

Man is the Measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy

Pages: 322

Publisher: Free Press (May 11, 2010)

Format: pdf, epub

Language: English

[DOWNLOAD FULL EBOOK PDF]

MAN IS THE MEASURE

A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy

REUBEN ABEL

THE FREE PRESS 1230 Avenue of the Americas New York, NY 10020

1976 The Free Press

THE FREE PRESS

A Division of Simon & Schuster Inc.

1230 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10020

Copyright © 1976 by The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

THE FREE PRESS and colophon are trademarks of Simon & Schuster Inc.

Manufactured in the United States of America

20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Abel, Reuben

Man is the measure.

Bibliography: p.

Includes index.

1. Philosophy. 2. Man. 3. Cosmology.

I. Title.

B53.A23 128 75-16646

ISBN-13: 978-0-684-83636-2

eISBN-13: 978-1-4391-1840-5

www.SimonandSchuster.com

COPYRIGHT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges permission to reprint from the following material:

Charles Sherrington, *Man on His Nature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1951), pp. 264-265.

George Sylvester Viereck, "Slaves," *My Flesh and Blood* (New York: Liveright, 1931 [out of print]).
Copyright © 1959 by Peter Viereck.

Judd Marmor, "Psychoanalytic Therapy as an Educational Process," *Psychoanalytic Education*, vol. 5 (1962).

René Dubos, "Biological Individuality," *The Columbia Forum*, vol. XII, no. 1 (Spring 1969), pp. 5-9 passim. Copyright © 1969 by The Trustees of Columbia University in the City of New York.

Moses Burg, "A Psychoanalytic Study of Japanese Linguistic Symbolic Processes," *Annual Journal of the Asia-Africa Cultural Research Institute* (March 1969), pp. 1-25 passim.

Paul Bowles, "Notes Taken in Thailand," *Without Stopping* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1972).
Copyright © 1972 by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

T. S. Eliot, "Burnt Norton," *Four Quartets* (1943). Reprinted by permission of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., and Faber and Faber, Ltd., London.

Mark Van Doren, "Past Is Past." Reprinted with the permission of Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc., from *Collected and New Poems, 1924-1963* by Mark Van Doren, Copyright © 1963 by the Estate of Mark Van Doren.

Lines from a poem by Stephen Spender. Reprinted with the permission of Random House, Inc.

To Marion and to Ernest *sine quibus non*

Contents

[Preface to the Paperback Edition](#)

[Preface](#)

[Introduction: The Philosophic Enterprise](#)

The “loose fit” between mind and the world ...

no unique structure ...

philosophy and science are complementary ...

the fear of knowledge ...

philosophical analysis.

[1. Metaphysics: What in the World Is There?](#)

Philosophy and science ...

varieties of metaphysics ...

“reality” ...

the aim of metaphysics ...

what is there? ...

reduction and the reductive fallacy ...

things and events ...

other classifications ...

naturalism ...

absolute idealism ...

mechanism ...

determinism and chance ...

causality: various interpretations; some problems ...

universal ...

necessary for knowledge ...

their pragmatic status ...

the “truth” of metaphysics.

[2. The Basis of Knowledge](#)

The problem of knowledge ...

knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description ...

knowing that and knowing how ...

knowledge and experience ...

propositional knowledge ...

four requirements ... nine kinds of good reason.

[3. Our Knowledge of the External World](#)

Perceptual knowledge is shaped by our senses; therefore limited, subjective, deceptive, discontinuous, outdated ...

primary and secondary qualities ...

sense data ... things as constructs out of sense data ... perceptual knowledge not certain, but pragmatically justified.

[4. The Task of Perception](#)

Learning how to see ...

perception interprets ("seeing-as") and applies concepts (seeing "what-is-the-case") ...

no "innocent eye" ...

perception selects ... and solves a problem ...

do things have a "natural" look? ...

persistent influence of convention ...

how primitive people look at photographs ...

perspective ...

influence of belief ...

"hearing-as" ...

perception as active inquiry ...

we must cook the raw sensation before we can digest it.

[5. When Do We Attain Certainty?](#)

Analytic and synthetic propositions ... the analytic are a priori (known to be certainly true) by virtue

of their meanings, but with no factual content ...

ambiguity possible, but removable ...

Kant's view ...

relevance of growth of knowledge ...

of language ...

recent attacks on this distinction ...

its pragmatic justification ...

alleged examples of synthetic a priori.

[6. Logic, Mathematics, and Metaphysics](#)

Aristotelian logic ...

three laws of thought ...

criticism of traditional logic: propositional forms insufficiently precise; relations and sentence connectives ignored; "laws of thought" unclear ...

the new logic ...

divorce of logic from metaphysics ...

temporal inference and timeless implication ...

reason alone does not provide knowledge of the world ...

logic as a calculus that functions uniquely to regulate inquiry, in pursuit of human ideals ...

arithmetic and geometry both analytic ... and not separable from logic ...

the limits of logic ...

the completeness of arithmetic ...

Brouwer ...

self-reference ...

the Theory of Types ...

Gödel's theorem.

[7. Meaning and Naming: How Language Bites on to the World](#)

When are words meaningful? ...

Aristotle's categories ...

reference: how language bites ...

names ... descriptions ...

sense and reference ...

connotation and denotation; intension and extension ...

propositions and sentences ...

some problems ...

referential opacity ...

Russell's Theory of Descriptions ...

names and acquaintance ...

three kinds of sign: icon, index, symbol ...

modern emphasis on language ...

pragmatic and empiricist theories of meaning ...

their importance, defects, and residual legacy.

[8. Truth and Belief](#)

What is truth? correspondence, coherence, and pragmatist theories ...

suitability of pragmatism to modern science ... a final consensus? ...

belief and action ... and will ...

and obligation.

[9. Science, Facts, and Hypotheses](#)

Scientists: their methods, limitations, objectives; selection of a theory ...

facts: relative to human organism, instruments, memory, personality, and language ... and especially to hypothesis: which must be falsifiable, true, simple, beautiful, general, non-statistical, show analogies, and satisfy certain metaphysical criteria.

[10. Scientific Explanation](#)

Varieties of explanation ... psychological aspects ...

science explains (i.e., allays doubt) by devising concepts to embed a fact within a general law ...

some misconceptions ...

progressive increase in generality or scope ... can it ever end? ...

explanation by reduction ...

system...

emergence ...

observation and theory mutually re-inforcing ...

how the new theory incorporates the old one ... scientific explanation by unobservables ...

explanation and prediction ...

science does not grow in a straight line: adventitious factors: choice of problems, chance, obscurity in "logic of discovery," extra-scientific influences, differing opinions as to what requires explanation ... fifteen examples ... it is not obvious what is obvious ... eleven current "explanations" ...

uneliminable anthro-pocentric aspect of growth of science.

[11. The Social Sciences](#)

Does the scientific study of human actions require the unique method of *Verstehen* (introspection and empathy) ? ...

Twelve claims considered: experiments; repeatability and uniqueness; isolation and complexity; prediction; constants; unobservability of motives; qualitative data; influence of the past; interaction of the social scientist with his subjects; values; holism and contextuality of social facts; "ideal types" ...

but differences in subject matter, technique, and degree do not exempt areas of science from the common logic of justification ... Sociology of knowledge: social and historical coefficients in science; value judgments taken as facts; ideology ... but this is empirical and remediable, not logical ... Cultural relativity of conceptual framework: we are imprisoned in implicit basic presuppositions which we are not aware of ... but this too is empirical only, and surmountable by continued growth.

[12. Space, Time, and Matter](#)

The ultimate particles of matter ...

now conceptual "waves of probability" ...

Pauli's exclusion principle and Leibniz' identity of indiscernibles ...

space, time, and motion: traditional views ...

their merger in relativity theory ...

irreversibility of time ...

non-Euclidean geometries ...

which is "correct"?

[13. Is There Purpose in Nature? The Evidence of Evolution](#)

Darwin's essential contribution: open-ended natural selection ...

which favors whichever species leaves more descendants ...

genetic mutations as the mechanism ...

Nature's lavish ingenuity is random ...

apparently purposive adaptation is ambiguous, better explained by function ...

Nature as the great destroyer ...

teleonomy ...

Nature's "successes" ...

can evolution be predicted? ...

species redefined ...

problems in theory of evolution ...

any trends? ...

sex and death ...

what is life? ...

our moral responsibility.

[14. "Human Nature" and Scientific Method in Anthropology, Psychology, and Psychoanalysis](#)

Is there any consistent group of traits which identify human beings? ...

typologies ...

man is found only in societies ...

no social or cultural constants ...

complex evolutionary inter-action between man and culture ...

functionalism and structuralism ...

psychological models of man ...

behaviorism ... intervening variables ...

two supplementary directions in psychology: toward the atomic part, and toward the structured whole ...

psychoanalysis: a therapy and a theory ...

how verified? analyst and patient jointly manufacture the data.

[15. The Study of History: What Is the Past?](#)

We study history in order to understand how we came to be what we now are ...

“the Past” not fixed, but re-constructed, and inferred ...

facts selected and composed to be meaningful to us today ...

patterns suggested but not uniquely dictated by the facts ...

absolute idealism less plausible than historical pluralism ...

no indisputable hard core of certainty, but history is not therefore incurably subjective ...

frameworks, or philosophies of history: cyclical; functional; progressive; Christian; organismic ...

the *Zeitgeist* ...

the myth of historical inevitability ...

criteria for appraisal ... history explains genetically.

[16. Probability, Rationality, and Induction](#)

Diverse meanings of probability: belief; weight of evidence; deductive or a priori; relative frequency ...

importance in science ...

diverse views of rationality ...

can it be defined? but no alternative to reliance on reasons ...

induction and the uniformity of nature ...

the new riddle of induction ...

paradoxes of confirmation ...

pragmatic function of logic in inquiry.

[17. The Person](#)

The Self as a metaphysical ultimate ...

“I” and “my body” ...

continuity of the person: an inner essence, or a series of accidents? ...

criterion of individuation for "same person" ...

genotype and phenotype ...

bodily form ...

discontinuity ...

when does life begin? when end? ...

memory ...

illness and disease ...

dialectic between rights of the person and needs of society ...

have you an absolute right to your body? ...

transplants ...

creation of the person a never-ending process.

[18. Mind and Body](#)

States of consciousness are private and non-spatial ...

emotions ... pain ...

a conceptual problem, how to explain inter-action of the mental or non-spatial with the physical or spatial ...

Dualism; its difficulties ...

mind now seen not as an entity, or "ghost in the machine," but as dispositions or ways of behaving ...

scientific progress in correlating the physical with the mental ...

physicalism ...

double language theory ...

six difficulties in knowledge of one's own states of consciousness.

[19. Minds, Machines, Meanings, and Language](#)

Intuition ...

twelve elements in its decline ...

minds and machines ...

language and mind ...

origin of language ...

natural languages described ...

constant change and expansion ...

metaphor ... mis-use? ...

the judicial process ...

the atmosphere of words ...

synonymy ...

varieties of linguistic structure ...

peculiarities of language ...

word origins ...

antithetical senses of primal words ...

vagueness ...

ambiguity ...

context ...

can language be made perfect? ...

how language can mislead us ...

no meanings apart from words, although meanings are not identical with words ...

the functions of language: cognitive; expressive; performatory; others ...

ostension ...

“ mental acts” can not alter established meanings ...

animal communication vs. human language ...

Chomsky vs. Skinner on how to explain this ...

no specific linguistic capacity need be postulated ...

language is continuous with other human activities.

[20. Intention, Action, and Free Will](#)

Intention as explanation for human actions ...

but difficult to clarify or pin-point ...

twenty-five questions ...

reasons for actions are not causes ...

human actions as logically primitive ...

but difficulties ...

freedom; determinism; fatalism ...

freedom from external compulsion: what is? ... choice by dominant motive ...

responsibility ...

freedom does not prevent science of human behavior ...

self-determination by the growing person ...

every man is a self-made man.

[21. Form in Art](#)

Various senses of "art" ...

difficulties of classification ...

functions of art ... the "imitation of nature" ...

art as a language ...

does not require unambiguous meanings ...

the artist's intention ...

"intentional fallacy" ...

variety of "true" interpretations ...

what is a "work of art"? ...

form ...

five quandaries ...

a status imputed to sensuous materials intentionally formed into a unity by a person, for the sake of doing so, and to evoke a response ...

some problems thus resolved ...

contemporary weakening of formal requirements ...

art as a criterion of the human?

[22. Creativity](#)

What does “creative” mean? ...

what does the artist add to his materials? ...

does creative new? ...

does the artist know in advance what his work will be? ...

is creativity passive? ...

irrational? ...

can the process be described, either by introspection or by observation? ...

Freudian analysis ...

Jungian archetypes ...

creativity as quintessentially human.

[23. Man Is the Measure](#)

What man can know hinges on what man is ...

some dimensions of the human condition ...

what this does not entail ...

we know what we are, but we know not what we may be.

[Guide to Further Reading](#)

[Index](#)

Preface to the Paperback Edition

THIS REISSUE of *Man is the Measure* gave me the opportunity to reread it with a critical eye. I must admit, I was pleased! Of course, after twenty years, history has caught up with some of my claims. For example, in considering the possibility that there is life else where in this infinite universe, I boldly said (p. 149), “no slightest bit of evidence exists.” Well, now it does! A tiny bit of organic material has been found, embedded in a Martian rock. And, in discussing whether arithmetic is complete (p. 61), I declared that the famous “last theorem” of Fermat remains unproven after two hundred years. But now an ingenious new proof has been discovered, and is generally accepted. This bears on the comparison of minds and machines (p. 212), as does the problem of whether machines can be programmed to recognize patterns and to translate natural languages. There has been considerable progress here, but the problems cannot be regarded as solved.

My invitation to the central problems of philosophy is, I hope, as cordial as ever.

Preface

I TRY in this book to bridge three different gulfs: first, the abyss that scares the layman away from professional philosophy; second, the no-man's land between philosophy and other sorts of intellectual inquiry; and third, the chasm that unhappily exists between the two disparate aims of philosophy, namely, critical analysis and speculative insight.

The first bridge has fallen into disrepair in our times, but was regularly traversed by many great philosophers in the Anglo-American tradition. I have in mind such notable figures as Bacon, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Mill, Russell, James, Schiller, and Dewey. They all succeeded in imparting pleasure and profit to their professional colleagues, as well as to the reader who has no familiarity with technical philosophy; yet they did so without distorting or minimizing the problems, and without patronizing the novice.

The second gap I attempt to close is the one that segregates philosophy (narrowly defined) from other significant cognitive enterprises. Thus I comment upon or try to analyze philosophical problems in such diverse fields as psychology, anthropology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, physics, biological evolution, mathematics, historiography, poetry, and art.

The third gulf is a transatlantic one, both literally (that is, between the English-speaking nations and continental Europe) and figuratively. It firmly separates the analytic philosophers, who insist on logic, precision, and clarity, from the imaginative metaphysicians, who claim that their vision resists the rigor of those requirements.

I have also tried, on many of the issues in philosophy, to present a variety of points of view with which I do not agree, so that the reader will have some notion of why I argue as vehemently as I sometimes do. My own position will (I imagine) be variously referred to as pragmatist, or humanist, or naturalist, or empiricist, or instrumentalist, or positivist, or analytical, or neo-Kantian, or even existentialist. Dear reader, be chary! In order to be coherent, it is not necessary to carry a banner.

I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Ernest Nagel, who has lighted the way for a generation of American philosophers; to Sidney Hook, Paul Edwards, and Donald Levy, who have also gone over the entire manuscript; to my late mentors Felix Kaufmann and Horace M. Kallen; and to the editorial talents of Robert Wallace and Margaret Miner. But my debts are much greater. I have been thinking about these problems, as well as teaching, studying, reading, and discussing them for so long, and with such concentration, that I no longer can identify how much of this book is my own and how much has been absorbed. I make little effort to document the attribution which scholarship requires. If I had his audacity, I would repeat Wittgenstein's remark, in the preface to his *Tractatus*: "It is a matter of indifference to me whether the thoughts that I have had have been anticipated by someone else." After all, no one ever said anything for the first time! I would rather claim no originality for whatever is valuable here, and gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to the great community of Philosophy.

Introduction: The Philosophic Enterprise

—Protagoras

Man is the measure of all things: of those that are, that they are; and of those that are not, that they are not.

THIS BOOK is not an introduction to philosophy, although it invites the layman to consider most of the problems dealt with by philosophers; it is not a survey of philosophy, although it scrutinizes

much of the philosophical terrain; and it is not a history of philosophy, although it discusses many of the important philosophical traditions.

My intention, rather, is to put forth a philosophical point of view about man and the world—a point of view boldly stated a long time ago by Protagoras, but perhaps never fully grasped, nor properly applied. We can best make sense, I maintain, of the great human enterprise by taking into account the fact that it is, peculiarly and unavoidably, human. All our attempts to understand the world, to “grasp this Sorry Scheme of Things entire,”—all of science, metaphysics, poetry, history, art, and religion—depend upon certain distinctive characteristics of *Homo sapiens*. And, it would be misleading to speak as if man were a clearly fixed datum. What man is can best be understood in terms of how he came to be what he now is and what (as the geneticists make us so vividly aware) he can make of himself in time to come. The human endeavor to apprehend the world is an open-ended process. My aim is to exhibit the “loose fit” between mind and the world, by analysis of some of the aspects and limitations of knowledge. I hope to make manifest a radical and irreducible anthropo-centrism.

(The universe—so far as we can tell!—was not made for man. But neither is man the casual by-blow of nature. Intelligence is part of the world, not alien to it; it is nature becoming aware of itself. It is quite certain that there was a time when intelligent life did not exist on this planet; and it is perhaps equally certain that at some future time such life will no longer exist. However, it is not at all clear as we see in Chapter 13—whether or not, and in what sense, the existence of intelligence on this earth may be called an accident.)

Thus, in the following chapters I argue that there is no such thing as *the* structure of the world. Any attempt to say how things really are, or what objectively exists, requires a set of concepts (or terms, or symbols); and these concepts are not dictated unequivocally by “the facts.” Indeed, to refer to “the facts” or to “the given” as if it were obvious just what is given to us as fact is to disregard how the idiosyncrasies of human sensation, perception, and cognition select and shape “the facts.” Nor is there any clear and unambiguous single meaning to “the truth.” Can we assert that logic and mathematics, at least, are independent of human conceptualization, eternally subsistent in their crystalline purity? Is there a basic ultimate structure of mind? or of language? Can we reach the bedrock of certainty in knowledge of one’s own self? Or does even self-knowledge have built-in limitations? Is “the past” irrevocably fixed and unalterable? Or is the notion of an absolute past no clearer than that of the absolute given? Does art produce a kind of knowledge, and serve as a criterion of the human? These questions are examined and clarified.

But the inevitable anthropocentrism of knowledge does not imply that rational scientific inquiry is futile. There are philosophers who are scornful of science; I am not among them. I know of few things more misguided than the recent proof by an esteemed philosopher that, since man’s essence is unique, evolution is impossible. If the claims of a philosopher contradict those of a scientist, one or the other is confused or mistaken; but only prejudice will decide in advance. It is presumptuous for the philosopher to disparage the procedures of the scientist, and it is stultifying for the scientist to ignore the logical analysis of his concepts and suppositions. Science and philosophy are different kinds of intelligent inquiry, yet both are concerned with explaining the world. If in the long run they do not complement each other, the human enterprise will suffer. The absorption in philosophy without science may be illustrated by St. Simeon Stylites, who lived on top of a pillar for thirty-seven years; or by Cratylus, who, it is said, found language so unsatisfactory that he gave up talking altogether. Any philosopher who fears to lose his soul because of science is a lost soul to begin with.

Indeed, there is a recurring intellectual aberration that may be barbarously christened *epistemophobia*: an irrational fear of knowledge. This fear may appear as Gray’s “where ignorance is bliss, ‘tis folly to be wise” or as Keats’ “Philosophy will clip an Angel’s wings.” Or it may emerge in

the many currents of superstition, mythology, mysticism, dogmatic super-naturalism, and opposition to reason, which swirl through much of the twentieth century. Or it may be seen in the remark of former Premier George Papadopoulos of Greece that schooling that “only broadened the child’s mind” without fitting him for useful social work was dangerous; he added that much of the unrest in the world was due to excess knowledge, and concluded by asking “whether it is really useful for everybody to know everything.”

I consider it profoundly irrational, and ultimately delusive, to base any notion of human happiness, or utility, or dignity, upon the value of self-deception or ignorance.

Philosophy is, as its etymology reveals, the love of wisdom. Such love may issue in speculative synoptic vision, or it may issue in methodical critical analysis. In either event, however, philosophy is the kind of insight into fundamental questions that first requires that we make clear exactly what we are asking. In order to be profound, it is neither necessary to be obscure, nor sufficient to be vague! Thus, when we ask such questions as, is knowledge ever certain? or, is knowledge possible without language? or, are any statements necessarily true? or, does a computer think? or, how can a man be held accountable for his actions if all events have causes? or, is there a purpose in nature? or, are space and time infinitely divisible? we must analyze all these terms in order to ascertain how to proceed. But these philosophical questions differ from equally puzzling questions in science (such as, how did life originate? or, how many different kinds of subatomic particles are there? or, what causes cancer?) in that, usually, it is not additional facts that are needed. It has therefore been remarked that philosophical problems are not so much to be solved as to be dissolved. In any event, they seldom have simple solutions. Sometimes they have no solutions at all, which is part of what I mean by the loose fit of mind to the world. However, to realize this constraint is to enlarge our understanding. Even if philosophical analysis does not always produce new knowledge, or get us as far along the road to enlightenment as we would wish, it is nonetheless essential that we prefer articulate reasoned uncertainty over inarticulate or irrational dogma.

Let us begin our inquiry with the traditional core of philosophy, namely, metaphysics.

I Metaphysics: What in the World Is There?

THE PHILOSOPHER, the scientist, and the artist are all trying to describe the same world; they all want to tell us what is “really there.” But they do it in different ways. The artist endeavors to convey his insights by painting limp watches, red mountains, and three-eyed women. The scientist aims at factual accuracy, predictability, and control. The philosopher seeks conceptual clarity and precision. Thus, the scientist relies on what he can observe, whereas the philosopher asks what “observe” means. Do you “observe” what is “really there” when using a microscope? or a telescope? or X rays? or television? The scientist and the philosopher, unlike the artist, are expected to give reasons for what they say; but they give different kinds of reasons. **Varieties of Metaphysics**

Metaphysics is that branch of philosophy which attempts to comprehend the universe as a whole—not so much by examining it in detail (which is the procedure of science) as by analyzing and organizing the ideas and concepts by means of which we examine and think about the world. Metaphysical presuppositions often determine the way we approach other central problems in philosophy. Thus *materialism*, for example, is the metaphysical theory that the motion of matter (which is anything that occupies space) can in principle account for all that there is in the world; whatever exists can be explained by physical conditions. The difficulty materialism encounters is how to fit consciousness and purposiveness into that format. *Idealism* takes as the fundamental and irreducible feature of the universe the existence of mind or spirit (whether subjective or objective, theist or pantheist). The drawback of idealism is that, in all its many versions, it depreciates the commonsense world of material things. The idealist in metaphysics, as we see in

the next few chapters, is likely to be a rationalist rather than an empiricist in epistemology. Materialism and idealism are both monistic metaphysical theories; that is, each claims that there is only one kind of thing in the world. The metaphysics of *dualism*, however, posits two ultimate categories, mind and matter, neither of which can be reduced to the other. The dualist's problem is to explain how mind and matter, if they are radically different, can ever influence or affect each other (as we examine in Chapter 18).

There are many other metaphysical positions. Aristotle called for eight (or sometimes ten) categories, or kinds of properties, to describe the ultimate substances that "underlie everything else." These are the categories we cite in Chapter 7 as determining whether a proposition is meaningful or not. Kant was the first to recognize that certain alleged facts about the world are not really properties of things, but rather of the ways in which we organize our knowledge. Causality, for example, is not an inherent attribute of events, but rather provides the form for our cognitive discourse about the world; it is one of the categories of our understanding. Things cannot ever come within our experience or sensibility except insofar as they conform to those categories. Hegel devised some eighty metaphysical categories (such as quality, quantity, and measure) that go through the stages of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis in a dialectical process. Peirce worked out an unusual schema involving three metaphysical levels which he designated, appropriately, as firstness, secondness, and thirdness.

These and other metaphysical doctrines have been attacked and defended over the centuries. The attacks are often violent, but never fatal; old philosophies do not die, they merely fade away. A metaphysics is not the sort of thing that can be proved or disproved by anything that happens; it need not submit to any test, since it can specify what a test is. *Hylozoism* (the view that all matter is alive) still has its advocates. *Solipsism* (the theory that only I exist) is irrefutable—Schopenhauer said that it needed not a refutation but a cure.

The term *reality* often enters the discussion at this point, but it is not of much help. All metaphysicians claim to distinguish what is "real" from what is mere "appearance," but they can seldom agree on a criterion. Plato said that the bed you sleep on is less real than the "Form," or "Idea," of "The Bed." Your bed may have lumps, but The Bed is perfect; your bed did not exist at one time and, someday, will disappear, but The Bed is eternal. Particular things for Plato are what they are because they "imitate" or "partake of" or "participate in" the Forms or Ideas; it is only these Forms that are truly real. Kant said that reality is "that which is connected with perception according to laws." Hegel epitomized idealism when he declared that the essence of reality is consciousness. William James said, "anything is real of which we find ourselves obliged to take account in any way." For Croce, "physical facts have no reality, whereas art ... is eminently real." Other philosophers, however, have insisted that "reality" is forever hidden from us by a "veil of illusion." Thus the word "reality" tends to become a term of praise rather than a useful descriptive concept; it "carries an agreeable afflatus without dependence on any definite meaning," says Morris Cohen. **The Aim of Metaphysics: What Is There?**

The aim of metaphysics is to account for all that there is, and only for what there is, in as simple, complete, and compendious a scheme as possible. The metaphysician wants to sort into the fewest categories all that the world contains. He wants to accommodate, for example, the potential energy of the water above Niagara Falls (which may never become actual) and the capacity of this grain of salt in my hand to be dissolved (which may never come to pass); but he does not want to be "conned" or cozened into providing room in his scheme for nonexistent or merely putative entities, such as the present Queen of France, or an imaginary solid gold mountain a mile high, even if philosophers can talk about them (which is one of the problems of meaning discussed in Chapter 7). Nelson Goodman makes the point thus:

Some of the things that seem to me unacceptable without explanation are powers or dispositions,

counterfactual assertions, entities or experiences that are possible but not actual, electrons, angels, devils and classes... . My sample listing of suspect notions is of course far from complete... . You may decry some of these scruples and protest that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in my philosophy. I am concerned, rather, that there should not be more things dreamt of in my philosophy than there are in heaven or earth.

What, indeed, is there? There is a pen in my hand; a star in the sky; a hole in the carpet; a pain in my tooth; a ringing in my ears; a song in my heart; a redness in the sunset; a discussion in Congress; unrest in Ireland; a need for action; a duty to try; a possibility of success; a difference in size. Which of these are not "parts of the world"? The irreducible variety and plurality of "what there is" seems incontrovertible.

Yet philosophers and scientists have always tried to reduce this disorderly multiplicity. Thales declared simply that all things are water. Other ancient Greek thinkers added the other "elements"—earth, air, and fire. The growth of knowledge has indeed permitted many simplifications or *reductions*. Thus "caloric," which was once supposed to be the independent essence or principle of heat, has been reduced to the motion of molecules; the gene as the unit of heredity has been reduced to the chemical DNA; what was once called "satanic possession," to glandular imbalance. Reduction plays an important role in scientific explanation, as we see in Chapter 10. Some philosophers try to reduce "thing" to a group of sense data or sensibilia (Chapter 3); "proposition" to "sentence" (Chapter 7); and "person" to "body" (Chapter 17). The great difficulty with reduction is to accomplish it without committing the *reductive fallacy*—that would be to say that one thing is "nothing but" some other thing (for example, to say that the music of the violin is "nothing but the friction of horse's hair drawn over cat's gut" is to commit the reductive fallacy). A proper explanatory reduction, as we see in the progress of science (Chapter 10), does not eliminate any entity from the world, but is a more economical way of describing phenomena. Caloric *is not* something other than the motion of molecules, whereas music *is* something other than the vibration of strings. An example of successful reduction is Russell's reduction of "number" to a class of classes. He proposes that philosophers adopt the maxim "always substitute logical constructions for inferred entities." Whitehead likewise reduces "point" to a class of convergent volumes (why ever should anyone have to cope with the concept of an unextended spatial entity?). In their different ways, philosophers as diverse as Socrates, Descartes, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, and Wittgenstein have also sought by analysis to arrive at metaphysical simplicity. **Things and Events**

One traditional approach to sorting out what there is in the world is a division into things and events. My pen, for example, is a *thing*; it occupies space, or exists in space. A discussion, however, is an *event*; it runs through time, or happens in time. Things, it is claimed, are substances, characterized by continuity; events are processes, characterized by change. But is this distinction exclusive? or quite clear? Is a river a thing or an event? how about a rainbow? an electron? a sense datum? (Chapter 3). Events must involve things, and can occur only to things. A discussion cannot exist without people who discuss; the flight of an arrow cannot occur without the arrow. And every thing changes through time; my pen now is not absolutely identical with the pen it was yesterday. Thus, the distinction is of limited usefulness. Among the philosophers who argue for the metaphysical primacy of events are Schopenhauer, Bergson, Cassirer, and Whitehead; their "process" philosophy is supported by Relativity Theory. In Engels' words, "The great basic thought" which dialectical materialism inherited from Hegel was "that the world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things but as a complex of processes." Wittgenstein, however, begins his *Tractatus*, "The world is all that is the case" (that is, states of affairs, or configurations of objects).

There are, of course, other metaphysical schemata to classify what there is. In his "logical atomism" Russell declares the ultimate constituents of the world to be particular things, qualities

or attributes, relations, and facts. Dewey considers that the universe consists of fields (of interconnected things, events, and individuals). Other philosophers demand metaphysical autonomy for persons; for meanings; for actions; for sense data; for works of art; and for God or gods. **Naturalism**

Having run through (with shameless speed) some of the great efforts to sort out what there is in the world, we can look at three other varieties of metaphysics. *Naturalism* intends the single category of Nature to encompass all that exists in space and time—the totality of processes and things, organic and inorganic. It asserts that there is only one order of existence and denies that there is anything super-natural or sub-natural. “Nature has neither kernel nor shell,” says Goethe. Naturalism avoids the exclusive monism of both materialism and idealism, and the conceptual difficulty of dualism, by declaring that although matter is the basis of whatever exists, it does not exhaust whatever exists. Thus, man’s thoughts and values, his hopes and ideals, his failures and illusions are part of the material world which has become self-conscious. Mind is not a miraculous creation, nor an intrusion from outside of Nature. The naturalist accuses the materialist of committing the reductive fallacy when the materialist says that mental states are “nothing but” molecules of matter (Chapter 18). However, the naturalist agrees with the materialist that whatever exists or happens can be explained in principle by the methods of science. **Absolute Idealism**

One version of idealist metaphysics that proved very attractive in the nineteenth century, and that exemplifies some of the aesthetic appeal of monism, is well expressed by Tennyson:

Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but *if* I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is.

The world, thus, is seen as an indivisible concatenated whole; each part is what it is because of its place in this ideal whole. It would be a distortion to separate out any single element or fact. But William James and F. C. S. Schiller condemned this view as a “block universe.” Russell argued that the world was, rather, a series of isolated facts, with no necessary connections between them. In his autobiography, Russell stormed:

Academic philosophers, ever since the time of Parmenides, have believed that the world is a unity... . The most fundamental of my intellectual beliefs is that this is rubbish. I think the universe is all spots and jumps, without unity, without continuity, without coherence or orderliness or any of the other properties that governesses love ... it consists of events, short, small and haphazard. Order, unity, and continuity are human inventions, just as truly as are catalogues and encyclopedias. **Mechanism**

A third important metaphysics, one that expresses the scientific outlook of the seventeenth century, is *mechanism*. It sees the world as a huge clockwork, a composite machine that is entirely and uniquely determined by its component parts. Mechanism adds to materialism the hypothesis of determinism: the universe is a closed and self-contained material system of causes and effects. Whenever anything changes in *quality* (e.g., becomes warmer or prettier), this is a mere

epiphenomenon, a passive shadow of the changes in *quantity* or motion of the basic material particles. Thus, mechanism is simultaneously opposed (a) to idealism, dualism, and vitalism (which all assert that life or mind cannot be reduced to matter); (b) to dialectical materialism (which says that a composite whole cannot grow unless it has "internal contradictions"); and (c) to teleology (which maintains that there are goals or ends or purposes in the world what Aristotle calls "final causes" and that therefore you cannot really understand an acorn, for example, unless you know its goal is to become an oak tree; or clay, unless you know it can be made into a pot; or grapes, unless you know they can "make glad the hearts of men." ("Final causes" were extruded from Nature by Darwin; see Chapter 13.) The impact of the mechanist world view is perfectly expressed in Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach":

Ah, love, let us be true

To one another! for the world, which seems

To lie before us like a land of dreams,

So various, so beautiful, so new,

Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,

Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;

And we are here as on a darkling plain

Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,

Where ignorant armies clash by night.

But mechanism, like absolute idealism, has been found wanting. To begin with, neither of these metaphysical theories can account for the appearance of anything *new* in the world. (How science explains the emergence of novelty is discussed in Chapter 10.) Second, the mechanist image of the world as a huge clockwork is inadequate. A clock works by storing energy (for example, in the tension of a steel spring) and then releasing it. But there are more complex kinds of machines, such as the heat engine, which works not by storing energy but by transforming it (you feed it coal and water, which it transforms into steam, which drives a piston), and the computer, which stores and transforms not only energy but also information. Third (and most significantly), there are natural phenomena such as electromagnetism that cannot be explained mechanically at all. Physics now treats certain events (such as the emission of a single alpha particle) as in principle unpredictable. Hence, the basic premise of the metaphysics of mechanism is now rather dubious.

The model of the world as a great machine is responsible for such curious doctrines as Nietzsche's "eternal return." He claimed that if anything *can* happen, then it must, in the infinite past, already *have* happened. If the world is a clockwork, then it winds and unwinds and winds again. Mechanical processes are repeatable. David Hume wrote, "This world ... with all its events, even the most minute, has before been produced and destroyed, and will again be produced and destroyed, without any bounds and limitations." If the world consists of a finite number of particles, which can be combined in only a finite number of ways, then any particular combination is bound to recur in infinite time. Moreover, if any one state of the world were indeed to reappear exactly, then the whole subsequent history of the world would have to be repeated exactly. But none of these ingenious speculations applies to our world, which is just not that simple a machine.

Determinism and Chance

Note carefully, however, that it is mechanism, and not determinism, which has been abandoned. *Determinism* may be defined as the doctrine that all events have causes; that is, whatever event occurs may be connected by general laws to other events. A large part of science consists of sets of equations that connect states of matter at one time with states of matter at other times. In classical Newtonian mechanics, these states are the position and momentum of particles. In thermodynamics, the states are pressure, volume, temperature, entropy, and free energy. And in quantum mechanics, the state is the psi function, or probability state. This probability state does not represent imperfect or incomplete knowledge, but is all that there is to be known. Some philosophers (Democritus and Spinoza, for example) have held that the concepts of necessity and impossibility are complementary: whatever does actually happen must happen, and whatever does not actually happen cannot happen; there is no middle ground of possibility or contingency; if we were to say that it might or might not rain tomorrow, or that the South might have won the Civil War, we would be showing our ignorance of that which determines weather and wars. In modern physics, however, as we see in Chapters 12 and 16, probability is an objective and inherent aspect of the world.

Determinism is much too valuable a postulate to abandon. Like such other postulates as induction and the uniformity of nature, however, it is not so much metaphysical as methodological; that is, it describes a feature of human endeavor, rather than of the world. Curious men will never abandon the attempt to find out what makes things go. James calls this effort "an altar to an unknown god." However, we must differentiate determinism today from the bold but simplistic way in which it was proclaimed by Laplace almost two centuries ago:

[If] an Intellect at any given instant knew all the forces that animate nature, and the mutual position of the beings that compose it ... nothing would be uncertain, for the future, even as the past, would be ever present before his eyes.

Nowadays, physics shows that no meaning can be assigned to "all the forces ... at any given instant," and that the "beings that compose" the world are not things but conceptual waves of probability. Moreover, many natural phenomena such as clouds or hydrodynamic turbulence seem to be irreducibly "stochastic" that is, the number of individual events taking place at any one time is so enormous that it is physically impossible to observe or to note them all before they have changed. There is an upper limit to the amount of data that can be fed into a computer, just as there is an upper limit to how fast a human being can run. And there is an upper limit to the precision or mechanical reliability of any actual computer. It cannot even theoretically be made completely resistant to heat, friction, air pressure, cosmic rays, gravitation, and wearing out. Thus, determinism, like other methodological postulates, must take human limitations into account.

Determinism denies that there is any such thing as objective *chance*; it explains what may be called a "chance event" in one of the following six ways (which to a certain extent overlap): As an unexpected or unintended or psychologically surprising event. "I met him by chance in Samarra." As a "lucky" event, that is, one in which some arbitrary action is followed by a desirable result. "I hit on the answer by pure chance." As a case of probability. "There is a fifty-fifty chance of rain." As a slight or unobserved change in initial conditions that produces a significant result. A mouse steps on the junction points of a railroad switch and "by chance" derails a train. A roulette ball teeters until a tiny puff of air blows it "by chance" onto my number. As the complex interrelation between a large number of combined causes. A "chance" concurrence of unusual winds and tides sinks a ship. A perfect bridge hand is dealt "by chance." As the intersection of two separate and independent causal series. Since physical laws all have a given domain, an event outside that domain is often called "chance"—a comet entering our solar system, for example, or a brick falling from a roof onto a passerby on the street. *

An intelligently truthful book that explores the uneven landscape of the human intellect.

An accessible introduction to philosophy, this book narrows the gap between the general reader and intellectual inquiry. Its points are illustrated with concrete examples that should call the reader to a higher level of critical thinking and self-perception.

behold Man is the Measure (Cordial Invitation to the Central - maranangal free book mediafile free file sharing , study u.s.a ,man is the measure a cordial invitation to the central problems of philosophy. ,man honor battle Man is the Measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central - Each book examines a topic or theme that has emerged on the philosophical Behold Man is the Measure (Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Does Neoclassical Realism Provide a Compelling Approach - DANGITBILL! THE PROBLEMS OF Philosophy by Bertrand Russell (2008 - (The Z-man's contribution.) Chapter 4 of Charles Dickens' novel Bleak House bears the title On the plus side, voters in Washington State rejected a measure to we exchanged a few cordial pleasantries; then I enjoyed listening to race-realist philosopher Michael Levin with my rival podcaster (and Man Is the Measure - (Cordial Invitation to the - Pinterest - murthy hot stories book mediafile free file sharing. ,man nora ,man is the measure a cordial invitation to the central problems of philosophy ,manifesting. Man is the Measure (Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of - A man in his 20s has drowned this afternoon at Kogel Baai beach near Gordons Bay Book Online or by Phone and get Directions to Helderberg Restaurants. I knew part of the problem was our work schedule and you just couldn't contain all. Road 1 GORDON'S BAY CENTRAL Mon, Wed & Fri 18:00 to 20:30 Gordons. Ks2 jb - micalle - are from Griffi-•ths Problem statements are paraphrased [1.. Loves children's books. order to secure basic skills required to succeed post Primary Resources natural philosopher, chemist, teacher and Liberal political theorist. At that time, Job may have been the richest man on the face of the earth. Teacher's notes - Hodder Education - Man Is the Measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy. por Reuben Abel Environmental Issues: Measuring, Analyzing, and Evaluating. Theory of Knowledge Third Edition - TheMan Alone of Animals' Concept Stephen T. Newmyer Abel, Reuben, Man Is the Measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy Beagon, Mary, The Elder Pliny on the Human Animal: Natural History, Book 7, and Other Philosophical Animals (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2015). lbn 6400 Hhqufpz Ebook - dev.goodly.pro - Man Is the Measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Philosophy. por Reuben Abel Environmental

Issues: Measuring, Analyzing, and Evaluating. Man is the measure: a cordial invitation to the central problems - Article The Idealist philosopher may be the one who above all others takes the issue of... R., (1976), Man is the measure: A Cordial Invitation to the Central Problems of Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction, London: Routledge Books.

Relevant Books

[[DOWNLOAD](#)] - Pdf CROCKPOT RECIPES: 475 Of The Most Healthy And Delicious Slow Cooker and Crockpot Recipes free online

[[DOWNLOAD](#)] - Download book Tips For Freelance Telemarketers

[[DOWNLOAD](#)] - Captain America (1968-1996) #450 epub online

[[DOWNLOAD](#)] - Download ebook Maverick Quilts: Using Large-Scale Prints, Novelty Fabrics & Panels with Panache free epub, pdf online

[[DOWNLOAD](#)] - The FreeBSD Handbook free epub
