

method is the opposite of abstract argument. To make his point Blake presents us with the simplest possible material images; the issues are removed from the realm of complex moral abstractions to that of basic human choices. The homely yet powerful images pile up in our mind so that we understand better than before what the class struggle, in all its simplicity and infinite complexity, its pity and terror and its final hard-

gained people's triumph, is. And we feel on our pulses the abysmal black fatuity of the man who pities the stormy roar. In short, this is a great revolutionary poem because it deepens our feelings about the class struggle and, thus changing us, makes us better able to cope with our own world and its problems.

(N.B. All quotations are from the Nonesuch edition of Blake)

Philosophy, criticism and progress

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(This article is based on a paper on *The Social Responsibility of Philosophy*, presented to the Warsaw Conference of the International Institute of Philosophy in July 1957.)

THE purpose of this article is to do no more than some "thinking aloud" about the nature of philosophy and what we, the people, may expect to gain from it. I begin by assuming that philosophy is not entirely useless. It does something, it investigates something. What does it do, what does it investigate, what is its subject-matter?

What is Philosophy ?

As regards subject-matter, my first suggestion is perhaps rather startling. It is, that philosophy has *no* subject-matter—or at least, none in the sense that the special sciences have subject-matters. That is to say, there is no special part, department or aspect of reality which is the special subject-matter of philosophy, so that one could distinguish philosophy from other enquiries by saying : philosophy investigates *this*, while those other enquiries investigate *that* and *that*. . . . For instance, you can say that the subject-matter of physics is physical processes, of chemistry chemical processes, of sociology social processes, and so on with other sciences. But there is nothing similarly marked out as the subject-matter of philosophy.

Philosophy has subject-matter in a different sense. Not that it investigates any particular part or aspect of reality, but that it tries to answer certain kinds of questions, which may relate to any part or aspect of reality. The subject-matter of philosophy should be defined in terms of the kinds of questions philosophers try to answer.

What are these questions? I do not think one can define them by making a list of them, for

philosophy has not always been about the same questions. I think that what chiefly characterises philosophical questions is that they all spring from a certain kind of *criticism* of current ideas.

In the seventeenth century the great French philosopher Descartes said that in order to do philosophy it was first necessary *to doubt everything*. When he said this he was, it seems to me, stating in a rather sharp and exaggerated way a universal truth about philosophy. Only if people doubt and question does philosophy begin, and if they ever stop doubting and questioning then philosophy ends.

Something of the sort was also suggested by Hegel, in his lectures on the history of philosophy, when he said (though, as was usual with him, in a rather obscure and sententious way) that the philosophy of the time puts all the assumptions of the time in question, that "freedom of thought" is the first condition of philosophy, and that therefore "philosophy only appears where and in so far as free institutions are formed".

And certainly, if someone merely repeats doctrines handed down by authority, without questioning them or trying to justify or modify them in any way through criticism, then we would hardly say he was contributing to philosophy. Take the case of the middle ages, for instance. Hidebound as some medieval philosophers were (though since I have studied them a little I have come to think them less hidebound than they are often represented), what gives them the title of philosophers is that they did not merely repeat the dogmas of the Church but raised all kinds of questions about them.

So if philosophy questions and criticises, what does it question and criticise?

This is very hard to define exactly. I can only suggest a very vague and inexact definition, by saying that it questions and criticises *the general assumptions underlying the current ideologies of society*—that is to say, underlying traditionally accepted and handed-down views about the universe and human life and destiny (the whole diffuse complex of collective views, sentiments and attitudes which are held to be proper in a given society and are passed on and spread about through such agencies as the family, the school, the church, the state etc.); and also underlying current “common sense”.

The questions of philosophy are thus questions raised from *the criticism of tradition and common sense*. The constructive outcome of philosophy is then the critical formulation of a “world view” or “world outlook”. But this world view or world outlook is not in fact constructed by philosophers by some method of *a priori* reasoning or some special kind of philosophical investigation, but is constructed by them as a product of their *criticism* of the traditional and common-sense ideas of their time.

From this it follows that in different periods philosophy asks different questions. For the source of the questions is something which changes greatly from period to period—and one of the things which causes it to change is philosophy itself, as an effect of the very questions it raises.

The point was well made by the late R. G. Collingwood (Professor of Metaphysics at Oxford) that it is wrong to treat the history of philosophy as the history of a series of *different answers to the same questions*. In fact philosophy passes from one set of questions to different questions—though, of course, the different questions are always related, if only because philosophy itself passes into the “tradition” and so, as it gets under way, becomes largely concerned with self-criticism and in that way is self-perpetuating.

The Criticism of Metaphysics

An important development in modern philosophy is the tendency to pass away from what are now often called “metaphysical” questions. It is one thing to recognise that “metaphysical” questions are becoming outmoded, another to give an exact definition of what is a “metaphysical” question. I suggest that the main criterion of a “metaphysical” question is that it is about what is “ultimate”. Metaphysical philosophy is about “the ultimate”—about “being as being”, “the absolute”, the “ultimate constituents of the world” and so on.

The words “the ultimate”, or “ultimate reality”, which metaphysical philosophy is concerned with, are very hard to define. I shall try to convey their

meaning in an example. Reading this, you are looking at a piece of paper, and perhaps you will ask: “What is this paper made of?” To this a paper manufacturer will reply: “It is made of wood-pulp”. Then you ask a chemist what the wood-pulp is made of, and he will tell you it is made of certain combinations of chemical atoms. Then you consult a physicist, who will tell you how the atoms are built up out of electrons spinning round a nucleus. Much more than that you cannot find out, owing to the present limitations of sub-atomic science. Having thus exhausted scientific enquiry, you may then consult the metaphysicians, who will speak to you in a very different way. They will tell you that none of the technicians or scientists has even touched on the great question of what a piece of paper is “really” or “ultimately” made of. And as to that, each metaphysician will give you a different answer. One may tell you: “It is made of Matter”. Another will say, “No, that’s gross materialism—it is really a collection of sense-data in your mind.” Another will say: “This piece of paper is simply a passing modification of the One Absolute Substance”. And so on. You will notice two things about the metaphysicians. One is that they cannot agree amongst themselves. The other is, that each has somehow made up his theory out of his own head and, unlike the scientist, has no method to suggest of checking or verifying his theory, of carrying out any practical investigation or test in its favour.

So metaphysical questions about “the ultimate” or “ultimate reality” are distinguished from practical or scientific questions by this, that there is and can be no practical way of checking or verifying the answers.

Now asking metaphysical questions has lately come in for well-merited criticism on the grounds that it is senseless to ask questions of which you cannot check the answers. For this reason, some critics of metaphysics have tended to treat the whole of past philosophy as merely a big blunder; and this blunder has further been regarded as chiefly due to misunderstandings about the uses of language. I think, however, that there is a good deal more to be said on that score, and I want to suggest that asking metaphysical questions is linked with certain social conditions and the discrediting of metaphysical questions with a change in those social conditions.

One factor which evidently has a bearing on asking or not asking metaphysical questions is the development of science and technology. Philosophy has been driven from the attempt by answering metaphysical questions to work out philosophical systems revealing the “ultimate” nature of the world, since while philosophers were vainly trying to correct current ideologies by penetrating the secrets of the universe by speculation, genuine

knowledge was being amassed piecemeal by the work of the sciences. The success of the scientific explanation of separate parts and aspects of the world has tended to discredit the asking of metaphysical questions. (In the example I gave above, you would be less inclined to turn away from the speculations of the metaphysicians had you not received such detailed and practical information from the scientists.)

Engels was amongst those who first stated this fact and drew conclusions from it about the questions of philosophy. "That which still survives, independently, of all earlier philosophy", he wrote, "is the science of thought and its laws—formal logic and dialectics. Everything else is subsumed in the positive science of nature and history." Later, other philosophers began independently to reach comparable conclusions—though while they had an area of agreement with Engels about the questions of philosophy, the answers they began to work out were different from his. Thus, for example, Bertrand Russell wrote that "the classical philosophy" believed "that *a priori* reasoning could reveal otherwise undiscoverable secrets about the universe", whereas now it should be recognised that "logic is the essence of philosophy".

Yet while the sciences have played and continue to play this role in discrediting metaphysics, I do not think one can simply say that metaphysics must go because the sciences should take its place. The sciences do not in fact answer the questions which metaphysics asks. They ask and answer different questions, being not in the least concerned with anything metaphysically "ultimate". Hence, with the discoveries of the sciences, metaphysical questions are still asked, relating to those discoveries themselves. The question is asked: "What is the ultimate reality which constitutes the subject-matter of the sciences, and aspects of which they describe in terms of scientific concepts?" This question is asked even by critics of metaphysics like Bertrand Russell, and all manner of metaphysical answers are suggested—such as that the ultimate reality, or the ultimate subject-matter of the sciences, consists of "sense data" or "sense contents". The modern subjective idealist philosophy of Positivism provides, indeed, a good example of a thoroughly metaphysical philosophy.

I want to suggest that the reason why philosophy has for so long asked metaphysical questions, and continues to do so, despite all the criticisms of metaphysics, lies in some very fundamental cause persisting throughout the manifold changes in the structure of society; and that this cause is to be sought in the human condition which Marx in his earlier philosophical writings called "alienation", and certain aspects of which he later dealt with in detail in *Capital*.

The Marxist concept of "alienation" is an obscure and difficult one, and even were I able to provide an exact analysis and definition (which I am not) there would not be space for it here. I think that, briefly and roughly, its meaning is as follows. People coming together in society create conditions for themselves independent of their will in such a way that their own creations, which they created involuntarily and unconsciously (by a kind of necessity and yet for the sake of their own livelihood), come to dominate them like an alien force. One example of such "alienation" is the way in which, producing their products as commodities, people become dominated by their own products; and Marx paid some attention to this example in his analysis of "the fetishism of commodities" in Book I of *Capital*. But that is only one example of a widespread and persistent fact which has always played a major part in social affairs and, in particular, in the formation of ideological illusions and modes of false consciousness of all kinds.

According to Marx, the modern development of large-scale industry, bringing the socialisation of production and the formation of the modern working class, is at last creating conditions where it is possible to achieve a socialist order of society in which gradually all human creations can be brought under people's own conscious control—in which, as Engels put it, "the whole sphere of the conditions of life which environ man and have hitherto ruled man, comes under the dominion and control of man, who . . . has become master of his own social organisation." The time is therefore ripe for overcoming the age-old condition of alienation, with its various attendant miseries and illusions. Indeed, to overcome it is the whole task and aim of socialism.

It seems to me that the persistent asking of metaphysical questions may well be closely connected with the fact that philosophers have been living in an alienated society. The metaphysical idea of "the ultimate" (which, by the way, is in its origins closely bound up with religion) is an expression of the sense that man and society are dominated and bound by something unseen and intangible yet infinitely powerful and inescapable—the ultimate mystery which no technique and no science can master. So in trying to criticise and to understand, philosophers have been led to reason about this "ultimate" which presses upon the thoughts and feelings of men—not realising that it is in fact only the shadow of conditions which men have unwittingly created for themselves.

If the discovery of the "ultimate" now begins to seem to us beside the point, that is not simply because it is ruled out by the development of science —on the contrary, that development alone does not rule it out. It is because the development of science and technique and of social organisation itself is

creating possibilities for human progress for the exploitation of which the old metaphysical conundrums are totally irrelevant. Hence the turn of criticism against metaphysics, and the discrediting of metaphysics.

As Engels has pointed out, if metaphysical questions are not asked, then a large area of what once took the form of questions of philosophy is superseded by scientific investigation. Scientific investigation of nature and society takes the place of metaphysical questioning concerning the ultimate constituents of nature or the ultimate basis of human society. And so for the illusory certainties of metaphysics are substituted the provisional but empirically based and tested generalisations of the sciences.

The questions that remain for non-metaphysical philosophy are not questions in any way concerned with the discovery of the characteristics of what exists—whether of the “material world”, “ultimate reality”, “the mind”, or any other sphere of real or imaginary existence. Of course, discoveries about what exists may be and are extremely relevant to answering non-metaphysical questions of philosophy. But properly *philosophical* questions are concerned not with *existence* but with *thought*—with the forms of thought and its categories, the ways to use and develop them and the criticism of their aberrations. So the philosophical criticism of the current tradition and common sense does not take the form of reasoning about “the ultimate”, but about *the categories, laws and validity of our own thought*.

Philosophy and the Class Struggle

What I have called the ideological “tradition”, with its associated “common sense”, is a part of the social superstructure—a complex of views, sentiments and attitudes which, as Marx showed, is formed on the basis of given relations of production, given forms of property and class divisions, and, on the whole, helps to consolidate and conserve the social structure on the basis of which it was formed.

If, then, philosophy arises from criticising and questioning the tradition, this must be due in the first place to the existence of a certain instability in the social relations and a tendency for them to be changed in various ways—otherwise such questions and criticisms would not arise. And in its net effect, the critical activity of philosophy operates in two ways. Some philosophers ask and answer questions in such a way as, on the whole, to *reinstate and reinforce* the tradition and common sense of their time; while other philosophers tend to *undermine* that tradition and common sense and to help lay the foundations for a *new* tradition and common sense.

So by its very nature philosophy, as a critical mode of thought, tends to divide into *conservative* and *revolutionary* camps—the former acting to conserve (perhaps with various modifications which, in the existing state of instability, serve to strengthen) the existing system of social relations which gave rise to the tradition; and the latter to replace it.

I think it is important, however, to emphasise that this is a *tendency* to division and not always an absolute division. Philosophical propositions once launched into the world tend to act in a conservative or revolutionary way; but the complications of life and changing society are such that in many cases they may act in both ways at once: in some respects acting to undermine the tradition, they may in other respects act to conserve it, and vice versa.

Now so long as people have lived in a condition of alienation (and that is ever since human life began, since alienation is primitive, preceding the division of society into classes) they have harboured in their minds illusions about their condition, taking the form of belief in supernatural and superhuman agencies of various sorts. Such beliefs have always been ingredients in both the tradition and the associated common sense of society (belief in the supernatural has not only been propagated by medicine men and priests: it has always seemed to most people to be sheer common sense to believe that they are surrounded and overlooked by supernatural beings). From the start, therefore, philosophical criticism has been concerned with these beliefs, in part reinstating them in more systematised, rational and logical forms, and in part opposing them. Hence there has also arisen the perpetual conflict of two trends in the *content* of philosophical ideas—called in Marxist terminology the conflict between *idealism* and *materialism*. This division within philosophy between idealism and materialism is closely associated (though not identical) with the tendency of philosophy to act in a conservative or revolutionary way.

So long as philosophy is concerned largely with metaphysical questions, the opposition of materialism to idealism takes a metaphysical form. Thus in opposition to *idealist* views which characterise the “ultimate reality” as ideal or spiritual, there have been *materialist* views which say that the “ultimate reality” is matter. If we are now criticising metaphysics, that does not imply, as some such critics (namely, the so-called Positivist philosophers) have thought, that the opposition of materialism to idealism has been superseded. The word “matter” should no longer be used to denote the “ultimate reality” or the “stuff” or “substance” from which everything is supposed to be formed. But the concept retains its validity in the context of the distinction between “matter” and “mind”, or

"material" and "ideal"—that is to say, of the distinction between what exists and what is thought, between objective reality and our ideas, feelings, desires and purposes. Materialism is no longer put forward by Marxists (or perhaps I should say, *should* no longer be put forward) as a metaphysical answer to a metaphysical question, but as the mode of approach to answering non-metaphysical questions. Thus if we are discussing logical questions, materialism means that we are concerned with the laws whereby, as Marx put it, "the material world is translated into forms of thought"; or if we are discussing social questions and questions of value and purpose, we are concerned with basing and justifying our ideas on the knowledge of the actual conditions and needs of mankind.

Philosophers, then, ask questions arising from a context of social instability; and their answers, materialist or idealist in general content, are in social effect conservative or revolutionary. This means further that in doing philosophy they cannot but be playing a certain part in the class struggles characteristic of their society. They in fact bring their influence to the support of one or other of the contending classes, the conflict between whose material, economic interests is at once the consequence of the given social-economic system and the main force bringing about its modification and change.

In this way the controversies of philosophy constitute an element in the class struggle. The views of philosophers, from the very circumstances in which those views are formed in their minds, contribute to the struggle of one or other class; they become formative elements in class ideology. And they are conditioned and bounded by the material interests and actual possibilities of enquiry and formulation of views and aims characteristic of the various classes.

What does this imply about the immediate present?

Class conflicts are certainly a feature of the period in which we are living. And they have reached the point where the world is divided into different social systems: the new system of socialist economy, the outcome of the modern conflict, has already been established over a large territory. That being so, amid the many controversies in philosophy it is impossible to evade a fundamental one, between the philosophical criticism which in effect attacks the whole tradition of the older, capitalist order and works to create the new tradition of socialist society, and the opposite criticism. What is further characteristic of the socialist philosophy at the present time is that its concern is not only, as in the fairly recent past, to attack capitalist ideology and put forward socialist ideas, but to work towards creating the tradition of a socialist system actually

in process of formation. This naturally raises many new problems, and old problems in new ways.

In these circumstances, I think it perhaps specially worth emphasising that philosophy is *criticism*. Deep divisions exist; but setting aside those "philosophers" who are mere dogmatists and apologists, they exist between tendencies of critical enquiry. And so it seems possible to suggest that the more philosophers can join together, not in agreement about the answers to questions (which is hardly to be anticipated), but in exchanging questions and critically examining, and reshaping and developing, the ideologies of our time, the more will they actually contribute to the progress of mankind. As for socialist ideology, if it is true that it is the advancing point of human thought then it has got to keep advancing. A condition for this is that it is able continually to subject its own propositions to the review of a free and uninhibited criticism, which aims at the most logically consistent, clear and well-reasoned statement and at testing every point in the light of the experience and needs of the movement. And this advance is also likely to be the surer and more fertile the more, in developing the principles of socialism, Socialists are aware of and draw conclusions from all the critical questioning of the philosophy of our time.

Philosophy and Progress

The Marxist view that philosophy has a class basis and is an element in class struggle is often held to be derogatory to philosophy. Does it imply that all that any philosophy can achieve is to formulate the biased views of some class, which can have a value for that class only? I do not think so.

Marx's proposition that history is the history of class struggles does not imply that all that happens in history is that from time to time one class delivers a blow against another. *Progress* takes place, marked by such things as increase of productive power, increase of knowledge, and development of those ways of life embraced under the terms "civilisation" and "culture". Marx's proposition implies that all this does not happen independently of class struggles but *through* class struggles. A historian can therefore not merely report what happened, and assign to the best of his ability the causes why it happened, but can also assess the various historical actions (including the publication of philosophical works, for this is a historical action) not solely in terms of how they promoted some particular class interest but of how they promoted *general human progress*.

I think philosophy not only can contribute to human progress, but has actually done so and will continue to do so. But it does so only as an element in class struggle. The contribution which a philosopher makes is made through his associa-

tion with some class. But in the first place, that association is of an active, creative kind—for a philosopher does not merely repeat and systematise the already spontaneously-formed beliefs and aims of a class, but by the questions he asks and the criticism he makes helps form those beliefs and aims, which could not take the shape they do otherwise. And in the second place, a philosopher's contribution may *transcend class interests* in the narrow sense. It may not be exhausted by ideas which do no more than serve the particular interests of a particular class at a particular time (though some philosophical ideas do no more than this), but may also include ideas which serve and in their development continue to serve the *general* interests of human progress.

But what can we mean by "progress"? If the word is to express more than merely certain personal or group preferences, then we should specify certain factors by the change of which progress can, roughly at least, be checked and measured.

How can we measure general human progress?

Some might wish to measure it in terms of "happiness" or "well-being", say; but I doubt if such concepts yield measures of a kind which would determine whether progress had happened or not. I want to suggest that the *measure* of the general progress of society is *the growth of productive technique and knowledge*. If, for example, mankind has progressed from the stone age to the present day, the *fact* of progress and its *distance* is measured by the movement from crude stone tools to modern instruments of production, and from almost complete ignorance to fairly extensive knowledge. Again, if one asserts that, say, capitalism is progress on feudalism, and socialism on capitalism, then whether this is true or false is *tested* by whether the capitalist relations give more scope for technique and knowledge to increase than the feudal relations did, and the socialist relations more scope than the capitalist. In this sense, progress is not a matter of opinion or preference, but of *ascertainable fact*.

However, while it may be suggested that technique and knowledge provide the *objective basis* and *measure* of progress, I do not think one can suggest that these concepts *exhaust* what we mean when we speak of progress, not merely as something which happens and can be measured but as something *desirable* to strive for.

Thus it may be said: "Yes, increase of technique and knowledge may be progress, but what we are most interested in is how this technique and knowledge are going to be used. Are we progressing in our capacity to make a good use of progress?" Or again, Socialists may be told: "Your system may indeed favour technical and scientific progress, but we still cannot consider it desirable if this

progress is only obtained at the price of liberty and happiness."

What evidently counts is not technique and knowledge in themselves, but *the way of life* they enable people to *enjoy*. And here we are beginning to speak of things which *cannot* be measured, and to introduce *moral* rather than *factual* considerations.

I think we are now near to a definition of the use and social responsibility of philosophy, of what people may hope to gain from it. Through its social effect and influence, philosophy has a definite bearing on the attainment or non-attainment of progress. I think we should say that its use and responsibility is *to help progress*—but not only in the sense of aiding those forces which are actually developing technique and knowledge by working out critical ideas which help in that task, but also in the further sense of contributing to *the formulation and realisation of a way of life* by which people use, benefit from and enjoy the fruits of progress.

Philosophy and Human Purpose

I want to conclude with some observations about the kind of contribution philosophy makes, or can make, to human progress.

Philosophy makes no discoveries about either particular or general facts, and no inventions. So clearly it makes no *direct* contribution of any kind to the development of technique and knowledge. But it can now make an important indirect contribution—and this the more surely the more it frees itself from metaphysics—by clearing up questions about the *criteria of knowledge*, the *methods* of gaining it and the principles of its *application*. It can contribute, however, something more, in so far as it also attempts to clear up questions about the criteria of a good life and the methods of achieving and living it. In so far as it does this, philosophy contributes to progress also by dealing with *the ends which we try to make our material progress serve*, and helping to formulate the *purposes* which by our material progress may be realised.

Understood in this way, the fact of material progress cannot but give rise to the need for philosophy, and to properly philosophical questions and discussion. The full meaning of human progress can only be defined in philosophical terms; people cannot set their social purposes before themselves without critical philosophical ideas; and those purposes cannot be striven for and still less be realised without the guidance of critical philosophical discussion.

Of course, social purposes do not *originate* from philosophical thought. I said above that philosophy "helps to formulate" them. And this indeed is an outcome of the philosophical criticism of

current tradition from which philosophical questions arise.

At any time, the existing level of technique and knowledge, to which corresponds a system of economy and class relations, leads to the formation of specific class interests and limited possibilities of social action and achievement. It is from these interests and possibilities that social ideas of purpose arise, and philosophy can do no more than criticise, clarify and logically elaborate them. For human purposes are at all times related to people's actual conditions, interests and possibilities.

In its metaphysical phase, philosophy tries to formulate, fix and justify viewpoints corresponding to temporary historical conditions in terms of metaphysical conceptions of the "ultimate" and "absolute". That in part accounts for the contrast between the certainty and permanence which metaphysical systems claim for themselves and their actual dubiety and impermanence. When philosophers come to criticise metaphysics, then the critical philosophical discussion of problems of "thought and its laws" can not only help clarify the methods of advancing and applying knowledge, but also the methods of formulating and justifying purposes—not in terms of metaphysical theories, but of considering the *actual conditions* of human life and the *needs* arising from them.

The formulation and discussion of philosophical questions is always an intricate task, for which various highly specialised terminologies and methods of discussion are elaborated. From this there arises an ever-present tendency for specialised "schools" of philosophy to be formed, which engage in debate on a narrowing range of special philosophical questions divorced from the wider problems facing society. The outcome is usually that the schools are not so much formally refuted as in practice superseded. Philosophy needs to be and actually is continually renewed and revived by awareness of the problems facing society as a whole, and the effort to ask philosophical questions in such a way as to contribute to solving those problems. Apart from this, it cannot make the kind of contribution which people can claim that it should make to human progress.

Philosophy should not, therefore, be a specialised, separate pursuit, but be integrated with other social instrumentalities of progress. Of especial importance, it seems to me, is its relationship with art, science and politics. Aesthetics, the philosophy of science and political philosophy have long been recognised departments of philosophical study. But what should be the outcome of these studies? Not simply to discuss and clarify what is meant by "beauty" or "artistic form", by "scientific method", or by "the state"; but to discuss and clarify how these

various things serve or can be made to serve social purposes. The outcome of philosophy would then be to help make these and other social activities themselves "philosophical", in the sense of contributing to their awareness of *what they are doing and what they are aiming at*. (It is sometimes said, for example, that Communists make philosophy subservient to politics. But the aim of Marxist philosophy would be better described by saying that it seeks to make our politics philosophical.)

It follows that philosophy has today not only to tackle questions of broadly a "logical" kind, as was originally suggested from the criticism of metaphysics, but also and finally questions of "value". These are not metaphysical questions, in the sense of trying to define the "ultimate" or "absolute" good, though they have been and still are put as metaphysical questions. They are questions of *the formulation of human purposes*.

Thus as a product of philosophical criticism and of philosophical questions about the laws of thought should come the discussion and clarification of *the relations of ends and means in human life*, and of the basis and justification of the ends we put before ourselves and the means we use to seek them.

I think we stand in need of such discussion at the present day. For example, it may be worth making clear that both parties and states are means and not ends, what are the ends for which they are required, and how they can be made to serve those ends. This is an example of philosophical criticism.

Such discussion requires careful enquiry about facts, but it is philosophical and links up with all the contemporary questions of philosophy. However it may become engrossed with special questions, philosophy cannot evade its responsibility of criticising all current ideology in order to formulate an outlook concerning the ends of human life and the means to achieve them.

Marxism is, I believe, just such an outlook; and it needs to be developed as such. Marxist philosophy is not just a system of such propositions as: "Matter is prior to mind Everything changes and develops and is related to everything else Quantitative changes give rise to qualitative changes All processes consist of a unity of big and small contradictions" If that is how we understood Marxist philosophy then we would hardly understand it at all, and would turn it into a mere system of metaphysics, reducing its propositions to abstract rules and dogmas. Marxism is not such a system, but a living and critical mode of thought, which strives, by constant criticism and enquiry, to develop a method of understanding the world and ourselves so as to change the world in accordance with our needs.