A CONSTRUCTIVE CRITIQUE
OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF PHILOSOPHY:
Abstract of the Ph.D. Dissertation
By
Ramesh N. Patel
June, 1970

Philosophy pursues a rational explication of our understanding, experiences, and values in terms of objective truth and reality. Conspicuously, its view of rationality has been rigid and preconceived. Application of the preconceived reason in the explication of the essential features of our world fails and issues in a network of dialectical tangles. These artificially created tangles pose a unique intellectual challenge, but the perennial failure to resolve them limits the intellectual response of philosophers to remaining caught in the tangles, or to taking intuitively favorable sides, or to simply denouncing the tangles as meaningless. Each is understandable.

Superficially, traditional philosophical reason looks like a correct tool for the explication of our world of common sense, but its applications to the world result in logical tangles showing its inadequacy. The philosopher's faith in such reason ends up in one of two positions: abandoning our world in the interests of such reason, or embodying itself in the world through a special form of reason. Plato took the first and Aristotle took the second position. My analysis shows that Plato failed to explicate the relation between his world of Forms and our world of particulars, and, more importantly, between the Forms and the intuitive reason which grasps them. Aristotle, in my analysis, cannot conceal that the law of noncontradiction is a mere exhortation and has no descriptive necessity with respect to thought, things, or meaning. We also find such dialectical difficulties in Augustine, Hume and Strawson.

"Microphilosophical feasibilism" is our proposal for the best treatment, if not the definitive solution, of these problems. Instead of separating philosophical method into logic, epistemology, axiology, and metaphysics on the one side, and partitioning the projected results of philosophizing into validity, truth, valuation, and reality on the other, we need to start philosophizing with a general distinction between "method employed" and "intended result." This distinction is not pre-

colored by claims to ultimate verities. It is a direct aid to understanding. I consider the basic inevitable paradox that a philosopher should explain not only our understanding of experience but also his philosophizing itself. The circularity between "method employed" and "intended result" needs to be admitted as an initial fact about reason rather than circumvented by an implausibly claimed capacity of philosophical reason to formally transcend everything including this circularity.

Presuppositions are reduced to a minimum inevitable number. Being our primary microphilosophical criteria, they are reason, experience, and value in their minimal sense. They cannot be plausibly substituted or further reduced. They cannot be preferred one or more to others arbitrarily. We show how, in microphilosophy they coincide or synchronize. Jointly and basically, they form the minimum method employed. The initial, basic, intended result is called minimum feasibility. The fundamental circularity between method and result leaves no way out but to ground self-reference in such a manner that method and result "logico-genetically" coincide. Two extreme situations are avoided: "the logical zero-situation" where nothing is true or real, and "the credulous open situation" where everything is true or real. Finding a mean manifests a basic value. If the meaning of truth and reality is to be preserved, the basic value must have a clear impact and express descriptive rather than revisionary reason.

Several other stringent demands are raised as conditions which microphilosophy should fulfil to achieve feasibility. The final, joint, outcome of both "method" and "result," in the thesis of microphilosophical feasibilism, is formulated thus: Self refers freely and symbolically to itself, own person, own body, material bodies, other persons' bodies, other persons, and other selves.

Ramesh N. Patel
Doctor of Philosophy in
Philosophy conferred in
June, 1970
University of New Mexico,
Albuquerque, N.M.