

## SOCIAL REALITY AND PHILOSOPHY: AN ACCOUNT OF THE PROBLEM IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE

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### Abstract

In this article we consider the major views on the social determination of philosophy. After paying attention specifically to Max Scheler we come to a delimitation of the domain of sociological study of philosophy in general and within the sociology of knowledge in particular.

It has been claimed that Greek metaphysics was ahistorical.<sup>1</sup> This claim is appropriate not only with respect to Greek philosophy, but also with regard to later Medieval and even classical philosophy, including the philosophy of Kant, in so far as we can find no systematic recognition of the historical relativity of philosophy in general, i.e. the impossibility of a time-free metaphysics. It was Hegel who ventured to articulate this impossibility in these emphatic terms:

"Whatever happens, every individual is a child of his time, so philosophy too is its own time apprehended in thought. It is just as absurd to fancy that a philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as it is to fancy that an individual can overleap his own age".<sup>2</sup>

Every philosophy belongs to its time and, satisfying the interests of the day, is the manifestation of a particular stage of historical development, and therefore limited to, and restricted by, its particular historical context and conditions. Similarly, every individual is the offspring of his time, his people and world, whose characteristics are manifested in his constitution. He "may spread himself out as he will, he cannot escape out of his time any more than out of his skin".<sup>3</sup> It may, however, be asked, given his belief in the time-representation of philosophy, how Hegel accounts for the multiplicity of philosophies in any

period of time. In his last lecture of the **History of Philosophy** he argues in this way: "[whereas] several philosophies appear at the same time, they are different sides which make up one totality forming their basis; and on account of their one-sidedness we see the refutation of the one by the other".<sup>4</sup>

Hegel sees all previous philosophies as necessary stages in the development of thought. In (the lectures on the) **History of Philosophy**, he divides the whole history of philosophy after Oriental Subjectivity into eight epochs, starting from Parmenides' Greek philosophy of Being and ending with the Kantian philosophy and the philosophy of his own time.<sup>5</sup>

In a striking passage in the preface to the **Philosophy of Right** in a way which must seem very strange to those who consider him to be the most "idealist" philosopher, Hegel writes:

"Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it [i.e. instruction as to what the world ought to be]. As the thought of the world, it appears only when actuality is already there cut and dried after its process of formation has been completed. The teaching of the concept, which is also history's inescapable lesson, is that it is only when actuality is mature that the ideal first appears over against the real and that the ideal apprehends

this same real world in its substance and builds it up for itself into the shape of an intellectual realm".<sup>6</sup>

These concepts and orientations, with the decisive emphasis on the real, were certainly influential in the formation of Marx's basic views. "When philosophy paints its grey in grey, then has a shape of life gone old". "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk".<sup>7</sup>

Although Hegel maintains that the latest philosophy in every period is the highest stage of philosophical development,<sup>8</sup> he does not view all previous philosophies as mere fallacies. On the contrary they are necessary stages, and while each stage has its own form, "nothing is lost", "all principles are preserved, since philosophy in its final aspect is the totality of forms. ... All this time was required to produce the philosophy of our day".<sup>9</sup> In contrast to what is asserted by many historians of philosophy, and repeated by secondary writers, to the effect that Hegel proudly claimed for his own system the achievement of a uniquely perfect and completed philosophy, he made no monopolistic claims for this attainment. He viewed the problem in general terms, his own philosophical achievement being seen to be itself dependent upon and preserving within itself all previous philosophical developments. We see the proposition like the following quotation in a number of different places:

"The latest philosophy contains therefore those which went before; it embraces in itself all the different stages thereof; it is the product and result of those that preceded it".<sup>10</sup>

While impressed by the historical method of Hegel, Feuerbach subjected "speculative" philosophy to a devastating critique. For Feuerbach, philosophy is nothing but self-conceptions expressing ordinary and human needs, in a doubly hypostatized way. Because, upon religion which is a concrete expression of these needs theology imposes an abstruse expression and philosophy gives them a fully abstract representation. "The secret of philosophy is theology", and, "the secret of theology is anthropology". Therefore philosophy is a double alienation of self-consciousness. It is for the same reason that he forcefully rejects speculative philosophy:

"I unconditionally repudiate absolute, immaterial, self-sufficing speculation - that speculation which creates its material out of itself. I am worlds apart from those philosophers who pluck out their eyes the better to think. I require the senses for my thinking, above all, I require my eyes; I found my ideas on those materials which can be appropriated only by means of sense-activity. I do not generate the object from thought, but on the contrary, thought from the object. But only that is an object which exists outside my head".<sup>11</sup>

He emphasises that the road taken by speculative philosophy is an "inverted one" which will never lead to "true, objective reality". Speculative philosophy should free itself from the prefix "speculative"; "speculation is drunken philosophy. Philosophy will become sober once again".<sup>12</sup>

It is actually in the later period of his life<sup>12/2</sup> that Feuerbach, feeling more and more independent from Hegelian philosophy, adopts a sceptical attitude towards the commonly held belief of the Young-Hegelians in the absoluteness of Hegel's philosophy.

"Philosophy must, in any case, surpass and go beyond Hegelianism. It is speculative superstition to believe in the actual incarnation of philosophy in a particular historical phenomenon. How can you want to be philosophers, and at the same time confine the eternally creative life of the spirit in narrow time-space limits? There was a time when Aristotle was philosophically and rationally valid. Haven't this time and its beliefs vanished?"<sup>13</sup>

These criticisms of philosophy by Feuerbach were highly influential on Marx. In a letter to Ruge (1843), Marx, after reading Feuerbach's provisional **Theses For a Reform of Philosophy** (1842), said that he was in agreement with it wholeheartedly, except for the exaggerated significance Feuerbach had placed upon natural philosophy at the expense of politics.<sup>14</sup> Marx in the **Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right, Introduction**, maintains that just as ancients lived their previous history in mythology, Germans have lived their future history in philosophy. Marx continues that while the "practical political party" in Germany is right to demand the negation of philosophy, it goes wrong in demanding what that does not and cannot achieve, because it does not recognize that philosophy is part of German reality, or regards it as beneath German practice. He warns "you cannot transcend philosophy without realizing it". On the other hand, the "theoretical political party", having its origin in philosophy, has the basic defect that "it believed that it could realize philosophy without transcending it".<sup>15</sup> Now is the time for Marx to elaborate his own view of Hegel:

"The criticism of the German philosophy of the state and of law, which received its most consistent, thorough and complete formulation from **Hegel**, is both these things: it is at once a critical analysis of the modern state and of the reality connected with it and a decisive negation of all previous forms of political and juridical consciousness in Germany, whose most refined and universal expression, elevated to the level of a science, is precisely the speculative philosophy of law".<sup>16</sup>

But the criticism of the speculative philosophy of law cannot find its progression "within itself". It can be done in only one way; through practice (praxis). This practice will realize emancipation. But:

"The **head** of this emancipation is **philosophy**, its **heart** the **proletariat**. Philosophy cannot realize itself without the transcendence of the proletariat, and the proletariat cannot transcend itself without the realization of philosophy".<sup>17</sup>

Marx, in the historical analysis of the genesis of philosophy, in the **German Ideology**, retraces its emergence to the moment of division of labour. Here he starts with the axiom that consciousness is a social product. Historically speaking, in the beginning, it is merely simple



consciousness of immediate sensuous environment, nature, other things and persons, and their limited connection. In this stage, man's consciousness of association with other individuals is mere "herd-consciousness". With the increase in productivity, need, population, and consequently the division of labour, consciousness develops. Division of labour which originally was only in the sexual act, then developed spontaneously by virtue of natural predisposition, needs, accidents etc. "Division of labour only becomes truly such", continues Marx, "from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears". It is from this moment that consciousness can "flatter itself that it is something other than consciousness of existing practice", i.e., to emancipate itself from the world and to form "pure" theory, theology, philosophy etc.<sup>18</sup> However, this supposed emancipation is for Marx illusory. He also considers philosophy as a part of ideology, which is determined by life's reality.<sup>19</sup> German philosophy, for example, is a "consequence of German petty-bourgeois conditions",<sup>20</sup> and Kant's philosophy corresponds to the "impotence, depression and wretchedness of the German burghers", as compared to the French and English bourgeoisie.<sup>21</sup> To differentiate his approach from German idealist philosophy, he writes: "In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven".<sup>22</sup> This reminds one of Feuerbach's suggestion that "the road taken so far by speculative philosophy, from the abstract to the concrete, from the ideal to the real, is an inverted one".<sup>23</sup>

In our view, independently of Marx, Engels does not really contribute very significant new insights. Almost half a century after the publication of their **German Ideology**, in 1890, in an attempt to rectify the exaggerated economic interpretation of their theories, Engels writes in a letter to C. Schmidt:

"As to the realms of ideology which soar still higher in the air-religion, philosophy, etc.- these have a prehistoric stock, found already in existence by and taken over in the historical period, of what we should today call bunk. These various false conceptions of nature, of man's own being, of spirits, magic forces, etc., have for the most part only a negative economic elements as their basis; the low economic development of the prehistoric period is supplemented and also partially conditioned and even caused by the false conceptions of nature. And even though economic necessity was the main driving force of the progressive knowledge of nature and has become ever more so, it would surely be pedantic to try and find economic causes for all this primitive nonsense. The history of science is the history of gradual clearing away of this nonsense or rather of its replacement by fresh but always less absurd nonsense".<sup>24</sup>

With these slogans, Engels could only establish that he would not hesitate in the previous well-rooted conviction (economism), and showed that he was wrong in conceiving that the younger followers had interpreted them (Marx

and Engels) incorrectly.<sup>25</sup> He, once again, reaffirms that "all the same they themselves [philosophy, religion etc] are in turn under the dominating influence of economic development"; "I consider the ultimate supremacy of economic development established in these spheres too".<sup>26</sup> Hobbes was the first modern materialist, Engels says, but an absolutist because of absolute monarchy in Europe. Locke was the child of the class compromise of 1688. The English deists and the French materialists were the true philosophers of the bourgeoisie.<sup>27</sup>

Vulgar Marxists follow the line opened up by Engels through his simplifications. On the other hand "Orthodox Marxists", in contradistinction to the crude materialistic approach of "Positivist Marxists", try to follow a more deliberate Marxian approach. An example of the latter is Lukács, who, while believing in the inability of bourgeois philosophy<sup>28</sup> to comprehend total reality, does not reject the possibility of such comprehension by a non-bourgeois one. He not only does not refer to philosophy as mere nonsense or illusion, but even considers the proletarian dialectical method<sup>29</sup> the continuation of classical philosophy.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, although Lukács considers philosophy to be a social reflection,<sup>31</sup> he also gives an emancipatory role of some kind to philosophy and art.<sup>32</sup>

A similar line is followed by Gramsci. He considers philosophy to be historically determined.<sup>33</sup> But although "all hitherto existing philosophies have been manifestations of the intimate contradictions by which society is lacerated",<sup>34</sup> in the history of philosophical thought, Gramsci emphasizes, Hegel represents "a chapter of his own" in which one can understand what reality is. That is to say "one finds in a single system and in a single philosopher, that consciousness of contradictions which one previously acquired from the **ensemble** of systems and philosophers in polemic and contradiction with each other". The "philosophy of praxis", i.e. Marxism, is for him a "reform and a development of Hegelianism".<sup>35</sup> Besides Classical German philosophy, this reform was realized in English classical economics, and French political literature.<sup>36</sup> Philosophies, in order to become creative of new history, Gramsci maintains, must assume the form of "popular beliefs"; "common sense". Philosophy must become an ideology, to enjoy the energy of "material forces". That is why "the philosophy of praxis" is considered by him to be a "critico-practical activity".<sup>37</sup> It is the supreme importance of this critical (political) side of the concept for Gramsci, that convinces him that while pragmatism, as a philosophy, wishes "to tie itself immediately to practice", the German or Italian ("individual") type of philosopher is "more 'practical' than the pragmatist who judges from immediate reality". That is because the former "sets his sights higher and tends to raise the existing cultural level".<sup>38</sup> This view is reminiscent of Lenin's dictum that "A wise idealism is closer to a wise materialism than is a stupid materialism".

Korsch also stands in the camp of those Neo-Marxists who appealed for the "resurrection of philosophy",<sup>39</sup> in one way or another. He wrote in his **Marxismus und Philosophie** (1923), "the dialectical materialism of Marx



and Engels is by its very nature a philosophy through and through".<sup>40</sup> Just as he, like others such as Gramsci and Lukács (at least at that time), stood politically against Stalinism, so also in the intellectual realm he fought against the anti-philosophical stance of vulgarised Marxism.<sup>41</sup> Their attempt was a starting point in the foundation of a general orientation of European Marxism in "decisive .... rejection of Engels' philosophical heritage".<sup>42</sup>

Marcuse's work is also to be followed through this line. He warns that Marx's criticism must not be confounded with the destruction of philosophy. For Marcuse it is the function of philosophy to recognize the irrational in the existing reality, along with its "concrete negation". Moreover, he justifies the Hegelian relation between philosophy and art in this way: "art allows for the sensual appearance of the concept".<sup>43</sup> Art is the "break with everyday reality". Capitalist cultures strive to "integrate art into life" or "reconcile art and life". Marcuse rejects any dogmatic belief in the completeness or absolute validity of Marxism. "The relationship of aesthetics to Marxist theory [is] as such: art preserves that which was not elaborated in the idea of socialism",<sup>44</sup> "Theory must be formulated anew."<sup>45</sup> Marcuse by announcing the impossibility of understanding existing reality without Freud's metapsychology, in fact, has historicized Marxism itself. Gramsci has done the same. Sartre, even more articulately, does the same. In his **Critique of Dialectical Reason**<sup>46</sup> Sartre maintains that in every age there is one, and only one philosophy. This philosophy cannot be transcended or circumvented. Marxism, according to him, was one of this kind, but now must be rejuvenated by existentialism.

One of the most radical, regarding philosophy in particular, in the Marxist tradition is Ernst Bloch, an uncompromising enemy of vulgar Marxism. For him, not only is philosophy not nonsense, but it is that "moving *cantus firmus* which provides stability and direction". Philosophy, he believes, "stands on the front line", knowledgeably active in the process of transformation.<sup>47</sup> Things are "abbreviated forms of themselves", and want to "end apocalyptically",<sup>48</sup> in order to be perfected. And philosophy may be characterized as the "hope conceived in materialistic terms".<sup>49</sup> Utopia points to this future which is to be realized through practical change.<sup>50</sup> Bloch's approach to philosophy is neither "positivistic" nor "idealistic", and neither "relativistic" nor "agnostic". He writes:

"in the authentic and responsible philosophy that we have to pursue, there is no relativism and certainly no agnosticism. No relativism, as though all cognitions were subjective or forever restricted to historical ideologies; and no agnosticism, as though *rerum natura*, the nature of things, were essentially uncognizable. Relativism and agnosticism are, rather, manifestations of cowardice or a decline of philosophy, and have no place in it".<sup>51</sup>

Now, we will continue our discussion outside the camp of Marxism. We consider Dilthey first. In his analysis of

philosophy, two keywords of his system, life and understanding, have especial importance. Philosophy is neither completely individual nor completely societal:

"Philosophy is an operation which springs from the need of the individual mind for reflection upon its activity, for inner clarity and firmness in action, for a stable form of relation to the whole of human society, and it is likewise a function which is grounded in the structure of society and necessary for the perfection of its life. It is therefore a function which takes place in the same way in many minds, and binds them together in a social and historical unity".<sup>52</sup>

The nature of philosophy, according to Dilthey, lies in the relation between the tendency towards the highest generalizations and final explanations on the one hand, and the individual functions governed by the circumstances of the age on the other. Thus metaphysics develops everywhere in the "inner connection between life, experience of life and a view of the world",<sup>53</sup> and functions under the various conditions of historical life. "Philosophy adapts itself to every stage in the development of culture and to all the conditions involved in its historical situation".<sup>54</sup> But this of course does not mean that Dilthey has fallen into a crude determinism. For he explains that "the fundamental characteristic in all the functions of philosophy is... the drive of the mind which moves forward beyond its attachment to determinate, finite, limited interests".<sup>55</sup>

For Dilthey, all **Weltanschauungen** arise from the objectification of ways of thinking, feeling, experiencing, desiring, and seeking of living man. He classifies all *Weltanschauungen* into three types:

- (1) materialism or naturalism: this type is based on a view of human nature which gives primacy to its animal side. On the question of the good life, its criterion is pleasure or power; in religion it is anti-otherworldly; in art it is "realist"; in philosophy it is positivist, and in ethics it is either hedonist or preacher of enlightenment. Representatives of this type are Democritus, Lucretius, Epicurus, Hobbes, the Encyclopaedists, modern materialists, Comte and Avenarius.
- (2) Objective idealism: This type is contemplative and holistic. Its philosophy is "organic"; its epistemology is intellectual — intuitionist; in art it is represented by Goethe; in religion Indian Pantheism is a representative. Exponents of this type of philosophy are Heraclitus, the strict school of Stoicism, Averroes, Bruno, Spinoza, Leibniz, Goethe, Schelling, Hegel and Schleiermacher.
- (3) Idealism of freedom: This type is based on man's inner experience of free will. Its religion is theist; its art is based on a concept of the world as a "theatre of heroic action"; its philosophy has reason as its base. Its representatives are Plato, Hellenistic and Roman philosophy of life represented by Cicero, Christian speculation, Kant, Fichte, Maine de Biran, and Carlyle.<sup>56</sup>

The point that should not be missed out here is that although Dilthey relativizes philosophies according to life's realities, including social circumstances, he does not



relativise the truth-content of philosophies. This point is expressed more clearly by Scheler.

For Scheler, knowledge consists of three different types: knowledge of control or achievement (science), knowledge of essence or culture (first philosophy), and knowledge of metaphysical reality or salvation (religion). Each of these types has characteristics of its own: in its domain (phenomenal reality, essential structure of all being, and metaphysical reality or salvation - for science, philosophy, and religion respectively); in its source and method (induction, deduction, charismatic contact with God); in its motive (drive to exercise power over nature and society, drive and feeling of wonder - *θαυμαζω* about existence, drive to safeguard through salvation); in its ideal type of leaders (researcher & technologist, sage, homoreligiosus); in its form of movement (paradigmatic & progressive & devaluative, non-cumulative & non-devaluative, retrospective - back to the origin); and in its social organizational form (university & institution, school - in the classic sense, ecclesia).

The second type of knowledge, philosophy, therefore has for its motive or what Scheler called the "drive to know", the "spiritual feeling of astonishment [wonder]";<sup>57</sup> wonderment that this or that object "exists at all". Therefore, philosophic thinking revolves around the question of the essence of the world.<sup>58</sup> Essences and essential relations are the "world constants", knowledge of which is "evident, complete, and a priori to the quantity of inductive experience".<sup>59</sup>

From the sociological point of view, metaphysics, i.e. philosophy, Scheler states, is related to the "intellectual élite". This élite, free from religious, traditional and economic ties and work, has the time to look, with a theoretical attitude, at the "essential structure" of the world, and to establish "probable hypotheses about the ultimate ground of things". Metaphysics, by necessity, is tied to a "person", because the totality of the world, is accessible only to "one concrete person". This is precisely why the social form of metaphysics is the "school" with a "sage" as its centre. Pertinence of metaphysics to the complex concept of "person"<sup>60</sup> in Scheler, is the foundation for the analysis of many formal and sociological questions. The world totality given to a person gives meaning to the concept of "microcosm",<sup>61</sup> an idea repeated since Aristotle. Moreover, although metaphysics is the "venture of reason to penetrate into absolute reality", because it is achieved with man's essential, personal powers, he is always "personally" responsible. It is also "continuously hypothetical", in contrast to the impersonal theories of science.<sup>62</sup> Thus metaphysics remains personally bound to the "intellectual physiognomy of its originator", of which "his world" is the reflection.<sup>63</sup> It is also "valid" only for those "who feel its nature to be in spiritual unity with the nature of a metaphysician who corresponds to their own ideal person-type".<sup>64</sup>

The metaphysician as a person is mediated by his inner solidarity and participation in the totality of historical world experience; in his unity with the world. Therefore the estates and classes to which a metaphysician belongs

are of great importance for the structure of his metaphysics. Metaphysicians mostly come from estates and classes of "cultivation and possession", in contrast to prophets who come, in general, from lower classes.<sup>65</sup> This, of course, is not without exception. For example Epictetus was a slave. Also Stoic philosophy had become more and more an ideology of a suppressed class, so that Spengler compares it to modern proletarian socialism. Moreover class is important in the maintenance of a type of metaphysics. To the question why in the feudal era contemplative metaphysics had an institutional character, possessing a relatively strong position, in contrast to modern metaphysics of relatively "lonely thinkers" such as Descartes, Malebranche, Spinoza, Leibniz and Kant, Scheler answers:

"a feudal class of leaders that accumulates its wealth not through its own work but through the work of others and through political privileges, likewise can and will maintain, with its own peculiar 'largesse' and through the products of unfree labour, intellectual and contemplative classes that are economically unproductive."<sup>66</sup>

Quite different is the connection with the bourgeoisie. Since these new classes produced their own wealth and were eager to abolish economically unproductive and dependent forms of work, "the contemplative and metaphysical attitude of mind increasingly was deprived of its necessary economic basis".<sup>67</sup> Within the same framework can be described the differences between the various European philosophies. French philosophy had been a philosophy of the "enlightened nobility" since the overcoming of the medieval Scholasticism until Rousseau. It was "world-open, non-academic, and non-pedantic" and directed itself to the entire learned world. It was the same in Italy, where the "patrician city-nobility" had aimed at cultivation of the mind. In contrast to them was German philosophy, where "the difference between castles of nobility and burghers of the town was fundamental to the history of German nobility". Modern German philosophy has been the work of the learned protestant middle class. This explains, Scheler says, its style, mostly with cumbersome terminology, its contemplative character, disconnected from the real world, and with a weak relation to the natural sciences. It is also non-political, in contrast to "British philosophers of the larger bourgeoisie, who are both statesmen and economists".<sup>68</sup>

Furthermore, the philosophical system remains bound to the whole culture. The metaphysics of India could originate only in India and not in Greece and vice versa.<sup>69</sup> Within different racial dispositions and different "relatively natural world-views",<sup>69/2</sup> Europe and Asia have approached problems of knowledge from fundamentally different directions: "Europe's predominant direction has been from matter to the soul; Asia's has been from the soul to matter."<sup>70</sup> Asian metaphysics is metaphysics of "forests",<sup>71</sup> of immediate contact with nature, of "metaphysical-democratic" conscious unity of man with all subhuman life.<sup>72</sup> By contrast, Western metaphysics



"cannot learn anything from the trees", and is a product of city-thinking. It rests on different concepts of self and nature: man is a sovereign being over nature.<sup>73</sup> These differences also help to account for why metaphysics grew better in the East, and won dominance over science and religion, while in the West, science and religion progressed and both exercised domination over metaphysics.<sup>74</sup>

"In their historical manifestations", Scheler writes, "the most general types of metaphysics in a cultural field are *side by side* with one another during the process of cultural development".<sup>75</sup> Metaphysics itself grows throughout history and perfects its "fullness and comprehension" with the incorporation of elements of truth contained in other metaphysical systems. This process, at the same time, relativises these systems.<sup>76</sup>

In contrast to science that founds itself on constant principles, universality,<sup>77</sup> and universal standards of proof, metaphysics remains hypothetical, probable, and "personal":

"The 'conflict' among various metaphysics can never be settled in the same sense and by the same methods as are conflicts among the sciences. This follows by necessity from the first object of metaphysics, which is to deal with undefinable, basic concepts to which one can only point [aufweisbar] and with unprovable principles that govern the essential interconnections of the world and which necessarily underlie all possible proofs. And this follows also from the fact that metaphysics in full consciousness abandons the principle of positive science, viz. that every question that cannot be settled by observation, measurement and mathematical calculation is to be concluded as senseless, and that it thereby wishes to furnish a hypothetical total view of how all things, ordered according to ultimate essences, are rooted in 'absolute reality'.<sup>78</sup>

Although there is growth in metaphysics, Scheler tells us, it does not possess "progress", which belongs by nature to science. By "progress" he means the devaluation of earlier states of science by a new one. "The systems of Plato and Aristotle, Augustine, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, etc., are not obsolete today, as are Lavoisier's chemistry and Newton's mechanics, and they can never become obsolete."<sup>79</sup> Therefore we can certainly say that Scheler rejects the possibility of application of Popper's later theory of "refutation" or "falsification" within the metaphysical domain.<sup>80</sup> He moreover maintains that the "prevailing metaphysical systems are never crushed by positive science, which itself is determined by metaphysics - more than it suspects. Rather, metaphysics is crushed only by new metaphysical systems or by a religion."<sup>81</sup>

The sociological study of metaphysical systems, which has been discussed here in very restricted detail, can be found as breaking into the "ivory towers" of philosophical thinking, which many philosophers and non-philosophers alike have thought to be absolute, pure, and unchangeable. Researches of this kind aim to bring to consciousness

the fact that philosophers are not mere minds or intellects, but are human beings of flesh and blood, with desires and interests, and open to impressions of different kinds, and that all these factors are influential in their philosophical thought forms.

While saying this, however, we must emphasize that these existential parameters do not influence the truth-content of the systems. In this respect we follow, basically, the Schelerian view.<sup>83</sup> Moreover, social factors have not, always and everywhere, determined philosophical systems equally and similarly, in kind and degree. More important, they have not been similarly assessed by different social researchers. For example on the issue of ancient Greek philosophy and logic, some have claimed that the validity criterion of Aristotelian logic is culture and class determined,<sup>84</sup> while others have stated that the role of "polis" has been merely to make available those social opportunities (like economic requirements of the thinker, cultural support of state, etc.) that have made it possible for the thinker to devise his system. Despite the deep gap between the two assertions, one thing is certain; it is that the political theories of Plato and Aristotle, for example, were highly influenced by the City-State organization of ancient Greece. We have already indicated different types of determination, regarding metaphysics. In ancient Greece, for example, there was not any powerful religious pressure over metaphysics, because of the absence of a universal organized religion with recognized authority. Therefore its determination complex is different from the historical realities of other situations. In China, philosophy was more concerned with problems of daily life. Confucianists, Mohists, Legalists, etc. were all engaged in the search for a cure for the ills of the time. The stress in Chinese philosophy is on practical aspects of life rather than on questions of logic and truth. In general terms, Chinese philosophy can be characterised as pragmatic. The ideal of harmony that dominated the Chinese mind - in Confucianism communal harmony and in Taoism natural harmony - also may be looked at within this framework. Thisworldliness pervades almost all aspects of Chinese thought. Even Buddhism when it entered China from India took on a this-worldly colour. These attributes render understandable the close relationship between state and philosophy in China. New-Confucianism as the official philosophy is an example.<sup>85</sup>

In India, in contrast to China, philosophy is more otherworldly. Nonetheless the picture of the social structure is pre-eminent in many philosophical concepts.<sup>86</sup> It is also one of the characteristics of Indian philosophy that despite the fact that it was more in contact with religious ideas, it was neither, in general, a religious philosophy, nor under religion's pressure.

In medieval Christianity and Islam, philosophy came under the rule of both Court and Church, i.e. politics and theology. Although with the rise of the Renaissance, philosophy partially and gradually started to free itself from the yoke of the organized church, many of the new forms of philosophy were subjected to the sovereignty of science instead. Moreover, they continued to bear the



impact of the social structure; the political influence. It is on the basis of the latter that we encounter judgements such as: the bourgeois origins of Nominalism;<sup>87</sup> the social ethos of seventeenth century Puritanism's impetus for Utilitarianism;<sup>88</sup> the liberal bourgeois' association with Anglo-Saxon philosophy;<sup>89</sup> and the professional middle class origin of positivism.<sup>90</sup>

In contrast to many critics who see only negative points in the relativization of philosophical systems, we want to emphasize the positive side of the problem as well.<sup>91</sup> That is, consciousness of historical relativization not only enables us to recognise the restrictions and partiality of our own and others' systems of thought, but also enables us to overcome this partiality, as far as possible, through recognition and submission to the partial truth of other systems. It implies and involves a preparation or desire for the richer understanding of world, life and self.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES

- 1 In Germany this point was made by Nietzsche, and repeated by Spengler. In more recent times it has been noted, amongst others in Britain, by Collingwood.
- 2 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, Oxford, 1942, p.11.
- 3 Hegel, *History of Philosophy*, tr. E. Haldane, London, 1892, vol. I, p.45.
- 4 Ibid, vol. III, p.548.
- 5 Ibid, vol. III, p. 548-50.
- 6 Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p.12-13.
- 7 Ibid, p.13.
- 8 Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy (*History of Philosophy*), op.cit., vol.I, p.41. Also vol.III, p.547 and 552.
- 9 Ibid, voll.III, p.546.
- 10 Ibid, vol.III, pp.552-3.
- 11 Feuerbach, Collected Works, (ed. Sass) VII, p.280; in Wartofsky's *Feuerbach*, Cambridge, 1977, p.256.
- 12 Ibid, VII, p.153; in Wartofsky's *Feuerbach*, p.172.
- 12/2 Feuerbach's articulated criticism of Hegel's idealism, and speculative philosophy in general, takes from around 1840, and becomes stronger later.
- 13 Ibid, p.171 (Wartofsky).
- 14 Cf. Lucio Colletti's introduction to Marx, *Early Writings*, Pelican, Middlesex, 1975, p.23. Colletti merely gives the letter's date as March 1843 (without a day). However, in the letter of Marx to Ruge dated 13th March 1843 (in McLellan(ed), *Early Texts*, Oxford, 1972, pp.58-60), although there is an indication of this problem of nature and politics in Feuerbach, you do not find the information given by Colletti.
- 15 Marx, "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction", in *Early Writings*, (Pelican, op.cit.), pp.249-50.
- 16 Ibid, p.250.
- 17 Ibid, p.257. Tom Bottomore in his translation of 'Aufhebung', instead of "transcendence", used by Levingstone & Benton, has used the word "abolition" (Bottomore(ed), Marx, *Early Writings*, London, 1963, p.59). McLellan has also used the term "transcendence" in his translation (McLellan(ed), Marx, *Early Texts*, p.129), which seems more understandable and more appropriate, indicating more clearly the (Hegelian) sense of supercession, preservation and elevation to a higher level.
- 18 Cf. Karl Marx, *The German Ideology*, (ed. C.J. Arthur), London, 1970, pp.51-2.
- 19 Ibid, p.47.
- 20 Ibid, p.118.
- 21 Ibid, p.97.
- 22 Ibid, p.47.
- 23 Feuerbach, Collected Works, II, p.232; Wartofsky's translation, in *Feuerbach*, Cambridge, 1977, p.358.
- 24 Engels to C.Schmidt, Oct. 27, 1890, in Marx-Engels, *Selected Works*, London, 1968, (in one volume), p.687-8.
- 25 Earlier, he had mentioned that "Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side that is due to it". Engels to J.Bloch, *ibid*, p.683.
- 26 Ibid, p.688.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, London, 1971, p.109.
- 29 It may be noted that, with many others, Gurvitch holds the belief that "to consider the proletarian class as the source of philosophical knowledge rests on *beliefs and myths*" (his italics); *The Social Framework of Knowledge*, Oxford, 1971, p.108. Of course terms such as "proletarian philosophy" and "proletarian science" are more fully (and crudely) articulated by vulgar Marxists.
- 30 G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness*, pp. 148-9.
- 31 Ibid, p.134.
- 32 Cf. G. Lukács, "The Ontological Bases of Human Thought and Action", Telos, Fall '75, no 7, p.36. For his programme for philosophy see for example, *History and Class Consciousness*, pp.110-111.
- 33 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London, 1971, p.368. See also pp.343-7.
- 34 Ibid, 404.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid, p.399.
- 37 Ibid, p.321-2, and p.404.
- 38 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, London, 1971, p.372-3.
- 39 The term is used by Neil McInnes; *The Western Marxists*, New York, 1972, p.22.
- 40 Karl Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy*, London, 1970, p.67.
- 41 He was denounced by the Communist International as a heretic, and was expelled from the Communist party, in 1926.
- 42 Perry Anderson, *Considerations on Western Marxism*, London, 1976, p.60.
- 43 Marcuse, in "Theory and Politics: A Discussion With Herbert Marcuse, Juergen Habermas, Heinz Lubasz and Telman Spencer", Telos, Winter 1978-9, 38, p.141.
- 44 Ibid, p.145.
- 45 Ibid, p.150.
- 46 J.P.Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, London, 1976.
- 47 E. Bloch, *On Karl Marx*, tr.J. Maxwell, New York, 1971, p.134-5.
- 48 Michael Landmann, "Critique of Reason from Max Weber to Ernst Bloch", Telos, Fall 1976, no 29, p.198.
- 49 Ernst Bloch, *On Karl Marx*, p. 139.
- 50 For more detail of his theory of transmission, and the role of utopia, see his "Causality and Finality", Telos, Fall 1974, 21, p.96-107.
- 51 E. Bloch, *On Karl Marx*, p.138.
- 52 W. Dilthey, "What is Philosophy?", in H.A. Hodges, *Wilhelm Dilthey - An Introduction*, London, 1944, p.149. In order not to oversocialize philosophy, he emphasizes "of all systems of purposes, art and philosophy are those which bind individuals least closely to one another. For the function which the artist or the philosopher fulfils is not conditioned by any organized form of life; its realm is that of the mind's highest freedom". (p.150).
- 53 W. Dilthey, *pattern & Meaning in History*, New York, 1962, p.149.
- 54 Dilthey, "What is Philosophy?", in Hodges' *Wilhelm Dilthey - An Introduction*, p.151. He emphasizes that "every solution of the philosophical problems belongs from a historical point of view to a particular situation at that date". (P.155).
- 55 Ibid, p.151.
- 56 Ibid, pp.152-4. Also see H.Hodges, *The Philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey*, London, 1952, pp.88-90.
- 57 Scheler, *S of K*, p.78.
- 58 Cf. Max Scheler, *Philosophical Perspectives*, Boston, 1958, pp.44-47.
- 59 Scheler, "On the Positivistic Philosophy of the History of Knowledge and Its Law of Three Stages", in Curtis & Petras, *The Sociology of Knowledge*, New York, 1970, p.168.
- 60 For his analysis of the concept and its different aspects, see the chapter "Formalism and Person", in *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, tr.M.Frings and R.Funk, Evanston, 1973, pp.370-595.
- 61 Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, pp.396-8.
- 62 This may be also the reason why metaphysics becomes impossible according to positivism (Mach, Avenarius, as well as empiricism, sensationism etc in general) Neo-Kantianism and historicism (Marx, Dilthey, Troeltsch, Spengler), which Scheler refutes in this respect. Cf.



- his *Philosophical Perspectives*, p.2-3.
- 63 Scheler, "On the Positivistic Philosophy...", op cit, p.168.
- 64 Scheler, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, London, 1980, p.96.
- 65 Max Weber says this is not the case. See his "The Social Psychology of the World Religions", in *From Max Weber*, London, 1974, p.274.
- 66 Scheler, *S of K* (Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge), p.164.
- 67 Ibid.
- 68 Ibid, pp.98-9.
- 69 Scheler, "On the Positivistic Philosophy...", p.168.
- 69/2 "Relatively Natural World-View", for Scheler, is the basic cultural mentality of a nation, with an organic growth advancing only during a lengthy period of time. It lay behind all intellectual products of the generation.
- 70 Scheler, *S of K*, p.148.
- 71 Cf. R. Tagore, *Sadhana: The Realization of Life*, London, 1920.
- 72 Scheler, *S of K*, p.98. Scheler uses the term "Asian Indian" here. We should mention that in Eastern Asia both Chinese and Indian philosophers, generally, are inclined to pure nature, while in Western Asia, philosophy, at least after the dominance of Islamic culture, namely Islamic philosophy, does not share this characteristic.
- 73 For the different concepts of "control" in East and West; self-control and nature-control, see Scheler's *S of K*, pp.139-144. The similarity between Scheler and Weber can be seen for example in their views on the difference between East and West concerning asceticism (suffering) & action. See for example Scheler's *S of K*, pp.139-44, and Weber's "The Social Psychology of the World Religions", in *From Max Weber*, p.285 & 291.
- 74 See Scheler's *S of K*, p.91, also p.181. For further details of Scheler's explanation as to why religion won dominance over metaphysics see *S of K*, p.83-4 and 91-4, as well as his *Philosophical Perspectives*, p.117-8. The pressure of religion on philosophy has been discussed by many later writers, including by those of Christian faith; see for example F.C. Copleston, *Philosophies and Cultures*, Oxford, 1980, pp.16, 71-2, and 136-7.
- 75 Scheler, *S of K*, p.95.
- 76 It is with the acceptance of this process of relativization that Scheler can talk about the phases in the history of philosophy (*S of K*, p.99-100); to reject the concept of fixed reason in the classical epistemology (*S of K*, p.40-41); to suggest the changing structure of reason (*Man's Place in Nature*, Boston, 1968, p.51); and to consider the existing concept of "reason" as masculine ("Concerning the Meaning of the Feminist Movement", *Philosophical Forum*, Fall 1977, 9, p.48.)
- 77 to which K. Popper, later, applies the term "public".
- 78 Scheler, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, p. 95.
- 79 Scheler, "On the Positivistic Philosophy...", p.168.
- 80 Scheler's idea of validity is basically different from the positivistic conceptual experiments of Popper. He can never put anything metaphysical in the waiting list of Popperism to be tested.
- 81 Scheler, *S of K*, p.97.
- 83 Specifically on the problem of social determination of philosophy, and on the question of its truth-content, we believe that among the existing theories, philosopher-sociologist Scheler has elaborated the most comprehensive, coherent and far-going one. On the one hand, at the existential level Scheler's relativization goes radically down to axiological principles, value-preferences, and value-perceptions; relativizing all (relatively) natural world-views and perspectives. On the other hand, at the essential level his non-relativity of objectivity and truth-contents stands firm and uncompromisable.
- 84 For example see J. Dewey's *Experience and Nature*, New York, 1925; and his *Logic; The Theory of Inquiry*, New York, 1938. See also C.W. Mills, "Language, Logic, and Culture", *American Sociological Review*, 1939, IV, 5.
- 85 For discussions on these aspects of the Chinese thought see for example: H.G. Creel, *Chinese Thought From Confucius To Mao Tse-tung*, Secaucus, N.J., 1962; C. Linang, *A History of Chinese Political Thought*, London, 1930; M. Weber, *Religion of China*, New York, 1962; D.J. Munro, *The Concept of Man in Early China*, Stanford, 1969; and F.C. Copleston, *Philosophies and Cultures*, Oxford, 1980.
- 86 In this respect see Max Weber's "The Social Psychology of the World Religions", in *From Max Weber*; and *Religion of India*, 111., 1962. For the discussion of the general ideas of Indian philosophy see for instance S. Radhakrishnan, *History of Indian Philosophy*, London, 1962; S.N. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Cambridge, 1951-5; R.A. Sinari, *The Structure of Indian Thought*, Springfield, 1970; N. Smart, *Doctrine and Argument in Indian Philosophy*, London, 1964; and T. Ling, *Buddhist Revival in India*, London, 1980; *Buddha, Marx, and God*, New York, 1966.
- 87 E. Conze, "Bourgeois Origins of Nominalism", *Marxist Quarterly*, I, 1.
- 88 R.K. Merton, *Science, Society, and Technology in Seventeenth Century England*, Bruges, 1938.
- 89 R.A. Sharpe, "Ideology and Ontology", *Philosophy of The Social Sciences*, 1974, 4.
- 90 I. Horowitz, *Philosophy, Science, and Sociology of Knowledge*, Springfield, 1961, 49-50. E. Nagel in his article, "Impression and Appraisals of Analytic Philosophy in Europe" (2 parts, *The Journal of Philosophy*, 1936) talks about the significance of the economic and political motivations in central Europe for the formal ethical neutrality of positivism. D.M. Simonton speaks of the positive impact of political fragmentation on the emergence of empiricism, scepticism-criticism, materialism, etc. (D.K. Simonton, "The Sociopolitical Context of Philosophical Beliefs: A Transhistorical Causal Analysis", *Social Forces*, 1976, 54, 3.).
- 91 It does not mean, of course, that the present writer is taking the side of the limitless and thorough-going relativism that relativizes even the whole criterion of validity and rejects the objectivity of an ultimate truth. This relativism, obviously, is self-contradictory and doomed to self-falsification.

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