at the outset. Without eschatology there can be no 'good news', and should it be denied, little point is left in proceeding any further. The quest could only be pursued as a kind of act of Promethean defiance, of the exercise of existential values commanding us to confront Reality, to look it dead in the eye without flinching.

The paragraphs above set forth what I take to be a common ground which, I believe, must be accepted taken by all to be the point of departure for their philosophical speculations. From the starting gate which this provides, one is free to head off in almost any direction that one pleases or sees fit.

This having been said, is the method of inquiry and mode of procedure also subject to constraints defined in terms of an envelope of options? My response again is yes. First of all, philosophy is a cognitive discipline which seeks to focus Reality in terms of an organised network of ideas; this requires that the aspiring philosopher be an architect -an architect of ideas. But this 'view from nowhere' takes us only half way, or perhaps a bit beyond. There must also be an existential manifesto in which the living immediacy of the conscious moment is addressed. As a special case, the 'Cartesian Cut' must be approached independently from both sides; only thus can we arrive at the much sought-after theory of how the mind/brain ensemble is put together.. But to engage the view from somewhere calls for the soul of a poet. To be both is asking a lot; Plato managed to pull it off, but how many others measure up in this respect? Regardless, just because like art, philosophical world views must flow from single minds, somehow or other, any philosopher must somehow or other preserve elements of both. Perhaps what we might hope for would be the emergence of a series of world-views in which these two aspects are variously weighted -given only that both be truly addressed.

To repeat an earlier demand, common sense must be in command of the intellectual engine, with all that this implies. Details of just what would seem to be implied is presented in a separate chapter on the subject [??]

At risk of seeming to indulge in wanton paradox, I believe that we need to start from the end of things rather than the beginning. What I mean to imply is that Reality is deeply imbued with evolution which points to the consummation of Reality at the end of things. Perhaps what I'm here appealing to is a kind of generalisation of Pascal's rejoinder: to search for God is to have already found him.

We are, I believe, at the present moment -and for the first time in history- in possession of everything needed to reconstruct philosophy which we need to break out of the current paradigm and bring into existence something which has so far eluded history, namely a world view sufficiently resilient to exhibit something of the convergence and coherence so highly prized by the scientific enterprise. Here are some The available ingredients fall into three categories:

- O The discoveries of science, including those of the 'new' biology, particle physics, and above all, those within the fields of neuroanatomy and neurophysiology.
- O As an important special case, the definitive dispatch of the illusion of 'naive realism'

- O The whole sweep of our philosophical heritage -of both East and West. Many of the ideas which will prove valuable have long since passed out of currency and will have to be dragged back from the past.
- O A whole host of discoveries within the formal realm, including those of transfinite (and other branches of advanced) mathematics and our insights into the nature of language -started within Port Royal and elaborated by Wilhelm von Humboldt a century later; to be included here are the more recent speculations of Noam Chomsky.

It is only within this century, and more particularly since World War II that this point has been reached. One is, perhaps, somewhat left asking why there seem to be so few signs of any rebirth in systematic philosophy. I think that one can only argue that paradigm changes involve singularities and their occurrence is unpredictable; they have a way of coming out of the blue.

I believe that the benefits of the enterprise will double back on physics itself, in which it will be demonstrated that many of the paradoxes with which it is currently beset will turn out to be green herrings⁴.

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FOOTNOTES

¹ ".....A metaphor is an implied comparison. It is to be distinguished from a simile which is an explicit comparison. In a simile, one says a is similar to b in certain explicit respects, different in others. The elaboration of a simile ultimately gives rise to prose which is an indefinitely extended simile, ie, to talk prose is to say (or imply) that the world is like what I say (though also unlike). In a metaphor, it is essential that the similarity is left implicated or unstated. I suggest that the meaning of a metaphor is therefore directly apprehended in an implicate order of the mind. So, in poetry, it is possible to engage the implicate 'dance of the mind' ".

Private communication from David Bohm, recounted by (Saul?) Rosen in Physics & the Ultimate Significance of Time. Edited by [?] Griffon.

²Some might wish to argue that like it or not, our progress may be held up by one or more issues whose reach lies beyond our present intellectual competence or span of knowledge. These sceptics might offer us the following analogy. Prior to world war II, there was absolutely no way in which a journey to the moon, followed by safe return to earth, could have been undertaken. The vital missing link was the existence of computing devices of anything approaching the power needed -above all, any which could be carried and operated aboard the spacecraft. Even as late as the early 1950s, Vannevar [?] Bush, respected inventor of the first differential analyser (originally constructed out of Mecchano ?), was to dismiss any idea of such space travel as a pipe dream.

My response to such scepticism is two-fold. Even in the analogy given, a start upon space travel could have been made in the 1930s, given the will. A great deal was already known about rocket design, and pioneers in both Russia and the United States had been active in their construction. The basic mathematics underlying all phases of space flight was fully understood -for example the daunting size of any booster large enough to put a payload into earth orbit. Nevertheless, the state of the art was adequate to support the many engineering innovations needed to bring Sputnik into existence 20 years ahead of its time.

As with technology, so also with philosophy; one is never frozen into immobility; there are always some steps which can be taken, and one simply does what one can. And sometimes, a great deal can be accomplished with a very little:

".....Indian thought applied itself.....to the most abstruse problems before it was even remotely in a position to treat them intelligibly."
Paul
Deussen

In other words, as we might say today, they were pushing the state of the art to the limit -but with what breath-taking results.

It is my firm belief that finally, within the present century, we come into possession of everything which is needed to put together a world view of some enduring value, perhaps coming to exhibit something of the *convergence* enjoyed by the scientific enterprise. Thus, for example, transfinite mathematics has now come to provide us with the formal tools by means of which a grip may be secured upon the very slippery concepts of transcendence and eternity, and their relation to the time and space of finite existence; it was exactly here that Hegel was to lose his grasp. And the researches of the neuroscientists has enabled us to roundly dispatch the fallacy of naive realism and to help guide us in placing that all-important 'Cartesian cut' -the interface between the cooperating partners of the mind/brain ensemble- where it belongs.

³".....the starting point of philosophy is common-sense rather than indubitable intuitions. By common-sense Peirce meant those fundamental beliefs we share with almost all human beings and that our human situation forces upon us. Examples of common-sense beliefs are our conviction that fire burns, that some things are red and others blue, that we can usually trust our memories, and that there is a certain amount of order in the universe.....'We cannot begin with complete doubt. We begin with all of the prejudices which we actually have when we enter into the study of philosophy. These prejudices are not to be dispelled by a maxim, for they are things which it does not occur to us *can be questioned*.....let us not pretend to doubt in philosophy what we do not doubt in our hearts'.....The crux of the psychological criticism is that *real* doubt arises from the conflict of beliefs and hence involves non-doubt. It is an error to suppose that we can doubt at will.....The surprise occurs when a belief comes into conflict with either some other belief or some novel experience, and a mind empty of belief cannot be surprised. If you try to doubt without such positive occasion for doubting you are merely feigning doubt....."

⁴A 'Green Herring' is the inverse of its rubine counterpart. It proclaims a profound truth which passes unrecognised because it is out of registration with the ambient metaphysical and scientific presuppositions. One might say that they are too obvious to be noticed. It is my belief that many of the paradoxes presently bedevilling physics may turn out to be green herrings, and that the needed reconstruction of the foundations of physics will need to take origin from this acknowledgment.

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