

Western philosophy is structured around three major schools of thought, which shape the way we approach the questions we ask and the answers we seek: metaphysics, phenomenology, and epistemology. In the first, philosophy is considered a full-fledged science. There is an intrinsic truth, and the philosopher's task is to discover it, much like a physicist of the soul. Here, the philosopher does not invent; he uncovers what already exists. In the second, things are seen as phenomena, driven by opposing, diverse, and multiple forces that cause them to evolve in certain directions. Lastly, epistemology, a framework focused on science and knowledge, is concerned with understanding how we come to know things.

Of course, there are numerous other philosophical currents—ethics, morality, and so forth—but these are merely subfields of the three major bodies previously mentioned. Our concern here is with the method of analysis, not the subject being analyzed. Morality, for instance, can be studied either from a metaphysical standpoint or through its manifestations as phenomena.

As you may have gathered, my aim here is to demonstrate the limitations of these three major bodies for philosophy. Yet I do not seek to diminish their value or to suggest they should be replaced. What could be more noble than the search for human truth (metaphysics)? However, it is possible—perhaps likely—that the nobility of these disciplines has caused them to distance themselves from the nurturing ground that is philosophy itself. After all, what does it mean to philosophize? Or rather, why do we philosophize? Philosophy is the art of thinking about the world around us, certainly, but why engage in this intellectual effort? It is to better understand the world and, by extension, to improve ourselves. While we might take pleasure in philosophy for its own sake, we must not forget that its true purpose is to instruct others and improve their understanding of themselves and the world—thereby fostering personal growth. Can one truly be free without understanding what freedom is? Not really. Thus, the purpose of the philosophy of freedom is to enable us to be genuinely free. This is why philosophy is taught in schools.

Yet today, after more than twenty-five centuries of philosophical history, if someone turns to philosophy for the reasons mentioned, what conclusions can they draw that serve them in practice? Almost none. Philosophy has become more a science of generating questions than of providing answers. Is man good or evil? Two thousand five hundred years later, we still don't know. Is man free or determined? No answer to that either. Instead of offering answers that serve people, philosophy has increasingly structured itself around grand paradigms that clash across the ages without resolution. Some claim we are free, while others assert we are determined—and thus the battle goes on. To be clear, I am oversimplifying. There is intellectual value in this exercise, and such debates are certainly enriching. But the fact remains: we still do not know whether man is free or determined. Only one question has escaped this vicious circle: happiness. We know that the supreme good for an individual is happiness, or at least the minimization of suffering. That's all.

Given this understanding, can the great unresolved debates that have structured philosophy for millennia be subsumed under the pursuit of happiness? Does God exist? Is man free or determined? Good or evil by nature? Humanity sits in the stands, eager for answers that will help it live better—ultimately the only philosophical quest that matters. Yes, we gain culture and critical thinking, but not the long-awaited answers. The persistent absence of these

answers may even strip them of their philosophical value, for if we cannot grasp them, they become uncertain. Not only are there no answers, but there is no indication that we will ever have them.

If the goal seems so far from being achieved, perhaps the problem lies in the object of that goal. Philosophy has been driven by a single methodological aim: the pursuit of truth. Linking philosophy with truth may seem self-evident, but perhaps it is precisely because this has gone unquestioned that we have overlooked the problem. Should truth be the sole pursuit of philosophy? I am not suggesting it shouldn't be, but must it be the only one? Should truth be the only criterion by which we evaluate the quality of philosophical work?

What I am about to say may surprise many, especially metaphysicians, but perhaps it is better to seek usefulness rather than truth. Isn't a faithful friend in usefulness better than an empty companion in an unreachable truth? Admittedly, this may sound surprising, especially to scholars, who might think they are being asked to abandon the search for truth. But I assert that this approach actually brings us closer to the essence of philosophy. Precisely because usefulness is a nobler cause and more synonymous with philosophy than truth. Consider the debate on whether man is free or determined. We will very likely never know the definitive answer. The debate is interesting, of course, but it remains an intellectual exercise. Let me borrow an argument from metaphysicians: if there is truth to the soul, it must necessarily be universal. So let us pursue a philosophy that is truly universal, one that is no longer the domain of a pseudo-elite content merely to ponder. Let us serve those who serve.

To the question of whether man is free or determined, I would rephrase it: is it better to believe that he is free or not? Let us seek the useful, not the true. For the question of freedom, here is the seed of an answer that would arise if usefulness were valued more than truth: it is better to believe that man is free, even if he is determined, than to believe he is determined when he is free. From a practical standpoint, truth prevails. I emphasize the practical because it is better for everyone to believe they are free and act accordingly, even if this belief is ultimately in vain, rather than to risk succumbing to determinism and discovering too late that one has drowned in it. This applies to the individual, but especially to society. What kind of society can we build without individual freedom and, by extension, without responsibility? How can we judge someone who is less responsible for their actions than the fate that compelled them to act? To judge a determined person is to judge the entire system that determined them, and thus, in effect, to judge ourselves. Society could only function as a zoo, where every action is attributed to external forces beyond individual control.

Another example: is history cyclical or linear? Again, searching for the truth leads to endless debates with no definitive answers. What does usefulness tell us? Is it better to believe that history is cyclical or that it has a direction? If history is cyclical, then all is lost. Why strive for education, progress, or dreams if everything is doomed to collapse and repeat itself? Why even philosophize if history is a loop? It would be like trying to educate a child already condemned to repeat the same mistakes. From a utilitarian standpoint, there is no benefit in thinking that history is cyclical. In fact, it's a genuine danger, spreading a sense of futility across the world. History may indeed be cyclical, but in the short span of a human life, it is undoubtedly better to believe otherwise—to cling to dreams and to fight for a better future,

both for individuals and societies. For the intellectual, it means believing that their efforts are not in vain. For the politician, it offers motivation to pursue peace or other worthy causes.

Approaching philosophical questions from the standpoint of their usefulness finally allows us to find answers—answers not only to questions long unresolved but also answers that serve the world. For that is what utility is: something that can be put to use. And what is the point of philosophy if it cannot be used? To make use of philosophical inquiry for oneself and for the world around us—this is far more valuable than endlessly clashing over questions to which we will never know the answers and which, therefore, lose both their meaning and their value. Yes, perhaps thinking this way will lead us to cling to things that are false, but we will never know the true nature of those things—whether they are true or false. At least, instead of remaining dormant in dusty old books, the utility of these answers will finally serve a purpose: to serve humanity.