

English summary of: Philosophy, Science and the Future

Philosophy has always struggled with somewhat insoluble problems and unanswerable questions. Is this misfortune due to the nature of the questions, the wrong method in handling them or some other undetected obstacle? I argue that the answers to this are in some way positive for all three questions that all three questions can, to some extent, be answered in the positive. If the definition of the philosophical problem is an unanswerable question, philosophy is rather meaningless and futile. Ironically, this self-image has in no way kept philosophers from having a very high self-esteem. This tendency probably goes back to the birth of philosophy in ancient Greece where the unproductivity of the aristocracy was a sign of nobility. I ask the question whether philosophy, just because of its age and academic status until today, is a viable form of doing business with the world. For this purpose, I investigate if and how a modern naturalistic theory of the human mind and knowledge - the so-called cognitive science - will influence the way philosophy is pursued and understood.

The thesis is divided into three parts. The first part gives a brief overview of naturalistic philosophy, and then tries to characterise what cognitive science is all about, and how it deals with old philosophical problems such as mind-body dualism, intentionality, meaning and the flow of time. I present different kinds of cognitive models - classical symbolic computationalism, connectionism and ecological embodied cognitivism - and argue for a constructed hybrid between connectionism and moderate embodied cognitivism. The 'solutions' proposed for the old philosophical problems get their theoretical foundations from different scientific areas such as dynamical models in mathematics, evolutionary theory and biological semiotics. As to the question of the consciousness, I only sketch a way to deal with the problem and do not try to 'solve' it. The question cannot, I argue, be solved in a speculative way, but only by a combination of (non-dogmatic) phenomenology and empirical investigation. Today we are simply not in possession of the proper scientific tools. The main objection to the proposed 'solution' is the targeting. Some philosophers will argue that the phenomena I am trying to explain are not identical with the ones philosophy has tried to explain for a couple of thousand years, mainly due to the

extra-phenomenological character of my suggestions. Time is primarily experienced time, intentionality is mainly dependent on appearances and so on, the traditional philosopher would argue.

My main reply to this is that phenomenology is only a descriptive tool (among others) and cannot have the kind of intrinsic explanatory power which it is traditionally supposed to have. Since the breakthrough of modern science, many scientific theories have transcended the phenomenological level with great success. Transcending the phenomenological level of common sense - or what I call the macro-phenomenological level - is possibly a *sine qua non* for developing our understanding of the reality, when the selection of our cognitive equipment is determined by survival (adaptation) and not exact correspondence. Besides, phenomenology is itself a topic under investigation in cognitive science.

In the second part I discuss metaphilosophical questions in relation to cognitive science and the naturalisation of philosophy. Various common objections from both Anglo-American and continental philosophy are discussed. Some of them concern the relativity and moderate realism of the position I have suggested as the most viable kind of naturalism. My defence is, crudely put, that some of the premises for that kind of rationalistic normativity and evaluation which the opponents presuppose is a reminiscence of an outdated understanding of knowledge and science. Instead of rigid and aprioristic rationality the only realistic course is an empirical, context-sensitive and fallible way of justification. The last and most severe objection, which I deal with at length, is Heidegger's critique of the modern technical way of handling and describing reality. The strength of Heidegger's argument is due partly to the fundamental character of the critique and partly to the fact that his point is somewhat akin to mine. Despite the fact that Heidegger's thoughts on the technical character of the world are similar to cognitive science's theory of top-down causation of the phenomenology of objects and states of affairs, Heidegger seems to overdo the idea and end up in a kind of skeptical relativism. Instead cognitive science, while it as a fallibilism is well aware of the possible falsity of its theories, takes the technical as a *de re* quality of the world - among others. Acknowledging that the technical description of reality is not exhaustive, cognitive science has never pretended to

deliver the final truth about the inner essence of reality but it is nevertheless possibly the closest we get to a practically relevant description the world.

In the final chapter I sketch some philosophical perspectives of the relatively great success of cognitive science. As I see the matter, philosophy cannot ignore the naturalistic way of explaining human cognition with scientific descriptive tools, methodology and ontology. The old schisms between the province, subjects and status of philosophy and science, which philosophy has been defending for thousands of years as its *raison d'être*, cannot be withheld without dogmatism. The only chance for the continued contribution from philosophy to the wide investigation of human dealing with the world, in terms of truth, meaning and knowledge, is by joining forces with cognitive science. Otherwise philosophy as a discipline will run the risk of being left out in the cold obsolescence. Not because philosophical reflection will be neglected, but because philosophy generally has taught science a lesson about conditions for describing the world which has enabled science to look out for itself. Philosophy of science is in other words an integrated part of all proper scientific theorising today, and has in principle no need of (external) philosophical guidance or justification.