TAKING SIDES IN PHILOSOPHY

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THERE is a certain emotion of repugnance which I, and I hope a good many would-be philosophers, feel when asked the conventional question, "If you are a philosopher, to what school of thought do you belong? Are you an Idealist or a Realist, a Platonist or a Hobbist, a Monist or a Pluralist?"

We all habitually and conveniently employ these and dozens of other similar party-labels. And the standard histories of philosophy aid and abet us in treating the history of philosophy as a series of conflicts between opposing camps or election campaigns between rival factions. We even come to deem philosophers as worthy or unworthy of study according to the particular "isms" of which they are alleged to be, or confess themselves to be partisans. Sometimes quite well-meaning persons actually boast of being "orthodox Hegelians" or "orthodox Realists" as if the notion of orthodoxy in philosophy was a natural and appropriate one.

I fear, too, that in teaching the subject we are prone consciously or unconsciously to give our pupils the impression that they would be well advised not to inform themselves of the views or the arguments of philosophers belonging to this or that school.

Nevertheless, I dislike being asked how I cast my vote, and I want, if I can, to lay bare the sources of this dislike. But I should say at the very start that I am not arguing for eclecticism in philosophical thinking. To my mind eclecticism is only the most corrupt of all the "isms." It is our form of Coalitionism, a parasite on the party system.

The gist of my position is this.

There is no place for "isms" in philosophy.

The alleged party issues are never the important philosophic questions, and to be affiliated to a recognizable party is to be the slave of a non-philosophic prejudice in favour of a (usually non-philosophic) article of belief. To be a "so-and-so-ist" is to be philosophically frail. And while I am ready to confess or to be accused of such a frailty, I ought no more to boast of it than to boast of astigmatism or *mal de mer*. I am, that is, prepared to find myself classified and classified justly as a "so-and-so-ist," only I think that that is something to be apologetic for. My "ism" exists, doubtless, but it is not a banner so much as a susceptibility. So there ought to be nothing in philosophy corresponding to vote-

casting. The question "How do you vote between this 'ism' and that 'ism'?" ought to be dropped in favour of the question "Which way do your inclinations and biases pull you between this 'ism' and that?"

1. Part of my repugnance comes from this source. To be a member of such and such a school is to cleave to a certain tenet or set of tenets. And for the school to know itself, or be known by others, as a special school, the school, say, of Monists or Pragmatists, its tenets must be contestable. In fact, a set of tenets gets its label from being opposed. It is usually those who think it false who first call it "Realism," or "Rationalism" or "Berkeleyanism." In general "isms" are unnamed until they are contested. They are also, as a rule, unchampioned until they are contested.

To cleave to an "ism" is then to cleave to a disputable position. But what is it to cleave to a position? If it means to entertain no doubts of the truth of the theory, then this is an unforgivable irrationality, if the arguments against it have anything in them at all. And they will not be arguments if they haven't. It is sheer credulity to accept without question a theory which is in any part or degree logically fallacious or imperfect.

But sometimes a logically valid theory is disputed. Probably there still exist militant circle-squarers. So there would be nothing irrational in cleaving to an "ism" the arguments for which were logically unassailable, although assailants in fact exist. But what would this "cleaving" be? Just seeing that the arguments for the theory were valid and those against it were fallacious. On this showing, being a Realist, say, would just consist in seeing that Idealists reason very foolishly. And there would be no more reason for cherishing a school of Realism in philosophy than for fostering a school of non-circle-squarers in geometry. The party would contain everyone who could think straight in philosophical subjects. No philosophers would be outside it. So it would be no philosophic party at all.

Every "ism" that can get to the point of acquiring a name is *philosophically* questionable, and is actually questioned by genuine philosophers. And that means that no philosopher has any excuse for cleaving to it. Any philosopher should see and welcome the logically valid part of its argument; and any philosopher should see and welcome the logically valid parts of the theory of its contestants. And there is nothing left which should convince anyone of the truth of the remainder of those theories—unless a philosopher is to be allowed to believe doctrines because he likes them.

Of course each of us is predisposed to swallow uncritically certain sorts of doctrines which happen to be congenial to him; and it is hygienic to recognize and confess these predispositions. But a

fraternity of persons of kindred credulities could only constitute a school of "misosophy."

2. Another consideration which I find underlying my distate for party-labels in philosophy is this. The central issues between the self-announcing "isms" turn out, when the fog of the early engagements is over, to be extremely refined and even academic differences. (I also think that they often turn out not to be genuine philosophical issues either. But I choose not to discuss this point here.) For example, it has been argued and not, I think, contested that the radical issue that splits Monists or Absolute Idealists from opposing "schools" is the question whether relations are or are not internal to their terms. Now the question interests me, and is, I think, soluble. But if asked by a pupil what are the radical problems of philosophy, I could not with an easy mind tell him, "Oh, such questions as whether relational propositions are analytic or not." Or, to take another example, I should feel unhappy in saying that one of the major truths discovered by philosophers is the answer to the question that splits Platonists and anti-Platonists, namely, that general words are significant by being proper names of entities (or the negative, if it is preferred).

Yet the doctrines of principle (adherence to which, as we shall see, is what constitutes schools of thought) have to be fairly narrow and abstract propositions if the "schools" are to be supposed to be standing for anything in particular. So they have to treat their single-plank election platforms as if they were the radical truths of philosophy. The radical topics that philosophy is about have to be represented as of these patterns—whether truths of fact can be deduced from *a priori* premisses (the issue between Rationalism and Empiricism), whether "I ought" is compatible with "I had better not" (the issue between Utilitarianism and Intuitionism), whether the nature of what I know or think about entails that I know or think about it (the issue between one form of Idealism and Realism). And so on.

Now doubtless such questions as these are watershed questions. As we vote on them, so we shall have to vote on many derivative questions. But to say that these are the central questions that face philosophers provokes the comment that they seem very technical specialists' questions. Indeed, they seem to be riddles which we need a lot of special training in philosophy to appreciate.

The chief fruits of the subject seem to be rather small potatoes. Now I am not complaining because these topics are unfit for the pulpit or the market-place; nor yet because they are abstract and logically fine-drawn. These are merits in a topic of philosophical inquiry. No, I am complaining, I think, because questions like these are *resultant* riddles and not *inaugurating* riddles. They are special

posers which trip us up after we have travelled a good long way; they are not what set us travelling. To change the metaphor, there is the smell of sediment about them, as if they were what the tide has left behind it—after ebbing.

3. However these two grounds for girding at sectarian habits of thought and speech in philosophy are not yet at the root of the matter. The real root of my objection is, I think, the view that I take of the nature of philosophical inquiry. I am not going to expound it in full, but a part of the view is that it is a species of discovery. And it seems absurd for discoverers to split into Whigs and Tories. Could there be a pro-Tibet and an anti-Tibet party in the sphere of geography? Are there Captain Cook-ites and Nansenists?

But before developing this argument it will be useful to clear away some possible misinterpretations of the case for which I am arguing.

(*a*) I am as far as possible from deploring or ridiculing polemics in philosophical discussion. There could, in my view, be nothing more unwholesome than unanimity among philosophers. The *unconvinced are the sharpest critics of an argument, and those who* are also hostile are its warmest critics. And an argument which was not tested by sharp or warm critics would be at least half untested. I am only urging that the common motive for unconversion and hostility, namely, allegiance to an "ism," is philosophically unjustifiable and ought to be discountenanced by philosophers. Arguments should be attacked because they are invalid, not because they are "Monistic" or "Pluralistic," "Occamistic" or "Spinozistic."

Philosophy lives by dispute. For dispute is the testing of arguments. But debates under the eyes of Whips test nothing but solidarity.

(*b*) Nor, of course, am I defending the milk-and-water doctrine that all philosophers are really in the right and really seeing eye to eye with one another. All philosophers make mistakes, and even great philosophers commit howlers. And their mistakes often lie undetected for a long time, or, when detected, retain the credence of their disciples for woefully lengthy periods. It is often desirable that a philosopher should be refuted. What is improper is that he should be discredited for being a Left-Winger, say, or have his fallacies condoned because he is on the side of the angels in the party of the Right-Centre.

(*c*) There is one way of dividing philosophers into types which is perfectly legitimate, namely, the classification of them as Logicians, Moralists, Political Philosophers, Epistemologists, Metaphysicians (maybe), Jurisprudents, and so on. Certainly these compartments are not watertight, and a philosopher may justly be suspected of philosophic incompetence who ignores all philosophical questions save those in his one pet department. But a man may, like Butler, be predominantly excellent in the philosophy of conduct and motives,

or, like Berkeley, in the philosophy of perception. There is nothing sectarian or schismatic about such preoccupations.

(*d*) And for certain ends, such as those of biography or the history of cultures (though not those of philosophy itself), it is often useful and correct to classify philosophers according to certain general casts of mind or temperaments. There are, we are told, the tender-minded and the tough-minded among philosophers; or again, there are those who are constitutionally Platonic and those who are constitutionally Aristotelian; there are the mystical and the matter-of-fact; the "inflationists" and the "deflationists"; those of the prophetic and those of the engineering casts of mind. The fact that we can get a fair measure of agreement between students of diverse sorts, how the major philosophic figures ought to be classified under such heads as these is good evidence that the contrast of psychological types is not altogether fictitious. To some extent the thoughts of the philosophers whom we study are congenial or uncongenial to us according to which of the two psychological baskets they are drawn from.

If we admit that there is some big difference of psychological types of this sort, we can take either of two attitudes towards it. We can say that one of the qualities of mind is a necessary part of excellence at philosophy, while the other is an insuperable disability. Or we can say that both are or can be assets—only assets which human beings can seldom, if ever, possess together. Neither view would justify the existence of philosophical sects. For suppose, on the one hand, that the "prophetic" or tender-minded temperament is a *sine qua non* of philosophic excellence. Then it would follow that no one of the "tough-minded" or "engineering" temperament could be a philosopher. So the gulf would be one between philosophers and non-philosophers and not between one set of philosophers and another. (Astronomers do not boast a party of anti-Astrologists.) And, on the other hand, suppose that both temperaments are assets, so that some are excellent at philosophy because they are of the "prophetic" type, while others are excellent at it because they are of the "engineering" type. Then for the followers of those of one type to campaign against those of the other would be as stupid as it would be for a lover of poetry to declare war on the lovers of prose, or for a mountaineer to blackball from his club all maritime explorers.

Whether the "prophetic" temperament, say, is analogous to blinkers or to long-sightedness there can be no grounds for a philosopher of the "engineering" type to join a faction against the possessors of it. For either they are constitutionally impotent at philosophy, in which case they can be ignored as we ignore phrenologists and fortune-tellers; or else they have a special quali-

fication for discovering certain sorts of philosophic truth which is denied to those of the more matter-of-fact type, who on their side will have a compensating ability to discover philosophic truths of another sort. And in this case, they are related as the physician to the surgeon, by difference of function and not by conflict of "isms."

But in any case this crude sort of psychological division can only serve to explain causally why some sorts of people are prone not to appreciate either some sorts or any sorts of philosophical arguments and questions, and not to feel either some or any sorts of philosophic qualms. It contributes nothing to the testing of such arguments, to the formulation or solution of such questions, or to the excitation or appeasing of such qualms. Again, it may explain causally why certain sorts of philosophers are congenial or uncongenial to me. It cannot explain what are the philosophical excellences or demerits of their work. (Incidentally, on a point of history, it seems to me that some of the best philosophers have enjoyed both temperaments. Plato, for example, "engineers" in the *Theaetetus*, the *Sophist*, and the *Parmenides*. Kant is "prophetic," perhaps, in his moral theory. Leibniz is both a formal logician and a "heaven-sketcher.")

Let us consider more closely than we have yet done what it is to be a member of a "school of philosophy" or a champion of an "ism" or a disciple of a philosophical teacher. For certainly there are people who have been with justice labelled, by others or by themselves, as Epicureans, Wolffians, Kantians, Spencerians, Bradleians, and the like. We speak familiarly and intelligibly of the schools of Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Occam, and of the schools of Hegel, Brentano, and James. Are there not notoriously a Cambridge and a Vienna school? Was there not an Oxford tradition?

If there hadn't existed any such churches, claques, or cliques, there would have been no sectarian tradition for me to inveigh against. My whole case is that there is a schismatic tradition in philosophy, and that "schismatic philosopher" is a contradiction in terms.

What then is a "follower"? First, there is the deliberately abusive sense in which we sometimes use such descriptions, though it is not the use for which we are looking (namely, the use in which a man might say *with pride* that he "followed" Hegel, or Wittgenstein). We can abusively describe someone as a follower or disciple of Nietzsche, say, who accepts because they are congenial to him those doctrines of Nietzsche which he understands and rejects by ignoring them the views of everyone else. A man who only attends to the views of one philosopher and takes them as gospel because they are to his taste is, of course, neither a philosopher nor a student of philosophy. In this sense of the word to say "I am a disciple of so-

and-so" would mean "I prefer to shut my eyes to all doctrines and problems save those of so-and-so. I prefer also to shut my eyes to any defects there may be in so-and-so's theory. I swear *in verba magistri.*"

Next it might be suggested that what it means to say of someone that he is a follower of Epicurus, or a disciple of Kant, is that he believes all that Epicurus (or Kant) says, and nothing that any other philosopher says, save where he echoes Epicurus (or Kant). But this would be a silly definition of "follower" or "disciple." For no one can remember all the dicta of any but the least copious of philosophers. And no philosophers are completely consistent. And all the best philosophers rebut views which they had themselves once believed. Nor can one disbelieve all the dicta of all other philosophers. For we cannot read, much less remember and much less still understand, all the dicta of all philosophers. And of those that we read and understand we cannot disbelieve all. For some are the direct contradictories of some others. And some are obviously true.

Even if by "follower" we meant someone who is generally disposed to believe whatever he reads and remembers from Epicurus (or Kant), and is disposed in general to disbelieve what he reads and remembers from anyone else, we should have to say that such a man was a worshipper or a parrot, and no philosopher. For on such a definition a "follower" would be one who never thought for himself. And there is no room for credence in philosophy. However, it is obvious that when philosophers or would-be philosophers are described as "followers" or "disciples," it is not ordinarily meant that they are just unthinking "yes-men." What else does it mean?

A third possible and more flattering definition of "followers" would be this. To follow Aristotle, say, would be to see, after rational consideration, that Aristotle's conclusions are true because his arguments are valid, and also to see, after rational consideration, that no other philosophers argue validly for their conclusions.

But even in this sense no one but a fool could claim to be—and not even a fool could be—a follower of anybody. For neither Aristotle nor any other philosopher has failed to produce at least some defective and even fallacious arguments. Nor is Aristotle or any other philosopher the sole discoverer of valid arguments. And no human being could be so acquainted with all the arguments of all philosophers that he could dismiss all of them save some of those of, say, Aristotle as invalid.

A philosopher, or rather student of philosophy of this type, for whom "following so-and-so" consists in seeing the validity of so-and-so's arguments, would have rather to describe himself in terms like this. "I follow Aristotle in respect of arguments A, D, and F,

but not of his arguments B, C, and E; I also follow Berkeley in respect of his arguments W, Y, and Z, but not of his arguments P. . . V, and X; I also follow Russell on such-and-such points, and Kant on such-and-such others. . . ." And then he would not be, in the ordinary sense of the word, for which we are still in search, anybody's "disciple." But he would be (almost) a philosopher. For the only bias or *parti pris* in his outlook would be one in favour not of persons or congenial doctrines, but of valid arguments.

But even this is patently not the sense in which people actually claim with pride or thankfulness to be uncompromising Spinozists, sound Hegelians, unswerving Pragmatists, loyal Moderate Bradleians, or last-ditch Logical Positivists. To accept the philosophy of such-and-such a teacher (or group of teachers) is, it is rather vaguely felt, something more than merely to find his general temper of mind sympathetic, and something less than credulously to endorse every particular dictum or argument that he ever propounded. A philosophy, such as Hegelianism or Thomism, is something more definite than a mood, and less definite than a cento of propositions, or a sorites of special ratiocinations. It is in some way adoptable or discardible as a whole.

A philosophy, that is, is something which has a general trend; and it is or else it rests on some dominant structure of argument. So it can be in some important sense on the right track, for all that much of its detail may be faulty. Its terminology may be loose and confused; many of its special arguments may be fallacious or incomplete, and yet as a whole (or "system," as it is dubbed in its testimonials) the philosophy of so-and-so may have the root of the matter in it. Conversely (so this vague theory would hold) the philosophy of such-and-such may be altogether on the wrong track, and its wrongness be not a whit compensated by the precision of its terminology or the cogency of its special arguments. The rottenness of the trunk is not excused by the fineness of its foliage.

Further, the rightness as a whole of a given philosophy does not derive from, though it is probably the source of the congeniality of the temperament of its author to us who appreciate it. Its rightness is something rational, and not merely temperamental or emotional. The rightness of, say, Rationalism or Critical Realism or Empirio-Criticism, is something for which the ability to think coherently plus the willingness to think honestly are the necessary and sufficient conditions. Monists, therefore, are radically good at philosophizing, and Pluralists radically bad at it (or vice versa). The members of the opposing school, championing as they do a philosophy which has the wrong general trend, are the victims of a mistake in principle, no matter what acumen they may exercise in questions of detail.

Accordingly every school of thought which is conscious of itself

as such must and does maintain that the opposing school or schools of thought are in some way philosophically unprincipled. For they are blind to those principles which make its philosophy *a* philosophy and *the* philosophy.

Of course we are not often let into the secret of what these principles are. There is apt to be an almost Masonic reserve about them. Just as in politics Conservatives, Liberals, and Socialists would rather shed their blood to defend than court disaster by unpadlocking their Joanna Southcote's boxes of principles, so the militant advocates of the philosophical sects generally prefer to attack one another's derivative tenets than to win each other over by exhibiting those truths for the seeing of which rationality and honesty are supposed to be a sufficient condition.

And it must be confessed, in justification of this reserve, that when these principles are divulged, they are apt to bear a close resemblance either to undebatable platitudes, or to dogmatic unplausibilities, for neither of which could a man of sense and mettle fight with gusto.

But are there such principles? And if there are, are they the preserves of cliques? And most important of all, how are they established, that is, what makes it reasonable to accept them and perversity or blindness to reject them?

It can hardly be maintained that they are self-evident axioms —else why does no one publish the first page of our Euclid for us? Moreover, they would have either to be self-evident because analytic, in which case no thinking man could fail to assent, with a yawn, to them; or they would have to be self-evident although synthetic. And the possibility of there existing such truths at all within philosophy can hardly be taken for granted in the face of Hume and Kant.

No, these doctrines of principle, which constitute (it is supposed) both the bedrock and the cement of any reputable "ism," are established, and only established, by philosophical argument. (Or if no reasons can be given for them, they should be confessed by their adherents to be sheer dogmas, which philosophers are at liberty to accept or to reject at the dictates of their palates.)

So let us consider what it is to establish a doctrine by philosophical argument. What sort of an argument is a philosophical argument? Two answers can be dismissed without many words. Philosophical argument is not induction, and it is not demonstration *ordine geometrico*. It is not the latter. For we have no agreed or evident axioms to start with. In the sense of the word "presupposition," in which philosophy is concerned with presuppositions, the goal of its labours is to reveal them. They are not the premisses of its arguments. And certainly philosophical argument is not induction.

A philosopher is playing at science who culls statistics or experiments in laboratories. To suppose that a philosopher's propositions can be falsified or corroborated by a new empirical discovery is to annihilate the difference between philosophy and the special sciences.

Moreover, inductive arguments cannot yield better than probable conclusions, and (I say it dogmatically) no probable arguments are philosophical arguments. Certainly there is an important sense in which a philosopher's argument may be *plausible*, that is, not obviously invalid. Most philosophical arguments are too difficult for us to know that they are completely probative on first, or even fiftieth, examination. But we may see that they are plausible in a non-derogatory sense. Something (though we are not quite sure what) seems to be proved by certain steps (though we are not quite clear which), in the argument. But an argument which is plausible in this way is not a probable argument; it is an argument which probably (or not improbably) is probative. It has the *prima facies* of a probative argument.

No, a philosophical argument is neither a piece of induction nor a piece of Euclidean deduction. Its pattern may be labelled "dialectical" if we like, though I am not clear that this means anything different from "philosophical." It is or aims at being logically rigorous, for self-contradiction is the promised penalty of default in it.

Now the ability to see that a philosophical argument is rigorous or has the *prima facies* of being rigorous is not the perquisite of any person or team of persons, though of course some people are more capable of philosophical thinking than others.

So the arguments which establish, or are supposed to establish, the "principles" of a system of philosophy are inspectable by all. To accept (or reject) those principles on blind trust (or blind distrust) in the rigorousness of the arguments is partisanship of the irrational sort. If there are questions of principle in philosophy, there is one task primarily worthy of philosophers, namely, to examine the force of the arguments for and of the arguments against such principles without a *parti pris* for or against the truth of those principles. Any serious philosopher would be as grateful for rigorous arguments for as for rigorous arguments against the principles of "Idealism" (say), or "Thomism," or "Logical Positivism."

So if the opposition between rival "isms" is, as both must claim, an opposition on a question of principle, the contestants ought to find in each other the keenest and most helpful coadjutors in the examination of the cogency of the arguments about that principle. A "Thingummist" who is seriously concerned about the validity of the argument for "Thingummism" should find the strongest argu-

ments of the "anti-Thingummists" the very test for which he craves of whether his own argument is rigorous or only plausible. And then they would not be rivals, but coadjutors in dispute. But the attitude of actual schools towards their rival schools seems to be something different. Content with the case for their own principles, they seem, as a rule, to ignore the case for the prosecution, as if presupposition of those sacred principles was a necessary condition of any argument being valid, including, it is to be feared, the very arguments by which those principles were established.

Of course this sort of attitude is not consciously or deliberately adopted, much less justified. There could be only two ways of justifying it, if justification was sought. One would be to say that there are private revelations of principles to selected and privileged people, so that the hapless majority of philosophers are to be pitied for being, through no fault or deficiency of their own, graceless. The other would be to admit that principles can be adopted according to personal predilection. But the intellectual conscience of the better philosophers would forbid them to immunize themselves from criticism by claiming that their principles are above or beneath argument. The only heresy in philosophy is the belief that there are philosophical orthodoxies.

So far I have spoken as if it was pretty clear what sort of a thing a "principle" is. But in fact it is far from clear. The only account that I can give is this. A philosophical question is a question of principle when it is philosophically much more important than most other questions. And the relative importance of philosophical questions could be explained on these lines that when, given the answer to one question, it is at once clear what are the answers, or of what sort are the answers, to an expanding range of other questions, while the answers to any of the latter do not in the same way throw light on the former, then the former is a question of principle relative to the latter.

Or else, when in the case of a range of questions it is clear that none of them could be answered, or, perhaps, even be clearly formulated before some anterior question is answered, then this is a question of principle relative to them. The notion is simply that of one question being logically prior or cardinal to a range of other questions. It is tempting, but it would be too rash to say that there is one absolutely first question, or one set of absolutely first questions. Relations of logical precedence among questions are moderately easy to get fairly wide agreement about; but not so about absolute primacy.

A question of principle then is just an important or very important philosophical question. And that a question is important or very important is something for and against which there can be plausible

and sometimes probative arguments. Often it is not contested that a question is important, though every suggested solution is hotly contested.

But there is no difference in kind between arguments on more and arguments on less important philosophical questions. The sort of logical rigour demanded is the same.

Nor must we say that the less important philosophical questions are not philosophical questions. This would be self-contradictory. Certainly there is room in philosophy for ingenuity on minor points. We need our deft joiners as well as our engineers and our prophets. Though at the present moment I am inclined to think that we are suffering from a spate of over-ingenuity. Indeed, of the two prevalent infections to-day, over-respectability and over-ingenuity, I am not sure which is the more enervating complaint.

DISCOVERY IN PHILOSOPHY

It is my opinion that there is an affirmative answer to the cynically meant question, "Do philosophers ever discover anything?" The allegation that they do not is partly due to the fact that the champions of the "isms" never acknowledge defeat. And indeed they are not often defeated. For their battles are usually sham battles. My view is simply this. Every rigorous philosophical argument is a discovery. And in a looser sense of the word "discovery," even every plausible philosophical argument, is a discovery. A valid philosophical argument is itself the revealing of something, and something of the sort of which philosophy is the search. Every philosopher who produces one new philosophical argument has made a philosophical advance. But it is not just the *conclusion* of his argument which is his discovery; it is the total argument for that conclusion. (Many histories of philosophy are worthless just because they think that, for example, Hume's philosophy can be presented, like pemmican, by cataloguing his conclusions. But if all we needed to learn from Hume's thinking could be propounded in the dozen odd sentences in which we would state Hume's conclusions, we should properly blame him for burying them in his ocean of other words. Whereas for his *argument* the Treatise errs in the direction of ellipse.)

When a philosopher or his commentator is asked to summarize what he has discovered, a bad mistake underlies the very posing of the question. It assumes that just as the astronomer's discoveries can be published to the world in a sentence or two, namely, sentences stating the new facts that he has discovered, so the philosophers ought to be able to tell us new facts. But philosophy does not discover, or look for, new matters of fact. In a sense, which I shall not

try to elucidate, the philosopher throws new light, but he does not give new information. And the light that he throws is resident in the rigour of his arguments. Anthologies of the quotable dicta of the great philosophers pretend, sometimes, to be encyclopaedias of the "results" of philosophy up to date. But they illuminate no one who has not himself followed the same lines of reasoning as they had done.

But if this, or something like this, is true, how can there be in philosophy "isms" pitted against "isms"? If, for example, we take Monism and Pluralism to be two accredited and antagonistic "isms," then the Monist, if he is a philosopher at all, will be bound to say either that the case for Pluralism contains some plausible or probative philosophical arguments, so that the Pluralists will have discovered something which he had missed; or that Pluralism contains no philosophical arguments which are either plausible or probative, in which case it will not be a philosophical theory at all, and will not therefore be an antagonistic philosophical theory. Even if he alleges that the case for Monism is probative, while that for Pluralism is merely plausible and fallacious—and this would, I suppose, usually be the allegation of the one "school" against its rival—he should confess that there must have been defects in the presentation of the case for Monism, else how could the case for Pluralism have looked plausible? How can an argument *seem* to refute a patently unanswerable case? The case for Monism, if really unanswerable, ought to be made patently unanswerable. So the existence of Pluralists will at least have done philosophy the service of advertising the fact that the case for Monism is either answerable or not patently unanswerable. In either case the Monist, if he is a serious philosopher, would give the Pluralist the credit for having made a philosophical discovery on a question of principle. And then the feud between the "isms" is over, and we are left with a serious dispute on questions of philosophical importance. Instead of saying, "I can't argue with Pluralists, for they are philosophically unprincipled," the philosophically minded Monist will say, "I can't argue profitably with anyone but a Pluralist. He is the only person who is keen to examine the rigorousness of the arguments on our questions of principle." And the sect-labels would be dropped.

I have said that there is no philosophical information. Philosophers do not make known matters of fact which were unknown before. The sense in which they throw light is that they make clear what was unclear before, or make obvious things which were previously in a muddle. And the dawning of this desiderated obviousness occurs in the finding of a logically rigorous philosophical argument. Something that was obscure becomes obvious to me in the act of

seeing the force of a particular philosophical argument. Nor can I make a short cut to that clarification by perusing the conclusions, but skipping the reasoning of the argument.

Anyone who appreciates the argument *ipso facto* gets the clarification. Though, of course, it is often very hard to appreciate involved and abstract arguments, like that which constitutes the *Critique of Pure Reason.*

But if a philosopher does succeed in finding for himself and transmitting to his readers a new and valid philosophical argument, then he has made something obvious for mankind. The obscurity which he has overcome is, apart from collapses of cultures, dead from that time on. His arduously achieved discovery becomes a public truism, and, if it is of any importance, becomes crystallized in the diction and the thought of educated people, even though the great majority of them have never read a word of him. The historian who wants to find out what Aristotle or Locke "discovered" must see what public truisms existed after the philosopher's work was done which were not even the topic of a clearly recognized question before he began it. Now when such a clarification has been effected and a previously unseen truism has become a part of the ordinary intellectual equipment of educated men, the discoverer of the truism will seem, on retrospect, to have been talking platitudes. And just that is his great achievement, so to emancipate men from an obscurity that they can regard as a platitude what their predecessors could not even contemplate clearly enough to regard as a paradox.

Those very parts of the work of Berkeley, say, or Hume, to which we vouchsafe an unexcited "Of course," are the discoveries of Berkeley and Hume.

But there can be, and are in fact, no faction-fights about the public truisms which are the real legacy of effective philosophizing. We do not marshal ourselves into Liberals and Conservatives about the points which a philosopher has made obvious. On the contrary, we contest about points which he has left contestable, points, namely, where he failed to make something obvious. We fight for or against some of his doctrines which are not truisms just because he has failed to establish them by probative or patently probative arguments. We enlist ourselves as his "followers" on the points where he was unsuccessful in clarifying something. He is the leader of a party in those very paths where he is still blindfolded.

I conclude with a few concessions.

1. Although, as I think, the motive of allegiance to a school or a leader is a non-philosophic and often an anti-philosophic motive, it may have some good results. Partisanship does generate zeal, combativeness, and team-spirit. And, when these impulses are by

chance canalized into the channels of a non-spurious philosophical dispute, the hostilities and militancies may aerate the waters and even drive useful turbines.

2. Pedagogically there is some utility in the superstition that philosophers are divided into Whigs and Tories. For we can work on the match-winning propensities of the young, and trick them into philosophizing by encouraging them to try to "dish" the Rationalists, or "scupper" the Hedonists. But this is a dodge for generating examination-philosophy rather than philosophy.

3. The "ism" labels remain, of course, applicable and handy, as terms of abuse, commiseration, or apologia. It is a neat and quick way of indicating the blinkers of a would-be philosopher to say, "He does not consider such-and-such an argument or type of argument, but then, poor fellow, he is a die-hard Idealist (or a sound Realist, or a whole-hogging Pragmatist)." And we, too, shall be, with perfect justice, allocated to new or old-fangled "isms."

For, being human, we are in philosophizing as elsewhere, partial to views from irrational motives, such as vanity, personal devotions, local patriotisms, and race-prejudices.

I am only urging that the employment of "ism-labels" should be reserved for our intervals of gossip and confession. They should not occur in philosophical discussions.

4. A big service that has been done to philosophy by the philosophical sects has been in respect of the technical terminology of philosophy. Philosophers no more dispense with technical terms than do plumbers. But language traps are the source of errors and confusions in philosophy. So a fairly copious supply of alternative and disparate founts of jargon is a considerable safeguard. And the occasional essays in inter-translation which occur when, for instance, a convinced anti-Thingummist tries to expound or criticize the views of a Thingummist are admirably fog-dispelling about the jargons of both, and not infrequently even about the philosophical problems themselves.

5. An important part of philosophical thinking consists in the hypothetical trying-out of theories—seeing what would follow from the assumed theory, how far other theories would or would not be compatible with it, and so on.

Now much of the exploration can be done by a person who firmly believes the theory, although he has no good grounds for it. But whether he consciously adopts it as a not impossible theory, or is so irrationally imbued with it that it constitutes his inescapable "point of view," he can follow out its consequences with profit to the subject. Sometimes the added enthusiasm which comes from belief, however irrational, stimulates the exploration where it would have flagged in the absence of that credence. But none the less the disposition to

be convinced of ill-founded or unfounded doctrines, or unconvinced of well-founded ones, is a "misosophical" disposition.

6. It is often claimed that the major "lesson" that we ought to learn from a philosophical leader is not so much a doctrine or set of doctrines as a Method; and what unites a "school" is not unanimity about conclusions, but agreement in the practice of the Method. We are to follow the example, not echo the pronouncements of the founders. Now though it is not easy to say what we mean by a method of philosophizing, it seems to me clear that it does mean something. If there is more than one method of philosophy, or more than one strand in the method of philosophizing, the revealing of a new method or a new strand in the method is one of the biggest sorts of discovery that a philosopher can make.

However, that a proposed or exhibited method is a proper method or the proper method, or part of the proper method of philosophizing, is not a truth of private revelation, or a matter of personal taste. It is a philosophical proposition, and one on a question of "principle." So a school which claimed to be, and alone to be, on the right track in virtue of its monopoly of the true Method would only be a special case of what we considered before, the pretended monopoly of philosophical principles. The rival sects would again be separated only by rival pretensions, unless they join in exploring the case for and the case against those pretensions. And then they are not rivals.