1P. Series of Reflections on What it Means to Be 'Critical'?
Part I – General Investigations

The Pursuit of Philosophy as a Discipline

Volume III

The Prescience of Philosophy as a Discipline:

Beyond Criticism:

How Should Philosophy
Progressively Perfect an Ongoing Critique of its Discipline,
And,
Through Such Constructive Insight,
Perceptively Appreciate the Nature of the Human Condition??
A Critique of Theory *versus* A Theory of Critique…

N.K.Tointon

2020 – 2021

1P. Series of Reflections on What it Means to Be 'Critical'? Part I – General Investigations*

0. Pre-Introduction

What does it mean to be 'critical'? A series of reflections in three parts. (0)

This topic is central to my third volume of essays in the collection titled: *The Pursuit of Philosophy as a Discipline*. The first volume primarily dealt with 'theory' whilst the second volume focused on 'practice'. In the pursuit of this principle objective, I have come to consider 'critiques' as either an explicit or implicit aspect of narratives given that I perceive narratives as driven by a desire to de-anomalize the perception of those anomalies around which each narrative has apparently come into cultural existence. In essence, a critique supervises such a process of de-anomalization. That, in the successful resolution of this central objective, the narrational relationship would then have no *raison d'être* to exist and, accordingly, would render itself as inoperable, as not needing to operate. But, so much for theory. On a cursory inspection, it would be obvious that most narratives have a habit of persisting, and, therefore, one may well suspect that only ongoing, qualified and circumscribed patters of resolution are usually being exercised? (1)

In this first essay, I will orchestrate a set of incremental reflections, as an introduction, on what it means to be 'critical'. In the second essay, I will explore a number of critical philosophies constructed by a certain number of critically-minded philosophers in order to highlight certain potentially critical insights into the nature of the philosophical discipline along with a recognition of how they may have also ultimately failed to achieve that objective. In the third essay, I will attempt to construct a critically oriented philosophical approach that will try to answer a number of those criticisms noted in the course of these reflections. In this endeavour, I will argue that economic correlativities at the center of all disciplinary economies should allow us to construct, exercise and critique all topics of enquiry in a manner that would permit mutual forms of both self-correction and self-corroboration in much the same way as we make our usual, normally non-problematic passage in this world at large both 'before others' and 'before-others'.[1] Indeed, that 'the world is relatively non-problematic for the non-philosophical person' is, itself, a philosophical problem that will need to be addressed, as, hopefully, we critically advance our relative insightfulness into all such matters relevant to this principle objective (of 'what it mean to be critical?'). (2)

'Making progress' is a difficult thing to assess, and, I suspect, more to be observed in a nonlinear, circular fashion. However, let us find some enjoyment in such circuits and revolutions trusting time will tell us whether they are vicious or philosophically profitable, have us going down endless rabbit holes or see us truly moving forwards? (3)

* For latest version of this text: www.homestead.com/noelshomepage/noels homepage5.html

[1] This convention of relating the relatively non-existential with the existential is usually indicated by '(-)', e.g., 'before(-)others'; i.e., as 'both before us non-existentially and before-us existentially'.

1. Introduction

Through a first series of general reflections let me highlight certain features that appear to construct and support the general idea of what it appears might be meant by the expression ‘to be critical’, etc? (4)

2. A First Series of Reflections on what it Might Mean to Be ‘Critical’?

i. The Basic Idea of Criticism as an Assessment of a Skillful and Successful Alignment…

Imagine yourself as a child, back at pre-school, and being instructed to place an ‘E’ shape into an ‘E-shaped recess’ constructed on a board. Before too long you soon learn the rule-directed routines involved in the performance of this ‘game’ by correctly and successfully inserting the larger ‘E’ shape into the larger ‘E-shaped recess’, and not the ‘O’ shaped piece. Soon learning also to put the smaller ‘e’ into the smaller ‘e-shaped recess’, and so on. Here, successfulness in correctly putting these shapes into their appropriate recesses is something obvious once all parties have appreciated the rules expected to be observed behind the performance of these relatively simple routines. I.e., ‘this shape goes in that recess with the same shape’, and so on. (5)

This simple example clearly illustrates a number of principles central to our more complex ideas of what might be entailed in the performative-concept of a ‘critique’. Namely, a pre-understood understanding of the rules that will be invoked; the rules include a rule that tells us when the objective/s of this performance have been successfully realized. I.e., critically realized successfully. That the experience of confirmation, e.g., is experienced in real time in the fitting together of that correctly fitted piece in this puzzle, and, we can later re-experience that semblance of an appropriate fit in a virtual process of verification just by looking at this puzzle and seeing this objective of the fitting being ‘suitably’ carried out (i.e., either properly, appropriately and/or appositely executed). (6)

On a deeper level of generalization, we might say that an alignment is being observed between what is seen, expected, non-virtually enacted, virtually enacted, reports that describe what is being represented, seen being enacted, and so on. (7)

Hence this crucial concept of ‘alignment’? But ‘alignment’ is not something enacted with itself, with the in and of itself, or, any other abstruse or bizarre formula posited by some strange form of philosophy whose incantations either advertently or inadvertently only end up poking fun at itself. Let me explain by exploring what is entailed in this concept of ‘alignment’. (8)

I perceive alignment as a process and therefore, ‘alignment through realignment’. Moreover, in my own reflections on this iterative process I can distinguish three types of realignment. Let outline these three different styles of iteration. (9)

First, there is error correction of particular aspects in a certain type of situation. In effect, realignment through ‘re-de-mis-alignment’. I.e., by correcting those features that we think are not as aligned as we may have first thought or as other may have thought. E.g., I think ‘the cat is still sleeping on the mat in front of the heater’. To determine whether I am right or wrong would be as simple as going into the next room and seeing for myself whether this is or is not the case. I duly do so and see the cat is now sleeping on the couch and rightly suspect they found it was too hot to stay in front of the heater; so, decide to switch the temperature controls on the heater down to a much lower setting. The cat, heater, couch and rug are still in this room, just the cat is no longer sleeping on the mat. In effect, having corrected my former expectation by realizing, through perception, that my cat is now asleep on the couch. Moreover, the heater is still on in this hot room, but, have now turned the temperature down in order to arrive at something a lot more comfortable. This form of re(-)alignment being (phenomenal-)phenomenological in orientation and concerns itself more with texts that are written/read as representations of the world on numerous levels of employment.[2] (10)

Second, there is a general form of alignment when we find the genres of behaviour being adopted and adapted are being duly observed in their conventional, cultural forms of conformity. I know my cat has just eaten its evening meal, has had plenty of time to lick itself afterwards, and, in all probability, will be sleeping in that room that has the heater turned on. Sure enough, I see my cat sleeping on the couch doing the same sort of things each and every evening. In other words, a ‘realignment’ that closely observes whether our genre expectations are still in that former state of (re)alignment, which we may comprehend as being more ‘meta-textually’ and ‘hermeneutically aligned’ with such ‘genre expectations’.[3] (11)

Third, there is the specific form of alignment that through closer inspection, processes of re(-)enactment, serious reflection, provocative humour, etc., that might dramatically become ‘re-aligned’ through some more radical, relatively chaotic process of re-self-organization. I look more closely at ‘my’ cat sleeping on the mat in front of the heater to suddenly realize it’s actually my next-door neighbour’s cat who has climbed in through the open kitchen window in order to enjoy a warm nap in front of my heater. I look around this room and find my cat hiding behind the couch and also happily asleep. This variety of ‘re-alignment’ I perceive as something as more ‘existential’ in orientation, an event incrementally arrived at that causes some form of reversal, re-assessment, re-orientation, revolution, some form of relatively radical re-enactment, but at the same time resolves what might have been puzzling to begin with. A way of ‘re-seeing’ that harmonically restores our understanding to the way things actually are rather than as they were thought to be or as not yet understood to be formed in a way that has as yet not been suitably understood, etc. (12)

---

[2] E.g., the types of (possible) propositions and (true) statements as expressed in paragraph 7, etc.

[3] ‘Genres’ can be seen as ‘the meta-textual instructions informing us as to how we are either to read and/or write a certain type of text’. In effect, being sequences of instructions, like recipes, whose observances have to be correctly followed in order to coherently arrive at, in a non-contradictory and apposite manner, with the desired realization of the aspirational objective/s being sought through the suitably invoked performances of those necessary sequences.

Therefore, a process or alignment is re(-)assessed through either ‘re-de-mis-alignment’, conformal ‘realignment’ and/or through the relatively radical discontinuity of a chaotic or chaotic-like process of ‘re-alignment’ (with the hyphen). (13)

But, the problem moves on and we now need to seriously ask ‘re(-)alignment of who or what with whom or what?’ (14)

Basically, our re(-)alignment is with and between texts in a textual situation (as appreciated in a textual economy). But by ‘texts’ I mean ‘textual depositions’ that are usually realized as ‘intentionally directed rearrangements imprinted upon the surface of the world at large’ but as ‘appreciated in and through a textual economy, etc.’. In other words, there is more to a textual economy that just texts *qua* texts. I have already introduced the concept of ‘meta-textual genres’ that generally direct our intentional directedness in the requisite manner as dictated by those meta-textual sequences in the hope of ‘successfully performing in the correct manner what was intended in the manner it was apparently intended(?)’ (15)

In the textual economy, I would also argue that we have, besides texts and meta-texts, the important, but all too overlooked, aspect of the ‘non-textual’. An aspect of the textual economy where we find a ‘simulation of apparent intentional intent being imaginatively re(-)constructed in a re(-)simulated “simulation of a simulation” but where such ‘simulation’ must not be treated as if it were ‘a simulation of that which is to be regarded as that which is “not-being-simulated” or as that which existed as if it were of the “pre-simulated”’. I.e., ‘simulation’ is arrived at through ‘re(-)simulation’ understood as a ‘simulation of a simulation’ but not as a ‘simulation of something that exists in a non-simulated form or format’![4] (16)

It is necessary to get our heads around this distinction. I.e., that a ‘simulation’ is ‘that arrived at through re(-)simulation as a simulation of a simulation that has no dealings whosever with anything to be treated as not simulated or as existing before this act of simulation’. Let me bring this point home by simply reflecting upon the visual act of perception, the act of seeing. Metaphorically, our eyes could be treated as both the ‘windows of the soul’ and ‘windows through which we look out on to the world’. But, such a metaphor should never be taken too literally because if we were someone ‘looking though our own eyes’ then we would need another someone or something to look through those ‘eyes’ that were then looking through these eyes that are visible to others, and so on. An infinite regress, and an obvious absurdity that can all be short-circuited by just accepting the constructed nature of our perception as if it were arrived at through a simulation of a simulation[5] and not as a simulation of something that exists apart from that process of simulation. (17)

---

[4] An important philosophical insight that structures much of Postmodern thinking, practice, and criticism.

[5] Phenomenologically, we can read a ‘simulation of a simulation’ as a ‘matching of intentional retention and protention’.

In the subtlety of this re-positioning we can see 're(-)simulation' as 'involving a mix of re-de-mis-simulation, conformal resimulation of the genre/s in question and processes of relatively radical re-simulation when and where they should arise'. Invoking a direct relationship between all aspects and facets of that simulated situatedness, doing away with so-called 'internal worlds' and 'external worlds', and seeing those simulations as arising in and through a relationship between all the relevant textual contributions that will involve some unequal interactive mixing between that as intended and that sense of a world as engaged in and through its resistance to its being simulated in some fashion otherwise to that as it is or was being envisaged. E.g., imaging looking at an 'apple' as if it were an 'orange'… something that is not impossible, but, a feat that must be either over-directed by us or mis-directed by us in order to subvert the apparent apple-ness of that apple by forcing into this imaginary mould of an orange. Indeed, the moment we know it is an 'apple' we will find this apple-ness (re)asserting itself just as if we were to mistakenly think it were an 'orange' in the first place, and, to then have this notion immediately disabuse itself upon a closer inspection of that specific piece of fruit.[6] Treating that apparent piece of fruit *qua* piece of fruit as 'that piece of fruit' that must inevitably dictate its 'apple-ness' upon closer inspection, i.e., observing a more carefully enacted process concerning its 're(-)simulation'. (18)

It is obvious that we have had to travel some distance from being a child in pre-school learning to fit the shapes of letters into those recesses with exactly the same shapes! But in many ways the same principles apply. We know when we are correct when we find our representations 'fit' our expectations, and v.v. But how do we arrive at this estimation of our apparent success, and so on? (19)

ii. How do we 'see' a conformity between things that, by their nature, are different..?

In paragraph no. 7, I noted a series of different things as described to be in some form of alignment or apparent conformity:

> On a deeper level of generalization, we might say that an alignment is being observed between what is seen, expected, non-virtually enacted, virtually enacted, reports that describe what is being represented, seen being enacted, and so on. [7]
> (20)

This philosophical problem can be resolved (through the following two steps, namely) by first treating all such 'reports' as 'simulations', albeit as different kinds of simulations, but, second, as proposing that they all possess some 'inner' or relatively 'reductive' form of isomorphic conformity. Just as the true statement 'the cat is on the mat' when it is the case the cat is 'seen' to be on the mat (in that moment of time that this true statement was being uttered). So, I think 'the cat is on the mat' when I see that cat is now

---

[6] Noting it is still being seen as 'a piece of fruit', only, through re-de-mis-alignment or re-alignment is this false impression or misconstruction now correctly re-constructed. Implying also that all genres occur in a hierarchical organization of genres, super-genres, sub-genres, meta-genres, etc. So, e.g., an 'apple', as a particular-specific genre of fruit is also treated as a 'piece of fruit' which, in turn, is treated as 'something to eat', etc.

on this mat' just as the 'expectation' that my cat would be on that mat after its evening meal are all in a state of a predicted alignment. I.e., my statement, my perceptions and expectations all have the same logical form at the very expressed center of their simulated re(-)presented-ness. (21)

By putting aside all such childish ideas of so-called 'internal worlds' and so-called 'external worlds' we can now see we are in a world of re(-)presentations, albeit in a miscellany of forms some of which we label as 'possible' or 'impossible', others as 'true' or 'false', and, then, treated in a plethora of modes of presentation from 'expectations' to 'imaginings' to 'sentences in a novel or narratives recounted by someone' to 'perceptions' to 'memories' to 'linguistic propositions and statements' to 'forms of intentional expressiveness', and so on. (22)

Now, some perceptive people might think we have merely banished one problem to create another to take its place; all a bit like digging a hole in order to bury the soil dug up in a first hole, etc? But, all is not lost! Consider the philosophical problem of what the differences between a 'dream apple' and a 'non-virtual apple' must be given that the former does not successfully satiate or satisfy physiological hunger and the latter do? (23)

As a phenomenon, a 'dream-apple' in a dream looks like an 'apple phenomenon' as might be had in daily life. But, as noted there are and must be differences given that they have quite different causal originations and consequences. One grows on an apple tree and the other 'grows' in the depths of our dreams. In our close phenomenological appreciation of either phenomenon we should be able to separately list a series of modalities that we find as being present, and, theoretically or hypothetically, we should eventually be able to discern differences between these two lists. There could be different modalities being registered when those lists are compared. It would probably be safe to say, as a general rule, that the longer list would more likely differentiate the less virtual phenomenon from the more virtual party. As both phenomena are experientially presented in phenomenal-phenomenological experience we should note that it would be quite wrong, and misleading, to say that one set of experiences was actually present and the other was only an illusion or not real, was only a copy, and so forth. Hence my technical use of 'non-virtual' can be read/misread with the conventional meaning of 'actual'. (24)

In such research, in this regard, we can note the following formula, namely, 'density, intensity and propensity'. I.e., the relative numerical richness or poverty of itemized modalities noted; the relative intensity that each of these modalities is found to reveal in their essentially distinctive phenomenal particularity (both individually and collectively); and, either the general intentional and/or causal tendencies found to be co-associated with these modalities both individually, but, preferably in a collective sense (in the specific uniqueness experienced in the engaged instantiation of each lived-phenomenon). With respect to the latter, we can note that apples are a form of food, and, therefore, should both nourish us and relieve hunger, and, as well, being objects that are big and solid, it would be best if we avoid carelessly dropping them on the toes of our bare feet… (25)

That on careful consideration, we should be able to say that when a set of phenomena appear to have, on a relatively superficial level of inspection, the same isomorphic form, despite a different overall modal complexion, then we have the right to say that they are all of the same meta-type rather than being exactly of the same object-type. Hence our being able to group together, in a meta-category, a set of experiences with a similarity of content, such as, e.g., 'my experience of this apple being eaten now', 'my memory of the apple I ate yesterday', 'the apple seen in this detailed photograph', 'the apples painted by Cezanne', 'the dream I had about a (still) very delicious 'pink-lady' apple that I ate many years ago in China', and so on. (26)

Hence this ability to categorize intentional objects, object-states and similar (as 'real' objects[7]); and, virtual representations of the same, objectives (as 'irreal' objects), etc., as being (semantically) 'located' under either of these two levels in epistemological organization. So-called object-level items being able to be discerned as either having the same relative intentional or causal continuity by virtue of having the same imputed intentional and/or causal histories. I.e., arguing, in effect, that apparent intentional and/or causal continuity can be accounted for through imputing such a connection where the necessary degree of transformational isomorphic invariance is preserved that then allows us to categorize these represented items in the way we regard as 'suitable' in that situated context, etc., and, furthermore, in line with both their apparent form, implied meta-textual format, and their more semantically detailed descriptions, prescriptions, proscriptions, etc.[8] (27)

Comprehending this meta-difference also gives us a powerful way of understanding that controversial notion of 'truth' (albeit from a semantic perspective). (28)

iii. What is (a semantic theory of) truth?

In general (economic) terms we could say all things are textually represented in intentional consciousness, as texts, albeit in a textual economy comprising phenomena-phenomenological presentations as 'texts' (which also can be treated as 'facts' to be used in a narrative); meta-textual, hermeneutically oriented modes of performance like genres, narratives, etc; and, non-textual simulations (that if critically entertained could be treated as 'critiques' that oversee the qualified de-anomalization of their co-associated narratives[9]). (29)

But, putting such economic distinctions to the side, the experiential presence of both object-level and meta-level items that can be regarded as possessing the same internally constituted, transformationally isomorphic invariance, does allow us to demon-

---

[7] Using Husserlian terminology of 'real' and 'irreal' (and, somewhat, matching my distinction of 'non-virtual' and 'virtual').

[8] I.e., the formal or informal recorded phenomenal-phenomenological descriptions, hermeneutical prescriptions and existential proscriptions.

[9] 'Qualified' by virtue of the fact that most narratives do not see out definitive forms of resolution through thorough and finalized forms of de-anomalization.

strate a semantic theory of truth as proposed by Alfred Taski (1901-1983), a notable logician and mathematician.[10] (30)

Quite simply he stated that truth values are a property of sentences, i.e., propositions and statements (the latter being 'statements' when considered as propositions that are either confirmed and/or verified as true):

P' is T iff P (31)

I.e., that 'the propositions about P', on a meta-level P'. is T (true) iff (if and only if) P can be positively found existing in a suitable form or format on the (relative) object-level. E.g, the proposition 'the cat is on the mat', as (C/M)', is T iff C/M, i.e., that this cat referred to is actually on this mat. Or, translated using a meta-level and object-level approach, we could say that X' is T iff X; i.e., that X, what ever X stands for or could stand for on its meta-level of explication, is true if and only if X can be found on the object-level. Where X could stand for an assorted combination of either nominations, predications and/or relations. (32)

Or, put as simply as possible; the sentence 'about' X is true if and only if X can be found as an object (on an object-level of explication). (33)

iv. But a claim for a true truth value is hardly an argument..?

Hence a need for valid argumentation, and, thence a need for the application of a suitably well-constructed use of logic. (34)

In a first understanding we might say that a well-constructed logic consists of true premises; valid and non-fallacious arguments; with conclusions that are treated as demonstrably true (as, e.g., per Tarski's semantic theory of truth determination)..? (35)

In a second understanding we might say that our premises must be suitably grounded presuppositionally; that our arguments must be relevant, non-contradictory, coherent, and well-integrated; whilst our ensuing conclusions need to be suitably arrived at and in a manner that will enrich our understanding and not be merely derived purely from a well-constructed sequence of *a priori*-like definitions bound together in some form of an equation, etc. (36)

In a third understanding we could say that the way we think has cultural-intercultural roots and that we should expand our understanding to include relevant phenomenal-phenomenological 'facts' (as premises, etc.); narratives that propose certain types of argument (through a hermeneutical invocation of types of con-text, genres, narratives, personae, etc.); and, specific conclusions that possess the potential for an existential assortment of co-associated senses of e/valuation in valuational formation (i.e., values, etc.) all suitably set with the requisitely re(-)presented situational context/s. (37)

---

[10] As published in 1935 in *On the Concept of Truth in Formal Languages.*

In effect, introducing the idea that our overall processes of argumentation need to involve a mix of subdisciplines of which the phenomenological, hermeneutical and existential have just been noted. Later in these *Series of Reflections* I will argue that they can play a crucial role in the formation of a viable critical philosophy. Indeed, as correlative with respect to each other (economically) they then can mutually support each other in process of self-correction and self-corroboration in an effort to discern greater degrees of alignment within our ongoing critical appreciation/s of lived-experienced. (38)

v. Just what is 'lived-experience; and how might we better appreciate it..??

Lived-experience is best appreciated existentially. Let me explain. (39)

This philosophical idea of 'appreciation', as to be here explored by myself, is that we need to shift our psychic center of gravity to a higher meta-level in order to better appreciate a relative object-level about to be placed under such scrutiny. (40)

Just as in climbing a mountain we would normally expect to get a better understanding of the landscape to be seen on and below the slopes of that mountain… assuming of course, that the weather is not inclement and the vegetation about us does not occlude such a vista. (41)

Similarly, the truth of a meta-level proposition becomes evident, through some form of suitable argumentation, if and only if it can demonstrate an object-level correlation or correlate (possessing the requisite degree of transformational isomorphic invariance). (42)

Relationships can also be represented through the suitable exercise of a textual economy. After the introduction of various items in that economic space pieces as 'parts' can be synthesized, through such synthetical treatment, into various 'wholes'. Or, we might wish to do the opposite through entering into a process of analytical-like treatment by disassembling a 'whole' in order to form an array of 'parts'. But, in running such an economy, namely, this hermeneutic circle (of comprehension), we also need to invoke a dialectical mix of both 'wholes-and-parts' (or, as 'parts-and-wholes'). (43)

Like individual characters in a novel, they are all part of one overall text. Imagine, e.g., pulling pages at random from a novel and reading them out of order… you might well find it hard to make any deeply connected sense of that overall book. (44)

Now, I would like to argue that when we have a well-informed appreciation of the 'whole', in effect, we are taking an existential perspective upon the holistic totality of that overall state of affairs that could not be arrived at reductively! That on this relational level, we experience the emergent significance of that overall economy. That we experience the simulation of that text as a text being experienced, or, rather re(-)experienced., indeed 'being-lived' as a 'lived-experience'. On one hand, experienced through re(-)iteration, and, on the other, through an appreciation of the same, albeit in 'higher' or 'wider' meta-terms of reference. (45)

Given our material bias for the objects of this world and less understanding for their relational interactions, most of the time we are more inclined to operate from a relatively non-existential orientation of a decidedly materialistic perspective. (46)

That, in essence, an existential orientation is a pro-relational attitude where we more identify with the re(-)presented relationships as 're(-)presented relationships' that emerge more on their own terms and less with their mere inclusion of objects, and subjects, interpersonal relationships, and so on. What are the important ramifications of this philosophical re(-)positioning of our preferences for a relational whole rather than either as a mere set and/or mere series of relational parts? Indeed, our very ability to appreciate valuational formation could not be found to arise 'for us' if we were to give a free rein to a senseless reductionism of an over-preferentially treated materialistic bias. A valuational formation is to be found associated with personal and interpersonal forms of non-reductively treated 'identification, functionality and values' (with values like, e.g., the deontological, pragmatical and the aesthetical, etc.). (47)

However, I would like to make the following two key points before concluding this *Series of Reflections*, Part I. First, we should note 'that the whole is greater that the mere sum off the related parts', as a relative principle or general observation, can be better re(-)translated to read 'that the psychic sense of the whole is greater that the mere psychic sum off the related parts'. And, in this simple propositional encapsulation, we have the basic idea of the existential. A state of affairs that also observes the simple principle 'that the existential is realized through the existentialization of the relatively non-existential!' That this qualitative difference can be experienced, but, first, we need to have some pre-understanding that such an important contrast in experience can actually be delineated in the course of lived-experience. But, let me explore the transcendental nature of this existential dimension in the next *Series of Reflections on What it Means to Be 'Critical'*, Part II. (48)

To form a provisional conclusion, let me address some final points in order to oversee what philosophical progress we might have achieved in the context of these arguments, thought experiments, observations, and so on, as entailed in this first series of reflections? (49)

3. Provisional Conclusions, Comments, and Observations

In a general principle of 'appreciation' I have suggested that there are times when we need 'higher' or 'wider' terms of meta-reference in order to better appreciate 'what is to hand.' That, in truth, this is always the case! In this regard, e.g., we could not appreciate that our two hands are similar, but not identical, by merely staring at either hand individually. In a sense, we have to stand back in order to better see what there is to be seen both non-comparatively and comparatively. That this 'climbing the mountain to better see' is also one metaphorical way of understanding how this Tarskian theory of semantic truth operates. (50)

Imagine we are in one of the national parks that surround the city of Sydney. Let us say it is an overcast day and it is impossible to make out where the sun is at this moment in time. Moreover, in going around and around, and following various creeks and the sides of hills we now have no firm idea in which direction we should be heading. But we know we need to head in a direction towards this same city in order to find our exit point near the train station that will then bring us back to the city after what will be a very long bush walk. Now, we admit we are a bit lost and in coming to a crossing on the track, that only goes sharp left and sharp right, without any signage, we become more perplexed. Tossing a coin, and hoping to be lucky, obviously, is not a good solution. However, it seems we are already quite high up and we speculate that in climbing further up the rocky side of this hill, beside the track, that we might get a view of the city and, from that viewing, then determine along which fork on this track we should head. One of us climbs this rocky hillside, and, fortunately, they can see Sydney in the distance; and, that it appears we should take the righthand fork on this track. We duly do so, and after a few more hours of walking soon safely arrive at this train station as the dark, wet, and cold, night now falls about us. (51)

Is the righthand fork, on this track, the true way to head more quickly towards the city of Sydney and exit this park? I.e., that the proposition 'the righthand fork is the right direction to take' is true (T) if and only if (iff) the righthand fork is the right direction to take. From that rocky hillside, this truth value could be determined. Going right would get us out of this park… and that proved to be the case. (52)

This metaphor of 'climbing a mountain to appreciate the landscape below' is also to be seen bound up in the idea of a 'philosophical turn' (that will be explored in the next series of reflections). By expanding our terms of reference, we might find ourselves in a better position to exit from the clutches of a certain problem… or at least re(-)frame that problem in a such a manner that it might be either de-anomalized and/or rendered in a more insightful form. (53)

We can also see that this concept of 'alignment', realized through of a process of 're-alignment' (and arrived at through a mix of either 're-de-mis-alignment', conformal 'realignment' and/or relatively chaotic 're-alignment') is an important concept at the very center of a semantic theory of truth. Indeed, central to all forms of philosophical exploration, i.e., general investigations, particular analyses and specific examinations, etc. (54)

That, with such interesting observations and insights, we are now in a better position to review the critical turns a number of critical philosophers have instigated in order to expand our appreciation of what might be meant in what it 'means to be critical'? (55)

Noël Tointon, Wentworth Falls, 16.1.21.