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A Philosophy of Social Science

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The modern movement towards specialization and compartmentalization of knowledge has brought about a confusion in human thought and chaos in valuation. These are today hopefully counteracted by a reverse trend towards the discovery of the unity of knowledge. The unity of social science comprises a commonness of human insight, appreciation and consecration based on an interchange and co-ordination of the fundamental notions and methods of the various social studies dealing with man, his behavior and culture.

The philosophy of social science aims at an integration of knowledge about human nature and human society. It does not represent a fresh addition to the social sciences, but is concerned with the analysis, description and clarification of the foundations of the existing social sciences. It embodies the corpus of a general or integrated theory of social phenomena. It is continuous with the philosophy of science in so far as it is a powerful and indispensable tool for the unification of human knowledge.

The philosophy of social science aims at discovering the structure of the real, whole or complete man and society. This is facilitated by the conceptual framework of a triangular interaction or 'transaction' between *Man, Behaviour and Society*, or between *Person, Values and Culture*, which encompasses the entire range of phenomena dealt with by the various social sciences in their different dimensions or orders. Recent advances in social theory point to the new reality that the individual person, and his values and his institutions are not separate and independent, but supplement and integrate one another. There is

no hiatus between universality and individuality, freedom and order, immanence and transcendence in the dynamic interplay between man, his individual and group function and his physical and cultural heritage. The search for the 'essence' or 'reality' of man and society comprises both the revelation of the triadic relationship and qualitative unity of the Man-Behaviour-Society pattern and the clarification of the dimensions or levels of this relationship.

The philosophy of social science integrates together the theory of Man and Personality (Anthropology as in German terminology), the theory of Human Motivations, Values and Behaviour (Psychology, Ethics and Axiology), and the theory of Human Institutions and Culture (Sociology and Culturology as in White's terminology). The notion of the 'field' or 'pattern', marked by qualitative integrity or order, is the unifying and coordinating concept. The ordering concepts of social 'field' or 'pattern' and 'transactions' therein are philosophical rather than scientific postulates. These stress both tension and regularity, instability and unity in the social adjustment and inter-relations at different levels or dimensions that elude the analytical methods of science. *Communication or Communion*, which is the central social process and the matrix of human meanings and values, cannot well be defined and categorized by science. *Multi-dimensionality* is the essence of human activity and values and demands philosophical procedures and treatment.

Man, lives in a multi-dimensional world, and his social adventure cannot be divided and segregated into an isolated social science. Like the philosophy of science, the philosophy of social science postulates the theory of 'complementarily', which provides the major key to the understanding of man and his goals, values and behaviour. No longer should we accept the separation of mechanical, organic, psychological and metaphysical modes of thought in respect of man and society: all are 'complementary', perspectival. As in modern physics, so in social science, we have to move to and fro between alternative theories and truths for interpreting the whole of human experience with its antinomic or contradictory principles,

attitudes and values. Corresponding to the complementary wave and particle conceptions of electron or light and those of position and velocity, we have the mutually exclusive but complementary conceptions of *instinct and reason, gratification and frustration, freedom and discipline, intrinsic and instrumental values, isolation and communion, self-acceptance and self-transcendence* in the social and moral sciences. Man, values and culture are organized and yet divided across the ages by the above incompatible, yet complementary assumptions and attitudes in the various dimensions of life and its adjustment. The main task of the philosophy of social science is to *harmonize and integrate the 'contradictory' and 'complementary' theories* derived from the various levels of dimensions of *Man-Values-Society*.

Obviously our present social theories, based on an epistemological error, reflect neither the spontaneity and openness of the social reality, nor man's perennial sense of unity and wholeness in universal nature as he moves to and fro from the conformity to the laws of nature and the social code to the freedom, triumph and transcendence of his own values, and builds up and transforms the physical and social world in the pattern of the latter. Since man's behaviour and experience cut across many dimensions, and metaphysics provides the law of his living, it is metaphysical speculations as regards man and society, subsuming the patterns of mathematical, biological and psychological thought, that furnish the ultimate postulates of all social sciences and social action.

The philosophy of social science bases its metaphysical postulates on dialectic, which is an empirical philosophy of continuous activity or becoming, an endless quest of that whole, which man is and which he understands as the unity and harmony of his opposites or antinomic modes, being and becoming, reality and appearance, order and individuation, self-actualization and self-transcendence, sensate and ideational. As he struggles with his dual nature and with the not-self, the neighbour, and reflects and judges between the opposite metaphysical attitudes and experiences, he measures the reality of

himself and society. His relation to his neighbour becomes at the same time a relation within himself - the neighbour neither warps nor limits his self-actualization but becomes the true and good self. He who loves his neighbour can alone fully understand and realize himself. Social values and ideals become his own potentialities, social status becomes self-status or self-esteem. He becomes a society, the unending ideal communion of the universe, in himself; he elevates social relationships into a full experience of transcendence, and goals and values into cosmical aspirations.

Man's transcendence is mediated by society, which is a constant tension inside. It is the nature of man to transcend himself because of the immanence in himself of the not-self, the neighbour, the whole universe. Beyond the existential society, there is the invisible society that extends into the past and the future and becomes time-less and also enlarges itself beyond known species and space into the cosmical community. In this perennially throbbing, humming cosmical beehive, which is human society, all beings, plants, animals and humans, and even the stars and the galaxies are neighbours, knit together in a common life by infinitely extending bonds and tendrils of attachment that indeed give meaning to the social destiny of man. Thus, can the social reality be endowed with deep and enduring feelings and aspirations; this is not possible in a mere intellectual interpretation of the unity of society. Such harmony of qualitative social yearnings has novelty, freshness and intensity of adventure corresponding to the practical tensions and resistances that society offers.

All social theories become philosophical when these accept the logic of dialectic. Through a scrutiny of the contradictory social assumptions, values and tendencies and their conditions and full implications in social life and institutions, dialectical social thinking paves the way towards a creative reconciliation of the antinomic or alternative modes, both of which demand full discovery, expression and protection within a wider organization of truths, values and action. The psychology of healthy, mature and wholesome persons, rather than of stunted, immature and desperate ones, shows that basically the higher and the lower needs, egoism and altruism, instinct and

conscience, intrinsic and instrumental ends, sensate, and ideational modes, are not in conflict but in agreement. The mature person abolishes these and many other polarities and contradictions. The psychology of healthy and mature rather than of sick culture similarly establishes a balance, collaboration and synergy of antinomic values and ways of living. A Middle or Third Way fuses many opposite and alternative truths and values. The great contemporary dialectical contradictions such as *Freedom and Organization, Equality and Order, Community and Individual, Competition and Collectivism, and Democracy and Totalitarianism or Marxism*, can be resolved only by the fusion or synthesis of the opposite and complementary assumptions and values at the next higher stage or dimension of social adjustment and experience. Such conservation and enhancement in the practical organization of life of what is precious in both alternative truths and attitudes cannot obviously be divorced from the valuation process that may usher in a Middle or Third Way. From Marxism, modern civilization derives the impulsion that brings about change in the economic and social structure based on fraternity and goodwill to the common man and the affirmation and recognition of the dignity of work and the rights of the human person in the worker. But in order that the working class of all countries may play the legitimate constructive role of building a new industrial civilization Marxism has to outgrow, first, its false, pessimistic philosophy of society that finds economic motivations and conflicts under which men and classes bend as universal; second, its false egoistic psychology derived from classical economics and British hedonism that disregards the accommodation and integration of diverse interests of men and groups by human culture; and third, its equally false philosophy of life that makes of all human values merchandise to be exchanged for wealth and power. On the other hand, Democracy, which equally with Marxism is rooted in the dignity of the common man, has in its turn to imbibe from Marxism the sense of social equality and solidarity and the aspiration and freedom of the worker to share free of cost, according to resources and possibilities, the essential goods and values comprising the material and spiritual heritage of civilization. But, unlike Marxism, it will regard the worker, reduced to the class man or

mass man, neither as servile, nor as immature, nor as chronically pugnacious but as a potentially free, creative, and complete social person. It will not brook with the suppression of the rights of association and organization generally, or the subordination of the values of personal fulfilment to the material and instrumental realm. It will strengthen and renovate the classical dignity of the individual by the economic guarantees of work, just wage and social security, emphasized by totalitarianism, and by the institutional guarantees of freedom of choice and moral decision in a plurality of autonomous bodies and associations, suppressed by totalitarianism. It will substitute the positive and spiritual aim of building up an open, ethical, classless community of free, happy and complete men, living and working in harmony with their fellow men. Finally, both **Democracy** and **Totalitarianism** have to revise their immature, all-pervasive faith in the efficacy of laws, institutions and economic and political techniques and procedures for achieving 'rightness' and 'goodness' in social relations. They forget that the higher sociality they both seek involves identity rather than adjustment, interpenetration; rather than interdependence, conscience, love and sharing rather than rights and liberties, and commonness as a value in itself rather than accommodation of separate interests and values. The rediscovery of order, justice and love as eternal ontological principles transcending human relations and institutions, that both the naturalistic conception of Democracy and the dialectical materialism of Totalitarianism repudiate, can alone give modern man political and cosmic patience, and enable him to carry the burden of human limitation and creativity with zeal and fortitude.

Accordingly, the discord between Democracy and Totalitarianism, which is a clash of feelings, values and truths comprising the social situation in the globe, may become the essence of the new social adventure and part of the meaning of harmony itself. According to Whitehead, harmony has two forms: '*a mere qualitative harmony within an experience comparatively barren of objects of high significance is a debased type of harmony, tame, vague, deficient in outline and intention*'. This form of harmony is contrasted with the

harmony where there is 'intense experience, with its freshness still upon it'. Today, both *laissez faire* Democracy and Communism, in spite or perhaps because of the Cold War, lack strength of experience in massiveness and in intensity and are bound up with 'a feeling of slow relapse into general anaesthesia or into tameness which is its prelude'. If 'perfection at a low level, ranks below imperfection with higher aim', there is urgent need today of reviewing afresh and reconciling the basic postulations, attitudes and values in democratic and totalitarian systems and culture mentalities.

Thus, can dialectical social theories discover the unity and wholeness of society and humanity in the conflicting assumptions, beliefs and values, each complementary to the other, that today sunder whole social systems and nations and prepare them for a global struggle. Though history itself is a verification of the dialectic of opposite principles, values and experiences, philosophy finds unity in diversity. And the co-ordination of the world of facts and the world of values also involves, if we follow Whitehead, not only such antitheses as Harmony and Frustration, Beauty and Ugliness, Attraction and Aversion, but also a measure of fusion in respect to each pair of opposites.

The philosophy of social science, recognizing the true status of antinomic and complementary idealizations in biology, psychology and all social disciplines, has in this Age of Troubles a most significant message for the synthesis of the apparently irreconcilable beliefs, ideologies and social and economic systems among blocs of peoples and for the unity and solidarity of mankind. The contemporary social conflicts and contradictions that indeed threaten a crisis in the life of the human species can only be resolved by philosophy that cherishes alternative and complementary truths and values, and, on the basis of logical principles of consistency, rises beyond them to universal and immutable truths and values for mankind's common understanding and dedication. The philosophy of social science accordingly leads the social sciences to the universal insights, experiences and values of man, and moulds and shapes one community, one culture, one world, comprising the present ideological disparity and struggle among

mankind. It extends unity and solidarity from the earth to the cosmos-community. It reveals the affinity and continuity between the human order and the supra-human and supra-temporal order. It invests human relations and values with cosmic status and dignity and brings the social to an ever-higher level of communion or an unlimited perennial society of the universe, which is the supreme value and meaning in itself, higher in significance than man himself or his ephemeral and parochial earthly society. Thus, the philosophy of social science can achieve an identity of the goals and values of the social sciences and of ethics and metaphysics as embodied in the symbolic syntheses of art, myth and religion through which man experiences harmony and wholeness of being and can bridge the gulf between the finite and the infinite, the fleeting and the eternal.

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