

Philosophy in a Catholic University

1. Pleasure satisfaction: where father studied; near home town
2. Not intention to study relations between two abstractions (phil, Cath Univ)
But to indicate (A) the opportunity presented philosophy by the contemporary situation in the sciences
(B) the requirements that must be met by a philosophy that could exploit the opportunity
(C) the answer to the question whether Thomism is such a philosophy

(A) The Contemporary Opportunity.

1. The opportunity presented by contemporary physics.

Modern science arose in rebellion against the Aristotelians; it proclaimed in effect a 'mechanist determinism'; the philosophic suppositions and the nature of scientific method were not clearly distinguished; but the advance of science itself has forced the distinction.

Relativity excludes the imaginable space-time

Quantum mechanics excludes the imaginable particle moving determinately in accord with necessary laws

Contemporary physicists don't know and would like to know what on earth it is that they know by their verified equations. (Variations: pragmatism to speculative)

An opportunity to enter the world of science that has not existed for 4 centuries.

Correspondence principle can be extended from classical physics to quantum theory.

2. The opportunity presented by contemporary mathematics.

Euclid: rigorous deduction from universal and necessary truths (self-evident)

Critique: not rigorous deduction (causal insights: equilateral tri-, exterior angle)
not necessary axioms: parallel postulate a possible

Math development: geometry of n-dimensional manifold of any curvature

Speculative problems: what is the foundation of mathematics? Does it all just hang in the ~~air~~ air? Can you postulate anything and deduce?

Euclidean avatars: Russell-Whitehead: deduce from logic (axioms of infinity, types)

Hilbert: two levels; math axioms and logical control (Gödel)

Bourbaki: just math axioms; dismiss speculative problem (develop)

Brouwer: legitimacy of excluded middle

Göseth (Zürich, Dialectica): math develops in inter-action w science, culture

3. Opportunities 1 & 2 combine: physics rests on maths

4. The opportunity presented by the human sciences. [*greater interest to the human sciences*]

Wt a philosophy, blind imitation of successful natural sciences; hence, leave man as man out of account.

Depersonalization of modern life; mass man; existentialist theme; Jaspers, Die Geistige Situation der Zeit, 1931; 6 editions in a year; trans European Japanese

(a) Ambiguity of XIXth century economics

In principle: James Mill, economic's shortly like Newtonian astronomy

In fact: issued precepts to free men: laissez faire, no govt interference
thrift and enterprise

Precepts, not adequate for whole cycle, but excellent for expansion, nineteenth century witnessed in Europe, world, movement to parliamentary democracy

Depression of '29 - '39: discredited classical economics; impossibility of economics issuing precepts to free men (no nexus between precepts, ethics, and human science based on model of physics); counsel to govts; creeping socialism

[Department, specialisation, autonomy, expansion of culture] ←

(b) Social problem

E. Husserl, Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die transszendentale Phänomenologie, The Hague, M. Nijhaus, 1954, ed W. Biemel.

Folk- and scientific medicine - Europe is sick; only folk medicine

If human science is to be for free men, it must be linked, not with physics but with ethics.

Question is not to be solved by electing conservatives in Canada and Republicans in US. On that level, one is simply missing point. A problem deep in our culture.

5. Not only opportunity for philosophy but also need for science

(a) Common to all sciences (broad sense including Phil Theol) is a turning away from immediate concerns of common sense in light of ideal

Ideal develops in time

Growth involves division, specialization: present multiplicity traced back to earlier stage when what now is distinct separate then parts of single inquiry

Phil theol: 12th undistinguished; 13th distinguished; Descartes separate

Phil science: not distinct in Descartes (conservation of momentum fr immutability distinction not articulate in Newton's time: Phil nat principia math

(b) organic growth, division of cells (1) like amoeba (2) like higher organism

can combine for practical purposes: medicine, industry, war

tendency to be so many specialties; each its proper ultimate norms; and the ultimate norms tend to be 'use and wont' 'custom' 'competence'

any systematic attempt at unification: another specialty; under suspicion of incompetence; and no foothold of serious influence

[Kon-Tiki, Thor Heyerdahl, no one interested in what comes out of holes]

(c) deformation professionelle -- scientists great authority & ineptitude

(d) 'The days of pure research are over' -- pure research works at ideas that others will perhaps understand in fifty years time -- it cannot be written out in intelligible abstract with convincing account of future utility -- it cannot depend on judgement of Solons in charge of foundations, Canada Research

(B) Requirements of a Philosophy that can meet the opportunity.

1. How can a philosophy meet an opportunity: an opportunity arises only in a concrete situation; it is determined by the peculiarities of a particular time.
 Philosophy, since the days of Plato, deals with eternal and immutable ideas, with universal and necessary truths
 It is equally applicable to any time; to any possible world
 It has no special relevance to any concrete situation in its concreteness

2. Is there any sense in speaking of a philosophy that can seize an opportunity?
 Is philosophy to be opportunist? What will be its value if, like the lilies of the field, today it glories in beauty, and tomorrow it is just rubbish?
 Must not philosophy provide the solid unchanging foundation for all else that has its day of celebrity and passes away?

3. Perhaps we can have both. Perhaps the immutable is a law of change

Perhaps philosophy is not a brick wall, which changing science batters down, but a law, a form, a structure, that includes within its permanent dynamism all the changes in science.

To deal adequately with this issue, not tonight.

But abstract questions of possibility are apt to be sterile. Solutions come from intelligent grasp of the facts. Let us turn to facts.

4. The fact of development

a) in the sciences: data, insight, hypothesis, deduction, test, new data, &c.

b) in the ideal of science: Law -- System of Laws (Galileo Kepler Newton Clerk-M Einstein)
 State and Probability
 certain knowledge of things by their causes
 resolutio in causas (analysis), compositio ex causis (synthesis)
 things: ten categories: quid quantum quale ad quid actio passio ubi quando situs
 causes: end agent matter form
 chemistry: 102 elements, 10³ x 3 compounds; analysis and synthesis
 but elements not Aristotle's causes; and compounds not defined as his things

c) theology develops: Origin, Augustine, Aquinas; 16th controversy; 19th history
 dogma develops: always the same turn, but ever greater wisdom understanding science

d) man develops: not the same thing to be born in Ottawa and in Central Africa; in Western Europe or behind the Iron Curtain
 to know himself concretely, man has to know his history; he is ever trying to realize some ideal of himself (from unconscious or from newspapers or from philosophy or from revelation); and the type of ideal he aims at, the conditions under which he strives and often fails, are historical. Students today and forty years ago.
 Christianity is a historical religion

5. Philosophy can cling to abstract, but it will be alien, irrelevant; it will not be a center in the intellectual life of a university
 Philosophy can descend into the market-place: existentialists, novels; but it risks ceasing to be a philosophy; it is interesting, stimulating, but a fad, a fashion

*Phil can try to a dam that blocks the river, but the river can find its way around above below
 Phil can also be the bed in which the river flows*

(C) Does Thomism meet the requirements?

1. ^{perhaps} All non-Thomists and the majority, if not all, Thomists ^{tend to} answer negatively. They conceive Thomism to be essentially a variant of Platonism, a matter of truths that are universal, necessary, eternal, immutable, abstract, irrelevant, alienated, and a permanent source of alienation

Europeans are ^amazed at existence of philosophy courses in Catholic colleges in US and Canada, at existence of Mediaeval Institutes. Tiens, au Canada.

2. Is truth eternal? Distinguish logical and ontological.

Logically: truth never contradicts truth; what is true at any time is true at every time

Ontologically: truth is a property of judgements; if judgement squares with reality, then true; if not, false.

Ontologically, eternity of truth supposes eternity of judgement; only divine judgement an eternal entity; only divine truth an eternal entity

3. Are concepts eternal? same distinction

Logically, a concept is the same concept, has its identity, in virtue of its essential notes, characteristics; to change them is to introduce a distinct concept
Ontologically, two distinct theories

Scotus: (and others) first element in intellectual consciousness is the concept; it is determined by automatic unconscious processes; any variation in the concept presupposes either change in thing or aberration of unconscious process. Understanding is a secondary phenomenon; supposes and operates on concepts, sees necessary or possible or impossible combinations of concepts; what it sees is determined by the concepts that are provided by reality and automatic process.

Aquinas: inner word, concept, is expression of, proceeds from, intelligere
Understanding develops: beatitude cannot be attained naturally by human intellect, because no matter how well a man understands, someone else comes along and brings to light new aspects of the matter

Because understanding develops, there is consequent development in concepts

Verbum articles, Insight: Thomism is essentially open to fact of development; it can meet the requirements of contemporary opportunity for philosophy

4. It can in principle. Will it do so in fact? Will it do so at Ottawa University?

Issue: University for all subjects, as United Nations for all Nations?

Philosophy in a ghetto, and each subject its own ghetto?

No occasion to hang head in shame. A universal, radical problem of our time. Rather pride that at least the issue can be raised among you

No sense in looking for quick results: problem has been building up for over four centuries. Solution, not this week, month, year, decade. Growth imperceptible; a man goes out and sows his seed; the rains come; the sun shines; the months pass --

It depends on you: principally on the philosophers; also on the humanists, the historians, the scientists; also on the students

I am not a prophet, but I can wish you well. An issue I have very much at heart.