

# ON THE JUSTIFICATION OF PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS

Nathan ROTENSTREICH

## A

In dealing with this question we have to distinguish first between the philosophical approach in general and the specific philosophical systems, which are particular and individual manifestations of the philosophical approach. The philosophical approach is characterized by an activity of analysis related to some specific problems. This activity of analysis is the reflection of reflection, i.e. the analysis of the very medium of knowledge. We encounter here the self-referential character of the philosophical approach. The philosophical approach invites every individual human being to analyse the medium of his relationship to whatever is the content of his relation, i.e. the human being himself, the various components of his experience, etc. The philosophical approach is justified, from this point of view, by way of what might be called the philosophical introspection. Once one's own reflection becomes a problem, one is already engaged in the activation of the philosophical approach. Along with the awareness of the problematic situation of knowledge, the philosophical approach moves further to the analysis of the dimension of data for knowledge and reflection. The philosophical approach does not call here for an introspection but for what might be called totalization. It understands the data as reality or as world. Various philosophical systems explicate, on the one hand, the point of departure of reflection and attempt, on the other hand, to put forward the transition from reflection to totalization or to totality. The point of departure in terms of reflection is given; the step towards totality is taken deliberately, and as such calls for definite modes of justification.

## B

Philosophical systems presuppose the philosophical approach and carry within themselves some specific modes of justification.

The first mode to be pointed out is the mode of relying on a specific cognition being the philosophical cognition proper. The historical example for this mode of justification would be Plato's cognition of ideas or Spinoza's third kind of knowledge. These modes of cognition reveal the ultimate stratum of reality or the universal context of all that which is real. Philosophy as a way of knowing is in the possession of a philosophical organon of knowledge proper. The philosophical system educates towards that organon or else presupposes that organon as a kind of an enlargement of the philosophical introspection underlying the very philosophical approach.

The refutation of this kind of philosophical cognition based on an organon of philosophical knowledge may take different forms: (a) It may raise the doubt whether there is such an organon altogether, that is to say, whether reflection or knowledge may reach the level of the ultimate stratum of reality or the totality of reality. This form of refutation is clearly the *Leitmotiv* of Kant's criticism of traditional metaphysics.

(b) A different version of the self-same criticism would be that this philosophy, being only an expression of human knowledge, abolishes the difference between finite human knowledge and the infinite mode of knowledge. This again is present in Kant's doctrine in the distinction between *intellectus archetypus* and *intellectus ectypus*.

(c) A more general mode of refutation would be the argument that philosophical systems assume their own power to generate a kind of cognition which otherwise is beyond the reach of every human being. The mystical version of this philosophical position considers the organon of philosophical cognition not as an outcome of human knowledge, but as an illumination stemming from the ultimate reality or from God. It retains, to some extent, the sceptical attitude: the source of a cognition reaching the ultimate cannot be in the human intellect; it can be only in the ultimate itself.

## C

Another way of justifying a philosophical system is to make the implicit assumption explicit. According to this mode of justification, philosophy does not offer information which we did not possess before the philosophical discourse started. Philosophy starts from a given information but makes — at least — some components within this given body of information explicit. According to this mode of justification of a philosophical system we do not hold the view that philosophy establishes out of its own resources any content, e.g. the principle of contradiction. Philosophy, or a branch of it, only makes the avoidance of contradictions implied in our ordinary discourse into a defined principle. Philosophy does not create mathematical propositions. It only makes explicit the hidden synthetical *a priori* character of these propositions.

The refutation of the philosophical argument underlying the justification of the findings of the system runs in this case parallel to the logic of justification:

(a) We may doubt whether there is an implicit component put forward by the system as being implicit and made by it explicit. In this case we may doubt whether the mathematical proposition is really synthetic, as Kant assumed, or tautological, as many assume against Kant. We doubt — generally speaking — whether that which is taken as implied is really implied. This doubt removes the ground from the method of explication.

(b) We may also question the position of the explication: whether, for instance, the principle of contradiction — even when it is implied in the discourse — can be understood — by way of explication as a principle based on evidence or on immediate recognition. Here we question the achievement of explication, while in the former case we question the assumed implication which serves as the starting point of the suggested explication.

The most prominent case of justification by making the implicit explicit is the case of dialectics. The recognition of the logical proposition that the negative is by the same token positive, as Hegel has it, or else that contradictions are not dissolved in an abstract null but have a content of their own — all these descrip-

tions are, as it were, invitations to an insight. This insight is supposed to help us realize that contradictory meanings are implied in one single statement: and the explication of the contradiction helps us to realize that the contradictory terms do not eliminate one another but are reconciled in a more comprehensive meaning. The goal here is a synthesis; but its justification is an explanation.

## D

The third way of justifying the philosophical system is that of proposing deliberate assumptions. The reasoning of this view may be summed up as follows: In order to have *B* we have to assume *A*. In order to be able to state a proposition which relates a predicate to a subject we have to assume the existence of permanent predicates or else we have to assume ideas. Or else: in order to make valid an assertion when we refer to empirical data we have to assume transcendental presuppositions of empirical propositions. Hence we assume categories and principles. The justification of the system presupposes here (a) a view of that which has to be achieved and (b) a view holding that the means for the achievement are within our reach either by way of a cognition based on the organon of philosophy (see the first mode of justification) or else by way of a deduction as is the case with Kant.

Here, again, the refutation of the philosophical system runs parallel to the logic of its justification:

(a) The refutation puts forward doubts as to that which has to be achieved; for instance, it questions the possibility of valid knowledge in general (scepticism) or the necessity of eternal predicates or fixed *a priori* principles for valid knowledge.

(b) The refutation may doubt whether or not the ideas or the principles are related eventually to the level of the data they are supposed to save. Here emerges the refutation based on the argument of *petitio principii* raised against Kant's transcendental deduction.

While the justification of the philosophical approach appeals in the last resort to human experience and reflection, the suggested modes of justification of philosophical systems are meaningful

within the logic of each of the respective systems. The justification for the assumption of ideas in the Platonic sense, to take again this example, does not refer to a general reflection on human experience but to a specific problem of knowledge or of doing. This assumption is supposed to be justified within a system which articulates the problem of knowledge related to predicates and puts forward a type of knowledge discerning these predicates in terms of their relation to the phenomena to be known. And *pari passu*: Since the justification of the system takes place within the universe of the discourse of the system, the refutation too is related to the trend of the system. Pointing to the ultimate stratum of individual substance, as is the case with Leibniz, is meaningful within the frame of reference of the denial of individual substances and assuming only one whole substance, as Spinoza did. Hence we find that philosophical justification, be it made as it may, is often put forward by way of polemic or at least is accompanied by a polemic. A meaningful polemic takes place within a common frame of reference or even presupposes a body of problems attacked by the parties engaged in the polemic. The well known statement of Spinoza, *omnis determinatio est negatio*, may be applied to the course of the modes of justification suggested by various types of philosophical systems.

## E

One more aspect connected with the refutation of suggested justifications of philosophical systems has to be mentioned in this context: the Platonic justification lies in the organon of cognition which refers to a stratum of reality. The Kantian mode of justification does not call for an organon; it takes advantage of a deduction, that is to say, of a sort of inference as opposed to direct seeing. This deduction in turn lands in the assumption of a stratum of principles. The common feature of both modes of justification is clearly the assumption of a stratum of ideas or principles which is not empirically given. Hence a parallel mode of refutation amounts to the questioning of the necessity to assume the respective strata. This type of justification calls as its *advocatus diaboli*

the nominalistic refutation which denies the necessity, that is to say the justification, to assume a stratum of entities — be these ideas or else principles.

## F

Is a philosophical system justified by way of an empirical observation, in the sense of an encounter with data? It seems that this is not the case. Clearly the Platonic view of the organon of philosophical knowledge cannot be checked by way of empirical data; neither could the view which calls for the philosophical explication assuming principles. Yet we find in philosophical arguments the appeal, though disguised, to the given. A case in point would be Leibniz's criticism of Spinoza pointing to the fact that there are individual substances and arguing that a philosophical view has to take the fact of the individual substances as given. Actually, however, this is not an appeal to given data but to an interpretation of experience and data; it is an attempt to undermine one philosophical view assuming one substance only by testing it in terms of another philosophical interpretation. The validity of the view assuming individual substances is considered to be established since it sounds more plausible than the view assuming but one substance. Or else this validity is established since it corresponds to our everyday view and the philosophical system proper is suggested to emerge as an explication of an assumed view.

A philosophical system puts forward the frame of reference in which its justification may take place. Neither the arguments used for justification nor the data the reference to which is to serve as justification are independent of the system under consideration. Philosophy carries out the explication of the concept of justification and describes the aspects of the justification of its own propositions.

*Jerusalem*

Nathan ROTENSTREICH

N. ROTENSTREICH

In the course of our discussion at previous sessions the term «logic of philosophy» or «methodology of philosophy» has been introduced several times. I do not pretend to present a sort of «logic of philosophy» — this is too vast a subject and my own logical upbringing is too poor to undertake the task. But, without repeating the written statement, I would like to deal with some aspects of what Mr. Passmore termed «philosophical reasoning» and which may serve as a point of departure for the development of a badly needed logic of philosophical thinking.

I presented in my paper three major attitudes related to philosophical thinking. One of them, represented historically by Plato or Spinoza, for instance, assumes that philosophy proper has an organon of knowledge of its own corresponding either to a status of reality, as in the case of Plato, or to the totality of reality, as in the case of Spinoza. This kind of philosophy, I would like to argue, tries to justify its endeavour by presenting a corollary of an organon of knowledge on the one hand, and, on the other, a reality peculiar to philosophical thinking.

Philosophy, in this case, presents a kind of information about the world which, otherwise, we would not possess and which we know that we do not possess. In this sense philosophy tries, as we know from the historical systems, to educate a person towards philosophical knowledge, towards philosophical insight. This is philosophy understood as pursuing rationality, that is to say, a knowledge of the world different from, or super-imposed on, other modes of knowledge. A philosophical argument is involved here: a philosopher argues for his thesis and proposes reasons for its acceptance. The reasons may be in the shortcomings of perception or in the gap between that which is partial and that which is total. This is a process of justification proper because the philosopher exposes his argument to a critical investigation. He articulates his argument. He does not say, This is my intuition, I feel the world to be like this, take it or leave it. He exposes himself to a critical investigation. What is peculiar or particular about this form of philosophical arguing is the fact that it is meant to lead to a new information about the world.

But this is not the only form of philosophical reasoning. The se-



cond form which I suggest is the reasoning which could be designated as «explication of implicit assumptions». If we look at the history of philosophy and at present-day philosophical discourse, this seems to be the most common philosophical argumentation. It may take on different forms, as for instance that in which some of us, like our predecessors, are engaged in our own time, and which consists in explicating conceptually the hidden meaning of extra-philosophical discourse. An example would be the mediaeval philosophers' attempt to explicate the philosophical conceptual meaning of God by identifying him with the *causa prima*. Or to explicate the idea of holiness applied in religious discourse or in the religious attitude; or to explicate the character of literary expression. This is one form of philosophical discourse which is an explication of the extra-philosophical. The other form that has to be mentioned is the explication of principles implied in everyday discourse, not in a specific, delimited domain, — for instance the explication of the principle of contradiction.

The third form which I mentioned in my paper is that which we find for instance in Hegel's *Phenomenology*; it consists in taking a trivial statement on the level of perception (*Wahrnehmung*) and in showing what is implied in it and thus reach through it an over-all synthesis which is beyond the original statement. But this is a doctrine, and we are speaking now about reasoning, and in this case I would suggest that rationality does not mean rendering information which we would not have without engaging in philosophy. Rationality would mean awareness of that which we are doing; and to be aware specifically in an articulate way of that which do tacitly, implicitly or by way of taking for granted is one of the objectives of the philosophical enterprise. In some cases, of course, two views providing information and providing explication may coincide and their boundaries are, or can be, blurred. Thus, when we say it is a task of philosophy to show that the mathematical judgement is synthetic, that it is making explicit that which is implied by the mathematician or mathematics, and then go to a new level providing information as supplementing that which is on the level of explication. The philosophical objective of providing information is grounded in the assumption of an organon of philosophical knowledge, while the philosophical objective or aim of providing explication does not call spe-



cifically for a philosophical organon *per se*, characteristic of philosophy proper.

The third philosophical argumentation which I would like to introduce is that engaged in finding the conceptual presuppositions of a certain enterprise — for instance the conceptual presuppositions of the enterprise of scientific knowledge. The most prominent case for this sort of argumentation is the Kantian transcendental deduction and transcendental philosophy in general, where we are engaged in providing a stratum of reasoning beyond the stratum of thinking or reasoning which we find on the level of science. There is, here, an interesting parallelism with the first kind of philosophical argumentation where we find a stratum of reality or an over-all philosophical total comprehensive view which leads us to acknowledge some presuppositions, because in both cases we go beyond that which we find in ordinary discourse — be it ordinary discourse of every day life or scientific discourse. But, in the case of Plato for instance, an organon is needed; *Noūs* would be an organon, Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* would be a kind of knowledge. In this case, no organon is needed because we are engaged in a form of inference or of deduction; we do not appeal to a special organon of philosophical knowledge but to reasoning on the same level as in science, though we call attention to the fact that what we find in science is not self-sufficient and needs grounding in a different level of reasoning. In this case, rationality would mean neither information, nor awareness, but grounding, making things stable, justified.

There would be different meanings of rationality, all being modes of rational discourse because they are exposed to argumentation, to criticism and even to total refutation. In my written presentation I have shown that each philosophical argumentation calls for a corollary refutation: reasoning by way of *Noūs* may call for a refutation based on the argument that *Noūs* does not reach that which it pretends to reach; explicative reasoning would call for a refutation by way of a different awareness; in other words, the explicit does not correspond to the implicit.

The third kind of refutation calling for presupposition would be, for instance, a *petitio principii* argument as that raised in nineteenth century philosophy against Kant. I suggest, therefore, that there are distinct ways of philosophical reasoning, the aim of which is to jus-

tify a concept of rationality of philosophical thinking. These types are, of course, ideal types. I do not imply that we can discern in a philosophical system only one mode of arguing: in Plato we find both the *nous* concept and the concept of presupposition, in the various systems of explication we find the idea that that which we explicate may be the presupposition of scientific thinking. The same would apply to the Kantian idea of presupposition. This means that the principles are not only for the sake of a scientific reasoning, but do have a meaning in themselves. And this is the meaning of the metaphysical deduction as opposed to the transcendental deduction. Therefore the distinctions are very often blurred in the historical systems. But we may make an effort to understand these historical systems by suggesting different ways of reasoning and argumentation which are immersed or embodied in these systems.

I would like to make one further observation about the blurring of the distinctions from a different angle. For instance: the distinction between that which is explicit and that which is presupposed is a very subtle distinction. If I say that I come by air from Israel to Liège, this implies that I came first to Brussels and then took a train to Liège, or it presupposes that I took a train from Brussels to Liège. It is perhaps a question of different expressions; or perhaps we may say that that which is explicit is sometimes understood not as a proposition but as a state of affairs, while that which is presupposed is sometimes understood as a proposition and not as a state of affairs. This, again, is not a rigid distinction. To sum up, I would say that philosophical systems present to those engaged in the problem of justification a very peculiar mode of thinking and expression. It cannot be verified by empirical evidence, or else it cannot be mathematically demonstrated. It has to be justified and thus calls for a re-statement of the concept of justification which will not only imply a theory about demonstration and verification, but will be applied to a philosophical endeavour which seeks to present arguments and be refuted by other arguments.

T. E. JESSOP

Within the short time allotted to him Professeur Rothenstreich has opened up the theme so well that I have no criticisms to make, and therefore can take up the pleasanter task of amplifying some of his points.

A system, in its minimal meaning, is a plurality of constituents more or less stably related to one another. We speak equally of systems of things, e. g. the solar system, and a living thing as itself a complicated system; and of systems of thought, e.g. scientific astronomy as distinguished from annals or chronicles. Of both things and thought we use the term «system» in opposition to a mere aggregation, collection or inventory. Indeed, we go further, usually applying it not to any arrangement whatever but to what is arranged in ways other than those of space, time and similarity. That something more is, for a natural science, at least the causal relation (whether regarded as dynamic or as uniform connection), on the ground that this relation is reasonably regarded as extensible beyond the instances observed; and, for philosophy, relatedness of further kinds has been required, such as, with varying emphasis, logical, teleological, and axiological, and reference to a transcendental order or entity. Between the natural sciences and philosophy lie the systems of pure mathematics, constituted solely by formal rigour of deduction from definitions and a few other propositions laid down as primitive.

The notion of system as such, then, is not peculiar to philosophy. The problem of justifying the notion is therefore presented as much by scientific as by philosophical systems: of all of them we can, do, and must raise the disturbing question of whether system is *imposed* on the objects of our system or is at any rate sometimes *detected* in them. Philosophy on its critical side has often pressed the question against the sciences as well as against its own constructive efforts. To adduce a classic instance, when Galileo, in his «Il Saggiatore», declared that physical reality consists wholly of quantities, he *pre-determined* the structure of the new physics by restricting its data to measurements and its theorising to the procedures of mathematics; in other words, he imposed on the study of matter an independent and non-empirical system of thought. The very remarkable scientific ad-

vance to which his preconception led has not been in dispute; all that has been questioned is whether his definitory and methodological reduction of matter wholly to quantity is *really true*.

We must ask, therefore, why philosophical system is supposed to be more problematic than scientific system. The most common answer is that scientific systems are justified by the increasing achievement of that sort of verification which scientists have agreed to seek and acknowledge, the broad reason for the success being that scientific systems are much more limited than philosophical ones. Each science, or at any rate each group of closely kindred sciences, has its own system; and even a scientific system of all the sciences, such as Comte tried to construct, would also be limited, precisely because science is by definition the study of what can be handled by scientific methods. Yet every scientific system does in fact go beyond actual observation, by working with the concept of classes, each of which has usually an indefinite, and therefore at any given time unexhausted, number of individual instances, and by extending relations that have been empirically established to all possible instances of each class. Nevertheless, though every natural science does regularly go beyond the observed, it remains within the realm of what is in principle observable. Although the phrase «within the limits of the observable» may not be strictly true of some of the speculative reaches of present-day physics, it is true enough as a general characterisation of the natural sciences.

What makes philosophical systems, in the sense of metaphysical ones, specially problematic is that they lack that limitation: they aim at embracing, structurally or in outline, the whole of reality, which has usually been taken to include existents beneath or above all observable ones, and values as well as existents; they attempt to go forward not only to the unobserved but to the unobservable, beyond the given and the givable to what is possibly greater in extent and different in kind. It is this attempt at complete comprehensiveness (which Professor Rothenstreich neatly calls «totalisation») that makes metaphysical systems almost ostentatiously, sometimes even offensively, problematic.

The attempt provokes question after question. For example, can the systems of the natural sciences alone, with their several diversities of subject-matter, be shaped into a single metascientific system without

the obviously devised imposition of a reductionist logical or linguistic scheme? If we try to press on further, into the territory of the unobservable, how are we to give it content, and how are we to formulate criteria to distinguish profundity from obscurity and height from abstract thinness? And can we take the further step of knitting values objectively and securely to the existent world or to a supposed existent one? Indeed, can we achieve the preliminary task of distinguishing values as qualifications of something existent from valuations as merely psycho-biological events, and if so, can we formulate for the truth of value-propositions criteria comparable (if only approximately) in clearness, applicability and cogency with the criteria used in the sciences to test the truth of existence-propositions? More generally, do we merely happen to have failed to do any of these tasks, or can man's natural equipment be proved to be intrinsically incapable of doing them?

Being an Englishman, I have no uncontrollable itch to construct a metaphysical system, and I approach the most ambitious systems of the past with spontaneous misgivings; and being a philosopher I am aware of both the difficulties and the perils of system-making, the perils of abstract remoteness of arbitrariness, obscurity, muddle, even of nonsense. Yet, again as a philosopher, I cannot bring myself to disavow the ideal of a total system as the ultimate intellectual goal. The tendency towards system is not only implied by, but also actually operative in, all tenacious reasoning. Whatever else reasoning may be, it is at least a demand for system and an instrument for procuring it. A rationally awakened mind cannot go on gaping at individual things, cannot be content with a list of facts or a mere series of propositions, or even with a plurality of systems left unrelated. At the philosophical level we begin with the large structures of scientific knowledge, also with the opinions and convictions which, established by habit, tradition and common sense, we have simply as human beings, and we proceed to look for their ultimate presuppositions and most general bearings. The philosophical question is thus not whether we should have system, but (a) of what kinds, (b) how far we should extend them, and (c) by what criteria we may critically distinguish tenable from untenable ones. The trouble is that these three sub-questions are inextricably interrelated: we have to juggle with all three at the same time — which is itself a symptom both of the ten-

dentious unity of all knowledge and of that battling and baffling philosophical criticism and self-criticism which Professor Rothenstreich designates «the problematic situation of knowledge» (i. e. of knowledge as such).

The basic justification of the notion of philosophical system is, then, that it is a demand of our reflective nature. The theoretical rejection of the notion would require us to show, not that we have in fact failed to produce a metaphysical system that commands general acceptance, but that reason is incapable of fulfilling its demand; and I am not myself convinced that this proposition has been cogently established. It seems to me to be a rational urge, not a mere piece of wishful thinking, to try to make sense of the whole of our experience. When we limit systematic exploration to *perceptual* experience only, we are paying *too* great a tribute to the natural sciences, and are perhaps allowing these to «condition» our reasoning instead of being encouraged by them to press our reasoning still further. After all, contemporary physicists are themselves being driven across their scientific frontiers into a quasi-philosophical cosmology. If reason is to strain itself to the uttermost, some philosophers will have to construct large systems, and others should be ready to criticise them in epistemological and metaphysical terms.

As Professor Rothenstreich has pointed out, the mode of justification of any particular system is prescribed in part by the system itself: we assess the degree to which it has achieved its intentions, i. e. has at best solved or at least illuminated the problems which it set for itself. We may also stand outside it and ask whether its intentions are basic enough, its coverage wide enough, and its method clear enough and appropriate — questions with which metaphysicians do in fact confront one another, and which are specifications of the idea of justification. Of course, to expect a completely filled system would be unfair, unrealistic. Further, to set up one type of system as the only model would be to stifle the versatility of reason: e. g. besides purely formal consistency there is consistency of matter or content, and there has also to be a balancing of the incompatible demands for vast adequacy on the one hand, and on the other hand for the pellucid clearness of formal implication. Yet further, we have to be willing to welcome the peculiar talent of each philosopher, such as the acuteness of one and the insight of another who can bring that

sort of illumination which we have not yet been able to formalise or formulate as a standard type of explanation.

In short, there *are* ways of justifying philosophical systems, though none of them is cogent alone. If this be granted, every system can be exposed to multiple criticism, requiring a dialogue across the boundaries of the schools, and thereby calling for that world-community of philosophers which the Institute seeks to realise.

#### N. ROTENSTREICH

Since Professor Jessop, whom I thank for his remarks, observed that he is rather inspired by the British tradition, I have the feeling that the *leit-motiv* of his observations is congenial to a *leit-motiv* of a philosopher who awakens from his dogmatic slumber because of a British philosopher. Kant, as is well known said that metaphysical systems are illusions but necessary ones and Professor Jessop suggests the same. This might be the case only if one takes the system in a very limited sense of the term. But there is a system in the *Treatise*; in a statement such as *esse = percipi*. This is a systematic statement *par excellence* because it extrapolates that which has been actually perceived and gives it an over-all comprehensive meaning. This is the case also with the *Tractatus* not only in the last part but in the whole argument from the very first sentence.

The very distinction between the observed and unobservable is a systematic distinction which has to be argued for by rational arguments. Why are philosophical systems problematic? This is a point which Professor Jessop referred to at various stages of his discourse. There are certainly many reasons, and I wonder whether I can give an exhaustive account about that. I think that there are some reasons related to the very philosophical endeavour. If philosophy, for instance, is an explication of experience, and experience changes because of science, because of technology; or if philosophy is explication of the work of art, and the position whether art is related to beauty, as we traditionally assume, is problematic, philosophy has to address itself to art which possibly is not related to the value of beauty, but to the value of structure, to expressiveness etc. Because of the changing character of experience, any explication of



experience, any attempt to give a comprehensive account of experience, has to change. Philosophy is not accumulative as science is. If a philosopher repeats what another philosopher said, he is an epigone, he is not a philosopher. If a student formulates a formula, expresses a physical formula, or a mechanic uses the mechanical application of physics, he may do a very good job. But if a philosopher, or a student of philosophy says that there are twelve categories, or ten categories, and does not reconstruct the reasoning behind this, this is sheer repetition. This is a different kind of attitude toward rationality. Not rationality only in terms of conclusions, but also rationality in terms of arguing and reasoning.

#### A. ROBINET

Je voudrais vous faire quelques remarques du point de vue de l'activité de l'historien de la philosophie et de ses réactions durant cette semaine. Il me semble d'une manière générale que l'œuvre métaphysique est loin de se priver des bénéfices de la démonstration, qu'elle est très loin de se réduire à des systèmes de justification et que la vérification, enfin, y a une portée singulière.

Soit une démonstration métaphysique comme celle qui concerne l'existence de l'idée dans le contexte de la philosophie malebranchiste. La démonstration repose sur un axiome, celui de l'invisibilité du néant qui implique que penser à rien et ne point penser c'est la même chose; si donc on pense à un objet, cet objet existe, quel que soit le statut que l'on peut donner à cette existence. La démonstration est nette, elle peut être mise sous forme de corollaire appuyé par des lemmes, et elle l'a été. Son activité fait immédiatement appel à une vérification par la possibilité qu'a la pensée d'avoir toujours de quoi penser, d'avoir toujours un «magasin d'idées» en réserve. Enfin, ce système de démonstration et de vérification s'appuie sur une justification (il y a bien entendu d'autres vérifications possibles, d'autres justifications possibles). C'est le recours à la thèse partielle de l'occasionnalisme selon laquelle les substances ne peuvent pas interagir, ce qui explique que pour que l'entendement puisse concevoir une idée, cette idée doit être mise à sa disposition sans que le corps matériel y intervienne au titre de l'interaction et au titre direct. Par

conséquent on a là un ensemble qui appartient à l'œuvre métaphysique en tant que telle où figurent démonstration, vérification, justification.

Ceci appelle, me semble-t-il, les remarques suivantes: que premièrement l'œuvre scientifique est très loin d'avoir le privilège de la démonstration et que jamais le philosophe, même intuitionniste, — et je pourrais prendre des exemples dans la manière dont Bergson fait progresser lui-même son œuvre, — jamais le philosophe n'a renoncé, ni ne renoncera, je l'espère, à la garantie de la vérité et à la possibilité de communication que cette garantie lui apporte.

La démonstration, telle que les métaphysiciens la pratiquent, se distingue alors de la démonstration dans l'œuvre scientifique et par l'objet sur lequel elle porte, et par la forme qu'elle prend.

1° Par l'objet sur lequel elle porte. En effet, c'est une chose que nous n'avons guère évoquée jusqu'ici, la démonstration métaphysique porte sur des existants, sur des substances concrètes et complètes, sur des substances qui ont leur histoire ou qui sont dans leur éternité: démonstration de l'existence du monde extérieur, démonstration de l'existence d'autrui, démonstration de l'existence de Dieu, démonstration de l'existence de l'idée, édification à partir de la reconnaissance de ces existences, d'un système préférentiel qui en commande l'action dans un sens ou dans l'autre suivant le degré de liberté concédé à ces existences.

Par conséquent, l'objet sur lequel porte l'attention intellectuelle du métaphysicien est une substance individuelle et pleine, qui ne sera définissable que par un ensemble de prédicats, dont la quantité est évidemment infinie, mais dont la qualité est également infinie, prédicats qui sont de qualité absolument hétérogène. Nous sommes obligés dans ce cas, de sortir du simple rapport de vérités, lequel est établi entre idées égales pour entrer dans les rapports d'ordre, c'est-à-dire dans les rapports combinatoires.

2° Par la forme qu'elle prend, la démonstration qui appelle des existences à sa conclusion est énoncée, elle aussi, suivant les principes d'une certaine formalisation et cette formalisation a été poussée extrêmement loin. La consécution des pensées a toujours été suivie avec la plus grande rigueur, avec la plus grande précision. Seulement, comme elle porte sur des tous concrets, sur des tous complets, la démonstration doit prendre à tout moment les existences sur lesquelles

les elle porte dans leur ensemble historié et elle ne peut pas se permettre de les décomposer analytiquement pour en disposer comme elle l'entend, ni de disposer de leurs prédicats sous l'angle d'une séparabilité qui en permettrait soit le criblage, soit l'ordonnancement indépendant de la substance même à laquelle ces prédicats se rapportent. La démonstration a donc de ce côté-ci une certaine originalité sans pour autant être inexistante.

Autre remarque. La vérification pour le métaphysicien à l'œuvre est loin de se référer à la simple présence d'un objet existentiel, même en philosophie intuitionniste. Elle ne considère comme tout le monde l'objet donné dans sa brutalité de première instance que comme quelque chose à élucider dont la connaissance ne sera pleine et entière que lorsqu'elle aura été l'objet de cette activité rationnelle qui va la constituer comme objet de savoir métaphysique. Il n'y a de vérification en métaphysique que lorsque l'activité du métaphysicien concernant une existence ne se satisfait pas de la rencontre de cette existence qui lui est donnée dans l'expérience brute mais l'élabore de nouveau au travers de la pleine consécution des démonstrations, des vérifications et des justifications. Par exemple, Malebranche estime l'existence de Dieu beaucoup mieux assurée au terme des démonstrations qu'il en donne qu'avant d'en donner la démonstration, sans quoi il est évident que la vérification première du fait de l'expérience de foi suffirait et que la foi n'aurait pas, comme il le dit, à appeler l'intelligence. L'appel à l'intelligence est le propre de l'œuvre du métaphysicien et c'est là effectivement que Malebranche conserve une valeur métaphysique.

Voilà donc ce champ d'intelligibilité qui se forme et qui exige que la vérification se fasse non seulement dans les termes existentiels préalables, mais dans le contexte des vérités rationnelles. Ce contexte est constitué. Si la notion d'une idée indépendante réelle figurant dans un monde intelligible, si la notion d'un Dieu existant comme notion parfaite, pleine et entière, peut entrer dans le système, c'est dans le système en voie de vérification qu'elle devra entrer et non pas comme réalités flottantes hors de la systématisation. Le métaphysicien est aussi bien que le savant attentif à l'exigence de la double vérification conçue à la fois comme coïncidence avec une réalité existentielle et à la fois comme cohérence avec la réalité constituante de l'architectonique qu'il exprime.

J'en arrive à la justification. La justification prend ou pourrait prendre en métaphysique, comme l'a dit le rapporteur, un sens et une portée tels qu'on pourrait se demander si la «*loi de Granger*» concernant l'épistémologie scientifique ne s'en trouverait pas totalement contournée et peut-être même inversée. Cependant je pense qu'on peut accepter cette loi même dans le domaine de l'histoire des métaphysiques, en tant qu'historiens œuvrant sur les métaphysiques. S'il se peut que la nécessité de la justification en philosophie entraîne momentanément la démonstration dans son orbite, sollicite des vérifications qui ne soient pas totalement discursives dans l'immédiat, il n'en reste pas moins que l'œuvre constituée et déposée ne peut l'être que selon la prééminence des démonstrations et qu'elle ne sera acceptée des autres métaphysiciens et du lecteur que si elle répond à cette nécessité logique et architectonique. Autrement dit, même si la valeur à justifier, même si l'existence à atteindre, sont d'une autre qualité et d'un autre ressort que la démonstration intellectuelle qui la met en œuvre, il n'en reste pas moins que seule la démonstration donne à l'œuvre son potentiel d'efficacité et d'originalité. A tel point que les sens les plus éloignés de la justification (que l'on n'a pas du tout abordés ici), comme ceux de la justification sautériologique par exemple, doivent entrer, pour avoir une signification, dans le cadre de la métaphysique intellectuellement constituée. J'en veux un très bel exemple qui est celui du passage de 1 à 3 dans le contexte de la philosophie malebranchiste où d'abord la séparation tragique entre un ordre de la nature et un ordre de la grâce ne peut se trancher que si dans l'ordre de la nature nous concevons des lois qui sont parfaitement scientifiques et que si dans l'ordre de la grâce nous acceptons la notion du miracle. Or, dans le *Traité de la nature et de la grâce*, cette thèse est totalement disparue au profit de la possibilité d'un gouvernement par lois, c'est-à-dire d'une compréhension intellectuelle de l'ordre de la grâce qui apparaît dans sa pleine effectivité, dans sa pleine efficacité, grâce à toute une série de procédés par lesquels Malebranche est passé. Il fut conduit à se séparer du groupe janséniste, ce qui prouve au passage que le travail sur les réalités métaphysiques est aussi un travail sur les données existentielles, puisqu'il fait éclater les groupes et puisqu'il oblige à des options vitales.

Dès lors, et ce sera ma conclusion, devant l'assertion catégorique «la pensée scientifique a le privilège de la démonstration», il me sem-

ble loisible de poser l'exemple de fait de la démontrabilité des vérités métaphysiques. Il reste entièrement loisible au métaphysicien, suivant Leibniz par exemple, qui ne saurait être suspect d'illogisme, de distinguer entre les vérités nécessaires où la démonstration au sens strict atteint le domaine même de la métaphysique fondamentale, et les vérités contingentes qui concernent les propositions relatives à l'existence et à l'action. La notion de vérité n'y joue plus au sens du non-contradictoire mais au sens de principe de la raison suffisante. Les métaphysiques, dans l'expérience qu'on en prend en les étudiant, nous livrent un enseignement extrêmement riche concernant l'activité de la raison. Elles obligent le logicien, non pas à faire une œuvre de mise entre parenthèses de l'œuvre métaphysique sous le prétexte que l'irrationalité se dessine au-delà du formalisable dans les termes où l'on entend la formalisation d'aujourd'hui, mais où il aura peut-être, à la manière leibnizienne, tout avantage à poursuivre la recherche d'une caractéristique qui soit si universelle que cette fois-ci elle puisse s'appliquer au domaine de l'existence et au domaine du droit.

#### A. J. AYER

I want to take up the point that Professor Rotenstreich made in replying to Jessop, which I think was a very good one, that we ought to take system, here, in a wider sense than it is sometimes taken. If one thinks of a philosophical system in what we may call the old-fashioned sense, the sense in which McTaggart had a system, then I would venture to say, perhaps shocking Jessop, that we do know that not to be possible. We do know it not to be possible to start with self evident premisses, and by strict deduction derive important distinct facts about the world. You can't get that rabbit out of that hat. But I do think that, in Rotenstreich's sense, almost any philosopher of any importance, even the least systematic, does have a system, in the sense of having some general principles which govern his philosophizing. In a discussion of this kind, it is best to take examples. It is only by working on examples, that you can hope to get anything clear. And one good example would be that of Russell's work. I think one can say that most of Russell's work has been governed by a principle he himself enunciates, one that he calls

«the supreme maxim in scientific philosophizing»: wherever possible, substitute logical construction for inferred entities. Now, the first question that strikes one, is *why*. Why should one do this? It might be for an aesthetic reason, I mean, some of us don't like our Universes to be too baroque. I myself particularly dislike a baroque Universe. But, after all, this is only a matter of taste, and by what right do I impose my austere taste on people who have different architectural views? The answer can't be just that. The reason that Russell himself gives is a very strange one indeed. Namely, that if you postulate entities, you run a risk of their not existing. So, possibly, if we can't reduce numbers to classes, there may not be numbers. If we can't reduce physical objects to sense data, there may not be physical objects. This is terribly odd, much odder than Russell realized. For what kind of an existential question is this? Is it that when God surveys his possessions, he doesn't see numbers? But how does one possibly verify this? I think this can't be the answer either. I think the answer is perhaps that if one just postulates entities, first of all it is lazy, it has, as Russell himself said, only the advantages of theft over honest toil. And secondly, it is unilluminating. It is to be content with what Wisdom calls the idiosyncratic platitude. Of course, it's perfectly true that moral judgements state moral propositions, that moral predicates stand for moral properties. It's perfectly true that numerals stand for numbers. It's perfectly true that a scientific statement refers to scientific entities. All this is absolutely safe, it can't be wrong, but when you've said it, you've said nothing. On the other hand, if you can, for example, carry out Russell's logistic programme, if you could show, following Frege and Russell that you could eliminate numbers in favour of classes, you've got somewhere. Of course, you've not got the whole way. Classes are also problematic. Whether classes exist is again a difficult question, but still, you've made an attempt. Similarly, if you're just saying «moral judgements stand for moral propositions», or, with Moore «ethical predicates stand for non-natural qualities», you're taking the lazy way out. Realizing that moral statements are not descriptive in the ordinary way, you settle for saying that they are descriptive of something extraordinary. And, of course, this is true in a way, but totally unilluminating. Whereas if you could analyse how moral judgements function, you would have learned something.

Now, the great difficulty here, of course, is to know when you've got something right. The trouble with Russell's reductive programme is that it almost always breaks down. You try to reduce and in the end you find you can't. How do you find you can't? Through logical reasons, it seems to me. You find, in a certain sense, that your statement of equivalence doesn't come off.

And here I will come to my last point. I don't want to be too long. One of the difficulties, I think, in answering this general kind of question is that, in a way, philosophy is logic, but it's not respectable logic. It's not respectable logic by comparison with the kind of logic that Professor Dopp or Professor Poznanski does. They have systems, well-defined systems, they have criteria of what is a well formed formula, they have also criteria of what is a decision procedure. In philosophy, we're using the same concepts, we're talking of entailment, we're talking of incompatibility, without having a well-defined system. Or if we are operating with ordinary language, we're often operating with rather vague, or as I would say, with ambiguous concepts, and, in making them precise, we often seem to beg the question. I will illustrate this by another example. Take a book like Ryle's *Concept of Mind*. Now, as he himself says, and as I think all questions relating to a philosophical system could probably be shown to be, this is in a sense a work of logical geography. But when does one say that he has got it right? Here I have two remarks to make.

First, I think it becomes much more like science than is often acknowledged. In the sense that when Ryle says something like «there aren't such things as acts of volition», by which he means that there isn't anything for which «the will», or «willing» could be a name, he is inviting you to look at the facts, to consider what happens when somebody does act, as we say, voluntarily, does decide to do something. Look at it carefully, and you'll find that you don't need this mysterious concept, that what is going on could be described in a more illuminating way. Here the refutation would be to find a counter-example, just as in science. It's often very like this, except, of course, that counter examples are most often not examples that you actually come across but examples that you merely think up.

Secondly, one of the main difficulties here is what one recognizes as a counter-example. If you take something like Ryle's main thesis, in fact a stronger thesis than Ryle actually himself puts forward, that



you can eliminate all talk about inner process in favour of talk about dispositions, behaviour, etc, when would we actually get a counter-example? Well, Ryle himself admits one in the form of pangs etc. But if someone very tough indeed, someone who wants to maintain the Australian national thesis of central state materialism, insists that, in every case, you get at least a factual equivalence to some physical statement; in the end it may come to assertion and counter-assertion. So, I'm afraid, I hate to admit this, there might be in a judgement of philosophical systems a non-reducible intuitive element. But the less intuition we can have, the better; it's always a lazy and discreditable business.

#### J. PASSMORE

The antithesis suggested in some remarks of Professor Jessop's when he contrasted «gaping at individual things» with «trying to construct a system» is just the kind of false antithesis which does so much harm in philosophy. Certainly, it is quite pointless to gape at individual things, but it does not follow that the alternative is an attempt to construct a total system. The alternative, rather, is the attempt to solve problems. Of course, one tries to solve problems in a systematic way, but to say that one tries to solve problems in a systematic way is quite different from saying that one tries to construct a system.

Secondly, however, philosophers often think that they have discovered a method of solving problems, like the dialectic, or like the method of logical positivism, or Hume's method. If it is often difficult to refute philosophies, and to see what would confirm their hypotheses, this is very often because one does not quite see how to confirm or refute a method. This, of course, became a great problem about the principle of verifiability in discussions of logical positivism. But, very frequently, one can in fact refute a particular doctrine when one thinks of it as an attempt to solve a problem, simply by showing that it does not solve that problem. One tries to show that the problem breaks out again within the suggested solution.

Or, again, sometimes one refutes a theory by reference to what one could call, in a sense, empirical facts. Hume says, for example,

that to remember is to have particularly vivid perceptions. And against this one can argue: «No, a man can have a vivid perception, and yet, when pushed, he will have to admit that he is not remembering, and indeed Hume admits himself that a person can have a vivid perception and not be remembering? If he is to claim to have been remembering, he must have been compresent with the situation which he is claiming to have remembered. It is not enough for him to have had a vivid perception.

A. G. M. VAN MELSEN

My first question concerns Plato.

Is it quite correct to say that Plato speaks of a special *philosophical* cognition, intuition or whatever it may be called? My point is that Plato did not yet know the distinction we usually make between science and philosophy.

My second question concerns the concluding remarks of Mr. Rotenstreich's paper: «Neither the arguments used for justification, nor the data, the reference to which is to serve as justification are independent of the system under consideration.»

This is true, but does it not apply to non-philosophical scientific systems also? The difference is, however, that within a non-philosophical system the difficulty of «self-justification» does not come to the light, because such a system accepts without discussion a certain frame of reference. Philosophy can not avoid the difficulty. Philosophy has to make explicit all the tacitly assumed justifications of the different types of systems. Perhaps the different styles of philosophizing reflect too much the different types of systematic scientific knowledge, instead of synthesizing them.

M. BUNGE

I wonder if Professor Rotenstreich would be willing to include a fourth way of justifying philosophical doctrines, namely by their compatibility with the practice and the goals of science. How would one justify a given philosophy of science, or of mathematics, other-

wise than by showing that it accounts for real scientific research and that it promotes its progress or at least does not hamper it? Likewise with epistemology and ontology: I think an epistemological theory is justified to the extent to which it explains the process of knowledge, and that an ontological theory is justified to the extent that it gives a correct and insightful analysis and systematization of what we know concerning the basic traits of the world.

The moral would seem to be this: a philosophical system is justified just in case (a) it squares with its object, and (b) it promotes its advancement. The apparent difficulty of this view is that it seems to lead us to a circle, because we would justify a philosophical system to the extent to which it tallies with a science which, in turn, has to be justified philosophically. But this circle is also found in logic: we justify the rules of inference by the theorems they allow us to prove, and we justify the latter by the former and the assumptions. Such a circle was noticed at the beginning of the century by the mathematician Bôchner. There is nothing wrong with it because actually we always proceed step-wise, by methodical trial and error, and we can nearly always know when a significant advance has been made. If a science and its associated philosophy get richer and deeper, the two are justified; if they remain stagnant, the two become suspicious.

#### A. JOJA

D'abord, on pourrait se poser le problème si la philosophie a encore un sens. Je pense qu'elle a un sens. La métaphysique, spécialement. Pourquoi? Parce que chaque science s'occupe d'un secteur déterminé de la vérité. Il y a une science qui s'occupe de l'ensemble, de la totalité. Or, la totalité n'est jamais égale à la somme des parties. Par conséquent, il y a un fondement pour l'existence de la philosophie.

Dans le *Sophiste* de Platon, Platon distingue 5 genres suprêmes: l'être, le mouvement, le repos, l'autre et le même. Evidemment, aucune science, la physique ne s'occupera jamais, je pense, de ces caractères de la réalité. Pourtant ces caractères existent *in re*; ce ne sont

pas de simples créations de l'esprit. Il y a partout de la différence, de l'identité. L'exemple du *Sophiste* de Platon démontre qu'il y a un objet propre de la philosophie, de la métaphysique, de l'ontologie, qui s'occupe de l'être en tant qu'être. Elle ne s'occupe pas de l'être physique ou de l'être chimique ou de l'être biologique. Elle s'occupe de l'être en tant qu'être. C'est ce qui justifie l'existence de la philosophie. Un autre problème. Est-ce qu'on peut avoir des démonstrations en philosophie ? D'abord je pense que tout n'est pas démontrable évidemment. Le principe de contradiction n'est pas démontrable: Aristote dit que tous les principes et tous les axiomes se ramènent en dernière instance au principe de démonstration et que celui qui voudrait tout démontrer serait semblable à un végétal dit-il, à un γύτρον. Il ne faut pas tout démontrer. Ensuite toutes les sciences, même les sciences positives ne se ressemblent pas. Elles sont de types différents. Le problème existentiel ne se pose pas en mathématiques. Il se pose évidemment en biologie, en physique, etc. Par conséquent toutes les sciences ne sont pas du même type, par conséquent on peut admettre qu'il y a une science philosophique, mais qui n'est pas tout à fait du même type que la physique ou la chimie ou la biologie.

N. ROTENSTREICH

Since I have to sum up «supersonically», I am obliged to omit some comments which I would have liked to entertain. I shall try to combine the comments of M. Robinet with those of M. Joja, because both were somehow related to the question of demonstrability.

I would like to observe first that the examples of M. Robinet are examples of philosophical systems which can be listed as providing information. Bergson would be a case of a philosopher who provides information — an information different from that of science, of empirical science, of science related to the special concept of time; but still he provides some kind of information. Intuition is, in a way, a re-statement of the concept of *theoria*. But demonstrability and demonstration are questions which the logicians have to pick up. What kind of demonstration do we find in philosophical systems ? The demonstration of God in Malebranche and Descartes, for instance:

there is demonstration here, not as Mr. Joja hinted at, demonstration for the sake of system or for the sake of the concept as such. Because God has to solve the problem of veracity in Descartes or that of the possibility of knowledge in Malebranche. Therefore it is a concept which has to support that which is established. This is an issue which the logicians should explore.

I agree with Mr. Ayer's suggestion. I wonder whether we may appeal here exclusively to psychological habits like laziness for instance. If we may state it in a more rational and programmatic sense I would suggest two points:

One is that philosophy, as a rational activity, is interested in a network of relations, and just to say that every event is an entity in itself is a kind of paganism — it is to say that every event is a deity. There is here a case of skipping the postulate for establishing relations. You may approach an ultimate relatum which cannot be reduced, etc. There are some empirical considerations here which both Professor Ayer and Professor Passmore mentioned in different forms.

With regard to the refutation of a philosophical argument: there are, of course, refutations which appeal to empirical facts like the description of memory, or to empirical facts of the development of science. If a philosopher takes the view that causality is an *a priori* principle, and science develops differently, without employing that principle this is an appeal to an empirical fact. Not an empirical fact of sense data, but of the history of ideas.

There are also problems of contradiction, problems of *petitio principii* and so on. There are proper forms of refutation related to the character of the system, or the structure, the pattern of the system's character.

Concerning the point made by Mr. Van Melsen: the difference between the classic and the modern view of the relation of science to philosophy consists in the ladder-like structure which the classic view assumed and which the modern view did not assume.

As to Mr. Bunge's point: the philosophy of science is a way of explication, and Carnap's Logical Syntax is, supposedly an explication of science. The distinction between the formal and material mode is an explication of what science is doing. Whether or not it prevents the development of science — it does prevent if it is dogmatic, uncritical; but I do not think that science is really impaired by a kind

of philosophy. For instance, if science developed in the direction of quantum physics and does not employ the Kantian point of view of causality, it just happens so, it is not an outcome of philosophical considerations. Philosophy has to take care of this, because philosophy does not — as far as I can see — prescribe to science its method; it only explains the structure of science and the fundamental concepts employed by science.