

SECTION I: PHILOSOPHY

1. [CAT-2002] The Nature and Role of Philosophy
2. [CAT-2006] Dogmatic and Critical Attitude
3. [CAT-2006] A Conception of Justice

PASSAGE I

The conceptions of life and the world which we call ‘philosophical’ are a product of two factors: one, inherited religious and ethical conceptions; the other, the sort of investigation which may be called ‘scientific’, using this word in its broadest sense. Individual philosophers have differed widely in regard to the proportions in which these two factors entered into their systems, but it is the presence of both, in some degree, that characterizes philosophy.

‘Philosophy’ is a word which has been used in many ways, some wider, some narrower. I propose to use it in a very wide sense, which I will now try to explain.

Philosophy, as I shall understand the word, is something intermediate between theology and science. Like theology, it consists of speculations on matters as to which definite knowledge has, so far, been unascertainable; but like science, it appeals to human reason rather than to authority, whether that of tradition or that of revelation. All definite knowledge—so I should contend—belongs to science; all dogma as to what surpasses definite knowledge belongs to theology. But between theology and science there is a ‘No man’s Land’, exposed to attack from both sides; this ‘No man’s Land’ is philosophy. Almost all the questions of most interest to speculative minds are such as science cannot answer, and the confident answers of theologians no longer seem so convincing as they did in former centuries. Is the world divided into mind and matter, and if so, what is mind and what is matter? Is mind subject to matter, or is it possessed of independent powers? Has the universe any unity or purpose? Is it evolving towards some goal? Are there really laws of nature, or do we believe in them only because of our innate love of order? Is man what he seems to the astronomer, a tiny lump of carbon and water impotently crawling on a small and unimportant planet? Or is he what he appears to Hamlet? Is he perhaps both at once? Is there a way of living that is noble and another that is base, or are all ways of living merely futile? If there is a way of living that is noble, in what does it consist, and how shall we achieve it? Must the good be eternal in order to deserve to be valued, or is it worth seeking even if the universe is inexorably moving towards death? Is there such a thing as wisdom, or is what seems such merely the ultimate refinement of folly? To such questions no answer can be found in the laboratory. Theologies have professed to give answers, all too definite; but their definiteness causes modern minds to view them with suspicion. The studying of these questions, if not the answering of them, is the business of philosophy.

Why, then, you may ask, waste time on such insoluble problems? To this one may answer as a historian, or as an individual facing the terror of cosmic loneliness.

The answer of the historian, in so far as I am capable of giving it, will appear in the course of this work. Ever since men became capable of free speculation, their actions in innumerable important respects have depended upon their theories as to the world and human life, as to what is good and what is evil. This is as true in the present day as at any former time. To understand an age or a nation, we must understand its philosophy, and to understand its philosophy we must ourselves be in some degree philosophers. There is here a reciprocal causation: the circumstances of men’s lives do much to determine their philosophy, but, conversely, their philosophy does much to determine their circumstances.

There is also, however, a more personal answer. Science tells us what we can know, but what we can know is little, and if we forget how much we cannot know we may become insensitive to many things of very great importance. Theology, on the other hand, induces a dogmatic belief that we have knowledge, where in fact we have ignorance, and by doing so generates a kind of impertinent insolence towards the universe. Uncertainty, in the presence of vivid hopes and fears, is painful, but must be endured if we wish to live without the support of comforting fairy tales. It is not good either to forget the questions that philosophy asks, or to persuade ourselves that we have found indubitable answers to them. To teach how to live without certainty, and yet without being paralyzed by hesitation, is perhaps the chief thing that philosophy, in our age, can still do for those who study it.

1. The purpose of philosophy is to:
 1. reduce uncertainty and chaos.
 2. help us to cope with uncertainty and ambiguity.
 3. help us to find explanations for uncertainty.
 4. reduce the terror of cosmic loneliness.

2. Based on this passage what can be concluded about the relation between philosophy and science?
 1. The two are antagonistic.
 2. The two are complementary.
 3. There is no relation between the two.
 4. Philosophy derives from science.
3. From reading the passage, what can be concluded about the profession of the author? He is most likely **not** to be a:
 1. historian
 2. philosopher
 3. scientist
 4. theologian
4. According to the author, which of the following statements about the nature of the universe must be definitely true?
 1. The universe has unity.
 2. The universe has a purpose.
 3. The universe is evolving towards a goal.
 4. None of the above.

PASSAGE II

Our propensity to look out for regularities, and to impose laws upon nature, leads to the psychological phenomenon of dogmatic thinking or, more generally, dogmatic behaviour: we expect regularities everywhere and attempt to find them even where there are none; events which do not yield to these attempts we are inclined to treat as a kind of ‘background noise’; and we stick to our expectations even when they are inadequate and we ought to accept defeat. This dogmatism is to some extent necessary. It is demanded by a situation which can only be dealt with by forcing our conjectures upon the world. Moreover, this dogmatism allows us to approach a good theory in stages, by way of approximations: if we accept defeat too easily, we may prevent ourselves from finding that we were very nearly right.

It is clear that this *dogmatic attitude*, which makes us stick to our first impressions, is indicative of a strong belief; while a critical attitude, which is ready to modify its tenets, which admits doubt and demands tests, is indicative of a weaker belief. Now according to Hume’s theory, and to the popular theory, the strength of a belief should be a product of repetition; thus it should always grow with experience, and always be greater in less primitive persons. But dogmatic thinking, an uncontrolled wish to impose regularities, a manifest pleasure in rites and in repetition as such, is characteristic of primitives and children; and increasing experience and maturity sometimes create an attitude of caution and criticism rather than of dogmatism.

My logical criticism of Hume’s psychological theory, and the considerations connected with it, may seem a little removed from the field of the philosophy of science. But the distinction between dogmatic and critical thinking, or the dogmatic and the critical attitude, brings us right back to our central problem. For the dogmatic attitude is clearly related to the tendency to verify our laws and schemata by seeking to apply them and to confirm them, even to the point of neglecting refutations, whereas the critical attitude is one of readiness to change them—to test them; to refute them; to falsify them, if possible. This suggests that we may identify the critical attitude with the scientific attitude, and the dogmatic attitude with the one which we have described as pseudo-scientific. It further suggests that genetically speaking the pseudo-scientific attitude is more primitive than, and prior to, the scientific attitude: that it is a pre-scientific attitude. And this primitivity or priority also has its logical aspect. For the critical attitude is not so much opposed to the dogmatic attitude as super-imposed upon it: criticism must be directed against existing and influential beliefs in need of critical revision—in other words, dogmatic beliefs. A critical attitude needs for its raw material, as it were, theories or beliefs which are held more or less dogmatically.

Thus, science must begin with myths, and with the criticism of myths; neither with the collection of observations, nor with the invention of experiments, but with the critical discussion of myths, and of magical techniques and practices. The scientific tradition is distinguished from the pre-scientific tradition in having two layers. Like the latter, it passes on its theories; but it also passes on a critical attitude towards them. The theories are passed on, not as dogmas, but rather with the challenge to discuss them and improve upon them.

The critical attitude, the tradition of free discussion of theories with the aim of discovering their weak spots so that they may be improved upon, is the attitude of reasonableness, of rationality. From the point of view here developed, all laws, all theories,

remain essentially tentative, or conjectural, or hypothetical, even when we feel unable to doubt them any longer. Before a theory has been refuted we can never know in what way it may have to be modified.

5. In the context of science, according to the passage, the interaction of *dogmatic beliefs* and *critical attitude* can be best described as:
 - (1) A duel between two warriors in which one has to die.
 - (2) The effect of a chisel on a marble stone while making a sculpture.
 - (3) The feedshare (natural gas) in fertilizer industry being transformed into fertilizers.
 - (4) A predator killing its prey.
 - (5) The effect of fertilizers on a sapling.
6. According to the passage, the role of a dogmatic attitude or dogmatic behaviour in the development of science is
 - (1) critical and important, as, without it, initial hypotheses or conjectures can never be made.
 - (2) positive, as conjectures arising out of our dogmatic attitude become science.
 - (3) negative, as it leads to pseudo-science.
 - (4) neutral, as the development of science is essentially because of our critical attitude.
 - (5) inferior to critical attitude, as a critical attitude leads to the attitude of reasonableness and rationality.
7. Dogmatic behaviour, in this passage, has been associated with primitives and children. Which of the following best describes the reason why the author compares primitives with children?
 - (1) Primitives are people who are not educated, and hence can be compared with children, who have not yet been through school.
 - (2) Primitives are people who, though not modern, are as innocent as children.
 - (3) Primitives are people without a critical attitude, just as children are.
 - (4) Primitives are people in the early stages of human evolution; children are in the early stages of their lives.
 - (5) Primitives are people who are not civilized enough, just as children are not.
8. Which of the following statements best supports the argument in the passage that a critical attitude leads to a weaker belief than a dogmatic one does?
 - (1) A critical attitude implies endless questioning, and, therefore, it cannot lead to strong beliefs.
 - (2) A critical attitude, by definition, is centred on an analysis of anomalies and “noise”.
 - (3) A critical attitude leads to questioning everything, and in the process generates “noise” without any conviction.
 - (4) A critical attitude is antithetical to conviction, which is required for stronger beliefs.
 - (5) A critical attitude leads to questioning and to tentative hypotheses.
9. According to the passage, which of the following statements best describes the difference between science and pseudo-science?
 - (1) Scientific theories or hypothesis are tentatively true whereas pseudo-sciences are always true.
 - (2) Scientific laws and theories are permanent and immutable whereas pseudo-sciences are contingent on the prevalent mode of thinking in a society.
 - (3) Science always allows the possibility of rejecting a theory or hypothesis, whereas pseudo-sciences seek to validate their ideas or theories.
 - (4) Science focuses on anomalies and exceptions so that fundamental truths can be uncovered, whereas pseudo-sciences focus mainly on general truths.
 - (5) Science progresses by collection of observations or by experimentation, whereas pseudo-sciences do not worry about observations and experiments.

PASSAGE III

My aim is to present a conception of justice which generalizes and carries to a higher level of abstraction the familiar theory of the social contract. In order to do this we are not to think of the original contract as one to enter a particular society or to set up a particular form of government. Rather, the idea is that the principles of justice for the basic structure of society are the object of the original agreement. They are the principles that free and rational persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality. These principles are to regulate all further agreements; they specify the kinds of social cooperation that can be entered into and the forms of government that can be established. This way of regarding the principles of justice, I shall call justice as fairness. Thus, we are to imagine that those who engage in social cooperation choose together, in one joint act, the principles which are to assign basic rights and duties and to determine the division of social benefits. Just as each person must

decide by rational reflection what constitutes his good, that is, the system of ends which it is rational for him to pursue, so a group of persons must decide once and for all what is to count among them as just and unjust. The choice which rational men would make in this hypothetical situation of equal liberty determines the principles of justice.

In 'justice as fairness', the original position is not an actual historical state of affairs. It is understood as a purely hypothetical situation characterized so as to lead to a certain conception of justice. Among the essential features of this situation is that no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance. This ensures that no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances. Since all are similarly situated and no one is able to design principles to favor his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain.

Justice as fairness begins with one of the most general of all choices which persons might make together, namely, with the choice of the first principles of a conception of justice which is to regulate all subsequent criticism and reform of institutions. Then, having chosen a conception of justice, we can suppose that they are to choose a constitution and a legislature to enact laws, and so on, all in accordance with the principles of justice initially agreed upon. Our social situation is just if it is such that by this sequence of hypothetical agreements we would have contracted into the general system of rules which defines it. Moreover, assuming that the original position does determine a set of principles, it will then be true that whenever social institutions satisfy these principles, those engaged in them can say to one another that they are cooperating on terms to which they would agree if they were free and equal persons whose relations with respect to one another were fair. They could all view their arrangements as meeting the stipulations which they would acknowledge in an initial situation that embodies widely accepted and reasonable constraints on the choice of principles. The general recognition of this fact would provide the basis for a public acceptance of the corresponding principles of justice. No society can, of course, be a scheme of cooperation which men enter voluntarily in a literal sense; each person finds himself placed at birth in some particular position in some particular society, and the nature of this position materially affects his life prospects. Yet a society satisfying the principles of justice as fairness comes as close as a society can to being a voluntary scheme, for it meets the principles which free and equal persons would assent to under circumstances that are fair.

10. A just society, as conceptualized in the passage, can be best described as:

- (1) A Utopia in which everyone is equal and no one enjoys any privilege based on their existing positions and powers.
- (2) A hypothetical society in which people agree upon principles of justice which are fair.
- (3) A society in which principles of justice are not based on the existing positions and powers of the individuals.
- (4) A society in which principles of justice are fair to all.
- (5) A hypothetical society in which principles of justice are not based on the existing positions and powers of the individuals.

11. The original agreement or original position in the passage has been used by the author as:

- (1) A hypothetical situation conceived to derive principles of justice which are not influenced by position, status and condition of individuals in the society.
- (2) A hypothetical situation in which every individual is equal and no individual enjoys any privilege based on the existing positions and powers.
- (3) A hypothetical situation to ensure fairness of agreements among individuals in society.
- (4) An imagined situation in which principles of justice would have to be fair.
- (5) An imagined situation in which fairness is the objective of the principles of justice to ensure that no individual enjoys any privilege based on the existing positions and powers.

12. Which of the following best illustrates the situation that is equivalent to choosing 'the principles of justice' behind a 'veil of ignorance'?

- (1) The principles of justice are chosen by businessmen, who are marooned on an uninhabited island after a shipwreck, but have some possibility of returning.
- (2) The principles of justice are chosen by a group of school children whose capabilities are yet to develop.
- (3) The principles of justice are chosen by businessmen, who are marooned on an uninhabited island after a shipwreck and have no possibility of returning.
- (4) The principles of justice are chosen assuming that such principles will govern the lives of the rule makers only in their next birth if the rule makers agree that they will be born again.
- (5) The principles of justice are chosen by potential immigrants who are unaware of the resources necessary to succeed in a foreign country.