

Proposal for a Systematic Metaphysics*

TRIADISM

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Introduction

Triadism is a consistent and systematic metaphysics, as an alternative for monisms, dualisms, and pluralisms. The groundwork of this metaphysics was laid by G. Frege ("three realms") and K.R. Popper ("three worlds") and I furthered it in my dissertation (in Dutch) in 1998 and later in my (Dutch) book "Triadisme" (2019). In this text I will present my proposal in 33 statements and argue step by step. At every step I'll present some elaborations. At the end of this text I will try to answer some possible questions from possible readers.

1. Simply put: as philosophers, just like scientists (and many others), we search for truth about reality

Searching for 'the' truth is, of course, often a utopian limit. Avoiding untruth and searching for something close-to-truth is less utopian and more realistic. Searching for untruth about reality ("the moon is made of cheese") may certainly be very relevant; we can exclude untruths as options. Searching for truth about un-reality ("unicorns are mammals") may be relevant; searching for un-truth about un-reality ("ghosts are essentially reptiles") will probably rarely be relevant. Searching for non-truth is often 'easier' than searching for truth. For instance: there are many untrue or wrong solutions of a sum but there is only one true solution. So at least we have truths, close-to-truths, possible truths or untruths, and certainly untruths. Epistemology is about truth; ontology is about reality. The big question is: what is reality? (And of course: what is non-reality?) I'll come back to that. This proposal is from a realist in triplicate: a tri-realist.

2. Searching for the truth about reality is searching for truths about states of affairs, of facts. We should avoid general questions and ideas about "the" truth about "the" reality

So we search for (specific) truths and untruths about (specific) relevant parts or aspects of reality. We search for true statements, propositions. (see at 5.) I think it is a grave mistake to see the most generic questions as in a philosophical sense the most 'deep' ones. Sometimes we raise dust and then we complain we cannot see, as good old Berkeley already knew. Usually people ask for 'the' truth, singular. Usually we can find many (non-conflicting) truths about parts of reality or states of affairs or situations.

3. Searching for truth is a human activity that requires a lot of specific mental activity

Reality is just 'there'; truth is never 'just there', but has to be found or discovered. (Re-)searching, discovering, arguing is a specific human mental activity. Although sometimes people 'just know' and have the feeling that 'truth comes to them', these are still mental events. The previous is, as far as I can see, an obvious truth about a part (or aspect) of our mental reality.

*The title is an adaption from that of a small book by D.M.Armstrong (Oxford, 2010)

4. *Truth is a possible quality of propositions (about (un-)reality)*

Or should I write “thoughts” instead of propositions? But as long as ‘knowing the truth’ is only a quality of someone’s thoughts, it cannot be communicated or checked. So: propositions can be either true or untrue. Or they can be more or less close to (a) truth. There may be people who know truths about reality that they have never tried to express. Or: truths of which they had no idea how to express them. But they may report this ‘mental reality’ of ‘knowing some truth’ (see at 7.)

5. *Propositions are structured compounds of concepts, in the same way as sentences are structures compounds of words*

This is an important distinction. Most propositions can be articulated in very different sentences. There is no ‘final’ or ‘ultimate’ articulation; some articulations are just more clear and more to the point than others. Some articulations are more understandable for some people than other articulations. But this doesn’t make them ‘more true’. On the other hand: sometimes people articulate different propositions when uttering the same sentence. Language cannot always be trusted as a means to communicate propositions, but it cannot be avoided either. This applies to every language.

6. *Thence, looking for truth results in, among many other things, articulating sentences as representations of true propositions*

In philosophy and science, this is the job-to-be-done: finding the best-possible articulations or expressions for the propositions that are the most close-to-truth about part of reality. Or those that are close to un-truth (as will be explicated in the articulation of a proposition). Or about non-reality (as explicated in the articulation of a proposition.) As can be seen in the examples in 1. We can articulate different sentences about different truths about one and the same state of affairs.

7. *As philosophers, just like scientists (and many others), we depend on our search for truths on (1) our mental capacities and on (2) our available conceptual framework*

Again: this is an important distinction. As human beings, we need to be able to think, argue, reason, and we need concepts, abstractions, contents of (mental) ideas. Progress in philosophy and science depends to a large extent on the availability of adequate concepts among philosophers and scientists (and on their ability to think).

8. *All this will be obvious in our search for the truths about the physical reality in and around us, but also for the truths about our mental activities, as part of our mental reality*

Almost every day we can learn about new developments in the natural or physical sciences: about truth and non-truth (“It is certain that so and so is NOT the case –although we don’t know what is the case”). Our mental reality is of course as real as that physical reality, but it is not in the same way ‘researchable’. Properties of mental ‘facts’ are not as neatly conceptualized as those of physical ‘facts’ often are. Therefore the truth about a mental reality is often not as available and justifiable as a truth about physical reality.

9. *The results of our search for truth are 'theories': structured compound conceptual entities about at least the physical reality and the mental reality*

Theories in philosophy and science are structured compositions of related concepts, as a representation of a non-conceptual reality; either physical or mental. Theories are structured compounds of propositions. Theories presuppose order, structure or regularity in the reality of its subject. Maybe (probably!) the mental reality is not as ordered and structured as the physical reality. Therefore, searching for truth about reality is searching for truth about (aspects of) the physical reality, (aspects of) the mental reality and (aspects of) the conceptual reality, whereby every truth about the physical and the mental reality is unavoidably articulated in propositions as compound parts of this conceptual reality.

10. *The reality of physical entities is undeniable for a living and conscious person: our body and all the things around us and our earth and universe are physical. The reality of mental entities is equally undeniable: all our thoughts and feelings and emotions and perceptions and opinions are mental.*

The reality of conceptual entities is also undeniable: everything that was written in this text so far refers to concepts, ideas, abstractions, and theories. This article itself is a linguistic presentation of real conceptual entities and as soon as anyone reads it, it becomes something of a mental reality too, and it provokes thoughts, feelings, etc., which are mental entities, in the reader.

11. *To articulate any truth about any reality, people use sentences representing propositions consisting of concepts. We cannot articulate any truth about the physical and the mental (and the conceptual) reality without using (and being in) our conceptual reality*

As soon as we try to speak or write a truth or describe or explain a state of affairs (physical or mental) we use universals and universals are conceptual entities.

12. *In this searching for truth in our history, we have developed a conceptual reality that is far larger than just the many concepts about physical and mental entities*

Although many theories in science are about the physical or the mental reality (or their connections), most theories in philosophy are about conceptual 'compounds'. And this is true for mathematics as well: it is about concepts about concepts (whether or not about some physical or mental reality). Mathematics and logic consist of conceptual compounds that are useful for all kinds of propositions about physical and mental reality. I think it would be foolish to deny a physical reality; likewise it would be foolish to deny a mental reality or a conceptual reality.

13. *In our personal history and in our collective history as living beings our physical reality comes first; then the mental reality and later the conceptual reality*

Our first cells are simply physical and at a certain moment during pregnancy we 'get mental' and probably after birth we 'get conceptual'. It is obvious that many animals live in a physical and a mental reality, though often different from ours as humans. We don't fly like birds or swim like fish. Thomas Nagel's famous question was primarily about the mental reality of bats. The physical reality of an organism (and a person) gives opportunities and constraints on the

mental reality of that organism (or person). The mental reality of an organism (and of a person) gives opportunities and constraints on the conceptual reality of that organism (or person).

14. In our personal and in our collective history we have developed a physical as well as a mental as well as a conceptual life-world or habitat. These life-worlds determine the limits of our physical, mental and conceptual possibilities, although they are dynamic

So: most animals have a physical habitat that is overlapping with ours (with of course exceptions like deep-sea fishes) and probably a mental habitat that is overlapping with ours: animals can probably suffer like us and can probably have emotions like us. It is not very probable (but for some animal species not improbable) that they live in a conceptual habitat that may be overlapping with ours. For his Three-World-theory Popper used the abbreviations W1, W2, and W3, for the physical 'world', the mental 'world' and the conceptual 'world' respectively. I am not too fond of this 'world'-metaphor, though it hints at forming a whole, a system, a structured complex of relations and all that fits: three complex systems of entities of the same 'substance': physical, mental, conceptual. For several reasons I prefer to insert (between the entity and the world) the concept of 'life-world' or habitat H: we live, every day of our lives, in a specific physical habitat H1 (and it changes through the years) inside W1, a specific mental habitat H2 (that also changes through the years) inside W2, and a conceptual habitat, H3 (and as long as we learn and develop this changes through the years too) inside W3. We do so as individuals (our body, our place to live, etc.), our Hi1 (individual physical life-world), and we do so collectively, in the place and land and era we live in, an Hc1 (collective physical life-world). The same goes for the H2 and the H3. These H's are dynamic, in process, and part of worlds, W's. Does a H2 'emerge' from a H1? Does a H3 'emerge' from a H2? As long as we have no sufficient theory, we can say so. But we should consider 'emergency' a fancy concept for just not-knowing and not-understanding. . .

15. Finding some truth about some part of reality, therefore, means finding the best-possible articulations for the best-possible propositions (concepts!) about our physical, our mental and our conceptual reality

(Un-)truth about reality is (un-)truth about one of these three and when truth is articulated in sentences to represent propositions, then these propositions themselves are part of our conceptual reality.

16. Propositions can be about particulars or individuals and about universals. There are physical, mental and conceptual particulars, 'existents', entities. Talking about universals is always conceptual

Of course one could say: "only physical things exist". But I would add: "they exist as physical entities and as nothing else. But mental entities exist too; as mental entities. And the same goes for conceptual entities: they exist, as concepts!" I guess no one would seriously argue that there are no concepts. Or that there are no emotions, perceptions, opinions, feelings" etc. After all: they are necessary for claiming the first statement. Universals are abstract entities and so they are conceptual particulars.

17. *An entity in a H1 and in W1 shall be named an e1. An entity in a H2 and in W2 shall be named an e2. An entity in a H3 and in W3 shall be named an e3. No entity is an entity in more than one world; entities are 'world-specific'*

Because all entities are 'in process', dynamic (Heracleitos: *Panta Rhei*), I prefer to call them "eventities", or 'happen-things'. Thus you can read e2 as "mental eventity", as "mental entity-in-process". And e1 can be read as "physical entity-in-process" or physical eventity etc. Triadism holds the reality of all these e1's in W1, of all these e2's in W2 and of all these e3's in W3: triadisme is a tri-realism.

18. *It is now obvious: our three life-worlds are each filled with their accessory and world-specific kinds of eventities: physical, mental and conceptual*

So in our talking and writing about a specific part of reality, we can refer to them as an e1, an e2, and an e3 and they all exist in their specific way. No eventity of one kind ("world") is equal or reducible to one of another kind ("world"). Reality, as well as non-reality, is therefore always world-specific; what is there in W1 is not as such there in W2 or in W3 and vice versa. To paraphrase Wittgenstein: the worlds are all that is the case.

19. *Many eventities are 'about' other eventities*

We experience (e2) physical things (e1). We think (e2) about ideas (e3) about 'the environment' (e1). Therefor I developed an additional coding for eventities: many of our (mental) experiences are about physical eventities: from the food we taste to the pain after an accident to the awe about a view: we have what I will call e2.1's, e.g. mental eventities about physical eventities. Our feelings about our experiences are an e2.2. Our 'beliefs', propositional attitudes: an e2.3. And of course we have our concepts for physical eventities: all our kinds of physical things are in our H3.1 and are e3.1: concepts for physical eventities, things, 'objects'. We have our concepts for mental eventities: feelings, emotions: concepts regarding mental eventities are e3.2. We can distinguish between a specific eventity about a specific eventity (e.g. as an e2.1: my perception of the Eiffel-tower) and a specific eventity about a class of eventities (e.g. my experiences of pains) and those I call e2(e2). My remembering my perception of the Eiffel-tower is an e2.2.1. So: "consciousness" refers usually to a kind of e2.2.n: an e2.2.1 ("awareness") or an e2.2.2 or an e2.3.2.1. All this is about "content", to use the common philosophical concept.

20. *So we all live in our individual/personal and our collective H1 (filled with e1's) and in our individual and collective H2, filled with e2.1's, e2.2's and e2.3's and more (e2.0; a mental eventity that is 'just there' and 'unconceptualized' and about 'nothing'). We all live in our personal and in our individual and collective H3, which is filled with e3.1's, e3.2's and e3.3's (concepts for concepts; philosophy is loaded with those!) and more: e3.0; pure concepts. . .*

Many photographs and models and toys (car-models, doll-house furniture) can be called e1.1, because they are physical eventities 'about' physical eventities. Everyone's H2 and H3 are certainly filled with numerous eventities about numerous eventities: e2.1, e2.2, e2.3 resp. e3.1, e3.2 and e3.3 and many more: an e2.2.3: a mental eventity (e.g. remembrance) of a mental eventity (e.g. surprise) about a concept. It is impossible to describe or explain an event in W1 or W2 without using concepts, without inhabiting a specific H3 as part of W3. Except for proper names, every word we use (in describing, explaining, and much more) refers to a kind

of eventivity, or a property: conceptualized and part of a H3. That implies that articulating truth about (any) reality depends on the inventory of our conceptual life-world, H3.

21. *A serious ontological question is: does anything exist 'independent' of or outside specific life-worlds? What 'is' in W1? W2? W3? (whether or not in H1, H2, H3) If anything?*

That which does not exist (What is not real, what is not an e1) in any H1 (or in W1) can still be an e2 or e3 in someone's H2 or H3: e.g. mythical creatures and many more, or an idea for a (physical) gadget. There is no doubt that UFO's exist in W3 and in many H3's. Some people even claim UFO's are real in their H2, as an e2.1: they saw them and heard or felt them. But the question remains: are these UFO's e1's? We all know about hallucinations; often too real in H2, but without a 'correlate' in W1. And we know for certain that there are e1's that are not in anyone's H1: undiscovered exoplanets, unfound fossils and many more.

22. *So, many eventivities in all three (life-)worlds do have correlates in one or two other worlds. But this is not the case for all eventivities*

I can feel a knife (e2.1) and it is just there as an e1 and of course I know the accessory concept (e3.1): [knife]. In those common cases, I suggest the concept "tri-eventivity" for the correlated e1, e2.1 and e3.1 with all the same 'name'; sometimes it is not obvious to which we refer when we use the word but that is usually no problem. But there are also "bi-eventivities" such as in my feeling of being in love (e2 and e3.2) or in kinds of radiation (e1 and e3.1) and there are many solo-eventivities; they are only real in one world. For instance numbers, pure abstractions, "un-nameable" experiences or things deep under the earth's crust or at Mars that could be discovered but which are, for the time being, 'just there' in W1 (and in no-one's H1).

23. *Now we can rephrase the issues of 'appearance' and 'reality: reality consists of e1's, e2's and e3's; appearance is the e2.1, e2.2 and e2.3*

Kant's "Ding an sich" was clearly about an e1. We can perceive (see, hear, feel, smell) an e1, but only as an e2.1. I think it is also relevant to distinguish between the e2 and the 'perceived' e2 (e2.2) and this is certainly relevant for an e3. Psychologists, in their theorizing about the relationship between an e1 and its correlate e2, have found out that the correlate concept (e3, if available) is also relevant for our percepts: a specific e2.1 is not only the 'result' of our senses, of the e1 as such, but also of our ideas about this specific e1, our e3.1.

24. *People live in many different H1's all over the world. But there is certainly only one W1, enclosing all these H1's. People also live in many different H2's and we can suppose that there is an enclosing W2 too, although not every H2 is within reach for everyone; everyone's empathy and fantasy has its limits. People live in many different H3s too.*

We should be careful to suppose the existence of one privileged common H3 ("the real truth for everyone", our Western and scientific H3 of course...). "How the world thinks" (Julian Baggini, 2018) is a wonderful account of possible and actual collective H3s all over the earth (our collective H1). "Metacognitive diversity" (J.Proust & M. Fortier, 2018) can be seen as a first research-project to a possible "meta-"H3 for H3's. Cognitions should be understood as e3's 'fitting' to e1's or e2's. "History of Ideas" is always about the dynamics in collective H3's.

25. *So this Triadism is cautious about claims from any H3 about W1 and W2: I don't presuppose some underlying structure for all three worlds and therefore no 'unity' 'behind' all these differences*

In our thinking and scientific work, we try to develop and find the best possible H3 for parts of W1 and W2, but our intellectual capabilities (parts of Hi2) are always limited and our comprehension of the reality of W1 and W2 (and W3) is always limited. I, therefore, don't suppose that there is some Platonic W3 with the ultimate truth about all reality; just as most of our H1 is man-made, so is most (or all?) of our H3 man-made. These life-worlds have changed over the years and they change as we speak. So: no ontological tri-unity; just these three!

26. *"To exist is to be identifiable", as Quine taught. So: in any world an eventity is an eventity when it is identifiable in that world*

And, I would add: discernable (from other eventities) too. So we want an ID for eventities: they should be Identifiable and Discernable. For most physical eventities this is obviously true (although mostly just in H2.1). For mental and for conceptual eventities this ID can be more complicated: how can we identify and discern a mental eventity? I don't think that is too complicated (phenomenology!); it is often more complicated to find or create a fitting conceptual correlate (and name, word, expression). Our conceptual framework for kinds of mental eventities is pretty (much too...) limited. And how can we identify a conceptual eventity? The only way to make 'abstractions' more or less concrete is by using words to name or describe them. People can have verbal disputes and I think these are often conceptual disputes. They talk as if a specific word is the name of a specific concept. But a word is never the 'mirror-image' of a concept. We can use different words for (probably) the same concept and we can use one word for a range of concepts. This is where philosophy gets complicated: in the use of words to refer to concepts. So the question of reference, the semantics, the ID of concepts will keep us busy... Maybe rarely with e3.1, because our words for concepts for physical eventities are often 'clear'. But when it comes to e3.2 it may be more complicated than it often seems to be. And in philosophy, of course, it is about e3.3 (e3.3.1, e3.3.2.1 etcetera) and that is inevitably complicated.

27. *Back to where we started: we search for truth about reality and that means: we search for the best possible, most representative, linguistic representations of the best-possible, most representative conceptual representations about physical, mental and conceptual realities, eventities*

That means: in science we look for the best (= most fitting) H3 for W1 and all its e1's and for W2 and all its e's (and their connections) and in philosophy we look for the best (= most fitting) H3 for W3. In 'philosophy of science' philosophers develop H3.3.1 and H3.3.2; studying H3.1 and H3.2. In studying "the social" scientists and philosophers search for the best H3 for the ecologies between life-worlds. In all this we should be 'pragmatic' and we should never be 'naïve' about our common conceptual habitat, as the outcome of many, often very accidental, circumstances. As philosophers, we can try to analyse and rearrange the conceptual life-worlds that we got handed down.

28. *Looking for natural kinds means looking for "necessary" e3.1's and/or e3.2's*

A discussion about natural kinds is a discussion about the kinds of e1's and e2's that are 'natural' and therefore will be conceptualized by every thinking person. But even Hacking, who

has thought a lot about natural kinds, doubts if they are 'there' at all. So: at least most kinds are not natural but 'cultural' kinds and parts of a specific ecology with a specific (individual or collective) H1, H2, and H3. This 'ecology' is "the social", as can be confirmed in Latour (2007).

29. *Eventities are never isolated; every eventity has (some) 'context'. Therefore eventities are related.*

It is tempting to ask: "do relations exist the way eventities exist?" I don't think they do; I think eventities are 'just' related, connected because they 'belong' to a 'world' and I think that we look for these relationships by conceptualizing kinds of connections and relations. These eventities, in any world, are 'just there' in some kind of 'order' and/or 'structure'. Scientists try to be specific about these 'connections', 'relations'.

30. *Thinking about relations means thinking about relations between 'substantially similar' eventities in the same world (e1-e11, e2-e21, e3-e31) and about relations between 'substantially differing' eventities from different worlds (e1-e2, e2-e3, etc.)*

The first kind can be named 'internal'; the second 'intranal' (I avoid the name 'external' because these relations are in-between). I think it is a rash mistake to use a concept that we use for a kind of internal relationship (e.g. a causal relation in W1) for an intranal relation (e.g. 'neural'=e1 and mental=e2), because then we think about reality as 'one' instead of three... We have hardly any concepts available for intranal relations, but again: we should be careful to use the internal concepts. Philosophers could try to develop a semantics for intranal relations...

31. *[Conditionals] might be a promising relational concept*

We can distinguish between 'necessary conditions' and 'sufficient conditions'; let's call them shortly 'necons' and 'sucons'. I think we can be pretty sure that there are specific e1's (in our brains) that are necons for specific e2's, but that there are no e1's that are sucons for e2's. But some might turn out to be sucons as well. This issue, of necons and sucons, is a very relevant field (psychiatry, neurology, psychology) for research of intranal relationships; a field where the discussions have grown confused by the use of the concept 'cause'. There will probably be specific e2's as necons for at least e2.3's. It seems improbable that any e2 is a sucon for an e2.3. But e2.3's are probably necons as well as sucons for e3's (as long as e3's are man-made...) Again: there is work to be done in developing and creating concepts for intranal relationships...

32. *Life-worlds are connected; in a person or a community. The reality of 'tri-' and 'bi-' eventities from 22 makes that obvious. Life-worlds of a person or a community are more or less 'mutually syntonized'*

I suppose that there is some kind of 'ecology' between life-worlds, in people and communities: some combinations are more harmonious and 'fitting' than others. This goes for all three H's and this applies to individuals in any place on this earth and in communities all over the earth (and I avoid the word 'world' here).

33. *All this is not only about knowing or explaining, but also about judging, evaluating*

We do judge in our H2: we enjoy seeing things as beautiful, the taste of an apple, the sound of music. And we judge in our H3: we have developed evaluative concepts ("beauty", "health")

and many more) and use them to argue about our evaluations of entities in all three worlds. So this Triadism is not only relevant in philosophy of sciences and in the sciences, but also in aesthetics, ethics and political philosophy. In all these 'branches' there are discussions about e1's, e2's and e3's and most of all about e3's concerning the relation between e1's and e2's and vice versa.

BUT

But what about knowledge? Isn't that more important than truth?

"Knowing" or "being sure" or "being certain" can refer to a lot of different subjects. "I know what I see" refers to an e2.1 and "I know what I feel" refers to an e2.2. This is usually about "awareness" and it is possible without a concept. "I know what I feel" is indeed different from "I know the name of the kind of mental eventuality that I feel": e2.1 is not the same as e2.3.2.1. So: knowing is something mental (belief) and involves a kind of 'certainty'. If a person is certain about and 'believes' the truth of a proposition, then that person has a specific 'propositional attitude'. We could ask that person to rate her or his degree of 'mental certainty' a value between 0 and 1. If a person is absolutely convinced of the truth of a proposition, the mental certainty of that person about that proposition is 1. In the well-known definition: "Knowledge is justified true belief", the words "justified" and "true" involve H3 and that "belief" involves H2. That's about 'knowledge'; now once more about truth. Truth is not about mental certainty (or 'belief'), but about epistemic certainty and that is not the same 'thing' as knowledge. Truth is certainly not personal (but of course there is a 'personal reality, a H2); truth is 'objective' and so is the degree of epistemic certainty. We may rate the truth of a proposition between 0 and 1, so when a proposition is true, the epistemic certainty of that proposition is 1. Of course, this goes for untruth too: someone can be certain that a proposition is not true. And some propositions can probably be true. There is truth 'about' someone's mental certainty, but not 'in' it. Now let's go back to the definition: Someone has 'real' knowledge and 'knows the truth', if her or his mental certainty (belief) about a proposition about a state of affairs or part of reality is maximal and the epistemic certainty is maximal too (justified and true). Mental certainty is a specific mental reality; epistemic certainty is a specific conceptual reality.

But isn't it obvious that everything mental is in fact really physical? Isn't physicalism (the dominant monism) the best and only serious metaphysics?

That is what some people (philosophers, psychologists) want us to believe (as an e2.3). They have, by thinking (their e2), come to this conclusion which they share in many publications, filled with theories and arguments, with all kinds of conceptual structures (e3) and they try to convince (e2) us to believe this too and show themselves very convinced: their mental certainty is maximal. They ignore the reality of their own thinking and their own believing, their convictions, their propositional attitudes and they ignore the reality of their conceptual frameworks, their specific (and limited) H3-region. So: no, there is most certainly nothing 'obvious' about that; see 31 once more. D.M. Armstrong, whose book inspired the title of this proposal, starts his book with this: "... all that exists is... the physical." He calls this a hypothesis and then only makes some room for 'abstract objects' (concepts, e3). And in his final chapter, "Mind", he discusses mental eventualities, especially "consciousness, qualia and intentionality" and admits that he is less certain about his physicalism than he was. Maybe he should have tried the hypothesis of Triadism as a "systematic metaphysics"!

But how do you explain the obvious mental consequences of many physical entities: psychopharmacology, drugs, etc.? What about the mind-body-problem?

I can't explain it; I am not a scientist. Of course, I know about many 'interactions' between physical entities and mental entities and I try to avoid thinking about this in terms of "the mind" and "the brain", because these concepts cover too much, too many kinds of e1's and of e2's. Why should all these 'interactions' be of the same kind? The 'mind-body-problem' is a crude simplification of a range of relationships between specific e1's and specific e2's and once again: we haven't developed many concepts for these (intranal) relationships. I think every scientist is familiar with the temptation of 'premature induction' and I think that many scientist have been unable to withstand this temptation.

But how can we explain anything?

Again: explaining a phenomenon (a compound of events/entities) in W1 or W2 is something for scientists, and they will need a certain mental framework, a H2, and a conceptual framework, H3, to be able to do so. As a philosopher, I restrict myself to W3 and to analysing and developing conceptual structures or theories that can be used by scientists. (Of course I am familiar with a lot of scientific theories and so I am able to explain quite a lot...) I hope to have shown how science sometimes restricts itself by using too limited conceptual structures and too 'blurry' concepts. So we shouldn't ask 'how things are' (explanations) without being aware of the presumptions (mental and conceptual) when we ask this kind of question.

But what about tropes? Qualia? Content? Categories?

These are words that in philosophical texts usually refer to more than one concept and therefore to different concepts. The usual question is: "what is a trope?", suggesting that there is a specific e3 with that name. This suggestion seems to go back to Plato who taught that everything has an essence, but in this Triadism we don't need Plato; see 24. The question should not be: "what is a trope? (or qualia, or ...)", but "to which concept do you refer when you use this word 'trope'?" And we might look for a different word for another concept, or consider using 'trope-a', 'trope-b', 'trope-c' etc. There is no 'true' or 'right' word and no given word-concept-relation. So what about tropes? I don't know. Some authors seem to use this word to refer to what I thought of as a tri-event; others use it for a bi-event (e1 and e2.1). What about qualia? Some authors refer to qualia as e2.1 and for other authors, every e2 is a quale. What about content? Any e1 can be the 'content' of an e2.1 or an e3.1 etc. What about categories? I would only use the concept of [categories] in H3, often for some kind of e3.1 or e2.1, or e2.2 or e2.3. But all these word-meanings are too blurry to use them in a philosophical text without a specific reference from the author to what they mean. And discussions about these words/concepts are often perfect examples of Berkeley's still relevant complaint: "First we raise the dust, and then we complain we cannot see".

But, so what? Why this 'triadism' at all?

I presume that a lot of arguing and thinking can change as soon as the reality of concepts and the reality of mental entities is taken seriously; especially in science and health-care. And I presume that it is a good thing that we are aware of the importance of these life-worlds in our lives and in our dealings with each other. A lot can change as soon as we accept the limitations of (any) life-worlds as what they are: more or less contingent selections of what could be and what is available, in all three worlds. On this 1 earth we live in our 3 Habitats ('worlds') and in and from these habitats ('worlds') we have to take care of this one earth. And I presume that

there is much to develop and to discover and to improve. People have many conflicts regarding their H1, or their H2, and certainly regarding their H3. With this triadism we could try to develop regions in H3 in which conflicts can be settled, by analysing and modifying H3.1's and H3.2's. And: learning about the H3's of people in our own past or in other cultures (the Far East!) is fascinating for philosophers. But learning about their H1 and H2 is fascinating too! And about these fascinating ecologies (see 32)! And: imagining life-worlds of animals: their H1 in connection with their H2 (and possibly H3). So: triadism!

Closing note

This article is just a sketch and of course also an invitation and/or provocation; many further elaborations are possible. This metaphysics is relevant for almost every issue in recent and historic philosophy; as a metaphysics and as a meta-philosophy.

Comments

Comments are welcome at info@triadism.org (Eite Veening)

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