

The Unity of Knowing and Acting — From a Neo-Confucian Perspective

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I

Philosophy as a natural function of the mind¹ is an independent, irreducible, and self-sufficient realm of human activity. It gives its own laws, develops its own methods, and chooses its own subjects. Yet as a fundamental inquiry into the underlying structures of being, philosophy must come into contact with the total reality of human experience. For it is the function of philosophy to increase man's wisdom by creating new, and deepening old, insights into all dimensions of human consciousness. Philosophy so conceived is more than a critical investigation; it is a spiritual quest for truth through meditative thinking as well as logical reasoning.

Such a quest involves man's whole being rather than merely his cognitive faculty. Indeed, in the mainstream of Eastern thought, there has been the realization that doing philosophy is in itself a religious act. It necessarily leads to the creation of values such as an integrated personality, a heightened social conscience, and a deepened moral commitment. The act of philosophizing is therefore a form of spiritual self-cultivation. To philosophize is not only to examine the foundations of one's being, but also to strengthen one's spirituality.

Actually, a similar orientation can be found in the mystic elements of Plato, the writings of St. Augustine, the Stoics, the medieval saints, Pascal, Kierkegaard, and the works of modern philosophers such as Martin Buber, Gilbert Marcel, and Martin Heidegger. In light of the experience in the East, be it Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, or Confucianism, the above-mentioned thinkers seem to symbolize a global search for philosophical wisdom, which according to Marcel, "is to be found wherever man tries not to organize his life around a center; instead he strives to organize it with respect to everything that has to do with the business of keeping oneself in existence; all else he regards as peripheral and subordinate."²

To be sure, this is not the only way to philosophize. In fact, in the majority of academic centers for the professional study of philosophy in England and the United States, the specific kind of approach has for many years been relegated to the background, if not altogether ostracized from the departments of philosophy.³ Thus it seems advisable to leave open the question, what is the most authentic way of doing philosophy? Unless the modern philosopher consciously

chooses to remain insensitive to the great spiritual traditions in human history, it does make sense to stress the importance of man's age-long heritage as bases for creative thinking, rather than merely as materials for critical analysis.

If it is accepted that the great spiritual traditions in the world today have a prominent role to perform in the *pensée pensante* ("thinking thought," to borrow a term coined by Blondel⁴) of modern philosophy, it becomes imperative that we study the creative thoughts in these traditions for the sake not only of a critical appreciation of historical wisdom, but also of our own way of doing philosophy. Since this form of philosophizing involves a kind of religious commitment, to distinguish it from the philosophical study of religion, we shall call it "religio-philosophy," a tentative definition of which is: the inquiry into human insights by disciplined reflection, for the primary purpose of spiritual transformation. Religio-philosophy thus defined characterizes the nature and function of philosophizing in all the major historical traditions of the East. In addition, it truthfully represents theological thinking in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It may even be suggested that religio-philosophy, as a way of doing philosophy, is a new message being delivered by some of the leading thinkers in modern Europe.⁵

II

Confucianism as a religio-philosophy seeks to "establish the ultimacy of man."⁶ Its primary concern is to study the uniqueness of man so as to understand his morality, sociality, and religiosity. Although this kind of study necessarily involves a critical understanding of issues such as the mind and human nature, its fundamental task is centered on the question of how to become the most authentic man or the sage. From the Confucian point of view, it is inconceivable that one is seriously engaged in the study of how to become the most authentic man purely as a detached inquirer, without involving any personal commitment. For the Confucian approach to sagehood rests on the belief that man is perfectible through his own effort. To know oneself as a form of self-cultivation is therefore deemed simultaneously an act of internal self-transformation. Indeed, self-knowledge and self-transformation are not only closely interrelated, they are also fully integrated. My attempt here is to reflect on this insight in the light of Neo-Confucian thinking.

Historically Neo-Confucianism is a spiritual tradition in China dating from the 11th century to the 17th.⁷ It can be considered an intellectual response to the challenges of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism and religious Taoism in a predominantly Confucian value-oriented society. In a long and strenuous process of searching for a new spiritual identity following the decline of Confucian thinking over a period of centuries, the Neo-Confucianists appropriated many Buddhist and Taoist values.

It is beyond the scope of this article to specify the nature of their appropriation, but it is important to point out that, despite its efforts to absorb inspiration from other spiritual systems, Neo-Confucianism is a creative adaptation of classical Confucian insights, rather than a syncretic culmination of the "Three Teachings."

Scholars of Chinese thought, nevertheless, have raised several questions about the validity of the Neo-Confucian masters' claims to be in the mainstream of Confucian thinking. Some of the issues that are still seriously debated include: How deeply was Chou Tun-i (Lien-hsi, 1017-73) influenced by Taoist cosmogony? How much was the universalism of Chang Tsai (Heng-ch'ü, 1020-77) derived from the Mahayana Buddhist idea of compassion? How closely related are the quietism of Ch'eng Hao (Ming-tao, 1032-85) and the practice of quiet-sitting in Taoism and Ch'an Buddhism? How Chan-like was Lu Chiu-yüan (Hsiang-shan, 1132-93)? And how Buddhistic or Taoistic was Wang Shou-jen (Yang-ming, 1472-1529)? Even in the cases of Ch'eng I (I-ch'uan, 1033-1107) and Chu Hsi (Yuan-hui, 1130-1200), the approach to Confucianism has frequently been considered a departure from rather than a fulfillment of the ancient wisdom in classical Confucian thought.

My primary aim here is not to judge the authenticity of Neo-Confucianism in the light of the spiritual orientation in classical Confucianism, but to probe the intrinsic value of Neo-Confucian thinking itself. Since the issue of authenticity is relevant to a general understanding of the problems to be discussed, it seems useful to make clear my own position in this matter at the outset. This necessitates a brief discussion of the basic *problematik* of classical Confucianism.

Philosophically, as well as historically, Confucianism symbolizes a very complex spiritual phenomenon. The scope of its involvement defies simple categorization. Even broad terms such as religion, social philosophy, and ethical system are too narrow to encompass the diversity of Confucian concerns, especially if the terms are used in a restrictive sense. For example, if Confucianism is described as a religion and by religion is meant a kind of spiritualism purportedly detached from the secular world, the whole dimension of sociality in Confucianism will be left out. If Confucianism is described as a social philosophy, its central concern of relating the self to the most generalized level of universality, or *t'ien* (heaven), will be ignored. If the spiritual aspect of Confucian self-cultivation is emphasized exclusively, its intention of complete self-fulfillment, which must also embrace the whole area of corporality, will be mis-understood. On the other hand, if the Confucian insistence on man as a sociopolitical being is overstated, its ideal of self-transcendence in the form of being one heaven and earth will become incomprehensible.

Therefore it is of paramount importance that we grasp the

underlying structure of Confucian intentionality. Undoubtedly the primary concern of the Confucianist is to become a sage, and as already mentioned, the Confucian sage symbolizes the most authentic, genuine, and sincere man. From the Confucian point of view, the ultimate basis of and actual strength for becoming a sage are located in the very nature of man, which is imparted from, but not created by, heaven. The path to sagehood is therefore an unceasing process of self-transformation, with the existential situation of man here and now as its point of departure. The process is one of gradual inclusion, a process that seeks to integrate the structure of the self with that of man, with that of nature, and eventually with that of the cosmos. In a deeper sense, the process of integration is concomitantly that of authentication. The self becomes truer to its original structure when it is ultimately identified with the cosmos, or the great self.

It is misleading to describe this process merely as an expansion of human consciousness or as a development of the spiritual self. According to Mencius (371?-289? B. C.), the process of *chien-hsing* (realization of the bodily design) is a holistic one, involving both the *ta-t' i* (the great body) and the *hsiao-t' i* (the small body). *Ta-t' i* refers to the intrinsic moral feelings that make man uniquely human; *hsiao-t' i* refers to the basic instinctual demands that make man a part of the animal kingdom. The word "great" is used to describe *ta-t' i*, for although the "bud-like" beginnings of intrinsic moral feelings are delicate, when they are fully cultivated they become all-embracing human sensitivity. The word "small" describes *hsiao-t' i*; although the "flood-like" forces of the basic instinctual demands are strong, if they are properly channeled they constitute the irreducible reality of the individual self. Therefore, self-transformation denies or slights neither spirituality nor corporality. As a holistic process of realizing the bodily design, self-transformation helps man to become a whole being in his lived concreteness. In the last analysis, it is none other than the process of humanization.⁸

In Confucianism the true meaning of man must be sought beyond his anthropological structure. A classical formulation of such a position may be found in the sayings of Mencius: "For a man to give full realization to his mind is for him to understand his own nature, and a man who knows his own nature will know Heaven."⁹ The word *chih* ("know") in the present context connotes not only cognitive knowing but also affective identifying, or experiential "embodying." The message implicit in the above quotation points to a "concrete-universal" approach to the ontology of man. Specifically, the concrete path of self-knowledge is considered the most authentic way of entering into universal communion with the cosmos. To use a Mencian analogy, this is like the sinking of a well: the deeper one goes into the ground of one's own being, the closer he gets to the

spring of common humanity and the source of cosmic creativity, a point to be developed later.¹⁰ Indeed, unless man transcends not only his egoistic structure but also his anthropological structure, he can never fully realize the ontological meaning of humanity.

If this is accepted as a basic *problematik* of classical Confucianism, the philosophical task of the Neo-Confucianists can be interpreted as a systematic reflection on what may be called the "inner dimension" of classical Confucianism. The primary method used is not logical reasoning or analytical argumentation, but a series of experiential encounters with the basic literature so as to understand its original insight. Philosophical creativity in this connection is not demonstrated in the ability to construct a conceptual edifice based on a limited number of premises. Rather, it is shown in the ability to relate a comprehensive ontological insight to the immediate daily affairs so as to integrate in a dynamic way one's concrete existence here and now with one's most generalized perception of the universe as a whole. To be sure, underlying this interpretation is the assumption that the mystic elements in Mencius, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Book of Changes* are all authentic texts in classical Confucian thinking. I am well aware that this assumption is not irrefutable, but so far as the existing scholarly research on this specific point is concerned, there does not seem to be enough evidence to prove otherwise. Therefore, in response to the questions about the validity of the Neo-Confucian masters' claims to be in the mainstream of Confucian thinking, I suggest that we deepen our own understanding and broaden our awareness of the key issues in the classical Confucian tradition by maintaining a constant dialogue with the leading philosophers in the Neo-Confucian period. If we must pass judgment on their "authenticity", we cannot afford to misread their intentionality.¹¹

To reflect on this particular insight of Confucianism in the light of Neo-Confucian thinking, I shall address myself to three basic problem areas: (1) the structure of *li-chih* (to establish the will or to make an existential decision), (2) the notion of *chih-hsing ho-i* (the unity of knowing and acting), and (3) the concept of *ch'eng* (sincerity, completeness, truth, reality, or creativity). It is hoped that such discussion will throw light on the inner dimension of Confucian thinking as a possible approach to the complicated phenomena of religio-philosophy.

III

The structure of *li-chih* is analogous to that of existential decision in the Kirkegaardian sense: it is a fundamental choice which requires an ultimate commitment; it is a qualitative change which affects the entire dimension of one's being; and it is an unceasing process which demands constant reaffirmation. Yet since there is a basic difference

in orientation between the Confucian way to sagehood and the Christian approach to salvation, the analogy must not be carried too far.

For the Confucianists, the fundamental choice is directed inward toward human nature. If man is not merely a conglomeration of externalizable physiological, psychological, and sociological states, a conscious choice is required to establish his spiritual identity. This is why Mencius advocated the primacy of establishing that which is great, or the *ta-che*, in each human being, and why the Neo-Confucianists — notably Chou Tun-i and Lu Chiu-yüan — insist on the centrality of "establishing the ultimacy of man."

The qualitative change in Confucianism, unlike its counterpart in Christianity, is not an either-or leap of faith, but a both-and return to the self. When Confucius says in the *Analects*, "At fifteen, I set my heart upon learning,"¹² he is describing his early commitment to self-transformation. The decision to learn, which in the classical sense means to be engaged in self-enlightenment,¹³ thus symbolizes a qualitative change in the orientation of one's life. As Hsü Tzu (fl 298-238 B. C.) has dramatically put it: "the art of learning occupies the whole of life; to arrive at its purpose, you cannot stop for an instant. To do this is to be a man; to stop is to be a beast."¹⁴ Learning so conceived is a conscious attempt to change oneself from being in a state of mere psychophysiological growth to that of ethico-religious existence. Such a change is a qualitative one, for it seeks to change from the natural growth of the partial man, or the "small body," to the meaningful existence of the fully integrated whole man, or the "great body." To reiterate an earlier point, in the Confucian sense an ethico-religious existence necessarily entails the realization of one's psychophysiological growth, for it is a return to the true self, which comprises both the large and the small body.

Paradoxically, neither the fundamental choice nor the qualitative change appears as merely a discrete moment in one's life history. Since Confucianism is not a revealed religion, the "establishment of the will" is not so much a mystic experience of the transcendent Absolute as it is an enlightening experience of the immanent Self. Therefore the never ending process it entails does not take the form of a dialogical relationship with the "wholly other," but rather, takes the form of a dialectical development of the Self. The inscription on the washing vessel of King T'ang (r. 1751? — 1739? B. C.), which is quoted in the *Great Learning*, says: "If you can renew yourself one day, then you can renew yourself everyday, and keep renewing yourself day after day."¹⁵ Thus the establishment of the will is both a single act and a continuous process. As a single act, it shakes the foundation of one's temporal existence so as to enable one to arrive at a deeper dimension of self-awareness. As a continuous process it

reaffirms the bedrock of one's being in an unending effort of self-realization.

Furthermore, the structure of *li-chih* involves what may be called a spatio-temporal dimension, symbolized by the ineffable Confucian concept of *shih* (timeliness or timeousness). In Confucianism, to establish the will or to make an existential decision is not to "deliver" oneself from one's concrete situation; rather it is a continually renewed effort to relate oneself meaningfully to one's lived concreteness. Sociopolitical conditions such as one's family affairs, communal responsibilities, or societal obligations are legitimate elements of one's true existence here and now, for only in the context of one's fundamental human relations can one, in experiential terms, decide to engage in the humanizing task of self-realization. One does not depart from the human situation; instead one begins with and eventually returns to the human situation.

As an integral part of the humanizing task, *li-chih* signifies a future action of realizing the self, an action that depends on the past and that is within one's present power. The future aspect of *li-chih* is not an undefined or undefinable project conditioned primarily by the unknown, or even by the unknowable. It is not a process of self-denial, but one of self-fulfilment. It is not a movement of alienation from, but of reconciliation with, the reality of man. Similarly, in the structure of *li-chih*, the "past" — namely, the irreducible human conditions — does not necessarily impose a set of meaningless restrictions on one's actions. It provides the means for concrete integration and realization of human values within one's present power. As a result, the establishment of the will is an act of the present which links the "experienced necessity" of the past with the creative freedom of the future.

IV

As Mencius points out, the will is the directionality of the mind,¹⁶ When the mind *directs*, a "bodily energy" follows. To be sure, Mencius warns us that since the direction of the mind may also be influenced by a psychosomatic disposition, it is essential that we cultivate our bodily energy for the service of the mind. Yet the interaction of the will and the bodily energy actually implies that the directionality of the mind has inner strength of its own. It is inconceivable that when the mind directs, the whole bodily constitution is not in some way affected by it. Therefore the establishment of the will involves both cognitive and affective dimensions. This leads us to the notion of *chih-hsing ho-i*.

Etymologically, *chih* refers to the faculty of knowing, *hsing* refers to the function of acting, and *ho-i* means either unity or identity. Although the "unity of knowing and acting" was formulated by Wang

Yang-ming in 1509, as the result of his experiential encounter with Chu Hsi's doctrine of *ko-wu* (the investigation of things),¹⁷ it may very well be accepted as a central concern in Confucianism as a whole. According to Chu Hsi, the road to sagehood involves a perception of the underlying *li* (ordering principle)¹⁸ in the totality of things (including intellectual ideas, natural phenomena, and human affairs). Theoretically, if the mind is completely purified, one can fully understand the *li* inherent in one's own nature. Practically, however, it is necessary for each to go through a gradual, strenuous, and persistent process of spiritual appropriation before his mind is able to arrive at a sudden comprehension of the *li* as the "ground of being" of all things. Yang-ming agrees with Chu Hsi that self-transformation requires learning, but he casts doubt on the separability of *hsin* (the mind) and *li*. If the human mind's understanding of the *li* of man does not take the form of an *aperception*, man's self-knowledge has to detour to search for objective truths from the outside. Yet Yang-ming asks: Can we really derive a guiding principle for action by investigating the anatomy of a bamboo tree? Must we search for internal self-identity in the midst of natural phenomena? Is the structure of man, in the last analysis, somewhat inadequate for self-knowledge, thereby necessitating the interiorization of external elements in order to make up for it?

Through a long and painful struggle with these kinds of issues the process described by Yang-ming as "a hundred deaths and a thousand hardships,"¹⁹ he comes to the realization that the decision to become a sage (the most authentic, genuine, and sincere man) is itself the *pen* (root) of sagehood. Ultimately it is both the necessary and the sufficient basis for becoming a sage. Indeed, if man is conceived as a self-transforming and self-realizing agent, the decision to become a sage is precisely what each man ought to make prior to any form of learning. This is in essence comparable to the Mencian position of establishing first that which is great in each of us. To seek greatness as a prior condition to learning is by no means a denial or depreciation of the importance of empirical study. To do so, however, does suggest that the route to sagehood begins with an inner decision, without which learning is not relevant to the task of self-realization.

I have already mentioned that the establishment of the will as an inner decision involves both cognitive and affective dimensions. It is certainly *knowing* that projects into the ideal state of what one ought to be in the future. But it is more than a mere cognitive knowing. As a form of introspective examination, knowing simultaneously transforms one's present existence into a state of being projected toward the future ideal. Indeed, the decision is knowing only in the sense that it is a transforming self-reflection. Similarly, the decision is *acting*, which reorders one's existential situation and affects the

whole dimension of his life. Yet as an actualization of reflective thinking, it is not a random act. Thus the decision is acting only in the sense that it is an intentional self-affirmation. A speculative thought without much experiential significance of an ephemeral act without much intellectual value can never become a part of the inner decision. Knowing, which causes fundamental changes in one's existence, and acting, which brings new depth to one's perception, form a unity in the structure of inner decision.

The unity of knowing and acting so conceived is neither an achieved state nor a desired ideal. As Wang Yang-ming says, the unity is the "original nature" of both knowing and acting in the process of man's inner decision to transform and perfect himself. In Yang-ming's words, "Knowing is the beginning of acting; acting is the completion of knowing."²⁰ Indeed, "Knowing is the crystallization of the will to act and acting is the task of carrying out that knowledge."²¹ The inseparability of knowing and acting is thus more than a corrective measure; it is a description of their true nature. If we investigate the *pen-t'i* (original structure) of knowing and acting, we are compelled to recognize that "without knowing, acting is impossible; without acting, knowing is impossible."²² The real nature of knowing in this respect is to be found in the actual transforming effects it has exerted on behaviour. Similarly, the real nature of acting is to be found in the actual deepening effects it contributes to self-knowledge. Therefore, to know the nature of man is not merely to gain some objective knowledge about it, but to act accordingly. To act, then is not only to change the external world but also to deepen and broaden self-knowledge.

The inseparability of knowing and acting does not imply a closed system. The inner decision, as both an act and a process, is always dynamically interrelated with the life situations one personally encounters. Self-knowledge can never be authenticated if one is isolated from the ethico-social context in which he becomes aware of the true self. The Confucianist further contends that the true self can never be fully realized except in the network of human-relatedness. As the *Great Learning* maintains, self-cultivation has to lead to communal values such as harmony in the family, order in the state, and peace in the world.²³ Implicit in this approach is Wang Yang-ming's statement: "The great man regards heaven, earth, and the myriad things as one body."²⁴ He is able to do so not by any deliberate effort, but by being himself. If one fails to attain this, he should follow the example of the great archer: "When he misses the center of the target, he turns around and seeks the cause of failure within himself."²⁵ Although this does not mean that one is "fated" to travel the concrete path of self-realization alone, it at least means the burden of the journey rests on the individual. One of Confucius's

most devoted disciples, Tseng Tzu, is so concerned with his heavy charge that he describes his way of life as walking on the edge of a deep valley or as treading thin ice.²⁶ Each step necessitates an inner decision, which, as both knowing and acting, is the only access to the ontology of man.

Thus we come to the crucial issue of communication.

V

In Section II, I described *ch'ien-hsing* as a holistic process, involving both the *ta-t'i* and the *hsiao-t'i*. I have also stated that self-transformation in this connection denies, or slights, neither spirituality nor corporality. Mencius says: "If a man who cares about food and drink can do so without neglecting any part of his person, then his mouth and belly are much more than just a foot or an inch of his skin."²⁷ If the *hsiao-t'i* embraces the whole structure of the bodily constitution, how much more so must be the embracing quality of the *ta-t'i*. Again, Mencius states that the cultivation of mind necessarily "manifests itself in the face, giving it a sleek appearance. It also shows in the back and extends to the limbs, rendering their message intelligible without words."²⁸ It is only in this sense that Mencius suggests further: "Our body and complexion are given to us by heaven. Only a sage can give his body complete fulfilment."²⁹

It should be pointed out, however, that *ch'ien-hsing*, as the complete fulfilment of one's body, must not be confined to the anthropological structure. Paradoxically, unless one goes beyond the restrictions of anthropology, one can never fully realize his nature as a man. This brings us to a highly controversial statement in Mencius: "All the ten thousand things are there in me. There is no greater joy for me than to find, on self-examination, that I am sincere (*ch'eng*) to myself."³⁰ To illustrate this point, I shall present an inquiry into the concept of *ch'eng* in the *Doctrine of the Mean* as understood by Neo-Confucian thinkers such as Chou Tun-i and Liu Tsung-chou (Nien-t'a, 1578-1645).

It should be mentioned at the beginning that "sincerity" is a poor approximation of the Chinese character *ch'eng*, which etymologically also connotes *completion actualization*, or *perfection*. Such connotations of the English word "sincerity" as *honesty*, *genuineness*, and *truth* are also included in the *ch'eng*. However, since *ch'eng* conveys only good implications, it cannot be used in a negative sense, to mean, for example, a firm belief in the validity of one's own opinions ("He is an entirely sincere and cruel tyrant"). For the sake of convenience, I will use — sometimes misuse — the word "sincerity" in this specific context to present the Confucian viewpoint.

Since the Confucianist believes that both the ultimate ground and the actual strength of becoming a sage lie in the very nature of man,

the act of establishing the will is ultimately internal self-transformation. A defining characteristic of man is thus his possession of the need and power for transforming himself from the existence of an ordinary man into that of a sage. Furthermore, since internal self-transformation is actually a process of self-purification and self-authentication, one fulfils one's highest obligation as man, in the words of Chang Tsai, simply by being unceasing in one's humanity.⁸¹ Similarly, once the process of self-transformation is stopped, one gradually ceases to be human. To use Ch'eng Hao's analogy, this is like paralysis of the four limbs. When the sensitivity to further self-realization becomes numb, the scope and depth of one's humanity are bound to be restricted.⁸² An extreme form of such a restriction is described in the Chinese vernacular as "walking corpse and running fresh." This seemingly naive position is based on an ontological insight into the nature of man.

According to the *Doctrine of the Mean*, man's sincere nature is imparted by heaven; to follow the truth of human nature is the authentic way, and to cultivate the way is the original meaning of teaching.⁸³ Man's fundamental approach to heaven is therefore to be sought in the structure of man itself. A transcendent reality completely outside the structure of man is either inconceivable or irrelevant to man's ultimate concern. Paradoxically, the only way man can transcend himself is through a process of "humanization," which in this specific context means a return to one's sincere nature. One may, of course raise the objection, Why should man try to transcend himself in the first place? The answer lies in the basic *problematik* of Confucianism: if man does not transcend his anthropological structure, he cannot fulfil his design as a man in the most sincere sense of the word. Indeed, "sincerity is the way of heaven. To learn how to be sincere is the way of man."⁸⁴ The sage, as the most sincere man, is "naturally and easily in harmony with the way,"⁸⁵ for he is identified with heaven. When one is not yet completely united with heaven, he must try to be sincere by "choosing the good and holding fast to it,"⁸⁶ so as to develop fully his own humanity.

The *Doctrine of the Mean* further suggests that sincerity necessarily entails *ming* "enlightening insights," and the primary function of teaching is to see to it that enlightening insights lead eventually to sincerity.⁸⁷ For the enlightening insight, as basically a form of cognitive understanding must find its resting place, as it were, in the transforming power of sincerity. That transforming power is inherent in sincerity can be shown by the following statement:

Only he who is absolutely sincere can realize his nature to the utmost. Able to do this, he is able to do the same to the nature of other men. Able to do this, he is able to do the same to the nature of things. Able to do this, he can assist

the transforming and nourishing of heaven and earth. Being able to do this, he can form a trinity with heaven and earth.⁸⁸

Implicit in this quotation is the assertion that the man who is absolutely sincere is the same man who has completely realized himself through internal self-transformation. Such a man is thought to have the power of extending the task of self-realization to the cosmos in general. For being absolutely sincere (genuine, truthful, and honest) necessarily entails the ability to actualize, complete, and perfect one's true nature which ontologically means the nature of other men, of things, and of the universe.

It is interesting to note in this context that the act of self-transformation and the state of sincerity are thought to be inseparable. To be sincere is to realize oneself through self-transformation; to engage oneself simultaneously in self-transformation is a necessary expression of being sincere. Since self-transformation is a process of becoming, and sincerity is usually thought to be a state of being, it means that the ordinary distinction of becoming and being is no longer applicable in this case. To define man as a self-transforming and self-realizing agent is to characterize him in terms of his becoming process.

This Confucian position can be labelled as humanist only in a very special sense. The man of humanity, being the most sincere manifestation of human nature, must also be able to realize the nature of the myriad things" and assist heaven and earth in their transforming and nourishing functions. If one cannot transcend one's anthropological structure, let alone egoistic structure, one's self-transformation is still in the initial stage. Unless one can realize the nature of all things so as to form a trinity with heaven and earth, one's self-realization is not yet complete. In this sense, humanity implies a profound care for and deep commitment to the well-being of the natural world—indeed, to the cosmos.

In light of the foregoing, sincerity seems to have dynamism of its own. It seeks to reorder the external world in such a way as to bring about its own realization. Sincerity thus conceived symbolizes the mystic working of creativity itself. The *Doctrine of the Mean* states:

Sincerity necessarily leads to visibility. From visibility it leads to manifestation. From manifestation, it leads to illumination (or enlightenment). Illumination entails activity. Activity entails change. And change leads to transformation.

Only he who is absolutely sincere can eventually transform.⁸⁹

To be sure, this may very well be interpreted as the mystic experience of the absolutely sincere sage. Yet the *Mean* further says: "Sincerity means self-completing, and the way is self-directing. Sincerity is the beginning and end of things. Without sincerity there can be nothing."⁹⁰ Sincerity in this sense is both the creative process

by which the existence of things becomes possible, and the ground of being on which the things as they really are ultimately rests.

Actually, the mystic experience of the sage is itself a manifestation of sincerity. For sincerity as a transcendent reality is the "way of heaven," which is actualizable through man's conscious effort to be sincere, that is through the "way of man." The sage, being completely unified or identified with heaven, thus transcends the anthropological restrictions, embodies the most authentic humanity, and participates in the great cosmic transformation itself. In the words of the *Mean*:

One who is absolutely sincere can regulate and attune the great relations of mankind, establish the great foundations of humanity, and understand the transforming and nourishing process of heaven and earth. Does he depend on anything else? How pure and genuine — he is humanity. How deep and unfathomable — he is ocean. How vast and great — he is heaven. How can he comprehend this, if he does not have intelligence, aperception, sageliness, and wisdom to carry out the virtue of heaven.⁴¹

The sage can perform such a task not because of some superhuman endowment, but because he is absolutely truthful to his own humanity. Although sincerity is a transcendent reality, its creative power never ceases to function in the inner dimension of humanity. Since man's nature is imparted from heaven, the creative power of sincerity is inherent in the very structure of man. To learn how to be sincere is ultimately an attempt to become truthfully human. For humanity in its ultimate sense is the fullest manifestation of sincerity. Accordingly the sage participates in cosmic creativity simply by his humanness. Being absolutely sincere, the sage humanizes in the spirit of cosmic creativity. That humanity can assume such a creative dimension again lies in the nature of sincerity itself:

Therefore absolute sincerity is ceaseless. Being ceaseless, it is lasting. Being lasting, it is evident. Being evident, it is infinite. Being infinite, it is broad and deep. Being broad and deep, it is high and illuminating. Because it is broad and deep it is laden with all things. Because it is high and illuminating it shines upon all things. Because it is infinite and lasting it completes all things. In being broad and deep, it identifies with earth. In being high and illuminating, it identifies with heaven. In being infinite, it is limitless. Such being its nature, it manifests without trace, changes without motion, and completes without any effort.⁴²

The "concrete-universal" approach in Confucianism may be summarized as follows: If one intends to become an authentic man, one must establish the will so as to become a whole man, which means

the fulfilment of both human corporality and spirituality. The establishment of the will as an inner decision is itself both *knowing* and *acting*. Only in the unity of knowing and acting can the true nature of inner decision be found, because the root of self-realization is inherent in the very structure of man. Self-realization, however, is not merely a process of individuation; it is also a course of universal communion. The more one sinks into the depth of one's being, the more he transcends his anthropological restriction. Underlying this paradox is the Confucian belief that the true nature of man and the real creativity of the cosmos are both "grounded" in *sincerity*. When one, through self-cultivation, becomes absolutely sincere, one is the most authentic man and simultaneously participates in the transforming and nourishing process of the cosmos. To do so is to fulfil one's human nature.

1. Attributed to Stuart Hampshire, quoted in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1966), p. 1698.
2. Gabriel Marcel, *Searchings* (New York: Newman Press, 1967), p. 39.
3. Of course it can be suggested that doing philosophy in the form of analyzing ordinary language may also have a profound religious import. It is quite conceivable that many philosophers are engaged in the task of linguistic analysis as a form of mental discipline, if not of spiritual self-transformation.
4. Quoted in Marcel, p. 31.
5. If religio-philosophy is used in a broad sense, it may also include the philosophies of Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Paul Sartre. For the kind of sociopolitical totalization they envision is in the last analysis a spiritual transformation of the greatest magnitude.
6. Cf. the original formulation of this concept in *I-ching* (the *Book of Changes*), commentary on hexagram no. 1, *ch'ien* (Heaven) and its Neo-Confucian development in the *T'ai-chi t'u-shuo* of Chou Tun-i (*Chou Tzu ch'üan-shu*, chaps. 1-2, pp. 4-32). For a brief discussion on this issue, see Wei-ming Tu, "The Neo-Confucian Concept of Man," in *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 21, no. 1 (January 1971), p. 80.
7. Since the revival of Neo-Confucian thinking by modern Chinese philosophers such as Hsiung Shih-li (1885-1968), Liang Souming (1893-), and Fung Yu-lan (1895-), there has been a continuous effort to reconstruct Chinese philosophy in the spirit of Confucianism. The works of T'ang Chün-i, Mou Tsung-san, and Hsü Fu-kuan are paradigmatic examples of such an effort. Unfortunately, their writings are little known outside of Hong Kong and Taiwan. An introductory account of the early development of this school can be found in Wing-tsit Chan's *Religious Trends in Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953).
8. Cf. *Mencius*, VIA: 15. For an English translation, see *Mencius*, trans. by D.C. Lau (Penguin Books, 1970), p. 168. Lau's "Introduction" gives an excellent summary of Mencius' spiritual orientation.
9. *Ibid.*, VIIA: 1. For the translation, see Lau, p. 182.
10. The classical formulation of such a position is to be found in *Chung-yung* (the *Doctrine of the Mean*), chap. 23. For an English translation, see Fung Yu-

- lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 176.
11. In the last few decades many serious attempts have been made to study the "true spirit" of classical Confucianism. Textual analyses have been used to find out the original meanings of the sayings of Confucius and Mencius. However, the conscious effort to arrive at an objective understanding of Chinese thought in its formative years has frequently been influenced by the ethos of Ch'ing learning and European sinological scholarsticism. If we must pass judgment on the authenticity of the Neo-Confucian interpretation of classical Confucianism, it is important that we arrive at a higher level of intellectual sophistication. Only then will we be able to analyze critically the philosophical presuppositions of the Neo-Confucianists.
 12. *Analects*, II: 4.
 13. It seems very likely that the Neo-Confucian interpretation was influenced by Buddhism, but in Hsü Shen's *Shuo-wen* (Explanation of Characters) a first century dictionary, *ch'ieh* (enlightening) is used to explain *hsüeh* (learning). This may only indicate phonetic and etymological similarities between the two characters, but there is also a strong indication that a semantic link does exist between them as well.
 14. *Hsün Tzu*, chap. 1, "Ch' üan-hsüeh" ("An Encouragement to Study").
 15. *Ta-hsüeh* (the *Great Learning*), chap. II.
 16. *Mencius*, IIA: 2. Lau, pp. 76-78.
 17. Cf. *Nien-p' u* in *Yang-ming ch' üan-shu*, 32: 7a-8b. *Ssu-pu peiyao* edition).
 18. For a general discussion of the concept, see Wing-tsit Chan, "The Evolution of the Neo-Confucian Concept of Li as Principle," in *Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, new series, vol. 4, no. 2 (February, 1964), pp. 123-148.
 19. Cf. *Yang-ming ch' üan-shu*, 33: 16 b.
 20. *Ibid.*, 1: 3a-b. For an English translation of Wang Yang-ming's *Ch'uan-hsi lu*, see Wing tsit Chan, *Instructors for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings by Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963).
 21. *Ibid.*
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. *Ta-hsüeh*, chap. I.
 24. *Yang-ming ch' üan-shu*, 26: 1b.
 25. *Chung-yung*, chap. XIV.
 26. *Analect*, VIII: 3. Actually Tseng Tzu was quoting the *Book of Poetry* to illustrate his point:
 In fear and trembling,
 With caution and care,
 As though on the brink of a chasm,
 As though treading thin ice.
 For the translation, cf. *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. by Arthur Waley (London: Allen and Unwin, 1938), p. 133.
 27. *Mencius*, VIA: 14. Lau, 168.
 28. *Ibid.*, VIIA: 21. Lau, 186.
 29. *Ibid.*, VIIA: 38. Lau, 191. The only change I have made is not to capitalize the word "heaven." This is done only for the sake of consistency in my article. In fact I believe that if Heaven is not misunderstood as anthropomorphic, it conveys the meaning of the Chinese word *t' ien* quite well.
 30. *Ibid.*, VIIA: 4. Lau, 182. I have changed the word "true" to "sincere."
 31. Chang Tsai, *Cheng-ming*, chap. 6.
 32. Ch'eng Hao, *Erh-Ch'eng i-shu*, 2A: 2a-b.

33. *Chung-yung*, chap. I.
34. *Ibid.*, chap. 20.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Ibid.*
37. *Ibid.*, chap. 21.
38. *Ibid.*, chap. 22.
39. *Ibid.*, chap. 23.
40. *Ibid.*, chap. 25.
41. *Ibid.*, chap. 32.
42. *Ibid.*, chap. 26.

In this paper I wish to focus attention squarely upon the theory and practice of philosophy. After some mention of other views, I will formulate my own conception of philosophy. It involves a serious difficulty, but it is one that is shared by most other conceptions of philosophy that are known to me. Finally, I will discuss somewhat more briefly the practice of philosophy.

One fairly common way to proceed in philosophical discussion is to enumerate alternatives to one's own position and then to demolish them, until only one's own is left standing. I have often suspected that if the destructive mood had been allowed to run its course in such discussions, the sole survivor would have perished with the others, and none at all would have survived.

In his Lowell Lectures,¹ delivered in the spring of 1914, Bertrand Russell examined then current tendencies in philosophy. These he labelled "the classical tradition" (descended in the main from Kant and Hegel), "evolutionism" (deriving its predominance from Darwin but chiefly represented at that time by Henri Bergson and William James), and "logical atomism" (which was said to have "gradually crept into philosophy through the critical scrutiny of mathematics.")² It did not take Russell long to demolish the first two of these, and the remainder of his Lowell Lectures was devoted to such topics as infinity, continuity, causality, and the external world as a logical construction out of sense data — all illustrating the methods and results of logical atomism.

The philosophical tendencies current today, over half a century later, are not so easily categorized, and I have no intention of refuting them one by one. Most of them I am happy to accept, regardless of how uncongenial I may find them in matters of detail, as honest efforts in the same general direction that I myself want to travel. I am pleased to be able to say that the anti-philosophical tendency among professional philosophers appears to have receded. A dozen years ago C. D. Broad wrote:

An influential contemporary school, with many very able adherents in England and the U.S.A., would reduce philosophy to the modest task of attempting to cure the occupational diseases of philosophers. In their writings the word 'philosopher' is commonly used to denote the holder of some opinion, or more accurately the utterer of some sentence in the indicative mood, which the writer regards as characteristically

fatuous. If this is what one thinks about one's own occupation, it is certainly *honest* to announce the fact. It is not for me to judge whether it is altogether *prudent* for professional philosophers thus publicly to proclaim that their business is to take in and wash each other's dirty linen. Nor will I speculate on how long an impoverished community, such as contemporary England, will continue to pay salaries to individuals whose only function, on their own showing, is to treat a disease which they catch from each other and impart to their pupils.³

I do want to discuss the analytic school, which is perhaps the dominant one today in Anglo-American philosophy. This tendency is associated with the names of Russell and Moore, and surely includes the "logical atomism" presented by Russell in his Lowell Lectures. Russell's 1914 statement was programmatic rather than definitive. He wrote that:

It represents, I believe, the same kind of advance as was introduced into physics by Galileo: the substitution of piecemeal, detailed, and verifiable results for large untested generalities recommended only by a certain appeal to imagination.⁴

As a young man I was fortunate enough to study under some of the most distinguished members of the analytical school, and I have been deeply influenced by them. I admire their writings and have sought to emulate them in some of my own. But I am convinced that although analysis is an interesting, important, and essential part of philosophy, it is only a part. My grounds for saying so are easy to state, and seem — to me at least — to be demonstrative. Any analysis, whether it is of terms or of concepts, of facts or of statements or of propositions, must be *into* something or *in terms* of something. Moore analyses propositions about material things into propositions about sense-data. Russell analyses numbers in terms of classes of similar classes, and propositions containing definite descriptions like "the so-and-so" into propositions containing only quantifiers, predicate terms, and truth-functional connectives. Ryle (for illustrative purposes) has analysed the University in terms of the organization of colleges, libraries, museums, and laboratories. If we look back at classical philosophers whose writings led A. J. Ayer to lay claim to Plato and Aristotle and Kant as "great philosophers" whose work is predominantly analytic,⁵ we find objects in the visible world being analysed by Plato into Ideas and The Receptacle, by Aristotle into Forms and Prime Matter, by Spinoza into Modes and Attributes of the one Substance, and by Leibniz into multiplicities of spiritual monads. Aristotle analysed causality in terms of form and matter, producers and purposes; Hume in terms of constant conjunctions of impressions

and ideas. Both before and since Russell enunciated his analytical program, philosophers have analysed some entities in terms of others.

What motivates this activity? What are its results? It seems clear that the products of such analytical activity are translations or definitions. But what has been accomplished when an *X* has been translated into, or defined in terms of, *Y*? It is surely implied that the initial *X*, before philosophical expertise has been brought to bear upon it, was somehow unsatisfactory or problematic. But if at the end of an analysis, the *Y* that now proudly stands where *X* once was, is just as unsatisfactory or problematic, nothing of value will have been accomplished. So the *Y* in terms of which we have analysed the *X* must be somehow more satisfactory, less problematic.

What can this mean? Is an analysis good just in case the *Y* in terms of which we analyse is familiar, and the *X* that is analysed is unfamiliar? This suggestion has an initial plausibility, but I think it is profoundly mistaken. We can better understand the ideas involved in philosophical analysis by examining their analogues in scientific analysis.

Combustion, burning, was once held to be the liberation of *phlogiston*, the inflammable principle. This was a plausible view, urged by Stahl, and accepted by chemists for a hundred years. But Lavoisier, the founder of modern or quantitative chemistry, insisted that combustion was oxidation, the chemical combination of oxygen with the material being burned. Consider now the factor of familiarity. Combustion or burning is a familiar thing. We all know it, we can all see and hear it. Oxygen had only recently been discovered by Priestley. It was not familiar. It is not visible. Yet there was progress, insight, and knowledge gained in Lavoisier's analysis of combustion in terms of oxygen. How could this be?

Consider another example from chemistry. During the eighteenth century heat was identified as caloric, an invisible, weightless fluid with the power of penetrating, expanding, dissolving, and vaporizing bodies. But Count Rumford overthrew that doctrine, and today heat is defined to be the mean kinetic energy of molecules in random motion. Here again, we are intimately familiar with heat, suffering it in summer, missing it in winter. But molecules — the eye of man hath not seen them even today. Yet here again, the triumph of the kinetic theory of heat signalled progress, insight, and knowledge gained.

What was accomplished, then, by the scientific analysis of combustion in terms of the chemistry of oxygen, and of heat in terms of molecular motion? Certainly not the translation of the unfamiliar into the familiar. It was rather the illumination and explanation of familiar things by revealing them to be instances of general laws, by fitting them into a larger picture. This was accomplished by defining them to fit in with a scientific theory which accounts for a

broad range of phenomena: the laws connecting volume, pressure, and temperature of gases, the laws of constant and multiple proportions for chemical combination, and the conservation of mass. A scientific analysis of a phenomenon is successful if it is in terms of, or into the vocabulary of, a successful scientific theory. And a scientific theory itself is successful to the extent that it accounts for the phenomena by organizing and systematizing the data in its field.

I think the situation is very similar in the case of philosophical analysis. A philosophical analysis of a concept is successful if it is in terms of, or into the vocabulary of, a successful philosophical theory. A philosophical analysis of *X* in terms of *Y* is adequate just in case the *Y* in question is part and parcel of a philosophical theory that accounts for, or illuminates, or provides a philosophical explanation for the originally problematic *X*.

We come to the point here at which I must part company with the analytical school. Russell spoke of "piecemeal results." I will be happy to consider any that are offered. But there is an obvious danger here, to escape which we must transcend the self-imposed limitations of the analysts. Philosophers are, after all, interested in analysing many concepts. When two different concepts are analysed, if we take the notion of piecemeal progress seriously, we may find that each is analysed in terms of a different analytical base. Each analysis may presuppose or be part of a different philosophical theory. If these two theories are compatible, if they may themselves be synthesized in a larger, more inclusive philosophical theory, that is all to the good. But it is *a priori* possible that the two different theories involved in the proposed analyses of the two different concepts may be incompatible, mutually inconsistent. We may not know which to reject, but it is obvious that we cannot accept them both if they are inconsistent with each other. This, in short, is the case against stopping with the idea of mere "piecemeal" results.

What it comes to is this, and I would hope that analytical philosophers might be induced to join us in this natural extension of their program. Our common goal is to achieve analyses of more and more concepts, ultimately of all concepts or of all experience. It is obviously necessary that all these analyses be consistent, that the theories underlying these analyses be compatible. And in philosophy just as in science, it is desirable that the several theories should be not just mutually consistent, but actually integrated into a single, unified, comprehensive theory. Our goal, then, is the achievement of a philosophical theory which shall be adequate to answer all philosophical questions by providing analyses of all philosophical concepts. This, however, is the traditional goal of speculative, systematic, synoptic philosophy. It is "the classical tradition" dismissed by Bertrand Russell early in his Lowell Lectures.

A moment ago I said that I would be happy to consider any "piecemeal result" that might be offered, to *consider* it, but not necessarily accept it. For to appraise the adequacy of a proposed analysis requires that we appraise the adequacy of the particular philosophical theory that underlies it. A sufficient reason for rejecting that particular theory would be that its acceptance would preclude analyses of other, equally important notions. Since attention must be paid to ensuring the mutual consistency of our analyses of different notions, no single analysis can be accepted as finally satisfactory until other analyses have been made and seen to be consistent with it. Our analyses are therefore all tentative, and the theories involved in them are to be regarded not as dogmas but as hypotheses.

It is my view, then, that the same general criteria apply to philosophical theories that apply to scientific ones. I want to stress the continuity of scientific and philosophical inquiry, rather than their differences. There are differences, of course, and it will be helpful to say what they are. One difference has to do with measurement. Every science tends to emphasize quantitative considerations in its theorizing and precise measurement in its collection of data. This is simply not true of philosophy. A closely connected further difference is the emphasis in science on prediction. Astronomers predict eclipses and planetary conjunctions very accurately; Economists predict the impact of governmental fiscal and monetary actions with a good deal less accuracy. But this is not true of philosophy: philosophers, *qua* philosophers, do not predict. As Russell said in his Lowell Lectures, "Prophecies as to the future of the universe, for example, are not the business of philosophy....." ⁶ Philosophical theories strive to explain, but they are not quantitative and they are not instruments for prediction. A third difference pertains to scope. Every science accepts a strictly delimited sphere of reality or of experience to study. But not philosophy, which is absolutely general, and accepts no limitation to the scope of its investigations. These differences are constitutive, and locate the line that divides philosophy from the special sciences. As William James wrote:

...the sciences are themselves branches of the tree of philosophy. As fast as questions got accurately answered, the answers were called 'scientific,' and what men call 'philosophy' today is but the residuum of questions still unanswered. The more general philosophy cannot as a rule follow the voluminous details of any special science. ⁷

James went on to say:

Philosophy has become a collective name for questions that have not yet been answered to the satisfaction of all by whom they have been asked. It does not follow, because some of these questions have waited two thousand years for an answer,

that no answer will ever be forthcoming. Two thousand years probably measure but one paragraph in that great romance of adventure called the history of the intellect of man. ⁸

My conception of philosophy has now been stated, at least by implication. With one tiny but important difference it agrees with that enunciated by Alfred North Whitehead in his definition of speculative philosophy:

Speculative Philosophy is the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted. By this notion of 'interpretation' I mean that everything of which we are conscious, as enjoyed, perceived, willed, or thought, shall have the character of a particular instance of the general scheme. ⁹

I dissent from Whitehead's conception only in that I would exclude the word 'necessary' from the definition he has given. It might be entirely possible, as I see it, that in the fullness of time we should have several alternative systems of general ideas that are coherent, logical, and adequate to all experience. If so, none would be 'necessary'. But this, I admit, is more than utopian. Literally utopian is the hope of finding even one adequate system, but it must be the goal of our philosophical striving.

At each stage of its development any system reasonably near adequacy will continue to grow and change as humans have new experience to be analysed or interpreted, or conceive new ways to interpret their experience. We cannot anticipate (or prophecy) new problems, so their advent will in all likelihood require modification and enlargement of our philosophical system. In this sense I think of philosophy as inductive rather than deductive, though strict deductive logic will inevitably appear within it, both as an instrument for analysis and as itself an item requiring interpretation.

Thus far I have spoken as if the only *aim* of theoretical philosophy were knowledge. But there is room in my conception of philosophy for more than that. A man is not a mere "scientific man" whose only aim is to maximize information, any more than he is a mere "economic man" whose only aim is to maximize material possessions. A man also has aesthetic, moral, social, and religious dimensions to his being, and he has aesthetic, moral, social, and religious experiences to be analysed or interpreted. Not everyone need be interested in interpreting and understanding them. But the philosopher is vitally interested in analysing these value experiences and bringing them within the range of comprehension of his systematic philosophizing. To the extent that we include knowledge of good and evil, and of the power of love, and ability to tell right from wrong, in the scope of

our systematic philosophy, to that extent it is fair to say that our goal is wisdom.

As for method, this has already been characterized in general terms. By reflection on our experience we devise theories which enable us to interpret and understand it. It seems to me to be a mistake to recommend more than the bringing to bear of reason on experience. Attempts to legislate methodology in detail seem to me not only futile but misguided: just as new experience will provide new problems, so new methods will emerge, more suitable for solving them than were previous techniques. The professional methodologist denies novelty and is the enemy of creativity. If one were to follow Bacon in enumerating Idols that "beset the human mind" one would today have to include "methodolatry," the idols of the Laboratory. I am terribly suspicious of recent overemphasis on methodology, which appears designed to frighten us into using just one method, on the basis of its laudable but limited achievement in one recently successful field of human effort. I subscribe to the thesis affirmed by Popper, that "Philosophers are as free as others to use any method in searching for truth. *There is no method peculiar to philosophy.*"¹⁰ I think Russell was right in saying:

When everything has been done that can be done by method, a stage is reached where only direct philosophic vision can carry matters further. Here only genius will avail. What is wanted, as a rule, is some new effort of logical imagination, some glimpse of a possibility never conceived before, and then the direct perception that this possibility is realised in the case in question.¹¹

So much for my conception of the nature and aims of philosophy, and for its methods. What are its prospects? There have been many different systems of philosophy in the history of the western world, some developing or revising older systems, others professing to be entirely fresh beginnings. This multiplicity of philosophies has sometimes been held up as a criticism and a reproach to the philosophical enterprise itself. It does seem to suffer from comparison with the steady, inexorable, developmental growth often attributed to science. But this monolithic conception of science is a myth, equally the imaginative product of popularizers and inferior text-books. Science grows not by the continual accretion of new data and gradual enlargement of old theory, but by the violent explosive achievements of great scientists bursting the bonds of old conceptions and replacing them with their own insights. Efforts are occasionally made to preserve the myth of steady growth by proclaiming older theories to be limited or special cases of the new. But it is rather the predictions and the data of the old theories that are special cases, or rather approximations, of the predictions and the data of the new. The older wave and corpuscular

theories of light are not special cases of the equations of quantum physics, they merely yield approximately the same results for special values of their parameters. Newton's law agree with Relativity physics, approximately, for some values of their variables, but they are enormously different in their conceptions and in their mathematics. And who but a paleontologist, enamored of fossil remains, would claim any continuity between the phlogiston theory and that of oxidation, or between the theory of caloric and the kinetic theory of heat? When the history of science is rightly understood, the history of philosophy does not suffer so much by comparison.

My best judgment is that philosophy will continue to change. Sometimes the change will be gradual, sometimes abrupt, but change there will be. Some of these changes will occur in response to new data, some as the result of new theoretical insights. Even in the absence of these occasions for change, change will occur because of the similarity of philosophy to the fine arts. The analogy was drawn rather casually by Santayana in the Preface to his four volume treatise *Realms of Being*. He wrote:

As for me, in stretching my canvas and taking up my palette and brush, I am not vexed that masters should have painted before me in styles which I have no power and no occasion to imitate; nor do I expect future generations to be satisfied with always repainting my pictures.¹²

The same point was put more elaborately by Bradley in the Introduction to his monumental Metaphysical Essay *Appearance and Reality*:

For whether there is progress or not, at all events there is change, and the changed minds of each generation will require a difference in what has to satisfy their intellect. Hence there seems as much reason for new philosophy as there is for new poetry. In each case the fresh production is usually much inferior to something already in existence; and yet it answers a purpose if it appeals more personally to the reader. What is really worse may serve better to promote, in certain respects and in a certain generation, the exercise of our best functions. And that is why, so long as we alter, we shall always want, and shall always have, new metaphysics.¹³

I would not be misunderstood on this point. I do not say that metaphysics is poetry. But I agree with Santayana and Bradley that it is *like* poetry in certain respects. It is enormously different over all. But philosophy is like poetry in that it is a speaking of one human to another, in which contemporary idiom facilitates maximum communication. And because content and expression cannot be completely separated, the reexpression of an old view must inevitably produce a new one.

I turn now to a serious difficulty with the philosophical program

proposed. That program is in a fundamental sense rationalistic. It does not reject the empirical, for experience is completely accepted as the basis and the continuing subject matter of our philosophy. It is rationalistic in the sense that what it proposes is the application of reason to experience for the purposes of developing an intelligible theory in terms of which all experience will be interpretable. But running through the history of western philosophy, even in the writings of those philosophers most strongly committed to the cause of reason, is a deep, unbroken vein of anti-rationalism. The fundamental tenet of this anti-rationalism is the doctrine that some things are beyond the reach of knowledge. As Plato wrote in the *Republic*, "The many, as we say, are seen but not known....."¹⁴ In Plato's cosmology, one of his fundamental principles is the "receptacle," characterized in *Timaeus* as "invisible and formless.... and...most incomprehensible...which is...apprehended...by a kind of spurious reason..."¹⁵ There is also the tradition of Plato's unwritten teachings. In the Seventh Epistle Plato writes:

...of the problems with which I am occupied...There is no book of mine that expounds them, nor will there ever be one; for this knowledge is not a matter that can be transmitted in writing like other sciences. It requires long-continued intercourse between pupil and teacher in joint pursuit of the object they are seeking to apprehend; and then suddenly, just as light flashes forth when a fire is kindled, this knowledge is born in the soul and henceforth nourishes itself.¹⁶

What cannot be said can scarcely be thought: Plato is here surely speaking of what is trans-rational or super-rational.

Aristotle followed Plato in this as in so many other things. For Aristotle reason is limited in attempting to know "substance, in the truest and primary and most definite sense of the word,"¹⁷ for "there is neither definition of nor demonstration about sensible individual substances."¹⁸

It may be objected that these are not expression of anti-rationalism but merely acknowledgement that there are *limits* to the application of reason. I should prefer not to dispute over words in this connection. More recent western philosophers have been more explicitly anti-rational, not merely challenging the extent to which reason can reach, but its very validity. Thus Nietzsche wrote:

But now science, stimulated by its powerful illusion, hastens irresistibly to its limits, on which its optimism, hidden in the essence of logic, is wrecked. For the periphery of the circle of science has an infinite number of points, and while there is still no telling how this circle can ever be

completely measured, yet the noble and gifted man, even before the middle of his career, inevitably comes in contact with those extreme points of the periphery where he stares into the unfathomable. When to his dismay he here sees how logic coils round itself at these limits and finally bites its own tail—then the new form of perception rises to view, namely *tragic perception*...¹⁹

And Miguel de Unamuno: "...the supreme triumph of reason is to case doubt on its own validity."²⁰ If that is true, the twentieth century has seen the apotheosis of reason. Early in the century the Russell paradox was published. If we consider the class of all classes—that-are-not-members-of-themselves, and ask if *it* is or is not a member of itself, we plunge immediately into contradiction. Different, yet somewhat analogous, is the paradox of the liar, of the speaker who says: "This statement is false." If true, then false; if false, then true: a contradiction. Kurt Gödel credited Russell with "...bringing to light the amazing fact that our logical intuitions (i. e., intuitions concerning such notions as: truth, concept, being, class, etc.) are self-contradictory."²¹ If Gödel's appraisal of the situation is accepted, the validity of reason becomes highly dubious.

Russell proposed his theory of Logical Types to resolve the logical paradoxes mentioned. According to this theory, accepted into the very foundation of Whitehead and Russell's *Principia Mathematica*,²² it is absolutely impossible to say anything, or even to think consistently, about *all* classes, *all* properties, *all* relations, or *all* propositions. Somewhat embarrassingly, according to the principles of Russell's Type Theory, it turns out to be impossible to formulate or assert that theory, because *it* clearly involves reference to all classes, all properties, all relations, and all propositions. This issue, I should add, is not completely resolved as yet. However, there are other alternative methods of resolving the paradoxes in question.

Among the most important discoveries in twentieth century logical researches, four results stand out that reveal essential limitations on our ability to develop theories or systems of logic and of language. One of these is the Löwenheim-Skolem Theorem,²³ which says in effect that no logico-mathematical system can provide a categorical or univocal characterization of the sequence of natural numbers: 0, 1, 2, 3, and so on. The second is Gödel's famous incompleteness theorem,²⁴ which asserts that no consistent formal system of logic that is adequate to elementary arithmetic can possibly provide proofs for all of the logico-mathematical truths that can be formulated within it. This incompleteness is essential: even if a truth that is not provable in the original system is added as an axiom and thus becomes provable, it is so only in the enlarged system which the same type of argument will prove to contain a new truth that is

not provable in the enlarged system. The third is Church's theorem,²⁵ which demonstrate that there is no effective method of deciding, for an arbitrary formula of elementary quantification theory, whether that formula is a theorem or not. And the fourth is Tarski's proof²⁶ that no consistent language can formulate its own semantics, that is, can manage to provide satisfactory definitions for such terms as 'designates' or 'truth' as applied to its own terms and sentences.

The difficulty with my rationalistic conception of philosophy now stands revealed. It has to do with the limitations, the *demonstrated* limitations, of reason and logic. No reasonably adequate consistent logical theory is complete or even theoretically completable; for no such logical theory do we have any effective method for deciding what is provable in it and what is not; no such theory can capture uniquely what we informally have in mind as elementary arithmetic; and no consistent language system can express everything, or even its own semantics. These results surely militate against any program that seeks to develop a "coherent, logical...system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted."²⁷ The very best that can be hoped for is a partial system: demonstrably incomplete, not adequate even to elementary arithmetic, without any effective method for discriminating what can be proved in it from what cannot, and with limitations even on what can be expressed in it. But if this is the best that can be hoped for, then if we hope for the best, this is indeed what we must hope for. The only comfort in this somewhat bleak situation is that every other philosophy is in the same predicament. Unless we are to abandon reason and logic altogether, we must learn to be resigned to the limitations that are inherent in our reason and our logic.

It is of course possible that new ways of conceiving logic, new insights, and new techniques, may somehow mitigate the constraints that seem now to be inescapable. Perhaps this hope is the essence of my faith in reason. But I have no hope of proving the reasonableness of my faith.

In turning to the practice of philosophy, we must acknowledge that the distinction between theory and practice is not easy to draw for philosophy. That distinction is easier in connection with the practical arts. It comes out most clearly in the case of a pair of subjects like Chemistry and Chemical Engineering, where the latter is the practice of which the former is the theory. Even here there are problems: the theory of practice is not the simplest of theories. Among Western thinkers, I believe John Dewey has been most sensitive to these problems, and has had much to say about them. As a Pragmatist Dewey has stressed the importance of practice. But he has insisted that "...action is involved in *knowledge*, not that knowledge is subordinated to action or

'practice'..." Dewey admits a difference between theory and practice, but denies that they can be separated, writing:

There is an empirical truth in the common opposition between theory and practice, between the contemplative, reflective type and the executive type...It is, however, a contrast between two modes of practice.²⁸

Although not influenced by Wittgenstein, who wrote in the *Tractatus* that "Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity,"²⁹ Dewey's remark clearly reveals that he interprets "theory" as the process rather than the product of theorizing or theoretical inquiry. Perhaps it would be more fruitful to speak of the application rather than of the practice of philosophy.

What are the applications of philosophy? We know the applications of other branches of knowledge. The applications of biology are in psychology, another theory, in medicine, which is both a theory and a practice, and in agriculture, which is a practice or practical art. Philosophy has no such specific and formal applications. As we remarked earlier, philosophy differs from the special sciences in not being quantitative, in not striving to make predictions, and in accepting no limits on the scope of its investigations. These differences, especially the relinquishment of efforts to predict, ensure that philosophy can have no formal and specific applications of the kind that the special sciences enjoy.

There is, however, another sense, perhaps less literal, in which we can speak of the application of philosophy. Here I have in mind the application of wisdom to practical problems of every sort: political, economic, social, and moral. It is the part of wisdom to bring to important problems the philosophical attitude. This means to be open minded and alert to a variety of possible solutions, to apply reason and intelligence, to respect available data but to be aware that some may be missing, to question and understand both motives and consequences, to avoid narrowness and dogmatism. It includes acknowledging that at certain times action must be taken despite lack of *proof* that it is the only action possible, or the best action available, or that a successful outcome of the action is guaranteed. But it also means knowledge that not all choices are forced, that further thought and study may well help ensure that action, when taken, will be productive and successful.

In *Walden*, Thoreau complained that "today there are professors of philosophy but no philosophers." His complaint was scarcely justified then, it is less so today. But there are many more professors of philosophy than there are philosophers. For the professors of philosophy there is a stern duty and a vital challenge. It is to meet with the young and to inculcate in them, as well as we can, the true spirit of philosophy. Our purpose must be to open the doors and windows of their minds and to widen their horizons. Our aim must

be to encourage the use of intelligence, and to stimulate our students to perceive and to appreciate the scope and the interrelations of the ideas they encounter in all phases of their educations and their lives. It was well stated by William James in a letter to the *Nation* almost a hundred years ago :

If the best use of our colleges is to give young men a wider openness of mind and a more flexible way of thinking than special technical training can generate, then we hold that philosophy...is the most important of all college studies. However skeptical one may be the attainment of universal truths (and to make our position more emphatic, we are willing here to concede the extreme Positivistic position), one can never deny that philosophic study means the habit of always seeing an alternative, of not taking the usual for granted, of making conventionalities fluid again, of imagining foreign states of mind. In a word, it means the possession of mental perspective. Touchstone's question, 'Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?' will never cease to be one of the tests of a well-born nature. It says, Is there space and air in your mind, or must your companions gasp for breath whenever they talk with you? And if our colleges are to make men, and not machines, they should look, above all things, to this aspect of their influence...³⁰

1. Published as *Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy*, by Bertrand Russell. Chicago and London, 1915.
2. Bertrand Russell, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.
3. C. D. Broad, "Philosophy I & II," *Inquiry*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Summer 1958, pp. 99-129.
4. Bertrand Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
5. Alfred J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*, New York, 1936, p. 59.
6. Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 237.
7. William James, *Some Problems of Philosophy*, London, New York, Toronto, 1940, p. 10.
8. William James, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
9. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, New York Cambridge, England, 1929, p. 4.
10. Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, New York, 1959, p. 15.
11. Bertrand Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 241.
12. George Santayana, *Realms of Being*, New York, 1942, pp. xvi-xvii.
13. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, London and New York, 1906, p. 6.
14. Plato, *Republic*, Book VI, 507.
15. Plato, *Timaeus*, 51-52.
16. Glenn R. Morrow, *Studies in the Platonic Epistles*, Urbana, Illinois, 1935, p. 206.
17. Aristotle, *Categories*, Chapter 5, 2a 11.
18. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book VII, Chapter 14, 1039b 27.

19. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, in *The Philosophy of Nietzsche*, New York, 1950, p. 1031.
20. Miguel de Unamuno, *The Tragic Sense of Life*, New York, 1954, p. 109.
21. Kurt Gödel, "Russell's Mathematical Logic," *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, Evanston, Illinois, 1944, p. 131.
22. Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, Cambridge, England, 1910, see especially pp. 37-65.
23. Leopold Löwenheim, "On Possibilities in the Calculus of Relatives," in Jean van Heijenoort's *From Frege to Gödel*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1967, pp. 228-251; and Thoralf Skolem, "Logico-combinatorial Investigations in the Satisfiability or Provability of Mathematical Propositions: A Simplified Proof of a Theorem, by L. Löwenheim and Generalizations of the Theorem," in *ibid.*, pp. 252-263.
24. Kurt Gödel, "On Formally Undecidable Propositions of *Principia Mathematica* and Related Systems I," translated in van Heijenoort, *op. cit.*, pp. 596-616.
25. Alonzo Church, "An Unsolvable Problem of Elementary Number Theory," *American Journal of Mathematics*, Vol. 58 (1936), pp. 345-363.
26. Alfred Tarski, "The Concept of Truth in Formalized Languages," *Logic, Semantics, Metamathematics*, Oxford, 1956, pp. 152-278.
27. See note 8.
28. John Dewey, *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, Evanston, Illinois, 1939, p. 528.
29. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, 1922, 4.112.
30. William James, *The Letters of William James*, New York, 1927, pp. 190-191.

We find people expressing dissatisfaction with philosophy because it is purely theoretical. Sometimes philosophers are accused of dishonesty, because in theory they say one thing and practise quite another. We want to show in this paper that so far as philosophy proper is concerned, the distinction between theory and practice is irrelevant. The distinction is relevant only in the sphere of action. Philosophy as a self-sufficient discipline is beyond this distinction. In this sense, philosophy has to be distinguished from action on the one hand, and ideologies or philosophies of action on the other. The philosopher is neither theoretical nor dishonest; he is guilty only of being a philosopher.

I

Like every other animal man has a natural disposition for action. Whenever we want something, we ask the question: what should I do? All action is done to achieve a goal, and the faith implicit in this natural attitude is that it is only by doing something that we can achieve our goal. This attitude is not learned but natural and universal (*naisargika*); faith in the efficacy of action is confirmed by experience but not learnt from it. It is something like an animal instinct or animal faith. We are not to be taught to believe in action.

All action is motivated and since one is free to accept or reject a motive, one is free to do an action, not to do it or to do it differently. The general motive behind all action is to bring about change in one's environment. This is because the natural man looks upon all his problems as objective and therefore seeks to solve them objectively. That all our problems are objective is the deeper principle in which faith in action is rooted. At the natural level, man like animals, regards the objective world as the source of his happiness and unhappiness, and naturally takes to action to change the world around. Behind all the stupendous progress of science and technology, and behind all the controversies concerning socio-political theories, it is this spirit that is working, the spirit, namely, that our problems can be solved only by action or change in the environment.

Of late, faith in action has been enhanced by the development of science and technology. It seems to have developed in man the confidence that he can do anything. We have come to believe that science and technology can give us the necessary know-how for anything. We hope to find out the secret of every thing some day. Science has des-

troyed many superstitions and that to the good of man, but the one it has produced in the wake of its progress is difficult to go; we mean the superstition or the illusion regarding the power of science. What can science not do? And if so, what is the use of philosophy and religion?

II

The achievements of science have demonstrated that success in action depends on right knowledge. Curiously enough, religion too like science emphasises right knowledge (*samyag jñāna*). "All successful human action is preceded by right knowledge" says Dharmakīrti. Unless one has right knowledge of things, one's efforts may not succeed. Knowledge therefore is necessary though not sufficient for our success; it must be followed by action. Two questions seem to arise here: What is that right knowledge that must precede action? Secondly, is it necessary that all knowledge must be followed by action?

To take up the first question, it would appear that there are three things that must be known if we want success in action. One must know the goal to be achieved, one must know whether it can be achieved and one must know the means to achieve the goal. In the absence of any one of these, it would be pointless to undertake any action. We must know the good first and then we should know whether it is achievable or is merely like crying for the moon. Then we must have the right knowledge about the means.

At the natural level of our life we take it for granted that we know the good and that is pleasure. Do all of us not believe that we know what can and what cannot make us happy? Who does not think that if certain objective conditions were secured and if his desires were fulfilled, he would feel happy? If a man has good health and a nice family, if he has money and respect in society, does he not consider himself happy? We naturally take these things to be good and think that the only problem is how to get them or to get more of them. We are dimly aware that these things are temporary and never without pain, but we do not bother, because we have reconciled ourselves that permanent and pure happiness is not possible. Let us have what is possible.

We bend all our energies to achieve the above objects of desire; we develop sciences, we build societies and we do not mind doing even immoral actions for the sake of gratifying our desires. Nations and individuals both exploit the stupendous stock of scientific knowledge to secure the best objective conditions that can make them happy. At the gate of happiness, there is, as it were, such a such that everybody is unhappy. There is conflict, there is jealousy, there is fear and there is cut-throat competition. And yet we are not in a mood to reflect whether we are on the right path. There is no time to reflect, there is no need of it.

This is our life at the natural level and the characteristics of life at this level are these; an unconscious belief in the efficacy of action, an unquestioned acceptance of the gratification of desires as the good, an exploitation of knowledge merely for the sake of discovering ways and means. These beliefs are not the result of any deliberate thinking but natural and unconscious. At this stage we have only the life of unreflective action, though later it may be rationalised and justified by conscious thought and reasoning. But that would be another level or stage of consciousness. At the next stage we not only have a life of action, but add to that also a philosophy of action. Let us now turn to that.

III

Broadly speaking there seem to be two kinds of philosophies of action, the secular and the non-secular. The latter again may be either moral or religious. The chief characteristic of these philosophies is that though they all believe in action and promote the life of action, they accept a goal deliberately and not unconsciously as is done at the natural level. This may be called the ideological stage of life. Secular philosophies no doubt accept the same goal of life as is accepted at the natural level but they do it after reflection and thinking. Naturalism is not to be confused with the natural attitude. Naturalistic philosophies develop a kind of idealism of pleasure and therefore give a philosophy of life. These secular philosophies do not question the pursuit of pleasure as anything bad or wrong but try to give some kind of wisdom about the way it should be sought. Pleasure sought in an unwise way may lead to unhappiness, but if pursued in a proper way, it would make man happy. Secularism battles with other views to show that there simply cannot be another goal of life except pleasure; even in morality and religion nothing else is aimed at. Some of the important types or examples of this philosophy would be utilitarianism, pragmatism and Marxism. All these philosophies are tuned to the external world and their one aim is to change the circumstances or environment to achieve the end of life. They are all humanistic in the sense that they care more for the happiness of man here in this world than for anything else. They all believe in pleasure as the goal, action as the means and empirical knowledge as the basis of life.

When, however, we turn to morality and religion, we find that they differ from secularism as a philosophy of life or ideology; they introduce a different goal or motive for action. While non-secular philosophies seem to have grown as a result of reflection on natural life, the secular philosophies seem to be reactions against a non-secular ideal. Let us take the moral philosophy of Kant. He made the distinction between the hypothetical imperative and the categorical imperative and pointed out the absoluteness of the moral ought. Man as a rational

animal must show highest respect to rationality or consistency which requires that he must not do what he would not like others to do or rather he should do only what he can permit everybody else to do. It is not the overt action or success or failure in action that matters; what matters is the intention, whether an action is done for pleasure or out of respect for the moral law. The goal of action therefore is virtue or inner perfection. This goal is not a natural goal; it is related to some kind of faith and has to be consciously and deliberately cultivated and pursued. Moral life is the life of action and the goal here is not pleasure but perfection or virtue. That it should be achieved is a matter of practical reason; if man were not rational, morality would not be binding on him. Man as rational being cannot be immoral without self-contradiction. That moral perfection can be achieved is a matter of faith because it is related to belief in God and the immorality of soul.

In religion, though virtue is emphasised, the motive for action is not virtue but the desire to please God. Moral actions please God, our father who has in His hands the destiny of our souls. Though Kant has introduced the ideas of God and soul, his ethics cannot be called religious; because the motive there is the goodwill and not the pleasure of God. Like the moral man, the religious man also pleads for the life of action and not for any withdrawal from action; the only thing to be kept in view is the pleasure of God and not one's own pleasure. As in morality, here too, the motive and not the external action or success and failure in action that is important, and more than morality, religion is based on faith. Neither morality nor religion is natural; they indicate the opening out of a new or non-natural dimension of man.

IV

Secularism, morality and religion give us philosophies of life or ideologies of action. Their common feature is that they all accept our natural tendency or disposition for action, but while secularism accepts the natural goal (pleasure) as the ideal, morality and religion substitute a non-natural goal as the ideal of action; morality aims at virtue and religion aims at the love of God. What is common between morality and religion is that by action they do not intend to bring about any change in the environment; they aim at bringing about an inner change or change of motive. This is what distinguishes morality and religion from the natural attitude as well as from secularism. In other words, the attitude of morality and religion is not wholly objective; they emphasise action but the emphasis is more on the inner side of action. Consequently, morality and religion do not depend so much on empirical knowledge as on faith.

All these philosophies of life are theoretical. They are theoretical

in the sense that they just give a theory or a programme of life which requires to be implemented. In other words, they would be worthless unless followed by appropriate action; they are not self-sufficient for life. Marx said, "the truth, i.e. the reality and power of thought must be demonstrated in practice.....Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways, but the real task is to alter it". Like Marx, the utilitarians and the pragmatists too seem to think that while other philosophers were only theoretical, they are themselves practical. In this they seem to be mistaken if they think that they are not interpreting the world; the whole of Marx is but an interpretation. The philosopher does not change the world; he only plans to change it and the change is brought about by action. In this sense all philosophy is merely theory, but since these philosophies of life propose an ideal to be reached by action, they are called practical. A practical philosophy is not that which *does* action but that which gives a theory of action. Like secular philosophies, morality and religion give a theory or ideology of action.

There is one great feature of these philosophies of action whether secular or non-secular. These philosophies present a positive ideal and demand action from us. So these philosophies can provide a basis for culture. It is specially so in the case of religious philosophies, because the ideal element is much greater in these philosophies than in secular philosophies or even in merely moral philosophies. This is why all over the world, religion has been the inspiration for all cultural achievements. It is not that there can be no such thing as a secular culture; communism is making an experiment of providing a whole programme of secular culture. But there is something in the religious ideology which impresses us more than the secular ideology; in fact secularism itself takes the form of a religion (and to that extent ceases to be secular) when it begins to claim absolute loyalty from us. Anyway, our only point is that in order to be the cultural basis of society, a philosophy must be a philosophy of action of one or the other type. Since most of us are men of action, we need an ideology or philosophy of action and mistake that for philosophy itself. But an ideology is not philosophy proper as will be shown subsequently.

V

We have spoken of different philosophies of life and have called them ideologies or philosophies of action deliberately. They are, specially by men of action, mistaken to be philosophy itself. We want, however, to emphasise that a philosophy of action must not be confused with philosophy proper. While natural life represents the first level and philosophies of action represent the second level, philosophy proper has to be understood as the third level of consciousness. Secular philosophy accepts pleasure as the goal and action as the

means: morality and religion reject pleasure as the goal but accept action as the means, but philosophy rejects not only pleasure as the goal but also action as the means. Philosophy proper is, as we shall see, not a theory of life or action, but a withdrawal from the life of action and is therefore on a different level. This will be obvious if we try to understand the way philosophic reflection sets in or emerges.

Normally our consciousness functions at the objective level and is naturally turned towards some kind of object. This is because all life depends on object-consciousness; consciousness can be useful in life only by being objective or by paying heed to objects. All troubles are traced to the objective world or environment. But this is so only so long as the goal is pleasure. As soon as the goal becomes moral perfection or devotion to God, attention is turned to the self. But even in the case of moral perfection or religious devotion, the idea implicit in our effort is that something which is not there is to be achieved and that by some kind of action. There comes a time in the life of man when the question arises: Can that which is so achieved be permanent and infinite? And this is the beginning of philosophy.

Philosophy is therefore born of a kind of disillusionment, a disillusionment about all that can be achieved by action or *karma*. The disillusioned man is able to see that *karma* cannot solve the problem of our life, because all objective solutions are superficial and piecemeal; they do not go to the roots. Whatever can be brought about by *karma* or action is necessarily finite and temporary. The *Bhagavad Gītā* says that those who desire the fruits of their action are small minded¹ and pitiable because the fruits of action are but short-lived.² The Upaniṣads decry the performance of sacrifices and even *upāsana* for the same reason; it may take us to heaven (*svarga*) but that will be only for a limited period and again we will be back to earth. The believer in *karma* is misguided for two reasons. Firstly, he does not realize that everything that has a beginning has also an end and so his actions cannot bring him anything eternal and infinite. Secondly, he does not realize that his heart really hungers not for temporary pleasures but for the permanent and the infinite, the finite and the temporal can never satisfy him. That is why the Upaniṣadic *ṛṣi* conceived the ideal as that which can be neither increased nor decreased by *karma* (*na karmaṇā vardhate no kaniyāna*). The *Gītā* speaks of the same as something after attaining which no gain seems to be greater or more valuable (*yaṁ labdhvā cāparam lābham manyate nadhikam tataḥ*); putting it negatively, it is that after attaining which one is not moved or troubled even by the greatest of suffering (*Gītā*, VI, 22). The final goal must be such that there is no diminution (*sukham akṣayam*) and no return (*yasmīngata na nivartanti bhūyaḥ*).

The Upaniṣads speak of two kinds of good (*Kaṭha* Up. II, 2) and two kinds of knowledge (*Muṇḍaka* Up. I, 4). The lower kind of know-

ledge (*aparā vidyā*) is concerned with the lower kind of good (pleasure). All the different sciences are concerned with the lower good while the *parā* or the higher knowledge is concerning the higher or the ultimate good. From this, it might appear that there are two goods, the temporal and the eternal. But really speaking there is only one good at a time. If by good we mean what we strive for, then it is obvious that at a time we pursue either the temporal or the eternal but never both simultaneously; the two are in two opposite directions. So long as the temporal or the pleasant occupies our mind, the question of seeking the eternal does not arise. It is only when we are disillusioned about the temporal, realizing its impermanence, its finitude and its being the source of all worry, that there can be any urge to strive for the eternal and the infinite. It is not that the temporal and eternal are given to us together and we have to choose this or that. We cannot choose the temporal unless we have rejected the eternal as unreal and impossible, and we cannot choose the eternal unless we have rejected the temporal as false or worthless. If we do not strive for the eternal, it can be only because we do not know that it is real and achievable. For to know the good is to seek it. We know only the temporal alone as real and naturally strive only for that. It is only when our face is turned away from the temporal and we are relatively free from its clutches that we can pay attention to the eternal. As the Bible puts it, one cannot have God and Mammon both at the same time; one has to die to the world to be able to live to God.

It is in this state of disillusionment that philosophy as reflection regarding the real good is born and comes to have significance. The cessation of the life of *karma* and the rejection of the ideologies or philosophies of *karma* necessarily follows this disillusionment for two reasons. Firstly, there is withdrawal from *karma* or action, because one comes to realize that *karma* can at best bring us only temporal good. Secondly, there is withdrawal from active life, because of the nature of reflection that philosophy is. Action is possible only so long as consciousness goes forward or is objective. When we reflect or when consciousness turns upon itself there can be no action. Self-consciousness or reflection and action or object-consciousness cannot go together even as sleep and consciousness of sleep cannot be simultaneous. Science, religion, morality, etc., represent the forward or objective mode of consciousness while reflection on all these or philosophy is the backward movement of consciousness. Reflection and action are thus opposed to each other; reflection being a suspension of the objective attitude is verily a hindrance to practical life. No wonder therefore that practical people do not like to reflect; they are in a hurry. The opposition is not one-sided; absorption in action prevents reflection no less than reflection prevents action. Ordinarily the world is too much with us and we are not able to reflect unless some-

thing serious enough to open our eyes happens. Something must happen to weaken the hold of the world on us, something to force us to turn back and try to see whether what we pursue is really good. And when reflection begins, action stops.

VI

The birth of philosophy in disillusionment determines two things: the value of philosophy and also the nature of philosophy. Philosophy is not a matter of choice; it is indispensable and that because it fills a gap which nothing else can. After the rejection of the temporal values, a gap or vacuum is created and man cannot live in a vacuum. Since the temporal is rejected only the eternal can fill the gap. And philosophy as an attempt to attain the eternal, becomes indispensable. It is difficult to imagine any other purpose which philosophy can serve. Philosophy being born on the corpse of the temporal cannot serve any temporal purpose. If, however, another explanation of the origin of philosophy is offered, it is possible to show that philosophy will not be in that case indispensable. The indispensability of philosophy can be demonstrated only if we are able to show that life becomes meaningless without it. After the rejection of the temporal life becomes meaningless unless philosophy steps in. Philosophy is meaningless while we are engaged in temporal life but indispensable when temporal life ceases to have attraction.

Born in disillusionment, philosophy must necessarily be critical and reflective; it is a correction and reassessment of the objective mode of life and consciousness. All philosophy is correction of some belief, specially that philosophy which starts from disillusionment. It is this feature which distinguishes philosophy from philosophies of life. Philosophy is not building up of systems and ideologies; it is self-criticism and self-analysis. When life in relation to object fails, the subject turns upon itself and finds fault with itself. In its mad pursuit for worldly pleasures, it took for granted the reality of the empirical world and its bodily existence. Before taking anything to be good, is it not necessary to ask whether the knowledge on the basis of which we are going to choose the ideal of life sound? Does not the knowledge of the true good also require the knowledge of reality or truth?

There are some people who think that it is possible to know the good without bothering ourselves about the question of reality or metaphysics. They sometimes style themselves as humanists and argue that without entering into controversial metaphysical issues, we can know what is good for man and can endeavour to achieve that. Who will not agree, they would say, that to make the human society free from hunger and want, free from disease and destruction is good? Such people sometimes seek to derive support from the life of Buddha who could establish a religion without going into metaphysical

controversies. Kant is supposed to have given a system of morality without metaphysics. Confucius also did. Negatively, it is argued that the questions regarding God and soul divide humanity more than they unite. And so setting them aside, an attempt to explore and exploit the areas of greater and greater agreement ought to be made.

It seems to us that the above view is completely mistaken and deceptive. It is based on many erroneous assumptions. To begin with, it is imagined that man could be made happy merely by providing material wants and comforts. The life of Buddha who had everything that could make a man happy gives a direct lie to that belief. Man wants complete and permanent freedom from suffering and cannot rest till he gets that. If it is said that all that is mere moonshine, one is unconsciously indulging in some implicit metaphysics. Secondly, it is assumed that the humanist view will not give rise to controversies and differences. Is it not a moon-shine? Again, to think that Buddha had no metaphysics because he did not answer certain questions and kept mum, is a tragic fallacy which is exploded by both logic and historical developments after Buddha. The same is true of Kant and Confucius. Could anyone accept Buddhism without taking *nirvāṇa* to be real? Finally, it may be pointed out that the love for the humanist ideal is itself not humanistic. Why should I accept the humanist ideal and what do I lose if I do not? If anything is taken to be good, it must have relevance to myself or else it will not be binding on me. The same can be said about all ideologies. The acceptance of the body as the centre of life belongs to the uncritical natural level. The disillusioned man must know the true nature of the self before accepting anything as good. What is considered to be good corresponds to what you consider to be your self. This is the great discovery of the Upaniṣads or Vedānta. The question of value is organically related to the question of reality.

One may agree that the temporal cannot be our real goal and that man hungers for the eternal, but may object that that is not enough to show that there is any such thing as the eternal and that it can be achieved. The pursuit of the eternal requires an assurance as regards its existence, its achievability and also the way of achieving it or else nobody would care to go after it. In answer it may be pointed out that the fall of the house of cards, i.e., the temporal life, contains within itself an assurance about the eternal. It is a spiritual process which is inexplicable in objective terms, but it is certain that the temporal world would not fall from our eyes unless the eternal has already made its appearance. The disenchantment about the temporal is itself an assurance about the eternal. In addition, there is the evidence of the great saints of the world. This is an evidence which must not be belittled simply because it is based on faith; in matters spiritual faith is the eye of the soul. The demand for any other kind

of evidence regarding the eternal is illegitimate, because nothing temporal can bear witness to the eternal except on the basis of faith.

As regards the possibility and the means of attaining the eternal, it may be pointed out that the eternal cannot be attained by any means whatsoever if it is something other than the self. Not only will it be impossible to attain it, but it will also be irrelevant to me or to myself. If the eternal is other than myself, I may fear it. I may love it, but I cannot be one with it. This is why the Upaniṣads suggest that the eternal is our very self (*tattvamasi*), and so it is not only possible to attain it, it is already attained. The eternal can be attained only if it is our self; it should be attained only if it is our self. God must be our very self.

The next question is as regards the means of attaining the eternal. The eternal is not only already there, it is one with our self and yet we do not seem to possess it. This can be only due to ignorance. So the eternal can be attained only by removing ignorance, that is, by knowledge. Here comes out the most important feature of philosophy. In philosophy, the goal is attained by knowledge and by knowledge alone, and not by knowledge and action as it is at the natural and ideological stages of our life. Here knowledge is not only necessary but also sufficient. Philosophy is not theoretical, but self-sufficient knowledge requiring no implementation. Action is not only unnecessary and irrelevant but also a distraction in the path of knowledge. Philosophy is not only followed by action, but cannot be followed by action; only ideology is followed by action. Thus in philosophy the goal is the eternal and the infinite, the means is the discovery of the true nature of self and the basis is the rejection of the temporal life and existence. Knowledge is an end in itself.

Incidentally, mention may be made of two remarkable points. All the principal religions of the world have tended towards some kind of absolutism: Hinduism ends in Advaitism, Buddhism ends in Vijnānavāda and Śūnyavāda, Christianity develops mysticism and Islam has Sufism. The primary characteristics of absolutism everywhere are three: rejection of the temporal, acceptance of the unity of existence and acceptance of knowledge alone as the way of realization. The other remarkable point to be noted is that even in religion as distinguished from philosophy a stage is reached where there is loss of faith in the life of action. This is when one comes to believe that God is really the doer of everything and so everything that is happening is good and good for everyone. Action thus becomes meaningless at this stage of consciousness; faith in the omnipotence and infinite goodness of God serves the purpose of solving all our problems which are there only until this faith emerges. But here too faith in action is not lost completely. What is lost is faith in one's own action but not faith in the action of God. In philosophy, however, it is

realized that no action is possible and no action is necessary either for me or for God. The Lord says in the *Gītā*, "O Pārtha, three is nothing for me to be done in all the three lokas" (III, 22). Again in Chapter IV, 14. "The karmas do not affect me nor do I have any desire for fruits of action."

VII

In the end, we may say a few words regarding the question whether there could be any synthesis of philosophy and action. Our answer is that there can be but it will be a loose synthesis. You cannot say that the philosopher or the man of knowledge *must* do this or that, but he *may* do this or that. Plato attempted a synthesis in his conception of the philosopher king but he has made it quite clear that the philosopher is most reluctant to come back to the world of opinion from the world of contemplation. But if he does, it will be because he is moved by compassion for the suffering humanity. However, even when the wise man is moved to action, he likes to do only what is spiritually beneficial to mankind; he does not bother himself about what humanity generally takes to be good, because he wants everybody to attain the supreme good.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* too has given us a synthesis of knowledge and action in its ideal of *loka saṅgraha*. And here too the example of a king, Janaka, is given. But here the wise man is not required to be the king but the model in society. When people see that the wise man is happy for all his indifference to what are called competitive goods, their own hunger for them is abated and the society comes to have less conflicts and quarrels. Apparently the wise man too seems to be doing what others do, but he does it in a detached spirit while others do it with attachment. The wise man does not ask people to withdraw from action prematurely, because that would produce hypocrites and would complicate the spiritual evolution of persons. He in fact makes people do action and does not create a conflict in them by suggesting the futility of action; because he knows that it is only by doing action that one can know its futility.

To conclude: there are three or four stages of the development of our consciousness. The first stage is that of natural life characterised by blind faith in action and the results of action; the second stage is of ideology characterised by the acceptance of a conscious programme of life; the third stage is the stage of philosophy where one comes to realize the futility of all action and seeks to attain the eternal by knowledge alone. The fourth stage may be one where even after attaining knowledge, the wise man indulges in action for the sake of others. The singular value of philosophy is in its being the independent and self-sufficient way of attaining the eternal by knowledge alone. In this sense, philosophy is not meant for all or the masses, but

only for the disillusioned. Most of the western philosophies are mere ideologies and not philosophy proper. Philosophy as mere ideology has to compete with other ideologies but philosophy does not have to do so. On the other hand, ideology has the double advantage of appealing to the masses and of providing a positive basis for culture and civilization.

1. *Bhagavad Gītā* II, 49, *kṛpāṇaḥ phalaśhetavaḥ*.
2. *Ibid*, VII, 23, *antavanṭu phalaṁ teṣāṁ*.

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In epistemic idealism object is reducible to idea; in epistemic panobjectivism idea is reducible to object. In metaphysical idealism material and vital events are reducible to mental events; in metaphysical naturalism mental events are reducible to material and vital events. These monistic refutations of dualism are typically Western since they counter dualism from within the dualistic tradition. Not so typical is the non-dualistic philosophy of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Like typical Eastern thought, his position is non-dualistic without being monistic, and for the same reason: the point of departure for his theorizing is anterior to the subject-object and mind-matter distinction. The work of the Indian philosopher, Sri Aurobindo, shares a point of departure that is similarly non-dualistic, but his work and that of Merleau-Ponty nevertheless differ radically with regard to their respective accounts of the meaning of life. This difference grows out of the concern of Sri Aurobindo for the *being* of the world, on the one hand, and out of Merleau-Ponty's interest in being *in* the world, on the other. As a result, Sri Aurobindo's theory is ontological and Merleau-Ponty's is existential. The work that follows explains how this categorial difference gives rise to different appraisals of practice and its relation to theory.

"Presence"

Indian philosophy, in common with Oriental thought in general, is non-dualistic. Given this position by the partisans of Aurobindo's philosophy,¹ we are not surprised by the argument Professor Haridas Chaudhuri offered in response to Professor Alburey Castell's claim that the self is an object which is also a subject. Inasmuch as the self, to be subject, must be conscious, and inasmuch as the object, to be object, must presuppose consciousness before it can be present, argued Professor Chaudhuri, "consciousness cannot by its very nature be objectified, i.e., known as an objective content....." Rather, it can only be "conscious of itself as an unobjectifiable subject." Furthermore, in contrast to the obscurity and opaqueness of dualism's mental substance, in which one cannot know the "I" that knows, consciousness as awareness is, according to Professor Chaudhuri, "pure translucency. It is the light that lights up everything else."^{1a}

In a similar vein Professor N. A. Nikam has observed that consciousness is "'presence' rather than awareness of 'objects'."

The distinction between awareness of objects and the awareness of being aware of the unobjectifiable subject is, according to Professor Nikam, recognized in the *Kena Upanishad*. In this writing the point is made that (a) the *that* which is seen *by* the eye is "there" as the terminus of sense-awareness, whereas (b) the *that by which* the eye sees is "there" where being is — a *where* "where the eye cannot go, nor speech nor mind." The difference between (a) and (b) is the difference between "the ontological category of 'object' and the ontological category of 'presence' or 'witness' (*sākshi*) as Indian philosophy states it."²

The positions of the two Indian philosophers, Chaudhuri and Nikam, give support to the claim that oriental culture in general is not receptive to a viewpoint according to which reality is fragmented. In fact, as their mentor Sri Aurobindo put it, the "individual sense of separateness" to which an appeal is made in supporting the claim that the self is substantial is "precisely the one thing that can be described as unreal reality." Dualistic dichotomies such as the One and the Many, Form and Formlessness, Finite and Infinite, etc., are "not hopelessly incompatible alternatives but two faces of the One Reality."³

Like Sri Aurobindo, Merleau-Ponty finds in non-fragmented "presence" a point of departure for philosophizing. "Presence" for him is a way of being in the world that he calls "body." This body is not, however, objective biological body. Biological body is not in the world but is, rather, an observation about the world. The difference between Merleau-Ponty's "body" and biological body may be illustrated by distinguishing seeing from an explanation of seeing. In prescribing eyeglasses, for example, the optometrist asks repeatedly as he slides one lens after another into the viewing device, "And how does this look to you?" In answering how meaningful, or clear, the letter appears, the patient is testifying to how he is living his body; that is, how it is coming to grips with the world. We can say that he is present in the world as the presence of "blur" or of "clear," neither of which is his biological body. For in an activity such as gazing at the optometrist's chart "I am unaware of my eyes as an object, as a globe set in an orbit, of its movement or state of rest in objective space, or of what these [objects] throw upon the retina."⁴

To be sure, let these orbs be removed and gazing will stop. But the "to be sure" is a non-gazing judgment by an observer to whom gazing is something to be explained. It is not the gazing whose presence is the presence of the gazed-at object. As distinguished from the biological body, the body that gazes, smells, moves, copulates, etc., is a *perceiving* body, a body that is *lived* rather than one that is talked about. Rather than being there as something to be observed, the perceiving body is "wherever there is something to be done"; it exists as "an attitude directed toward a certain existing or possible task."⁵

In contrast to the body which is the object of seeing, touching, etc., the perceiving body is not an object among objects. Nevertheless, without objects there would be no occasion to become aware of pre-conscious presence. Thus, in contrast to the Indian notion of consciousness that was noted above, according to which conscious awareness — the *that by which* there is presence as seeing, etc., — in its purity is objectiveless, for Merleau-Ponty we can be aware of seeing only if we are seeing something, of hearing only if we are hearing something, of moving only if we are moving toward or away from something. As the slogan goes, "All consciousness is consciousness of..." Hence, that there should be a visual object is the intention of looking; but not until something visible grasps and is grasped by the looking does the intention become objectified as something seen. "Perception is precisely that kind of act in which there is no question of setting the act itself apart from the end [i.e., the object] to which it is directed..."⁶ Perceiving body is therefore a *pre-objective* activity; and since the activity includes the object in which it culminates only intentionally and not as an object for consciousness, the awareness we have of perceiving is *pre-conscious*. Since the notion of pre-conscious, pre-objective presence may be an unfamiliar one, I shall offer illustrations from the realm of motility, sensing, and speaking.

(1) Consider as an example of motor or spatial pre-objectivity the scratching of a mosquito bite itch. In scratching I do not act objectively; that is, I do not first locate my hand, which I say is "here," then locate the irritation, which I say is "there," and finally plot a trajectory for my hand to follow from "here" to "there." Thus, scratching is not a response to an objective trajectory but to an intention whose meaning is present within the movement. A loss of the meaning would bring the moving to a halt, for if the itch should (let us say be being anesthetized) no longer call forth, and give particularity and structure to, the movement, the biological body could be described as moving if the hand kept going from an objective "here" to an objective "there," but this movement as a way of "living" the world would disappear. Lived moving thus makes the world meaningful, in this case with the itch-scratching meaning. Intentional movements present at once the body as lived and the world as lived. Thus, unlike the notion of "presence" as pure awareness, according to this notion "presence" is never pure. It is always a particular configuration whose meaningfulness marks being-in-the-world.

(2) To illustrate pre-objective sensory activity let us suppose that I have run the palm of my hand over a laminated table top and that I have volunteered the information that the table feels smooth, hard, and cool. Let us suppose, further, that at this point you raise a question: "Are you telling me that first you had a

feeling of 'cold,' and that after you finished feeling 'cold,' 'hard' took its turn to be felt, and finally 'smooth' replaced 'hard'?" "Of course not," I reply. "They were all sensed together, at once. It was only after I stopped to think about my sensing that I broke it up into these separate sensations" — that is, anterior to and underlying such objectifications as 'cold,' 'hard,' 'smooth,' etc. there is a pre-objective activity out of which these objective distinctions can rise to consciousness. The anterior pre-objective sensing in which "they are all sensed together" is present as "a 'primary' layer of sense experience which precedes its division into separate senses."⁷ As before, it may be pointed out that in feeling the table sensorily, the lived body and the lived world were simultaneously present as a source of meaning, in this case as meaning 'cold,' 'hard,' and 'smooth.' But, again, the meaningfulness as which the lived body and the lived world co-exist is never pure, for it is the meaningfulness of *particular* configurations that marks being-in-the-world.

(3) Verbal as well as motor and sensory meanings express being-in-the-world.⁸ Merleau-Ponty ventured the word "hail" as an example of how perceiving body and structuring world are verbally co-present. When hard, then friable, then melting pellets fall on my face, there is present "a piece of the world's behavior, a certain version of its style,"⁹ which allows itself to be "animated by meaning."¹⁰ The vocable "hail" expresses a "meeting of the human and the non-human."¹¹ As expressing this co-presence the vocable becomes verbal. Thus, instead of being an effect of some material cause, or subsisting in ideality, or exhibiting the "play" of Brahman, or being in some other way the sign of a Reality that transcends it, "hail" is present as the presence of a *particular* configuration which is the living of the difference between these pellets and everything else. As Merleau-Ponty wrote in a comment that applies to motor and sensory as well as to verbal meanings, "the process of expression brings meaning into being or makes it effective and does not merely translate it."¹²

Meanings in whatever perceptual mode — motor, sensory, verbal — are thus the inseparable co-presence of perceiving body and structuring world. Without a perceiving body, the world is meaningless — it is spaceless, a-sensible, and dumb. Hence the presence of lived body is also the presence of the lived world. This description of presence obviously runs counter to Western accounts of perception which, accepting the Cartesian distinction between subject and object, begin with the object rather than culminating in it, and dismiss "presence" as merely subjective. But Merleau-Ponty's version of existentialism also runs counter to Eastern non-dualism, for pre-conscious being-in-the-world is always particular and not pure. In contrast, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of integralism gets its thrust by

enhancing conscious subject's awareness as "the quality of Presence."¹⁰ As the capital "P" in "Presence" suggests, integralism uses "presence" as an ontological category. Merleau-Ponty's intentionalism, however, uses "presence" as an existential category. Brief sketches of their respective philosophical developments of "presence," including a consideration of the relation of practice to their theories, follows.

Integralism

Sri Aurobindo's ontology assimilates the evolutionary outlook of Western thought to the Indian acceptance of conscious awareness as manifesting the presence of Reality. Western evolutionary theory—whether Darwin's, Spencer's and Lamarck's on the one hand, or Bergson's on the other hand—precludes the disclosure of any meaning that is immanent in the process of evolution. In contrast, evolution as interpreted by Sri Aurobindo is meaningful as the ever-increasing clarification of living Reality as Pure Consciousness. "For there seems to be no reason," argues Sri Aurobindo, "why life should evolve out of material elements or Mind out of living forms, unless we accept the Vedāntic solution that Life is already involved in Matter and Mind in Life....." Lower principles can be the source of higher principles only if the latter are implicit in the former. "Evolution is an inverse action of involution, what is an ultimate and last derivation in the involution is the first to appear in the evolution, what was original and primal in the involution is in the evolution the last and supreme emergence." Conscious Reality "delights in manifesting itself" by involvement in "a dense material Inconscience" out of which its Presence emerges in succeeding evolutionary stages.¹⁴ The evolution of Conscious Reality is therefore nothing but the complementary side of the involution of Conscious Reality. Evolutionary-involutionary Presence is manifested as the being of the world in all of its emergent stages.

This view contrasts both with materialistic and idealistic interpretations of evolution. Contrary to materialistic theories, for which no meaning is immanent in evolutionary process, material Energy "is really the power of *cit*, conscious force, in its nature of creative self-consciousness."¹⁵ Although idealism, unlike materialistic theories, does grant a telic factor in evolution, this factor culminates in human mind. This culmination not only places a limit on the evolution of consciousness, but it also deprecates consciousness. For if consciousness reaches its greatest height in human beings, it is at best marked by futility since it is always seeking knowledge which it can never fully find.¹⁶ If human reason is the pinnacle of evolution, man is condemned to remain "a finite, limited, ephemeral being forever."¹⁷ However, in cosmic evolution there is no such dismal prospect, for

just as mind comprehends within itself soul, life, and finally matter, it also contains the promise of higher emergents such as higher mind, illumined mind, intuition, overmind, supermind, and Pure Consciousness.

Involuntary-evolutionary Activity is an integral process, for in the progressive witnessing of itself as the world's being it upgrades all manifestations in the upgrading of any one of them. Thus, matter which is constituent in the emergence of mind is higher than it was before mind emerged out of it. "Similarly, when supermind emerges, the entire cosmos of matter, life and mind is vitally transformed."¹⁸ Since the activity of Reality completely saturates, so to speak, the *whole* world with any one of its manifestations, Sri Aurobindo's philosophy is called "integralism." Moreover, the name fits for another reason. For the involvement of Reality in evolutionary deployment in this and numberless other universes is a playful activity by which It "enjoys issuing forth, in endless forms, the fundamental fact of its existence."¹⁹ The metaphor of play is a happy one, for to play is to be involved totally and *wholly*, without extrinsic considerations. Since the world has its being as Brahman's creative play, the world is meaningful as the "growing image of a divine creation."²⁰

But although the being of the world manifests the "Life Divine," Conscious Reality itself cannot *be*, for as Sri Aurobindo remarks, It "is indefinable and inconceivable by finite and defining Mind; it is ineffable by a mind-created speech; it is describable neither by our negations, *neti neti*—for we cannot limit it by saying it is not this, it is not that; nor by our affirmations—for we cannot fix it by saying it is this, it is that, *iti iti*."²¹ However, although the *Where* "where the eye cannot go, nor speech, nor mind" is itself beyond being, taken ontologically it is the principle of being which grounds the evolutionary being of the world.

The attempt to catch Reality in rational or other nets produces *Maya*, or mere appearances of Reality, for the finite cannot capture the infinite. But if Reality itself is beyond conceptual grasp, how does one "get at" or "get to" It? The answer is, one does not; for one is not (as such an attempt at conceptual objectification would imply separated from Reality. To the contrary, the awareness whereby we are aware is present as the presence of Reality. "It is only by the touch of the Absolute," writes Sri Aurobindo, "that we can arrive at our own Absolute."²² Hence Pure Consciousness, or Reality, is, as Professor Chaudhuri remarks, "the element of transcendence in man," for "by an act of self-awareness a man can transcend his own empirical existence and regard himself as a member of a cosmic manifold."²³ This "act of self-awareness" should not, however, be confused with the intellectual elaboration of objectiveless "presence" into the scheme of a cosmic involution-evolution of the life Divine

which accounts for the being of the world. Integralism as a theory is, on the one hand, an ontological explication of Reality as the source and explanation of the being of the world; but, on the other hand, as an "act of self-awareness" it is the realization of Reality.²⁴ The discipline of Yoga provides a means for this realization. In considering Yoga, our discussion turns from theory to practice.²⁵

Although theorizing cannot be a substitute for practice, integral Yoga includes integralist theorizing as a useful device for helping in the realization of Reality — useful because, among other things, integralism gives holistic meaning to sensible phenomena whose discreteness and plurality might otherwise be misleading. "The intellect," Sri Aurobindo points out, "is not capable by itself of bringing us into touch with the concrete spiritual reality, but it can help by a mental formulation of the truth of Spirit which explains it to the mind....."²⁶ In the West, unfortunately, not only have metaphysical ideas failed to serve spiritual life, but excessive reliance on intellectual criticism has also hampered spiritual experience; and no wonder, for the critical use of reason in spiritual matters is "an inferior light turned upon a field of higher illumination."²⁷ Moreover, adherence to the Cartesian distinction between subject and object obscures the being of each as the selfsame manifestation of Consciousness. Yet the cultivation of reason under Western impetus has stretched reason to its highest reach. Consequently mankind is now ready for the next step in evolution, namely, the global and integral consciousness of superman. In this cultivation, according to Professor S. K. Mitra, "ends the basic work of the West and begins the yet greater work of the East."²⁸

The acceleration of evolutionary process requires, however, more than an ascent through the spiritual discipline of Yoga to higher levels of consciousness, for the success of human Yoga depends on a complementary "cosmic Yoga" of involutionary-evolutionary Reality. For the discovery of one's own being as the self-delight of creative Consciousness does more than alter one's habitual mode of living; as a facet integral to all being, in one's own liberation one also liberates such other facets of reality that are party to one's own spiritual freedom. This liberation occurs because with the emergence of superman the "light and power of higher consciousness" descends into the mind, vitality, and matter involved in the emergence, thus transforming them "into effective channels of expression of universal love and all unifying truth."²⁹ Without these channels the best of efforts to bring about world economy, world government and world peace bog down, so to speak, in soil unprepared to receive them. It follows, therefore, that integral Yoga is the preeminently practical way to make possible the accomplishment of modes of living which, in so far as they facilitate human welfare, are practical in the highest sense.

Although Sri Aurobindo finds India to be the "chosen People" for this task, "Spirit's call" is boundless:

When superman is born as nature's King
His presence shall transfigure Matter's Work.
He shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night,
He shall lay upon the earth Truth's greater Law;
Man too shall turn towards the Spirit's call.³⁰

Unlike Sri Aurobindo, Merleau-Ponty offers no theory whose practice facilitates the realization of "Truth's greater Law" as disclosed by the theory. To the contrary, the philosopher does not, according to the French scholar's inaugural address, "place his hope in any destiny, even a favourable one, but in something belonging to us which is precisely not a destiny — in the contingency of history."³¹ Why this contrasting conclusion may be derived from "presence" taken existentially is our next consideration.

Intentionalism

As we have noted, according to Merleau-Ponty's intentionalism, the presence of lived body is also the presence of lived world. The process of perceiving is a co-existing in which each "stretches" toward the other. In phenomenological parlance, this "stretching toward" is referred to as "intending" (from *intentiō*—in, toward + *tendere*—to stretch); and the particular meaning toward which one "stretches"—a movement or lived space, a sensation, a verbal expression — is called an "intention." In ordinary English an intention is a goal which is immanent in the act—that is, it "stretches" throughout the act, from beginning to end, rather than being an object at which the act aims. Thus, when we ask someone, "What are your intentions?" we are not trying to get information about the object toward which he is directing his effort. Rather, we want to find out what he is "up to." Less familiar is the idea that the world also has intentions; that it is "up to something" in its behaviour. Yet unless the world were also "reaching" into perceiving with its structures, pre-consciousness would lack the possibility of distinctions and hence be empty rather than being a source of meaning.

The world's structurings exhibit a logic of their own. Whereas, for example, the logic of reason separates seeing from touching and from hearing (for as Plato long ago noted, a sight cannot be touched or heard), the "logic" of the world unites seeing and touching and hearing. Thus a carpet is not merely red; it is a woolly red whose tactility, weight, and resistance to sound can be seen just by looking at it. The brittleness, transparency, and tinkling of glass, none of which requires the others in its definition, nevertheless cohere when they are present as the presence of glass. "Expressed in more general terms, there is a logic of the world to which my [perceiving] body in

its entirety conforms, and through which things of intersensory significance become possible for us."⁸²

The "logic of the world" not only structures our perceiving but is the source of clarity in meaning. It is especially ironic that reasoning, which is supposed to clarify meanings, obfuscates them instead. For by critical effort we can conceive of brittleness as an "essence," and finding no "sound" or "transparency" included in the essence of brittleness, we can conclude that brittleness is neither transparent nor tinkling — a conclusion of which their lived co-existence as the presence of glass is a refutation. The perceiving body's acceptance of the structure intended for it "creates at a stroke, along with the cluster of data, the meaning [e.g., the glass presence] which unites them — indeed which not only discovers the meaning which they have, but moreover causes them to have a meaning."⁸³

Several metaphors — pact, transaction, coition, dialogue — are used to refer to perceiving as twofold complementary intentionality. The last named (a favourite with Merleau-Ponty) is used not as an analogy to the fact that dialogue takes place between persons, but to the mutual enrichment resulting from such dialogue. Just as in dialogue new ideas emerge in response to the demands of the participants, so in existential dialogue perceiving and perceivable intentions are co-present as meaning-giving-meaning-accepting activity. Dialogue is the "fundamental existential moment"⁸⁴ which is the very process whereby the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning."⁸⁵ Through dialogue the subject-body gets "a world that speaks to him of himself and gives his own thoughts their place in the world."⁸⁶ In short, in contrast to dualisms which start with subject and object as separate, in pre-conscious, pre-objective dialectical activity the "subject" exists as the very presence of the "object" which likewise exists as the very presence of the "subject." "Subject" and "object" are the work of analysis upon presence that is already there as their co-existence.

In intentionalism, pre-conscious pre-objective activity is practical and explanations of this activity are theoretical. Practice, or doing, is primary. Theory is derivative. It is only because pre-conscious scratching goes on that the mosquito-bite-scratching theory has something to explain. The difference between practice and theory is like the difference between playing a game and being a spectator of it.⁸⁷ Of the three modes of existential expression we have mentioned, moving and sensing are practical; verbal activity alone may be theoretical as well as practical. Let me illustrate.

For example, unless I make it a point to find out, I never consciously know what I am doing when I am driving. Stopping at a red light is not a symbolic matter of defining the significance of the signal, the function of the brake pedal, etc., of plotting a trajectory for my foot

to follow, and then arriving at a conclusion concerning what activity is called for and is possible. To the contrary, perceiving is in this case thinking-with-your-moving-foot. The conceptual matters we mentioned are *ex post facto*. Verbal activity, like such motor and sensory activity, is practical, for the activity of speaking also expresses intentions that are implicit in it. Like the little boy who told his teacher that he could not stop drawing when he was told to put away his crayons because "I have to finish it to find out what it is going to be," in speaking we cannot know how our speaking will turn out until we have finished speaking.

This situation obtains because our words are called forth by what we intend to say, and hence are always ahead of us as our yet unspoken project. Why these words are used and not others can be understood only retrospectively; and even when we "shop" for and contrive words, we do so under the domination of our verbal intentions and not as word-searchers. Moreover, since what we want to say is immanent in our speaking, our words "flow" spontaneously in stretches of meaning we call sentences. In fluency of speech "thought tends toward expression as its completion."⁸⁸ Hence, just as moving and sensing are lived as practical intentional activities, so too is speaking: I move meaningfully because there is a terminus implicit in my moving; I see meaningfully because looking is implicit in my seeing; I speak meaningfully because a purpose is implicit in my speaking.

But speech can be theoretical as well as practical. For although we cannot move our movements or sense our sensations, we can speak about our speaking. It is at this point that practice opens the door to theory, that perceptual thinking can become conceptual. For the original pre-conscious celebration of meaningful presence by vocal gesture is the exercise of "phonotory or articulatory organs and a respiratory apparatus" and hence can be repeated.⁸⁹ By repeating the sound by which a meaning is voiced, whoever uses his voice meaningfully can in the absence of the meaning nevertheless *signify* the meaning. Merleau-Ponty offers no explanation of the acquisition of significance through the repetition of sound and of the "sedimentation" of signified meanings into language. However, accepting this account, we can say that words are significant in so far as they refer to the pre-objective practical presence which is the living-body-in-the-living-world. Moreover, not only is language significant; it is also symbolic, for in making sentences words are "thrown together" [together + *ballein*, to throw (Greek)] so as to refer to each other: "itching" is referred to "biting," which is referred to "mosquito," etc. Once words have been put together symbolically, i.e., so that they refer to each other significantly they become a system of references which survives its having been spoken; in short, secondary speech results in knowledge. If such discourse is intended to be true, the knowledge is propositional. In

(secondary) speaking about (primary) speaking, the verbal expression of presence is turned into language; practice is turned into theory.

Practice and Truth

When linguistic meanings are divorced from the active dialectic of pre-conscious existence they gain a stability which makes them seem to be fixed and eternal.⁴⁰ Out of this semblance worlds are symbolized by system builders, and these linguistic creations are taken to be true; that is, the claim is made that the "real" world corresponds to the symbolic world, and consequently that the propositions which express the claim are true. Otherwise, as Merleau-Ponty points out, "my awareness of *constructing* an objective truth would never provide me with anything more than objective truth *for me*" (italics added).⁴¹ Nor, it may be added, is the idiosyncratic character of this awareness alleviated by appeals to postulational decisions whose denial, destroying the structure of knowledge, would make skepticism too costly. Competitors with different postulates for founding new structures have more than once given knowledge a new lease on life. But the dualistic question of whether our symbolic world matches the "real" world is the spurious one that is in principle unanswerable. For the "truth" of any answer does not foreclose the issue of the "truth" of any justification of this answer, and so on *ad infinitum*. Nor can this "bad infinity," as Hegel called it, be cured by the Hegelian trick of slipping into "reality" the "truth" that the system is designed to disclose. The dualistic problem of truth is a pseudo-problem that is generated by the failure to recognize that as a second-order mode of expressing presence, or meaning, the symbolic world of linguistic significances is merely epiphenomenal.⁴² To live in the symbolic world of our own linguistic construction as though such living were the presence of our lived-body-in-the-lived-world is to mistake theory for practice.

The pursuit of truth in terms of whether the being of the world answers the demands that we linguistically symbolize in our propositional systems is a will-o-the-wisp. The truth of language, however, is not. Rather than being the relation of symbol to reality, truth concerns the intentionality expressed by language. Consequently, the truth of a system—whether common sense, scientific, theological or philosophical—is the existential being-in-the-world of its creator or sustainer. For language to be true, it must be practical; that is, it must express "an operative intentionality already at work before any positing or any judgment."⁴³ Thus, for example, whereas in the American colonies where civil liberty was practised the democratic doctrines of the enlightenment could come alive, these selfsame doctrines were untrue for French political life. For the latter they were mere ideals. "... (B)efore any voluntary *adoption of a position*," wrote Merleau-Ponty, "I am already *situated* in an intersubjective world";⁴⁴ that is, the truth

of the position is the situation which is anterior to its being chosen. In short, propositions are true not because they refer to the being of the world, but because they express being in the world.

The truth of the theory is in its being in the world; its error is in its pretension to ontological "truth" about the being of the world. The error is compounded when "the serious man—the man of action, of religion, of passion"⁴⁵—tries to regulate practice not by theory as a system of symbols derived from and returnable to practice, but by theory as though it were true for a world whose reality is independent of its being spoken. With the "serious man" conscious thinking is not regarded as "an exchange between problems and solutions in which each partial solution transforms the initial problem."⁴⁶ The miracle of the lived-body-in-the-lived-world by whose dialectical activity "the hitherto meaningless takes on meaning" is denied by the "serious man."⁴⁷ To him truth is an essential rather than an existential relation. His privileged system becomes a Procrustean bed into which all moving, sensing, speaking, and even cohabiting (witness ideological opposition to birth control) must be made to fit.

The philosopher can be a man of action, but he is not "serious." When he joins causes it is not for their sake but out of his interest in keeping man free to transcend himself by keeping his "power to give significance," in Merleau-Ponty's words, "open and indefinite."⁴⁸ Although, to be sure, the knowledge of whether or not it is healthy to scratch an itch does no scratching, it does, however, provide just enough hesitational distance to make possible a choice between a life style that includes or excludes itch-scratching. Support of the "openness" created by this distance, born as it is of the theoretical power to signify, makes the philosopher suspect to the "serious man." For to him, the serious man, such distances are invitations to decide against whatever "health" he is advocating. From the stance of the "serious man," "...even if he (the philosopher) never betrayed any cause, one feels, in his very manner of being faithful, that he would be able to betray."⁴⁹ The existentialist manner of being faithful is modelled after Socrates who, knowing no more than his opponents, nevertheless did know that "there is no absolute knowledge, and that it is only by this absence that we are open to the truth."⁵⁰ The wise man, unlike the "serious man,"

does not say that a final transcendence of human contradictions may be possible, and that the complete man awaits us in the future... (He) does not place his hope in any destiny, even a favourable one, but in something belonging to us which is precisely not a destiny—in the contingency of our history.⁵¹

In trying to eliminate the distance that separates practice from theory by making practice and theory identical, the "serious man" is indeed

sincere. However, lacking the dialectic of corrigibility which makes life contingent, his sincerity lacks the truth of living which in existentialist parlance is called authenticity.

Intentionalism, Integralism, and Truth

Contrary to the optimism of integralism which looks forward to "when superman is born as Nature's King, "Merleau-Ponty's intentionalism holds out no hope "that the complete man awaits us in the future." From the stance of intentionalism the question of whether integralism is true or false is a practical one, for with respect to truth, internal criticisms which test whether the significances of a system have been used according to its own specifications, and external criticisms which match one theoretical system against another, are irrelevant. Integral Yoga does not, as we have noted, make the mistake of "mere idealism," that is, of substituting a study of integralist theory for its practice. Such a mistake would seem to indicate a failure to realize that the grasping of the theory is itself the "play" of the selfsame Reality disclosed in the theory. Therefore the study of integralist theory as the truth about Reality is actually a way to practise, or realize, the presence of Reality. Nor is such study merely an individual blessing, for any evolutionary advance in any stage anywhere is integral to all of Reality, and hence is an advance in all stages everywhere. Hence the practice of Yoga does more than just honour one theory among others; it also prepares the evolutionary soil, so to speak, for world peace and other universal values. Thus, instead of depending on an anterior "operating intentionality" for its truth, it generates the evidence that (to shift metaphors) "shall light up Truth's fire in Nature's night."

But a partisan of intentionalism might inquire: Could the claim that Reality issues in such blessings make sense unless Reality were theoretically conceived so as to include them? Is Yoga very much more than the celebration of a symbolic world? That is, is not Sri Aurobindo's philosophy an example of the theoretical trick of slipping into the hat of Reality those rabbits which Yoga proposes to pull out of it? Moreover, if criticisms of reason in spiritual matters is "an inferior light turned upon a field of higher illumination," the question arises as to whether Sri Aurobindo is a "serious man" and hence unworthy of being called "sri." For if he were indeed wise he would find the existential meaning, and hence the truth, of integralism in its contingency as being-in-the world.

But it is precisely this unwillingness to yield to the call of "Truth's greater law" that is, according to integralism, the curse of Western intellectualism—even, alas, of intellectualism which repudiates the dualistic confusions of the West. Moreover, if it is an error for integralism to pull the meaning of its practical activity out of a theory

according to which it makes sense, so too is it for intentionalism. For it is the theory of twofold intentionality that gives sense to the practice of "openness" advocated by adherents of intentionalism.

Perhaps the countering of intentionalism and integralism to each other creates an impasse. Or perhaps "Truth's greater law" will "transform Matter's Work" when "superman is born as Nature's King," but only if the truth of this claim, as well as the claim that "our history is contingent," is in existing Yogis, and existing existentialists being-in-the-world. Or perhaps differences that distinguish Yogis from existentialists are merely facets of the same Reality whose evolving as the being-of-the-world will reconcile the differences in "the complete man" who "awaits us in the future." In the latter case the truly "wise man" is also the truly "serious man" whose "turn towards the Spirit's call" unites theory and practice.

1. The original text did not make clear that this comment on Oriental thought is not espoused by me. This lack of clarity gave rise to an important criticism made in Professor N. V. Banerjee's commentary on the paper. Profiting by his remarks, I have made amendments in the text.
- 1a. See *Pacific Philosophy Forum*, I, 2; 62, 83 ff.; 1961. This journal publishes articles whose authors confront each other in thesis-counterthesis discussions at the annual sessions of the University of the Pacific Philosophy Institute.
2. *Ibid.*, IV, 3: 75 ff.; 1965.
3. *Life Divine* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo International University Centre, 1955), 417, 570f. Cited by Charles A. Moore, "Sri Aurobindo on East and West," in Haridas Chaudhuri and Frederic Spiegelberg, eds., *The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo* (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1960), 103, 105.
4. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, tr. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 278.
5. *Ibid.*, 250 and 100.
6. *Ibid.*, 374.
7. *Ibid.*, 227.
8. For convenience, "verbal" and "speaking" are for present purposes taken to include gesturing and writing.
9. *Ibid.*, 403f.
10. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy*, tr. John Wild and James Edie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1963), 46. (The inaugural lecture of the author upon assuming the chair of philosophy at Collège de France.)
11. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 403f.
12. *Ibid.*, 183.
13. Nikam, op. cit., 76.
14. Op. cit., Bk. I, 5; Bk. II, Pt. 2, 759-60 and 734-5. Cited by Moore, op. cit., 136 and 135.
15. Sri Aurobindo, op. cit., 32. Cited by Satischandra Chatterjee in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, eds., op. cit., 38.
16. Cf. Rishabhchand, "The Philosophical Basis of Integral Yoga," in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, eds., op. cit., 218.

17. R. S. Srivastava, "The Integralist Theory of Evolution," in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, eds., op. cit., 135.
18. Ibid., 137.
19. N. A. Nikam, "The Problem of Creation: Concepts of Māyā and Līlī," in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, op. cit., 145.
20. Chatterjee, op. cit., 41.
21. *Life Divine*, 292. Cited by Chaudhuri, "The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo," in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, eds., op. cit., 21.
22. *Life Divine*; included in excerpts Moore selected as containing the essential principles of Sri Aurobindo. In op. cit., in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, eds., op. cit., 106.
23. *Pacific Philosophy Forum*, I, 2: 84.
24. Cf. Moore, op. cit., 182.
25. For an Integral Yoga handbook see Haridas Chaudhuri, *Philosophy of Meditation* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965).
26. *Life Divine*; cited in Moore's selection (see footnote 22), 92.
27. Ibid., 93.
28. "The Nineteenth Century Upsurge," in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, eds., op. cit., 311.
29. Chaudhuri, "The Integral Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo," in Chaudhuri and Spiegelberg, op. cit., 33.
30. *Savitri*, Book XI, Canto I; cited by R. S. Srivastava, op. cit., 141; of. 142.
31. *In Praise of Philosophy*, 43f.
32. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 326.
33. Ibid., 38. Thus, in contrast to the stimulus-response doctrine, perceiving depends on looking rather than looking being a response to perceptual stimuli.
34. Thomas Langan, *Merleau-Ponty's Critique of Reason* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), 28.
35. Merleau-Ponty, *ibid.*, 169.
36. Ibid., 132.
37. "Practice" is derived from *prassein*, "to do," and "theory" from *theōros*, "spectator" (Greek).
38. Ibid., 177. Cf.: "The meaning of a sentence is its import or intention, which once more presupposes a departure and arrival point, an aim and a point of view" (430).
39. Ibid., 390f.; cf. 351.
40. Cf. *ibid.*, 190.
41. Ibid., 355.
42. Cf. *ibid.*, 429; "(Speech) which loses sight of itself as a contingent fact, and takes to resting upon itself ... (is) what provides us with the ideal of thought without words, whereas the idea of music without sounds is ridiculous" (190).
43. Ibid., 429.
44. Ibid., 355.
45. Merleau-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy*, 59.
46. Ibid., 23.
47. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 169.
48. Ibid., 194.
49. Merleau-Ponty, *In Praise of Philosophy*, 60.
50. Ibid., 39.
51. Ibid., 43f.

(Comments)

Caterina Conio

The author of this paper compares two great thinkers: Merleau-Ponty and Sri Aurobindo. He first brings out the interplay of theory and practice in what Merleau-Ponty calls "perception". I agree with Professor Nietmann in recognizing the great contribution made by Merleau-Ponty to contemporary Western Philosophy in psychology and epistemology. I can only pass some side-remarks on the 'negative' aspect of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy, at least on what seems to me to be the weakest point. Merleau-Ponty says, in fact, that the world is radical contingency. But how does he establish this concept of contingency? He also identifies Metaphysics with ordinary experience thus precluding any possibility of 'overcoming' contingency.

While opposing his philosophy to any systematization, Merleau-Ponty, like many other contemporary philosophers, confuses traditional Metaphysics with *system*—two things which are not at all the same! Metaphysics, even in the classical sense of 'ontology, admitting of a supra-physical world, does not necessarily imply a *system*. There can be an ontology without a system. Merleau-Ponty, in fact, does have an ontology even though this is merely phenomenologically sketched and not logically grounded. But Phenomenology as such is not Metaphysics!

As far as Aurobindo is concerned, I can only say that the idea of an evolution towards the "perfect man" or "superman"—an idea which is strongly denied by Merleau-Ponty—is only possible on the basis of a distinction between created being and the Absolute (or uncreated Being). Only the imperfect and the non-eternal can improve and become perfect; but for this, it must have a potentiality, a perfectibility, which, in its turn, presupposes its being originated from Perfection.

Radical contingency on the one hand (that of Merleau-Ponty) and optimistic evolutionarism on the other (that of Aurobindo) constitute two opposites, or better, two specimens of oppositions. Can they be reconciled? It seems to me that they can, precisely by admitting the idea of creation. If the contingent being is considered as created or as participated being, it can be conceived in a teleological perspective. But how can one know that man, or mankind, is destined to become 'perfect' if not from some 'Revelation'? It is true that there can be found in man a longing for perfection; but is this feeling sufficient for

him to be certain of a future perfection? How can one know that evolution will continue without any involution? Only faith in God can assure us that our aspirations will be fulfilled and that perfection can be attained. Human reason, by itself, is not far-seeing. We need help from above to be able to foresee our future destiny.

'THEORY AND PRACTICE IN INTEGRALISM AND INTENTIONALISM'

(Comments)

Nikunja Vihari Banerjee

I wish to mention at the outset that Professor Nietmann has earned the gratitude of many of us in this country by providing in this paper a masterly account of the salient features of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy which is yet to be widely known among philosophers and students of philosophy in India. The comparative study of Aurobindo and Merleau-Ponty who belong to two different traditions is, undoubtedly, a most difficult task. But Nietmann has performed it with great ability and has also displayed unusual philosophical insight in the course of his performance of it. He has introduced the subject-matter of his paper by stating that Merleau-Ponty has made a departure from the Western tradition by holding a position which is non-dualistic, without being monistic. In this Merleau-Ponty, according to him, is in agreement with Sri Aurobindo. But then, these two philosophers, as Nietmann observes, differ from each other with regard to the question of the meaning of life. This, in his view, is due to the fact that whereas Aurobindo is concerned with the *being of* the world, Merleau-Ponty is mainly interested in *being in* the world, which means that the former's standpoint is *ontological* and the latter's *existential*. This difference between the two is regarded by Nietmann as the determinant of the difference between their respective "appraisals of practice in relation to theory".

Now, as it is not possible for me to undertake a thorough discussion of Nietmann's paper within the limited scope of this review, I would better confine myself to the consideration of a few points in his treatment of the subject under discussion.

In the first place, I am not sure whether Nietmann has succeeded in showing that Aurobindo's conception of 'presence' amounts to its acceptance as an *ontological* category. The reason for my saying so is that he does not seem to have advanced any argument in this regard, but has merely relied upon the rather irrelevant statement that in the case of Aurobindo the word 'presence' is spelt with a capital P instead of with a small p. The fact here seems to be that Aurobindo is no less concerned with being in the world than with being of or beyond the world (i.e. transcendence). This means that his position, on the one hand, is existentialist and, on the other, is characterized by the overcoming or conquest of existentialism. This seems to be the reason

why he, unlike Merleau-Ponty, can make room for the emergence of superman.

Secondly, Nietmann holds that Merleau-Ponty's philosophy as well as Aurobindo's are non-dualistic, without being monistic. But in this connection there inevitably arises the question as to how their philosophical position should be positively characterized, when it is negatively spoken of as non-dualistic. If this question be treated as irrelevant, then it may rightly be contended that the characterization of their philosophical position as non-dualistic is unnecessary, if not irrelevant. Moreover, one may, unlike Merleau-Ponty, recognize the subject-object or mind-body distinction without being a dualist. But then, the point I have raised here is of minor importance and cannot serve any useful purpose except that of drawing attention to the futility of the categorization of philosophers or philosophical views.

Thirdly, Nietmann informs us that 'presence', according to Merleau-Ponty, is a way of being in the world which this philosopher calls 'body'. But we are not told why 'presence' in the given sense should be called 'body'. The difficulty with which we are thus confronted is not resolved, but on the contrary seems to be enhanced, by the distinction which Merleau-Ponty is said to have drawn between 'body' in the sense of 'being in the world' and 'body regarded as an 'objective biological' item. To add to our difficulty it is said that 'body' in the latter sense 'is not in the world', but 'is, rather, an observation about the world'. In any case the conception of 'body' in this sense seems to me to be far more difficult than even Berkeley's conception of the existence of material objects as consisting in their being perceived. But Professor Nietmann tries to remove this difficulty by giving a different version of Merleau-Ponty's conception of the biological body. He now says that the biological body, according to Merleau-Ponty, is the "body that gazes, smells, moves, etc.". But then, since smelling, gazing, etc. are acts of perceiving or at least have a bearing upon perception, it again becomes difficult to understand why the existential body should be called, as Merleau-Ponty actually calls it, 'a perceiving body' in distinction from the biological body.

My object in raising these difficulties is not, however, to find fault with Merleau-Ponty or with Professor Nietmann's exposition of his philosophy, but to suggest that a philosopher may be well advised in using ordinary language as the medium of the expression of his own ideas, instead of having recourse to extraordinary devices such as neologism to that end. Judged in this light, Merleau-Ponty's conception of the 'perceiving body' signifies something very different from, and indeed more significant than, what may be meant by the combination of the words 'perceiving' and 'body' in their ordinary use. Thus the 'perceiving body', according to him, is "wherever there is something to be done"; it exists as "an attitude directed towards a

certain existing or possible task". This, it is important to note, amounts to upholding the *activist* standpoint as distinguished from the *intellectualist* standpoint introduced into the history of Western philosophy through the Cartesian *cogito*. But whereas Descartes arbitrarily ruled out all reference to the object even in his understanding of the *cogito*, Merleau-Ponty, despite the fact that he is primarily concerned with *action*, instead of with *knowledge*, holds that the 'perceiving body' is in intimate relations with objects. This view of Merleau-Ponty is important in that it constitutes the foundation of the intentionalism. "Perception", as he himself says, "is precisely that kind of act in which there is no question of setting the act itself apart from the end (i. e. the object) to which it is directed.....".

But Merleau-Ponty, as Nietmann has tried to show, does not stop here, but goes further in his analysis of 'perceiving body'. Thus he holds that meanings in all modes of perception, whether motor, sensory or verbal, are the "inseparable copresence of perceiving body and structuring world". And proceeding still further, he affirms that without a perceiving body, the world is meaningless—it is spaceless, asensible and dumb". Hence also is his view that "the presence of the lived body is also the presence of the lived world". These views seem to me to be the results of the employment of the activist conception of 'perceiving' in the understanding of the cognitive situation. However that may be, there is no doubt that Merleau-Ponty's analysis of perception, as Nietmann has pointed out, is radically different from the Cartesian conception of the perceptual situation. But the question remains whether it is an exception to the Western tradition as a whole. As far as I am concerned, I am rather inclined to answer it in the negative. The views of Merleau-Ponty just mentioned, as it seems to me, represent a form of subjectivism or, if I may say so, subjective idealism, not openly but in disguise. While not being a materialist in the ordinary sense, Merleau-Ponty has used the language of materialism, for example, 'body' instead of 'self' or 'soul', so that his subjectivist proclivity may not come to light. In fact, his view that the world is "spaceless" apart from a perceiving body seems to be an echo of Kant's view that it is the knowing subject that contributes spatiality and temporality to the world. And his view that the world is meaningless apart from the perceiving body is not far removed from Berkeley's view that the world cannot be said to *exist* apart from the perceiving subject.

One other point which I may, with some hesitancy, touch upon is of special relevance to this meeting of the East and the West. It relates to two generalizations which I wish Professor Nietmann did not include in his paper which is replete with understanding, insight and wisdom. "Indian philosophy, in common with oriental thought in general", as Nietmann has observed, "is nondualistic". He further tells us that

"the positions of two Indian philosophers—Haridas Chaudhuri and N. A. Nikam—give support to the claim that oriental culture in general is not receptive to a view-point according to which reality is fragmented". But both these generalizations seem to be arbitrary in as much as neither Indian philosophy in general nor oriental culture in general may be said to be non-dualistic or recalcitrant to the view of reality as fragmented. In support of this it would perhaps suffice to point out that Zoroastrianism which is undoubtedly oriental is avowedly dualistic, that Sāṃkhya philosophy is not only dualistic but is more uncompromisingly so than even Cartesian dualism and that Vaiśeṣika philosophy, like the philosophy of Democritus and Leucippus, is both pluralistic and atomistic and thus upholds the view of reality as fragmented. Moreover, here in this country, Hinduism has not only evolved various forms of theism but has established the possibility of an outlook as in Advaita Vedānta, which transcends the limitation of theism. But the same Hinduism on the other hand makes room for polytheism alongside the most developed forms of religion without allowing unity to crush plurality and thus avoiding the possibility of the emergence of fanaticism.

It is, however, far from me to find fault with Professor Nietmann for his acceptance of the view of Indian philosophy and oriental culture under discussion. For the fact here is that, for some reason or other, many western scholars of Indian philosophy and culture have arrived at this view and, what is more, contributed to its propagation and popularization. In consequence, not to speak of Western scholars, even many Indian scholars have succumbed to the view in question, much to the detriment of the progress of philosophical thought in India. But all this apart, it seems that it would have been enough for Nietmann's immediate purpose to take into account only Aurobindo's view of reality, instead of going far afield in pronouncing a judgment upon the view of reality in Indian philosophy in general which is really no less out of the question than is the view of reality in Western philosophy in general. My main object here really was to provide an indication of the risk of various kinds of misunderstanding, including oversimplification, to which a comparative study of philosophies is likely to be open, especially when the philosophies concerned belong to different traditions.

Let us now turn our attention to Nietmann's treatment of the main theme of his paper which concerns the relation between theory and practice as viewed respectively by Aurobindo and Merleau-Ponty. As regards Aurobindo's view of this relation, Nietmann has most creditably discovered that it derives from Aurobindo's doctrine of Integralism which holds that Reality is essentially dynamic, being imbued with the involutionary-evolutionary activity, and that this activity pervades the entire universe with its manifestations. But then, Inte-

gralism thus understood is said to be peculiar in that, while being an ontological theory of the explanation of the being of the world, it is something more; it signifies "an act of self-awareness" which, when submitted to the discipline of Yoga, amounts to the realization of Reality.

In this connection the following statement of Aurobindo is especially significant. "The intellect", says Aurobindo, "is not capable by itself of bringing us into touch with the concrete spiritual Reality, but it can help by a mental formulation of the truth of Spirit which explains it to the mind". As regards this statement, whatever may be its real value, Nietmann construes it as an indication of how metaphysical ideas, unlike in the West, can "serve spiritual life". In this regard I wish to observe, however, that in the West, there has been no dearth of philosophers with a pronounced anti-intellectualistic attitude or of those who tried to suggest how the intellect can be of help in the realization of Reality. Moreover, though it has not evolved any system of Yoga of its own, the West has from time to time recognized the importance of contemplation or meditation as a way to the realization of Reality. But then, it seems that once the importance of Yoga, contemplation or meditation is seriously taken into account, any of these may come to be regarded as the exclusive means of the realization of Reality, resulting in the rejection of metaphysical theories as futile in this respect. Hence arises the predicament in the form of the relation of *Either Or* between metaphysics on the one hand and Yoga, contemplation or meditation on the other. And as far as this predicament is concerned, an attempt may be made to find a way of escape from it or else to meet its challenge with courage and wisdom. The first alternative either consists in cultivating metaphysics for its own sake without the idea of deriving from it any help in the realization of Reality as has been done by the majority of metaphysicians, including Merleau-Ponty; or it may just lie in the recognition of the all-importance of practice and the consequent resort to Yoga, Contemplation or Meditation out of a rational faith in their competence to yield the realization of Reality. As regards the second alternative, it conveys the demand for an enquiry into the universal deprivation of the human quality in man and the adoption of the means of the undoing of this deprivation, instead of an enquiry into Ultimate Reality and the search for the way to the realization of this imponderable entity. Thus is presented an idea of the reorientation of the metaphysical outlook which, as it seems to me, suggests the way of bringing theory and practice together, instead of keeping them separate from each other.

Any discussion about what philosophy is, or about what it is not, can be properly done only if we take pains not to forget the fact that it comprises within itself a variety of sub-disciplines, which may be inter-related but still remain different from each other in the sense that a true generalisation about one may not be true of the other. Even some professional philosophers forget this truism, it is not difficult to locate one offering a generalisation about philosophy as such which can at most be true only of some sector or sectors of it, and accusing someone else of misdescribing its nature when the generalisation the latter makes about it is true only of some sector or sectors different from those of which the former's generalisation is true.

The situation has become all the more complicated because of the changes which have taken place in the conceptions of the same sector in different periods of its history, or even in the same period because of some philosophers, who work in that sector, working in ways which are very greatly different from the ways which have acquired conventional acceptance. For example, it is not only an illicit generalisation to say (as this author himself once did) that philosophy is an enquiry into the nature of ultimate reality, since ethics, logic, epistemology, etc., which are bona fide members of its household, of are not at all concerned with the ascertainment or characterisation of the nature of ultimate (or penultimate) reality. This generalisation is not even true of metaphysics over the entire period of its history till date. It is amusing (or painful?) to find a philosopher defining philosophy in this way in the introductory chapter of his book and then including logic, ethics, epistemology, etc., among its various branches, or unapologetically discussing problems with which the latter are concerned. When one thinks of such sectors of philosophy as philosophy of science, philosophy of language, philosophy of logic, philosophy of action, meta-ethics, etc., the narrowness of this definition (or generalisation) becomes all the more obvious.

It seems to me, therefore, that the question whether or not philosophy has any practical relevance, and if it has, what is its nature, can be fruitfully discussed only if we are fully conscious of the variegated character of the philosophic enterprise. I do not intend to assert that *no* generalisation can be true of philosophy as such. Rather, it seems to me that it is not possible to make such a generalisation if it

is about the subject-matter of the various philosophical disciplines. Perhaps we can make such a generalisation about the method or methods which they adopt, but even such an attempt may not fare better. It is almost impossible to assert a generalisation which is true of the methods used by all of them, or even of those used by any one of them in the various phases of its development. On the other hand, even if one succeeds in offering an extremely broad generalisation true of all of them, it is bound to be too general to be of any informative value.

It should not, therefore, surprise anyone if it turns out that some philosophical disciplines have and some do not have practical relevance, or some have more practical relevance than some others. That philosophy is theoretical is too obvious a truism to be emphasised. Every branch of knowledge has to be (more or less) theoretical, otherwise it would not be a branch of knowledge. Any concern for some general principles, whether they are principles of action, principles of thought, principles of language, or principles of natural or social change, is bound to result, if it is successful, in the formulation of a theory. Further, that philosophy also has *some* practical relevance is also not a matter of dispute. By this I not only mean that the teaching and study of philosophy provide to a number of people employment, and also sometimes occasions for relaxation and social get-together, neither of which can be considered unimportant. Philosophy can also be practical for other, impersonal, reasons.

It is true, however, that both philosophers and non-philosophers have occasionally complained that it is not practical in the proper sense of the term and have pleaded that it ought to be. Behind all such complaints and recommendations there always exists some specific notion of practice or practical relevance. To understand and do justice to them, and also to be able to ascertain properly in what respects philosophy, or any one of its various sub-disciplines, can be expected to have practical relevance, let us see what does it mean to say that a certain branch of knowledge has practical relevance.

In the broad sense of the term, the study of a discipline has practical relevance for the student if it is likely to produce in his inner or outer life some noticeable effects, i.e. if it is likely to alter his modes of thinking or acting in some significant ways. To say that it is likely to produce such effects is to say that it will produce the effects it is likely to produce if certain conditions, which are necessary and sufficient, are satisfied. For example, one may say that philosophy will produce a certain set of effects on the student if he is serious enough, has the needed ability to understand and evaluate what he studies, has got the required amount of leisure, peace of mind, physical fitness, proper environment and social setting, and such other facilities as those of right instruction, right type of

reading materials etc. It should be noted here that the term 'practical relevance' in itself is evaluatively neutral. In any case, I would like it keep it so. Therefore, a philosophy would, according to me, remain practically relevant if it is likely to produce *some* effect, no matter whether that effect is desirable or undesirable. A society or legislature may decide to encourage the philosophy which is likely to produce desirable effects and to ban one which is likely to produce undesirable effects; but that would be another matter. The latter kind of philosophy is as much practically relevant as is the former kind.

The study of any creative work in philosophy, if done with sincerity, understanding, and earnestness by an alert student will produce some effects at least on his modes of thinking. It will affect his habits of reacting to certain problems, his modes of formulating his solutions to them, and may be even his own solutions, if he is lucky enough to arrive at some. In all this his study may produce in him conceptual confusion or conceptual illumination. It may increase his existing confusions or bestow new ones on him; or, it may remove his confusions and conceptual darkness by enabling him to have clear vision of those territories of his conceptual life which he did not clearly see till then. In both cases, if he subjects himself to sufficient drill, he is likely to acquire at least some amount of mastery over, or skill in, the use of certain concepts. In the former case, he will be able to manipulate with success, convenience, and ease concepts, which have packed in them confusion and obscurity, in a manner that he is able to add to his and, if he is influential enough, to the existing social stock of confusion and obscurity.

This process of expanding the range of old confusions and creating new ones may continue for long periods in the intellectual history of a people. It is very likely that in virtue of their historical status some confused and obscure notions or modes of thinking may collect around them an apparent halo of traditional wisdom and thus gain a good amount of intellectual respectability. The situation will change for the better only when some such person is born who is able to see through the halo, and possesses the courage to say and the competence to show to the intelligent public that the halo is deceptive. Like the child in the fable, he must be honest enough and uninhibited enough to say that the king is naked.

In the other case, when a philosophical study is of the type which produces conceptual illumination, one's undergoing through the drill will enable him to unpack the confusions residing in certain concepts and to show what they would look like if they are stripped of their confusion-generating features. By studying their behaviour he may discover their inter-relations, boundaries, limitations, etc. This kind of conceptual training is bound to produce a rich intellectual culture in him, and it may influence his approach to other, non-philoso-

phical, problems as well, and even his general approach to life. But whether one's study of philosophy leads to conceptual darkness or conceptual illumination depends upon the kind of philosophy he studies and many other factors.

It may be said, however, that philosophy, as far as its effects on conceptual life are concerned, remains to be practically relevant only to the professional philosopher and does not touch the society he belongs to. This charge does not have to be true, though it may be true of some societies, including the Indian society, and the reason is not far to seek. In order that a certain society is able to appreciate conceptual achievements of its thinkers and enjoy the fruits of their conceptual studies, it must have a certain amount of intellectual maturity and the inquisitiveness to know what its conceptual explorers claim to have discovered or added to its existing stock. Only then it can react, favourably or unfavourably, to what they do. A society which does not bother to know what its philosophers are doing cannot even think of banishing them from its land.

The country which has earned the greatest ill name, in the last few years, for banning such intellectual works (though non-philosophical) which have been judged by experts to be excellent products of human creativity, should also be praised for the eagerness of its people to know what its intellectuals say. I have it on the authority of Sir G. P. Snow¹ that no important writing is likely to be ignored or to remain unread by the Russian people, and it is very likely to influence their modes of thinking and acting. This is the reason why the Russian Government has to ban such writings which, in their eyes, are likely to influence the people in undesirable ways. A country where intellectual works are ignored by its people (and even by fellow intellectuals) does not need to ban any, since, whether it is good or bad, it is very unlikely that it would have influence on them. Such a situation makes it extremely easy for the Government of the country to get the credit of being liberal, but it also reflects on the very low amount of responsiveness to the written word on the part of its people.

It may further be said that even if the study of good philosophy is likely to produce conceptual illumination, it is of no great practical significance unless it is also going to influence *overt human behaviour* in a desirable manner, and there is no guarantee that it will. Any conceptual activity is an intellectual, rational, activity, and therefore conceptual illumination is also a rational illumination, an affair of the reason.

It is true that conceptual illumination is not necessarily accompanied by behaviour exhibiting moral (or spiritual) illumination. The reason lies in the fact that man is not primarily a rational animal in the sense that his reason can by itself determine his

behaviour. If Aristotle thought that he was, he was definitely wrong. What moves one to action is a desire, inclination, aspiration, want, etc., and not just his rationality. Conceptual clarity can be of use in the service of his desires, etc., and whether the resulting behaviour is morally good or bad will depend largely upon how good or bad his desires, etc. are. It is indeed an empirical generalisation to say that reason alone does not move one to action, but a generalisation which can, it seems to me, be easily confirmed by looking at human behaviour.

A good argument does not have in any way more power to move than a bad one. One need not be surprised, therefore, to find a logician not doing something which is supported by a logically sound argument, or to find him tailoring a logically defective argument in the favour of what he does or intends to do. Just as metaphysics can be an attempt to defend by reason what one believes on instinct, the use of rationality (or logic) in matters of conduct is very often made to defend or justify what one intends to do or not to do. This is human nature, and, therefore, if conceptual illumination is not sufficient to produce moral illumination, the fault lies not with conceptual illumination but with human nature itself. I am not questioning here the moral maxim that reason ought to guide our action; perhaps it ought to, I do not know. I am only saying that in fact it does not have by itself the power to do that.

Conceptual illumination is itself a desirable acquisition, and therefore it does not cease to be worth having even if it is not a sure means to moral (or spiritual) illumination. But it remains true that it is not the same as moral (or spiritual) illumination.

But many of those who complain that philosophy is not practical, or plead for making it practical, or even those who argue that every good philosophy is in fact practical, mean by its being practical something very different from its potentiality for producing conceptual illumination. For example, John Dewey says: "Philosophy still has a work to do. It may gain a role for itself for turning to consideration of why it is that man is now so alienated from man. It may turn to the projection of large generous hypotheses which, if used as plans of action, will give intelligent direction to man in search for ways to make the world more one of worth and significance, more homelike, in fact."² Radhakrishnan, presenting another view-point, though in the same direction, maintains that "the present needs make upon philosophy a demand to put forth a constructive theory of life, fair to science and faithful to true religion, a philosophy which would insist on the supremacy of a spiritual reality and the practice of self-discipline and self-sacrificing service."³

I have quoted above the two sets of lines not because they have been written by philosophers who have gained eminence in

two different cultures, but rather because they present two different, historically very important, positions claiming that philosophy ought to be practical. Each of them is rather a representative of a class of several broadly similar positions on the subject. Further, although the statements of these positions were made by their authors long ago, yet not only they very fairly represent their views, but even today there are philosophers in the two cultures who accept them or some others very similar to them.

In order to have a handy label to facilitate referring to each one of them I shall call any position like Dewey's the worldly point of view and one like Radhakrishnan's the spiritualistic point of view. Similarly, the position according to which the practical significance of philosophy consists in producing conceptual illumination may be called the logicalistic point of view. There are thus three positions on the subject, the last of which has been, though only briefly, discussed in the preceding pages. I shall now turn to the other two.

Both the worldly and the spiritualistic points of view agree in emphasizing the fact that philosophy can be practically relevant in the real sense of the term only if the effects it produces (or is likely to produce) are not limited to the intellectual or conceptual life of man. It must affect the world in the sense of making it better to live in, or it must help man to gain spiritual salvation or self-realization. A good philosophy would thus become a means for worldly or spiritual betterment of man.

Even if we accept such a goal for philosophy, we can accept it only for some sector or sectors of it, and definitely not for all of them. For example, one may prescribe the goal of worldly betterment to normative ethics and that of spiritual betterment to religious philosophy, but definitely neither to metaphysics, logic, epistemology, meta-ethics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, etc. Further, even to attribute such goals to normative ethics and religious philosophy may be questioned on very good grounds. For example, to prescribe the goal of worldly betterment to normative ethics will tend to merge it in the art of moral preaching or even in some types of religion like Buddhism or Jainism. Similarly to prescribe the goal of spiritual betterment to religious philosophy will tend to obliterate the distinction between religious philosophy and religion. Religious philosophy, if by it we mean philosophy of religion, is not the same as religion, just as philosophy of mathematics is not the same as mathematics. Normative ethics, similarly, is not the same as presenting a list of moral precepts or rules and trying to make men act according to them, though it is true that it is much closer to practical life than any other philosophical discipline.

It is worth mentioning here that if we define philosophy in such a way that it can be said to have practical relevance only if

it fulfils either one of the two goals mentioned above, then very few of those who are, according to the existing acceptance of the term, rightly called philosophers, will deserve that name. If defining philosophy as linguistic or conceptual analysis is considered objectionable on the ground that the definition is too narrow since it excludes a large number of philosophers, the former definition would be objectionable on equally strong, if not stronger, grounds. It should be noted that to study the notion of a practically relevant philosophy, or to present a theory about the ways in which philosophy ought to be practically relevant, is *not to give* a practically relevant philosophy. All such studies are analytical, theoretical, or conceptual, studies. If they would have any practical relevance, they would for our theoretical or conceptual life; they would effect, if successful, only conceptual illumination. Therefore, those who do such studies should not have the illusion that they are giving to the world a philosophy which can claim to have satisfied even their own test of a practically relevant philosophy.

It seems to me that most of those, who have argued for making philosophy practically relevant in the worldly or in the spiritualistic direction, have at best attempted at making a case for a practically relevant philosophy, or at presenting their own conception of what it is, and not at actually giving one. The matter is different with those who do philosophy as conceptual analysis, since to do conceptual analysis successfully is to produce conceptual clarification and illumination, more or less. Even to analyse the notion of conceptual illumination is to do conceptual analysis. To analyse the concept of philosophy as conceptual analysis is to clarify the notion of doing philosophy in a certain manner.

If we *require* of philosophy that it can be practically relevant only if it helps man to better his lot as a worldly or a spiritual being, then to be a good philosopher one needs to have many such qualifications and to pass many such tests which are not ordinarily considered necessary.⁴ There is nothing wrong in one's making the recommendation that anyone be called a successful philosopher only if he is either a successful social and moral reformer or a successful religious teacher, as long one does not forget that making a recommendation about how a certain term is to be used is not the same as stating how in fact it is used. To accept the recommendation would mean to agree, in effect to calling one a successful philosopher only if he is either a Gandhi or a Sankara, or, if we are liberal in the use of our criterion, if he is somewhere near Gandhi or Sankara. A good philosopher would then surely be an extremely rare being, very much rarer than he is at present. I would, on the other hand, wish that we better not make his appearance so rare even if we may have to remain contented with his

performance as an explorer in the world of concepts.

Whatever has been said here should not imply the view that a philosopher has no responsibility to make the world he inhabits morally or spiritually better. He is first a man and then a philosopher. He must do his best to improve the state of the world, and not only he but all the other members of his species who have the required ability. It may not be his professional obligation, but it surely is his obligation as a human being. Perhaps a truly religious person has better chances of success in this venture, but this does not mean that others should not try. To decide to call only him truly philosophical who is truly religious may amount to upgrading the rank of the philosopher, but nothing is lost even if the distinction between the two is not eliminated.

1. Snow, C.P., *Variety of Men* (Macmillan, 1967), p. 174
2. Dewey, John, *Problems of Men*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1946, p. 20
3. Radhakrishnan, S. 'The Role of Philosophy in the History of Civilisation', *Proceedings of the International Congress of Philosophy* (6th Congress, 1926), Kraus Reprint Limited, 1968, p. 550.
4. See my 'The Role' (of Philosophy) in 'Philosophy To-day' Issue of *Seminar*, October, 1961, pp. 24-28.