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## EDITORIAL NOTE

We are obliged to the members of the editorial board for painstakingly correcting the drafts of the contributors. We are thankful to our esteemed colleague, Prof. Raghunath Ghosh, the academic coordinator of our SAP (DRS-II) programme of UGC for his support and suggestions. Our other colleagues Prof. Kantilal Das, Dr. Koushik Joardar, Dr. Anirban Mukherjee, Dr. Nirmal Kumar Roy and Mr. N. Ramthing in the department have earnestly supported us in bringing out this volume, for which we are thankful to them. Thanks to the University Grants Commission, our Honourable Vice-Chancellor, Development Officer and Finance Officer for providing and helping us with the financial grant. Our sincere thank goes to the University Press, for publishing this volume.

There are *three* classical *arguments* for the existence of God, namely, the ontological, the cosmological and the physico-theological (teleological). The ontological proof argues for the necessary existence of a supremely perfect being solely through its concepts. Subirranjan Bhattacharya considers Kant's treatment of the ontological argument and divides his arguments into four sections. In the first section, a brief formulation of the ontological argument as given by St. Anselm and Descartes has been stated. In the second section, he explained the arguments offered by Kant against the ontological argument. In the third section, he intends to consider one of the objections of Shaffer against Kant's view and show that this objection is due to complete misunderstanding of Kant. And in the concluding section, he makes a few elucidations on the connection between Kant's theory of knowledge and his critique of the ontological argument.

The concept of social justice generally refers to the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being. There is a wide acceptance that social structure from Indian perspective is ridden with castes and communities, and that this has led to barriers and segregation and condemnation of obnoxious vice of social inequalities and untouchability. Raghunath Ghosh uses the term 'justice' alone that can convey the desired meaning as a social being alone can do justice. However, 'justice' for him is always a social phenomenon and hence, there cannot be 'justice' which is social. 'Justice' in the above-mentioned sense is frequently found in different philosophical literature available in ancient Indian tradition starting from the *Vedas*, *Upanisads* and *Śrutis* to the *Pitakas* of Buddhism.

Ritual is understood as the routine of worship. However, outside the domain of religion any formalized social interaction may be characterized as ritual. In recent years there has been a spate of literature, written mainly by anthropologists, relating rituals to performative utterances conceived and so-called by the English philosopher, J.L. Austin. Manjulika Ghosh attempts to link up Austin's concept of performatives to understand ritual acts. For that purpose, she divided her discussions into three sections. In the first section, she defines the concept of ritual. In the second, she has outlined the nature of performative utterances. In the last section she tried to make a link between rituals and

performatives. She concludes: the great insight of the speech act theory and its relevance for rituals is that it brings back language to the collective scene of human community.

An objective basis for morality can be found in an evolutionary account of its origin and development. Morality is a key factor in the success of human groups whether in competition or in co-existence with each other. One of Kant's formulations of moral theories, say for example, is the 'Categorical Imperative.' It is commonly known as the 'Formula of Humanity.' It commands us to "Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in any other person, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means." In recent years, this moral principle has become extremely popular not only among the self-proclaimed Kantians but also among those who are unwilling to accept Kant's moral theory. It is popular among contemporary Kantians because the content of its command promises to enrich a theory commonly associated with formalistic rationality. It is popular among the non-Kantians because of the values that float in uncertainty of this command are values that vibrate with us when we must make life-altering decisions about medical treatment, personal interactions, and social policy. Kantilal Das critically explores in what sense and how far Kantian moral theory is claimed to be universalizable, although contested.

It is a fact that death is an important feature of human experience. Yet, while the event of death is purely beyond human control, the process of dying has increasingly been brought into the domain of medication and life-extending technologies. The decision to use life-extending technologies is a moral choice, because it involves a decision about a fundamental human good, the preservation and intrinsic/inherent value of life. Yet, in some circumstances, to choose for a technology to stave off death comes at the price of compromising another fundamental human value, i.e. the quality of that life. Decisions about continuing treatment for the dying, or of allowing death to take place by foregoing or terminating such treatment, or even by physician-assisted suicide or euthanasia, are thus, both existentially and ethically agonizing. Jyotish Chandra Basak makes an effort to trace the origin of the controversy that takes us back from the ancient Greeks like Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle to the contemporary period. He tries to say that if voluntary euthanasia were accepted as a legitimate form of medical assistance in dying, then it must be acceptable for noncompetent patients. By legalizing voluntary active euthanasia, one must bite the bullet and also accept nonvoluntary active euthanasia or must concede that if nonvoluntary active euthanasia is regarded as too dangerous or unpalatable, then this is a valid and cogent reason for rejection of voluntary active euthanasia as well.

The *Naiyāyikas* unanimously accept that *tarka* is not an independent instrument of knowledge; rather it is just a condition for it. That is why for the *Naiyāyikas*, *tarka* itself is not a *pramāṇa* but a promoter to a *pramāṇa*. Sometimes *tarka* plays the role of a promoter to a *pramāṇa* and it does not establish that *tarka* can not be an independent *pramāṇa* itself. Nirmal Kumar Roy attempts to deal with the view of Jayatirtha regarding the nature and role of *tarka*. Especially he focuses on the probable answer that may be put forward from the part of the *Nyāya* school against the position of Jayatirtha in particular and that of the Mādhyas' school in general. In his concluding remarks, he

mentioned that how *tarka* helps in eliminating the impediment and thereby becomes an auxiliary factor to an accredited organ of knowledge.

The central question of philosophy is ‘where does man find his good’? It seems that it is not possible to achieve the highest good in the arena of worldly scene because the world is considered unreal by Indian Philosophers. If life has no value at all then all our efforts are meaningless and it would be mere mechanical actions like robots. But Radhakrishnan refutes such charges and remarks vividly that human life has value in this earth. Bimal Chandra Pal describes the metaphysical standpoint of Radhakrishnan’s philosophy which can be considered as monistic idealism. The absolute reality which is present in the soul of man as its secret ground provides a driving force to that man to harness his life in this world. This purposive act of man makes human life valuable and worthy to live on earth. The value of life is to realize the divinity. For Radhakrishnan, in the ever growing flow of nature there is neither repose nor halt. Nature is never satisfied with the level it has reached. So our destination of life is to find out a meaningful way to overcome the present situation of life. In search of certainty and supreme reality our life is meaningful and worthy in this world.

Environmental problems have expanding on a global scale. Ozone depletion and acid rain are examples of natural environmental destruction. Environmental pollution and pollution of food are examples of social environmental destruction. Modern people’s human-centred world-view and mental pathology are examples of mind-environmental destruction. Additionally, the endocrine disruption problem is the biggest current crisis affecting all life forms. If we are to solve environmental problems we must establish the principles of environmental ethics and life philosophy of the great personnel like Tagore, Gandhi, Vivekananda and of course Arne Naess and Aldo Leopold. This is the basis for environmental morals and the production of environmental philosophy. Sanghamitra Dasgupta attempts to show how Tagore’s views on environment provide a single motivating force for all the activities and movements aimed at saving planet Earth from human exploitation and domination.

Philosophy is the systematic study of ideas and issues, a reasoned pursuit of fundamental truths, a quest for a comprehensive understanding of the world, a study of principles of conduct, and much more. Every domain of human experience raises questions to which its techniques and theories apply, and its methods may be used in the study of any subject or the pursuit of any vocation. In the concluding chapter of *My Experiments with Truth*, Gandhi opines that “to describe truth, as it has appeared to me, and in the exact manner, in which I have arrived at it, has been my ceaseless effort.” In these Gandhian words an effort to describe truth no doubt was there but what about truth as an experiment? Koushik Joardar tries to examine the concept of ‘Truth and truths’ and explains that Gandhi was certain of the Truth that he was experimenting with from the very beginning of his experiments and for him this Truth was God.

Human beings have historically maintained animals for food production, labour, and companionship. Human history and the religious tradition to some extent portray human beings as being dominant over other life forms. For approximately the last three decades, attention paid to the issue of the moral consideration of animals has grown spectacularly. Moreover, this has been one field in which philosophers from Aristotle to Bernard Rollin

have been particularly influential. Philosophers' contributions have played an important role in the increase of social awareness of the issue which, in turn, has also fuelled the academic debate on it. In spite of this, this subject needs further development. Among other things, there is much work to do concerning the clarification of the philosophers' view that would be necessary to examine properly. Laxmikanta Padhi tries to tackle this task by providing some classical as well as contemporary philosophical arguments both in support and against the moral status of animals that should play a more significant role. For him, debates in animal ethics are largely characterized by ethical monism, the search for a single, timeless, and essential trait in which the moral standing of animals can be grounded.

The consequence of Rorty's antirepresentationalism is his conversationalism that denies that the world-by-itself rationally constrains choices of vocabulary with which to cope with it. He claims to find a viable notion of interpretive constraint in the solidarity of interpretive communities. Sutapa Roy endeavours to outline Rorty's sociological theory of knowledge, especially with reference to the notion of truth. According to Rorty, the persuasive power of the language of sciences comes not from its relation to reality, but from its historically contingent utility. Thus, we do not have access to any objective truth; all we have are the vocabularies we create. This would amount to recognition of what Rorty calls contingency of language, which means there is no way to step outside the various vocabularies employed and find a metavocabulary which sits in judgment over all the vocabularies. He intends to dispense with the notion of objective truth as correspondence to reality. Rorty is convinced that truth cannot be a goal of inquiry and hence it does not deserve the attention which philosophers have given to it.

Metaphysics and epistemology are very closely interrelated in Samkara's Advaita philosophy. In his epistemology Samkara expressed distrust for a kind of logical reasoning that is rhetorical and therefore was looking for a 'metaphysical principle' which was to be established solely on the basis of experience, though supplemented by logic as well. Surya Kanta Maharana in this regard, makes a humble attempt at understanding and examining the metaphysical position of Samkara pertaining to an enquiry into the metaphysical principle called as *Brahman*, the Supreme Being or Reality and its relation to the world. In this attempt, he further intends to submit that there is hardly any distinction between Reality, Self and Consciousness as they are synonymous to each other. Samkara asserts that everyone's true Self is nothing other than Brahman, the Absolute Reality. Such an Absolute Reality is of the nature of Consciousness (*Cit*). It is a contentless consciousness in which there is no consciousness of either 'I' or 'This', 'Aham' or 'Idam'. It is eternal, pure, unobjectified and distinctionless infinite-reality. It is a transcendental and a foundational consciousness with no distinction of ego and non-ego.

In his *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein introduces a linguistic method which is therapeutic in nature. For Wittgenstein, "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like a treatment of an illness." A philosopher takes a curative measure while dealing with a philosophical question. In this sense, a philosopher is both a doctor and a patient. Like a doctor, he is aware of the root cause of philosophical problem, the very nature of it and then finds out a proper solution of it. Hasen Ali Ahemed by supporting Wittgensteinian

approach attempts to show that so long a philosopher fails to understand the locus and nature of philosophical muddle, his solution to this problem would be ad hoc and superficial in nature.

Language has many layers that transfer human cognition into various modes of thought. Because there are so many methods of language learning, it makes a huge coverage for language in terms of its capacity to promote cognition. Meaning is not only confined to the walls of verbal communication, it has several other aspects. Language produces awareness of aesthetic concepts, visual imagery, music and cinema. In every sector of life meaning has made its way, thought is shared into multifaceted forms, human development urges for more communicational efforts. We are always on the verge of expressing our ideas, be it by verbal or non-verbal mode. Purbayan Jha attempts to discuss a creationist approach to prove to the world that human beings have the most gifted art of expression, but whether our approach does succeed or not is a question to be pondered over.

Husserl's phenomenological analysis of meaning has come under severe criticisms from Jacques Derrida. Sudip Goswami undertakes a brief account of Edmund Husserl's theory of meaning and present Derrida's opposition to Husserl, explaining various ramifications. He discusses the phenomenological analysis of our appreciation of music in order to throw light on Derrida's interpretation-cum-critique of Husserl. This will help us to evaluate Derrida's criticism of Husserl and also we will be in a better position to trace the significance of the development of Husserl's philosophical ideas with regard to meaning in particular and communication in general.

DEBIKA SAHA,  
JYOTISH CHANDRA BASAK AND  
LAXMIKANTA PADHI

## ON KANT'S TREATMENT OF THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT\*

SUBIRANJAN BHATTACHARYA

In the third chapter of the Transcendental Dialectic of his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant deals with the metaphysical pseudo-science of rational theology. The best known part of Kant's rational theology is its negative part: the famous refutation of the traditional scholastic rationalist proofs for the existence of God. Moses Mendelssohn called Kant's criticisms of the traditional metaphysical proofs for God's existence 'world crushing'. But it must be stated at the very outset that Kant's critique of speculative theism was not simply a series of attacks on the particular theistic proofs which had been offered by earlier philosophers. Its purpose was to show not only that no such proofs had in fact succeeded, but also that no speculative proofs of any kind for God's existence have any prospect of succeeding.

There are *three* classical *arguments* for the existence of God, namely, the ontological, the cosmological and the physico-theological (teleological). The ontological proof argues for the necessary existence of a supremely perfect being solely through its concepts. The cosmological argument argues for the necessary existence of a supremely perfect being from the contingent existence of a world in general. The physico-theological argument (also called argument from design) is based on the determinate experience of the world as having an orderly constitution, from which it infers the existence of 'an author of nature'. Of all the proofs Kant considers the ontological proof pivotal, for the other proofs, he thinks, rely tacitly on this proof.

The object of the present paper is to consider Kant's treatment of the ontological argument. It consists of four sections. In the first section, formulations of the ontological argument as given by St. Anselm and Descartes are stated in brief. In the second section, the arguments offered by Kant against the ontological argument are explained. In the third section, I intend to consider one of the objections of Shaffer against Kant's view and show that this objection is due to complete misunderstanding of Kant. And in the concluding section of my paper, I make a few comments on the connection between Kant's theory of knowledge and his critique of the ontological argument.

### I

The idea of God is the idea of an all-perfect reality (*ens realissimum*) who possesses all positive attributes in their superlative degree. Keeping this idea of God in mind Anselm's ontological argument<sup>1</sup> could be roughly formulated as follows:

By definition God is "the Being than which nothing greater can be conceived."

A Being who exists not merely in the understanding but also in the reality is greater than a being who exists only in the understanding.

Since a being greater than the greatest cannot be conceived, therefore, if God exists in the understanding, He must exist in reality as well.

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\* In preparing this paper, I am indebted to my revered teacher Prof. Kumudranjan Goswami for his valuable suggestions and advice.

God does exist in the understanding.

So, it follows that God exists in reality as well.

In modern times Descartes reformulated the argument. Descartes' formulation of the argument in *Meditation V* could be stated as follows:

God is the Being that possesses all reality, the absolutely perfect Being.

"Existence is a perfection"<sup>2</sup> which means that existence is an attribute.

Therefore, the absolutely perfect being must possess the attribute of existence, i.e. God necessarily exists.

From Descartes' argument it is quite clear that, according to him, existence must be included among the defining properties of God. Descartes further says just as it follows from the very nature of a triangle that the sum of its three angles equals to two right angles, so it follows from the nature of God that He exists.<sup>3</sup> It is as much a contradiction to say that God does not exist as it is to claim that the sum of three angles of a triangle is not equal to two right angles. God's existence is *necessary* existence.

## II

Kant's criticisms of the ontological argument are primarily directed against Descartes' view. For Kant, the idea God (or, *ens realissimum*) is an idea of Reason. Its objective reality is by no means proved by the mere fact that reason requires it.<sup>4</sup> Kant's criticisms of the ontological argument are embodied in section IV of chapter III of his *Transcendental Dialectic*. Kant has put forward a number of objections which are as follows:

1. The concept of an unconditionally necessary being is unintelligible.
2. All existential propositions, if considered analytic, are 'miserable tautologies', and if considered synthetic, can be denied without any contradiction. Hence they can never assert with significance and at the same time with necessity, the actual existence of anything, and a fortiori, of God.
3. Existence is not a real i.e. an additive predicate.

Let us explain these objections one by one:

### **Kant's first objection:**

This objection is put forward by Kant from A593 = B621 to A596 = B624 of the *Critique*. Kant claims that the so-called absolutely necessary being cannot even be intelligibly thought or conceived, far less proved to be existent. This being, even though it can be verbally defined as the being the non-existence of which is inconceivable, still remains unintelligible. The reason of the unintelligibility, according to Kant, is that the conditions which make it absolutely necessary cannot be spelt out: "...this yields no insight into the conditions which make it necessary to regard the non-existence of a thing as absolutely unthinkable."<sup>5</sup> What does it mean to say that something exists necessarily? What are we to understand by a being that necessarily exists? What makes the non-existence of such a being impossible? If we cannot answer these questions, then we

cannot give any meaning to the concept of an absolutely necessary being. And this is precisely what we cannot do, Kant thinks.

According to Kant, the attempt to clarify the concept of the absolutely necessary being by the use of the necessary judgments of geometry as examples of necessity is futile. Kant observes that these examples concern, not the necessary existence of things, but only the necessity of judgments. But the unconditioned necessity of judgments is not the same as the unconditioned or absolute necessity of things. The necessity of judgments is hypothetical, while that of things is categorical. As Kant puts it : “The absolute necessity of the judgment is only a conditioned necessity of the thing or of the predicate in the judgment.”<sup>6</sup> For example, the judgment ‘every triangle has three angles’ does not declare that three angles are unconditionally necessary, but only that under the condition that there is a *triangle*, there necessarily will also be *three angles*. Thus there would be a contradiction if we retain the subject triangle, but reject the predicate three angled, but there would be no contradiction if we reject the triangle along with the predicate. As Kant puts it:

“If, in an identical proposition, I reject the predicate while retaining the subject, contradiction results; and I, therefore, say that the former necessarily belongs to the latter. But if we reject subject and predicate alike, there is no contradiction; for nothing is then left that can be contradicted.”<sup>7</sup>

Kant holds that it would be a contradiction to deny omnipotence to God. For omnipotence is included in the concept of an Infinite Being. But no contradiction arises if we deny the existence of God, the Infinite Being, together with all His Divine attributes, such as omnipotence. So Kant’s point is that the hypothetical necessity of the judgment cannot explain the absolute or categorical necessity of a thing, even if it is God. So the concept of the absolutely necessary being remains unintelligible.

### **Kant’s second objection:**

It might be argued by the supporters of the ontological argument that the concept of God is a unique idea. It is the concept of an *ens realissimum*, the all perfect reality (in this respect it is unlike triangles or any other members of the class of possibly existing things) and all reality must include existence; it follows that we still cannot deny the existence of such infinite being without contradiction. Consequently, *ens realissimum*, or God, is to be admitted as necessarily existent. Against this argument Kant makes the following objection:<sup>8</sup>

If we say of a thing that it exists, what kind of judgment have we set forth? It may be either analytic or synthetic. If it is an analytic judgment, its predicate would not add anything to its subject, i.e. to the concept of the thing whose existence is asserted. In that case, either it is the subject concept itself whose existence is being asserted, not of any concrete thing, or otherwise we have included in the subject-concept merely the notion of possible existence, which is then repeated in the predicate, so that the proposition becomes a *miserable tautology*. On the other hand, if the existential proposition ‘it exists’ is synthetic (as Kant indeed believes all existential propositions must be) then it can obviously be denied without contradiction. For it is an essential feature of synthetic propositions, as opposed to analytic propositions, that they can be

denied without contradiction. Hence in that case it cannot be considered as asserting *necessary* existence.

### **Kant's third objection:**

The third objection urged by Kant against the ontological argument, namely, that existence is not a real predicate, is the most celebrated in the history of the ontological argument. The famous passage (A599 = B627) in the *Critique* is often quoted by the critics to determine whether, for Kant, existence is a real predicate, and if it is not, then what would be its actual status.

In the above-mentioned passage and also in the subsequent two passages (A600 = B628, and A601 = B629) Kant has made a number of points. To begin with, he distinguishes between logical predicate and real predicate. Kant means by a logical predicate the grammatical predicate, any expression that grammatically occupies the position of the predicate of a categorical proposition. Kant says: Anything we please can be made to serve as a logical predicate; the subject can even be predicated of itself...<sup>9</sup> For Kant, a logical predicate is determined by its form, and by it alone. The real predicates are those that add something to the concept of the subject. A real predicate represents a property that things can have or not have. Since not everything that can be predicated of a thing in a judgment is a property of that thing, not every logical predicate is also a real one.

Kant maintains that "Being" is "obviously not a real predicate"; for "it is not a concept of something that could be added to the concept of a thing."<sup>10</sup> Kant explains this by saying that logically it is merely the copula of a judgment. This means that the verb "to be" does not add any new predicate but merely connects the predicate-concept with the subject-concept, e.g., in the proposition 'God is omnipotent'. Moreover, if we take the subject-concept (God) with all its predicates (among which is omnipotence) and say, "God is", or "there is a God" the verb "to be" does not add any new predicate to the subject-concept. It merely posits the subject "God" with all its properties "as being an *object* that stands in relation to my *concept*."<sup>11</sup>

Let us take an example to make Kant's point more clear. If we say a horse has four legs, a tail, and hoofs, we are attributing properties to the horse; but if we go on to say that the horse *exists*, we are not adding another property. We are saying that the thing we conceived as having these properties also *exists*. We are not adding to our concept of the thing. We are asserting a relation between the concept and the world.

To show that existence does not add to the concept of a thing Kant points out that a concept and its corresponding object that exists in reality have the same content. In other words, the thought or concept of a thing is not affected by any consideration of whether a thing corresponding to the concept exists or not. In Kant's famous example, there can be no difference in the contents of the concepts of hundred merely possible thalers and one hundred real thalers. The thought of 100 real thalers is no different *qua thought*, from the thought of 100 possible i.e. non-existent ones. 100 real thalers do not contain a single coin more than the hundred possible that is expressed by the concept.

Otherwise, i.e. if the object contains more than the concept, the concept cannot be said to be the adequate or exact concept of that object.<sup>12</sup>

*The above objections have been stated by Kant in a different way also.*

If we think in a thing every kind of reality except one, the missing reality is not added to the concept of the thing by the affirmation that the defective thing exists. On the contrary, the thing exists, if at all, with the same defect as that thought in its concept. For otherwise, not that which was thought, but something different, exists. Now if we think a being as the supreme reality, without any defect, the question still remains whether this being exists or not. For although nothing may be lacking in the possible real content of our concept, there is a defect in its relation to our state of knowledge, that is, we are ignorant whether the knowledge of the object is also possible *a posteriori*. “And here we find the source of our present difficulty,”<sup>13</sup> says Kant. He explains the point as follows:

If we were concerned with an object of sense only, we could not confuse the concept with the existence of a thing. For the concept only enables us to think an object as conforming to the general conditions of experience, whereas in thinking of the existence of the object we think it as contained in the sphere of actual experience. This connection with actual experience does not, however, enlarge (add to) the concept; “all that has happened is that our thought has thereby obtained an additional *possible perception*.”<sup>14</sup> If we are to assert the existence of a sensible object, it must be either itself actually perceived or be connected by empirical laws with what is actually perceived. It is not, therefore, astonishing that if we seek to think existence through the pure category alone, we shall not obtain a single criterion by which to distinguish it from mere possibility.

The kernel of Kant’s contention is that the ontological argument which proceeds from the mere concept of God to the existence thereof is an example of a transcendental hypostatization under the influence of dialectical illusion.

### III

Jerome Shaffer<sup>15</sup> has objected to Kant’s arguments against the ontological proof on two grounds:

- a) Kant’s view involves self-contradiction.
- b) Kant’s view gives us an incomplete picture of predication.

I shall confine myself only to Shaffer’s first objection against Kant i.e. the charge of inconsistency, which, as everyone will admit, is a more a serious charge than the charge of incompleteness. Let us see how Shaffer makes out his case.

According to Kant, being or existence is not a real predicate since it adds nothing to the concept of the subject. But Kant also holds, Shaffer points out, that all existential propositions, e.g. ‘this or that thing exists’, are synthetic. Shaffer then refers to Kant’s remarks in the *IV<sup>th</sup>* section of the Introduction of his *Critique*, where he says : “A synthetic proposition adds to the concept of the subject a predicate which has not been in any wise thought in it, and which no analysis could possibly extract from it...”<sup>16</sup>

Shaffer now argues that if we accept Kant's contention that existential propositions are *always* synthetic, then we are to say that ...exists'' must be a predicate which adds to the concept of the subject, in short, a "real" predicate...."<sup>17</sup> Therefore, Kant's position is self-contradictory.

Shaffer's objection to Kant's view, stated above, can be paraphrased thus:

1. All existential propositions are synthetic.
2. All synthetic propositions are ampliative, i.e. their predicates add something to their subject concepts.
3. The concept of existence (which is used in the predicate of an existential proposition) is not additive.
4. Therefore, there is inconsistency in the set of propositions (i), (ii), & (iii)

It seems to me that Shaffer's charge of inconsistency is based upon a complete misunderstanding of Kant. Against Shaffer, I have two points to make.

In the first place, from what Shaffer says, it seems to me, he is working on the presupposition that, for Kant, all judgments are of the subject-predicate form. But this presupposition, made by Shaffer as well as by many eminent philosophers like Quine and Ayer, I think, is wrong. In order to find out wherein lies the mistake, let us see how Kant introduces the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments. Kant says:

"In all judgments in which the relation of a subject to a predicate is thought (I take into consideration affirmative judgments only, the subsequent application to negative judgments being easily made) the relation is possible in two ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something covertly contained in the concept A; or B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it. In the one case I entitle the judgment analytic, in the other synthetic."<sup>18</sup>

Now there is some doubt about the force of the relative clause in the first sentence of the passage: "In all judgments in which the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought." Does it give a description of all judgments as such, or does it mark off a species of judgments from judgments in general? If the former, then Kant thought that all judgments 'think the relation of a subject to a predicate,' and intended his division to *all* judgments. This is the interpretation upon which Shaffer's criticism is grounded. But, as pointed out by Robinson,<sup>19</sup> and quite rightly I think, in the passage in question Kant intended to mark off a species of judgments from judgments in general, and to divide only this species.<sup>20</sup> That, for Kant, not all judgments are of the subject-predicate form (i.e. attribute-ascriptive) becomes quite clear from his famous doctrine that existence is not a real predicate, which obviously implies that the judgment 'God exists' is not in subject-predicate form, and therefore some judgments do not 'think the relation of a subject to a predicate'. So when Kant introduces the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments, the distinction is to be understood only by reference to a species of judgment, i.e. all non-repetitive, affirmative, attribute-ascriptive judgments. In such kinds of judgments only those in which the predicate concept adds to the subject concept are to be regarded as synthetic. If we adopt this interpretation it is quite easy to see where Shaffer commits the mistake.

In our paraphrase of Shaffer's argument, the first proposition, viz. that all existential propositions are synthetic, is not questionable (because this is what Kant really says), but the reason given by Shaffer for its syntheticity does not correctly represent Kant's view. To this I will turn a little later.

As to the second proposition, namely, that all synthetic propositions are ampliative i.e. add to the concept of the subject a predicate, Shaffer cites as evidence what Kant says in B11. But Dryer<sup>21</sup> points out that Kant's considered view is that not all synthetic judgments are ampliative, attribute-ascriptive judgments. For, he argues that a negative synthetic judgment does not serve to increase knowledge, but to ward off error. To quote Kant : In respect to the content of our knowledge in general, which is either extended or limited by a judgment, the task peculiar to negative judgments is that of rejecting error."<sup>22</sup> Let us consider the judgment 'This table is not brown'. This negative synthetic judgment does not give us any information about the actual colour of the table. It is an error-preventive judgment. The purpose of this judgment is to prevent the mistake that this table is brown. From this it is quite clear that what Kant says in B11 cannot be cited as evidence that, according to Kant, all synthetic judgments are ampliative, for he is there speaking only of affirmative judgments. If that be so, the charge of inconsistency does not hold good.

Secondly, when Shaffer interprets Kant's thesis, namely, that all existential propositions are synthetic, he interprets it to mean that their predicate-concepts add to their subject-concepts, as all synthetic propositions do. This, he thinks, contradicts Kant's assertion that existence is not a real predicate which is added to the concept of the subject and enlarges it. Shaffer's mistake here is this: He appeals only to what Robinson calls Kant's 'containment-criterion' and completely overlooks another principle of classification given by Kant to distinguish between analytic and synthetic judgments. In the Prolegomena Kant says, "All analytic judgments rely wholly on the principle of contradiction."<sup>23</sup> This is what Robinson calls Kant's 'contradiction-criterion'. According to this criterion, a judgment is analytic if its denial is self-contradictory or, to put it in a different way, an analytic judgment is that which has a 'self-contradictory contradictory'. A synthetic judgment, on the other hand, is that the denial of which is not self-contradictory. When Kant says that existential propositions are synthetic, he does not apply the 'containment-criterion' at all, for they are not propositions of the subject-predicate form, i.e. attributive ascriptive propositions at all. All existential propositions are synthetic, according to him, because they can be denied without self-contradiction. If that be so, then there is no inconsistency in Kant's assertions that the concept of existence is not additive and that all existential propositions are synthetic. Therefore, Shaffer's criticism goes off the mark.

#### IV

Kant's rejection of the ontological argument as a proof for the existence of God, it seems to me, is intimately related to the most fundamental thesis of his epistemology – that all cognition requires both that an object should be given in intuition and thought through concepts. Now objects, for Kant, cannot be known unless they are given or presented in experience or in empirical intuition. Anything we think of is an object of thought. The object of thought simply because we are thinking of it is not thereby

guaranteed to be a real object. In order that it may be regarded as a real object, it must posit itself outside our thought and thereby show that it exists outside it. Now it can posit itself outside our thought only if it can posit itself in some extra-conceptual mode of apprehension called intuition. But the only intuition possible for us, human beings, is sensible intuition. Sensible intuition is either pure intuition or empirical intuition. Only space or time presents itself in pure intuition. The concept of God is not one whose object can be given to us in any intuition, whether pure or empirical. God cannot be presented in the pure intuition of space and time. For what is presented in space and time is limited, divisible and so on, but *ex hypothesi* God is unlimited. Again God cannot be presented in empirical intuition. For what is presented in empirical intuition is an empirical object, whereas God is supposed to be a trans-empirical object. So no genuine cognition of God is possible for us. The ontological argument ignores the fundamental distinction between forming a concept of an object and obtaining knowledge of the existence of an object answering to such a concept which, for us, always requires an intuition. The existence of an object can never be included in its concept, but must always be added to it through our intuition in which the object of the concept is given.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant concludes that no theoretically valid arguments for the existence of God can be given. The *Critique of Pure Reason*, did not, however, deny the existence of God; it only denied that we could know it. Kant says, "I have found it necessary to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*."<sup>24</sup> Although theoretical reason can provide us with no cognition of God, no proofs of God's existence, practical consideration can justify a belief, at least for the purpose of moral action, that there is a wise, benevolent and just Providence ordering the world. And this being is God.

God is not an object of knowledge, but of faith. It is a rational faith based on morality, and not upon sentiment. So, for Kant, religion is not the basis for morality, but rather the contrary; religion is a rational attitude based upon morality.

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## THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ŚRUTIS AND DHARMAŚĀSTRAS

RAGHUNATH GHOSH

### I

The term 'justice' conveys various ideas if it is considered in Indian perspective. If we stand beside those persons that are oppressed and in distress, it is a kind of justice to them. This idea is also found in the preamble of Indian constitution where much emphasis is laid on the fact of doing justice to all by way of removing distintegrity and preserving individual dignity. It is possible if the oppressed or minority is given equal right for enjoying those that are by the majority and non-oppressed. Keeping perhaps this idea in view Socrates enjoyed and others have taken such a notion of justice and hence they have described such justice as a balance or harmony. Keeping the same view in mind Plato also suggests that 'the search of justice' means 'the search for good life.'<sup>1</sup>

The term 'justice' in the sense mentioned above is accepted in various philosophical literatures in India. The phenomenon of justice to others presupposes the enlargement of heart or self of development of *Sadgun*□*as* existing in an individual. As justice can be done by social beings or can be shown to in a society. Hence, the term 'social justice', I think, is not appropriate. The term 'justice' alone (excluding the term 'social') can convey the desired meaning as a social being alone can do justice. Moreover, 'justice' is always a social phenomenon and hence there cannot be 'justice' which is social.

### II

'Justice' in the above-mentioned sense is frequently found in different philosophical literature available in ancient India. The Advaita Vedānta and Upaniṣads say that Self or Brahman exists in all animate and inanimate objects ("Sarvam khalvidam Brahma"). The Īsopoanis□ad says that as the whole world is covered by Self or Brahman each and every individual being should be looked upon as the part of the Divine or Self. Hence, one would not have any tendency of exploiting others. Hence, he should not feel greedy towards others properties. (*Īśāvāsyamidam sarvam yatkiñca jagatyām jagat /Tena tyaktena bhūñjīthā mā gr□dhah kasyasviddhanam*"<sup>2</sup>). The Upaniṣad gives us the message of an enjoyment which can be attained through renunciation (*Tyaktena bhūñjīthā*). One should not enjoy one's life after confining oneself within, but it is permissible if the enjoyment is shared by others. This attitude develops if one feels the existence of self in all social beings. From this standpoint all are 'related' (*ātmīya*) to all. Hence there would not arise any question of conflict among social beings. Upaniṣad also teaches us to adopt what is good (*śreyah*), but not pleasant (*preya*). To exploit others, to be greedy, towards others properties etc. may seem to be pleasant for us but these, not being 'good' are not permissible by the Śāstras. An action may be good if it can serve the broader interest i.e. the welfare of him as well as other social beings. That which brings universal welfare is called 'good' in order to do justice to others. Those who adopt 'good' are associated with welfare while adopting pleasant objects (*preya*) they are dissociated with the welfare. (*Tayoh śreya ādadānasya sādhu bhavati / hīyate 'rthādyā u preyo vr□n□īte'*)<sup>3</sup> That is why, the *Taittirīya Upaniṣ□ad* advises an individual to do those actions that are *anvadya* i.e., faultless from all standpoints. Other than these the rest should be rejected

(*yānyanavadyāni karmān i karmān i sevītvayāni / no itarān i //*).<sup>4</sup> These actions which protect the interest of oneself and others are permissible. Those who can see all beings in his own self and self in all beings cannot hate others. (*yastu sarvān i bhūtāni ātmanvevānupaśyati / sarvabhūtes u cātmanam tato na vijugupsate //*).<sup>5</sup> If some one thinks others as separated from himself, he can hate others. But as he looks at others as his own self, he cannot think them as separated from himself and hence, there does not arise any question of hate to others.

In the R̥gvedic *mantra* seers are always found to pray for the same status of all human beings irrespective of caste, creed etc. It is prayed so that all of us can go together, speak together have same equal mental status. We should also have same purpose, same organization, equal mind and equal hearts, same appeal to the Almighty, and so also same heart having same feeling (*'sam gacchadhvam sam vadadhvam sam vo manānsi jānatām./ samāno mantrah samitih samānī, samānam manah saha cittames ām..., samāni va ākutih samānāh hr̥dayāni vah samānamastu vo manah'* -*Rgveda-10/191/2-4*). Even teacher had a strong desire that he should not possess the sense of exclusion from the student. That is why, both the teacher and student used to pray so that God may protect both of them, bring them up equally and strengthen the capacity of grasping of what is taught. A teacher sincerely wanted that there should not be any sense of exclusion but instead both are brought up and protected by God after strengthening their acquired knowledge and bringing no room for violence between them (*'Saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu saha vīryam karavāvahai/Tejasvi nāvadhītamastu mā vidvis āvahai//'* -*Kenopanis̥ad, Mangalācāran̥a*) The seed of such inclusion is found even in the *Yajurveda* in the following *mantra* (38/18).

*Mitrasya mā caks̥us̥ ā sarvāni bhūtāni samīks̥ antām/  
Mitrasyāham caks̥us̥ ā sarvāṇi Bhūtāni samīks̥ e  
Mitrasya caks̥us̥ ā samīks̥ āmahe//.*

“May all beings look upon me with the eyes of a friend; may I look upon all beings with the eyes of a friend; may we look upon one another with the eye of a friend.”

The *Pr̥thivī-sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda* echoed the same theory of inclusion among men where it is prayed to Mother Earth to strengthen all in the earth to have a secular outlook. It is said: Oh, Mother Earth, give us as your children the ability to mix harmoniously without any discrimination, may we speak sweetly with one another’. The original *mantra* runs as follows: “*Ta nah prajāh buhatam samagrā vāco madhu pr̥thivī dehi mahyam*” (*Atharvaveda-12/1/1/45*).

In the *Śrīmad-bhagavad-gītā* it has been rightly endorsed by the Divine Teacher that each and every faith carries the same worth and significance for the people of India. The verse runs as follows:

*“Yo yo yām yām tanum bhaktah śraddhayārcitumicchati,  
tasya tasyācalam śraddhām tameva vidadhāmyaham.”* (7/21)

That is, “I provide firm devotion to certain deities whom he wishes to worship faithfully. It is again substantiated in verse - 4/11 where the Divine Teacher declares that men may pursue His path in various ways and He fulfills their desires in whatever

ways they prefer to identify Him ('yeyathā mām prapadyante tanstathaiva bhajāmyaham/mama vartamānuvartante manusyaḥ pārtha sarvaśah //').

Justice can be done to others if this Advaitic and Upaniṣadic view is taken into the account. Those who are engaged in doing welfare of others are called *Dhārmikas* in the true sense of the term. In the *Bhagavadgītā* it is said that Self exists in all beings and all beings are in Self ('*Sarvabhūtastham ātmā ātmani sarvabhūtam*'). Without this notion no justice is possible. All the good-qualities that are essential for the said justice are originated from this notion of Self. The qualities which make a man's life fruitful are called *sadgunā-s*. In the *Mahābhārata* it is said that all these qualities are to be obtained for the development of complete humanity. The forgiveness (*ksamā*) steadiness, non-violence, equality, truth, non-miserliness (*akāṛpanya*), shame (*hrī*) etc. are included in *Sadgunā-s*.<sup>6</sup> Due to the inclusion of *akāṛpanya* in the list of the *Sadguṇas* it is indicated that, if somebody thinks of his own interest, this is due to his narrowness described as miserliness (*kāṛpanya*) which is not at all treated as a good quality. For, *kāṛpanya* indicates the lack of sacrifice (*tyāga*) in an individual. If a man always leads a selfish life, he is not at all appreciated for the absence of the said harmony. We generally request our social beings to sacrifice for each other or to help us the various ways. This is called 'fellow-feeling' in the true sense of the term. If sacrifice finds no room in a society, there will be conflict, malice, hatred, violence etc. leading to the society into astray. That is why; this selfishness or miserliness is described as a defect which counters the human nature (*kāṛpanyadosopahatasvabhāvah*). The performance of sacrifice is the only way to prosper, as pointed out by the Divine Teacher. Just as a man gets whatever he needs from a mythological cow (*kāmadhuk*), a man can have all desired object through sacrifice. Here the term 'prosper (*prasavidhvam*) can be interpreted as both this-worldly and other-worldly prosperity. If we adhere to the selfish attitude, we would be in a position when idleness may grasp us. That is why, it is the injunction of the Divine Teacher to forsake the miserly attitude and idleness ('*klaivyam māsmā gamah*').<sup>7</sup> Moreover, one who enjoyed some thing from others without giving them any thing in return is a thief. ('... *Apradāyaibhyo yo bhunkte stena eva sa*'). It teaches us the way for living in a society with cooperation with each other for the sake of harmony.

The above-mentioned notion of harmony becomes more firm-footed if the concept of *Dharma* in the *Mahābhārata* is carefully reviewed. To think about the welfare of all beings is *Dharma*. The main objective of *Dharma* is to think about the welfare of the whole world and to become maliceless towards all beings. ("*Mānasam sarvabhūtānām dharmāhurmanīsinaḥ/ yasmāt sarvesu bhūtesu manasā śivamācaret*" //<sup>9</sup> and "*Adrohenaiiva bhūtānām yah sa dharmah satām matah*").<sup>10</sup> To make friendship with all beings without doing any harm to them is also *Dharma*. ("*Sarvabhūtahitam maitram purānaḥ yam janā viduh*")<sup>11</sup> In this epic justice to human being is considered so emphatically that for the sake of 'good' of human being it is permissible to say falsewords. If someone does not speak the truth, if it is connected with an individual's death-sentence, it is not to be taken as a fault. In the same way, the speaking of truth which is connected with someone's total loss of property is not also supportable. ("*Satyājyāyo nrītam vacah*").<sup>12</sup>

### III

In *Mānavadharmasastra* Manu's concept of *Dharma* is similar to that of the *Mahābharata*. *Dharma*, as Manu opines, is the means of the attainment of the good (*śreyah*) which is described by the Vedas as heaven etc. It has been stated afterwards that *Dharma* is always performed by honest and intellectual persons having no malice etc. and it is always supported by one's conscience. (*hṛdayenābhyanujñāta*).<sup>13</sup> In other words, that which is performed by the honest, maliceless intellectual persons and that which can associate us with our well being and highest good is called *Dharma*. Those who are really *Dhārmika* in nature should possess thirteen types of moral characters which include service to others (*aparopatāpitā*), non-jealous to others (*anasūyatā*), softness in temperament (*mr̥dutā*), non-harshness to others (*apārusyam*), friendliness (*mitratā*), capability of speaking lovable words (*priyamvāditā*), sense of gratitude (*kr̥tajñatā*), pity of others (*kāruṇyam*) etc. All these moral characters are described as preconditions of *Dharma* on account of the fact that these moral characters are to be developed for justice to the social beings. ("...aparopatāpitā anasūyatā mr̥dutā apārusyam maitratā kāruṇyam praśāntiśceti trayodaśavidham śīlam").<sup>14</sup>

*Dharmaśāstra* has formulated some moral codes in such a way so that the interest of different communities, weaker sections, women etc. is protected. In *Manusamhitā* it is stated that a Brahmin is allowed to take up arms in self-defense, or in defense of women, or the social order. As he has to take a soldier's duty, he has to violate the strict rule of *ahimsā*. This is permissible as an emphatic way of asserting the social obligation to stand up defence of social order, weaker section, women and children.<sup>15</sup> In Manu's system no one is allowed to solicit for alms if he feels hungry. Beggary like crimes grows like weeds in a neglected field and only when *Dharma* is relaxed. Solicitation of foods for a parent, a teacher or a sick person stands by its vicariousness on a higher level, and is commended.<sup>16</sup>

The concept of *Danda* (punishment) is an important concept in Manu's social philosophy. *Danda* or punishment, as Manu observed, was essential in the society in order to do justice to the social being or to bring harmony in a society. Before the emergence of *Danda* there was *Mātsya-nyāya* in the society. If *Danda* were not invented, there would have been exploitation of the weaker section in the society. The famous commentator Medhatithi observes that the stronger persons may exploit others or may torture the weaker section of people in many ways, viz, sometimes snatching their properties, sometimes engaging them in a job which requires bodily labour, or sometimes abducting their wives (*dhana-śarīra-dārāharanādīnā*). If this situation prevails, no social norms would be maintained. Hence each and every social being would be deprived of his own right. ("Svāmyam na syāt kasminścit")<sup>17</sup> leading to the origination of social disorder and dominance of the superiors by the inferiors. ("pravarttetādharottaram").<sup>18</sup> From the importance given to *Danda* it is assumed that Manu did not went the practice of exploitation of the weaker section by the stronger, which is the proof for the existence of justice in the society in ancient India. This is evidenced from the fact of his prescription of the service of the old by the younger without any interest. If a young man greets an old man and engages himself in the service of the old, he gets larger span of life, knowledge,

fame and spirit. (“*Utthāya sarvadā vr̥ddhābhivādanśīlasya vr̥ddhasevinaśca āyuh-prajñā-yaśo-valāni catvāri prakars̥ena vardhante*”).<sup>19</sup>

Manu prescribed some moral codes in favour of the protection of the dignity of the ladies. An individual should show honour to the ladies who are wives of others but not connected with blood and should address them as sister etc. which, I think, may help to form a society where all men and women may be tied with the thread of relation (“*yā strī parapatnī bhavati, asambandhā ca yonitā iti sasrādirna bhavati tāmanupayukta-sambhās̥an̥akāle bhavati subhage bhagini iti vā vadet*”).<sup>20</sup>

Manu has propounded some moral codes that have got eternal social value and universal character. If these are followed properly, there would not be any injustice or discontent in the society. An individual should collect good whatever may be its sources. He advised to see good things and follow it from other social beings even from the enemies. One should collect nectar from poison, should hear good advice even from a child.<sup>21</sup> This statement may guide an individual to lead a happy moral life due to having egolessness. The advice listening to good words even from the children and enemies indicates that one should be open minded or broad-minded or broad-minded for leading a good social life after keeping harmony. The justice shown to all is evidenced further from the statement that one cannot survive in a society without rendering service to each other. Hence, the service to mankind is described as *Nr̥yajña*. The term ‘*yajña*’ attached to the term ‘*Nr̥*’ has got much significance. The term denotes that the service of mankind should not be looked upon as an ordinary object, but as *yajña* or *ritual*.<sup>22</sup> The injunctions like one should not sell an object which is not up to the mark and which is not properly measured (“*Nānyadanyena samsr̥s̥t̥arūpam vikrayamarhati/Na cāsāram na nyūnam ...*”)<sup>23</sup> come from the strong ‘feeling’ for the social being.

#### IV

Those who maintain the moral codes or *Dharma* in the sense mentioned earlier are called *Sat* i.e., existent or that which is existing. An individual who exists physically is not taken as *Sat*, but one who has justified one’s existence is called *Sat*. If a man is known to all and has made his existence ‘meaningful’ by way of performing social service, giving respect to others, he is called *Sat*. Those who are negatively famous or negatively prove their ‘existence’ are called *Asat*, because their existence is denied here. Hence, our existence is justified through the performance of good works like social service etc. A person who, though physically existent, does not do justice to others for the sake of harmony is *Asat*. Here the terms *Sat* and *Asat* should be taken in this specific sense. The concept may be clarified with the help of an example. A father who is very much annoyed upon his son who does not prove his existence positively is found lamenting with the words. ‘I have no son though he exists’. On the other hand, a man being satisfied with the service rendered by an individual with whom he has no blood connection is found saying – “I am endowed with son though really I have not’. In the former case the son has got physical existence which is taken as tantamount to not having a son. While in the latter case the son has no physical existence which is taken as equal to having a son keeping his sense of justice towards others in view.

The Buddhists, I believe, also believed in this concept of *Sat*. They admit that an object is to be understood as *Sat* if it has got causal efficacy (*arthakriyākāritva*). An

object is *Sat* if it has capacity to serve our and other's purpose. Otherwise it would be taken as *Asat*. The jar, pot etc. would come under the category of *Sat* due to having their causal efficacy while hare's horn etc. is *Asat* due to not having the same. This doctrine, I believe, which is applicable to this epistemic world may be extended to other places. Behind the formulation of this concept there, I think was functioning some idea related to social welfare, and the sense of morality. An individual may be described as *Sat* and *Asat* after keeping his *arthakriyākāritva* by way of doing a social welfare accepting *Maitrī Karuṇā* etc. or *anarthakriyākāritva* respectively in view. To the Buddhist the human body is nothing but an object. As it is a body of human being, the *sattā* of it is determined in terms of causal efficacy connected with human value or social value, which leads to the path of *Maitrī and Karuṇā*. Hence, the causal efficacy of human being is different, which is not expressed in an explicit way in Buddhist literature. The same idea can be traced when they describe *Sat* as *Svalaksāna or unique*.<sup>24</sup> Just as the causal efficacy of water lies in the object itself, but not in the word 'water' the causal efficacy lies in human being, but not in name, race, caste etc possessed by him. An individual has to prove himself *Sat* by his own causal efficacy in the form of good works like social service etc. but not through his name, race etc. Hence, the Buddhists have coined the term '*kalpanā*' or imagination on account of the fact that they have no value in proving a man *Sat*. A man having unique character free from imaginary attributes is self-luminous or *Svaprakāsa*. Hence, he does not need to mention his name, father's name, race etc.

The same idea has been expressed by Bhartrhari in the following *Śolka of Nītiśataka* which runs as follows:

*"Eke satpuruṣāḥ parārthaghatāḥ, Svārthān parityajya ye,  
Sāmānyāstu parāthamudyamabhrātāḥ Svārthāvirodhena ye,  
Temī mānavarākṣakah parahitam, Svārthāya nighnanti ye,  
Ye tu ghnanti nirarthakam, Parahitam te ke, na jānīmahe."*<sup>26</sup>

That is, 'There are *Satpuruṣāḥ*, good people, who engage themselves in the good of others sacrificing their own self interest, the *Samanyas*, the generality of people, on the other hand, are those who engage themselves in the good of others so long as it does not involve the sacrifice of their own self-interest. There are others, the *Mānavarākṣāḥ*, devilish men, who sacrifice the good of others to gain their own selfish ends, but alas, what am I to say of those who sacrifice the good of others without gaining thereby any good to themselves or to any one else.'<sup>27</sup>

The *Satpuruṣāḥ* or good men have gone their overwhelming goodness which is not at all vitiated by their selfish motive and hence, they become glorified or they have glorified their existence. On the other hand, the people who destroy others' welfare in order to have more pleasure or comfort in their own lives are called *Mānavarākṣāḥ*, the devilish man or *Asura*. At this stage an individual tries to develop or satisfy his billogical or physical needs, but fails to develop his morality though he has so called proper education. Due to the lack of moral education a man dares to adopt unfair means in order to fulfil his own interest. Here self-interest is fulfilled sometimes at the cost of other's life, a sometimes exploiting others. This type of person is known as devil in the form of man. The person having this devilish attitude is called *Asat*, or *Mānavarākṣāḥ* or *Asura* due to having the lack of the sense of the justice to them.

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## RITUALS AND PERFORMATIVES

MANJULIKA GHOSH

### I

The domain of rituals encompasses a bewildering variety of social actions. They comprise such diverse activities as handshakes, everyday television viewing, coronations, prayers, vows, taking oath of an office, declaring allegiance to a government, marriage and funeral rituals, *upanayana*, initiation rituals of coming of age and many other varieties covering categories from the religious and the secular, indigenous and colonial, political and personal, archaic and modern. While almost all rituals are associated with physical movements, rituals are also closely tied up with linguistic utterances ensuring their correct and felicitous performance. The religious and marriage rituals constitute such a group. They are the acceptance of what is laid down in the script, and performing according to it. And marriage can be undone by the performance of another set of rituals just as flaws and hitches in a religious ritual performance are to be condoned by undergoing *prāyaścitta*, another variety of ritual acts. In our context, we shall deal specifically with those rituals in which the making of appropriate utterances is a part of their meaning and a necessary condition for their performance. Those rituals only will be our focus wherein covert or explicit utterances are made for the accomplishment of the rituals.

Many different definitions of ritual may be formulated. But each one of these highlights only an aspect of it. Ritual is not an exact concept like a mathematical notion and no strict definition of it can be proffered. However, rituals, share certain characteristics which are crisscrossing and overlapping. Rituals are social actions – a human accomplishment. They are special events in time and space, organized in terms of shared sequence of symbolical, formal acts and utterances which purport to alter the state of affairs obtaining at a given moment of time. They do not describe the world in which they occur. They are occasions for imagining how things could be or evaluating how they ought to be. This is a region of action governed by oughts.

From this we can further characterize rituals as communicative and not informative. It is true that the specifics of the situation in which they occur, for example, the timing, the auspicious day, the calendrical cycles – the full moon or the new moon, the different symbols pertaining to instruments of worship, the special dress or musical instruments and other staff are indeed informative, but the rituals in their core are communicative of what is to be done and not what is. Regarded in this way, ritual actions are transcendence of the peculiarities of the situation in which they are performed. A ritual situation is so constructed as to offer transcendence of the peculiarities of social circumstances and surroundings.

Rituals are regularly recurring actions. They have been done this way before by others. They are also repetitive in another sense. They are regularly recurring. Many rituals are calendrical, being prescribed by the repetition of a cycle rather than the mere passage of time. Offering *tarpana* to the forefathers during the *Devipaksā*, the sacred ritual of *navakalebara* of Shri Jagannatha Mahāprava are cyclic and not merely a matter of passage of time. The repetition characteristic of ritual is a rational approach to producing memory or reinforcing social roles and relations. They are essential for

collective memory. This element of recurrence becomes routine and may result in boredom and drudgery. However, this is not true without qualification. We may clarify our point with reference to the ritual aspect of religion which is about the sacred.

The sacred or any sacred object – such as the grape juice used in a Protestant community or the *caranāmrta* of gods and goddesses, offered after the *pujā* or *darśana* is completed, reflect a tendency to treat some things as of a different category of importance. These objects are treated as sacred objects rather than taking into account the objects' natural properties. The criterion of sacredness is not something mythical but is the pattern of activity of the members of the community. Such patterns of activity appear to be a constant of human social life. This is the foundation of religious ritual that every human group treats some things as unquestionably serious. And there is a profound impulse to acknowledge and express this 'seriousness' in words and actions of symbolic import. The 'serious life', to use Durkheim's terminology, is society's experience of seriousness, its identification and attention to such features. The rituals which put the faithful in contact with the sacred will hardly appear as boring or drudgery. A temple or church, its architecture, furnishings, special times of attendance, the activities that conduct, control, and conclude a service or worship, are all looked upon as contact with the sacred forces. They are to be strictly observed and any deviation or flaw is harmful or even sinful. Hence, there is stereotyping of rituals but hardly any boredom.

Linguistic utterances are constitutive of many rituals alongside physical action. I propose to deal exclusively with these in my paper, and put emphasis upon their performative character. Let us now move to the second section pertaining to the concept of performatives.

## II

The idea of performative utterances was conceived by the English philosopher J.L. Austin and the earliest expression of this is found in his 1947 paper "Other Minds"<sup>1</sup>, and then, in "Performative Utterances".<sup>2</sup> This is clarified more fully in his 1955 Harvard University Lectures, posthumously published as *How to do things with Words*.<sup>3</sup> In this work, Austin is critical of the traditional philosophical idea that the business of a statement can only be to 'describe' some state of affairs or state some facts truly or falsely. He claims that there are statements which are not properly characterized as true or false descriptions of fact but the doing of an action. He christens them as 'performatives'. In his words, a performative "...is a kind of utterance which looks like a statement and grammatically, I suppose, would be classed as a statement, which is not nonsensical, and yet is not true or false."<sup>4</sup> The issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action and it is not just saying something. For example, the utterance of the sentence, "I promise" is the doing of an action, promising; that of "I order you to leave the room" is doing the action of giving an order and so forth. Austin distinguishes this class of utterances from statements or constatives. While a constative, such as "My dog is brown and lazy" is a description, is true or false, the performative is a doing and cannot be appropriately assessed as true or false. They may be performed correctly or incorrectly; felicitously or infelicitously and so on.

Austin proposes several criteria to strengthen this distinction. We need not enter into that at this juncture.. It suffices saying that he gradually became skeptical of this distinction. He felt that the distinction cannot be maintained. He came to realize that

every utterance is a performative, being the performance of an action. Stating a fact or giving a report is as much the doing of an action as is promising or congratulating. Each one is a linguistic act or speech act. The performative-constative distinction thus gives way to the concept of speech act. The speaker, in making any utterance, so to say, is performing an action. The performatives are not discarded. They are retained within the scheme of speech acts as a variety of speech act. Hence, in our discussion we shall use the two terms, performative and speech act interchangeably.

It is evident from the above that use of language or speech performance is integral to certain actions. In fact, language or speech is constitutive, that is, makes them possible. We do not claim that we have promised unless we have used the formula "I promise" or that a marriage has been solemnized unless the bridegroom says "I do" or as the case may be "*pratigrānhāmi*" when the bride is offered for marriage by the appropriate authority. There are simple kinds of acts which need not be constituted by speech. I can ask somebody to leave the room or stop talking by making appropriate gestures but the more complex acts cannot be performed without speech. We cannot apply for leave nor will a property to someone without the appropriate speech acts, like "I hereby apply for leave..." or "I hereby make a will of my property..." etc. Even where gestural communication takes place without language, it can be conceived as parasitical upon speech at a certain stage of its formation.

Austin gives a taxonomy of speech acts as locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary. The locutionary act is the physical act of mouthing words; the illocutionary act is the act performed in making the locutionary act; the perlocutionary act is the act of producing certain effects on the mind of the hearer by the performance of the illocutionary act. The utterance of the words "I warn you..." is a locutionary act; the act of warning some one by making the locutionary act is an illocutionary act and alarming or frightening someone by making the illocutionary act is the perlocutionary act. The illocutionary acts have a certain force over and above their meaning and understanding this by the hearer is called by Austin "securing uptake". Although Austin speaks of the total speech act in the total situation, the achievement of the illocutionary uptake is given more importance than others.

Austin says that speech act is a kind of human transaction taking place in society. Obviously there are conventions governing the utterances. Austin states them as follows:

- (i) there must be a conventional procedure, having a certain conventional effect, which include the utterance of certain words by appropriate persons under appropriate conditions;
- (ii) in any particular case, the persons involved and the circumstances must be appropriate for the invocation of the procedure and
- (iii) for the procedure to be effective, participants must act out their parts both completely and correctly.<sup>5</sup>

It is the convention which makes speech acts social acts.

The question that arises is that why do we align rituals with performatives? This is because almost all of Austin's speech acts have collective and ritual context. All the original examples of performatives are of ritual origin. Naming and marrying are obviously social rituals that take place before the whole community. Promising and betting, of course, are not so clearly ritualistic because they do not possess the same public setting. To promise or bet one merely needs another person with whom to

undertake the promise or bet. But implied in the ‘local’ scene upon which we engage in everyday act of betting or promising is the equivalent understanding that our words will be evaluated according to the ‘public’ scene explicit in our more ceremonious and externalized rituals of marrying and naming.<sup>6</sup> The obligation underlying a promise is a community sanction. One may be constrained to break his promise; it may be unintentional but still real. And that opinion will determine the society’s perception of him in future cases of promising by him.

### III

With this background information let us now proceed with our task of understanding rituals in terms of performatives – which we have decided to call the performative approach.

Austin’s concept of speech acts has been proved fruitful in understanding, not only philosophical problems but also issues which are not strictly within the precincts of philosophy. Austin’s analysis can be extended to interpret rituals. Several different styles of analysis are indeed there to interpret rituals – the psychoanalytic approach, the ethno-sociological approach, the socio-structural approach, the symbolic approach etc. The performative approach has been adopted by such scholars as R. Finnegan (1969)<sup>7</sup>, S.J. Tambiah (1979)<sup>8</sup>, M. Block (1974),<sup>9</sup> Rot A. Rappaport (1974; 1979)<sup>10</sup>, Emily Ahern (1979)<sup>11</sup> and J. La Fontaine (1977)<sup>12</sup>. It has been argued by them that many of the rituals documented by anthropologists and ethnographers can be most fruitfully understood as being essentially similar to the performative acts. Such analyses emphasise that rituals are constitutive of the enactment of a change of state or doing something effective, e.g., the installation ceremony by a priest makes the deity installed; the ceremonial ritual of *pranpratistha* infuses life into the dead matter. It has been observed that “like some forms of linguistic utterances, ritual establishes what it described”. Not only does it directly imply a unique action that is only possible to perform through a speech act itself but it also is an action performed through a very standard and specific set of utterances.

While accepting this analysis I wish to go a step forward and venture the position that there is not merely a correspondence between performatives and rituals but there are rituals which are constituted by appropriate utterance of speech acts. In support of my contention I mention the sacrificial rituals of ancient India. The sacrifices were performed to fulfill certain desires, desire for objects one was lacking, cattle, crop, male offsprings, property, etc. There are ritualistic procedures prescribed in the *Śāstra* for that purpose. These procedures are laid down in the form of *vidhis*, prescriptions, *niśedhas*, prohibitions and *mantra*, hymns for invocation, etc. The site of these sentences is the *Veda*. These sentences are injunctive, having imperatival force. For example, *darśapurnā amāsabhyam yajeto paśukāmo*, desiring cattle one should perform the *darśapurnā amāsa* sacrifice, and for ‘*Svargakāmo*’ *viśvajitā yajeta; kariryā vrāśtikāmo yajeta* and so on for *putrakāmo*, or ‘*bhulikāmo*’. The principal ritual acts prescribed by the *vidhi* sentences include secondary ritual acts of “*samidho yajate*”, “*ido yajate*”, etc. The utterances are hands in gloves with the ritual practices or *anusāhanas*. The rituals are the norms and the norms are prescribed not by any ordinary person but by *Śāstric vākyas*. The authority of the *vākyas*, when uttered by the appropriate person, in this context, the *hotr*, or the *yāgñīik* prescribes the norm. The prescriptions, etc. constitute the foundation of the ritual, whether it is of gathering the

sacrificial wood, preparing the sacrificial platform – the fire alter, cooking the sacrificial sacred food, making oblation and others. The prescriptions are imperative sentences exhorting the person concerned about what kind of ritual he is to perform, ritual that will bring into existence that which is not already in existence, cattle, sons, wealth, prosperity, *svarga* and such like. The *vidhivākyas* impel the person addressed to perform the prescribed act. The possible facts prescribed in the injunctive sentences, when followed up by appropriate rituals, would be made actual. It is to be noted that as Austin put great importance on the performative verbs which is the locus of performance or doing, verbs like ‘promise’, ‘order’, ‘advise’, ‘name’, etc., the Mimāmsā philosophers who interpret the *vidhi* sentences of the Samhitās and their commentaries in the *Brāhmanas* put great emphasis on elucidating the verb in the imperative mood, delineating the *dhātu* and the *pratyaya*.<sup>13</sup>

There are indeed physical actions; physical movements no doubt alongside like cooking, collecting wood, baking bricks but they are contributory to the principal act of enjoining the performance, the Vedic prescription or directive. This leads us to say that many rituals are structured by speech acts of an imperatival, injunctive, exhortatory kind. The connection is too close to make us ignore the constitutive nature of the acts, that is, making possible the action exhorted

The analysis proffered here is applicable to various rituals like marriage rituals, the initiation rituals of *upanayana*<sup>14</sup>, the gateway to studentship and those of coming of age for boys and girls, whether in tribal communities or sophisticated societies. In the specific case of religious rituals, these privileged deed and words may involve induction, consecration, initiation passage, commendation, celebration, invocation, evocation, etc. The point of the analysis is that the sentences mentioned, when uttered by appropriate persons in appropriate situations, are not merely the saying of certain things but a species of doing, making possible the things to be done or to be made actual. The scene of the production of speech includes the performance.

Before we conclude let us have a quick look at the point of the efficacy of language as speech acts. What gives words this power or potency for performance? Do words have magical or mysterious power? This does not seem to be the case. There are rituals involving magic, for example, protection, healing (*jalpada*, *telpada*), and magic potions having curative property, driving away ghosts or other evil spirits. The great insight of the speech act theory and its relevance for rituals is that it brings back language to the collective scene of human community.

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## MORAL UNIVERSALIZABILITY: A KANTIAN APPROACH

KANTILAL DAS

It would not be an exaggeration if we profess that the principle of universalizability is one of the most important criterion of determining morality. Although it was Hare who in his *Freedom and Reason* directly introduced the term universalizability as an important mark of his theory of prescriptivism, but we think it was Kant who first, though indirectly, introduced and subsequently employed the theory of universalizability in his moral philosophy, more specifically in his first formulation of *categorical imperative*. Besides Hare and Kant, we also sense the concept of moral universalizability in Rule-utilitarianism as well as in Sartrean moral philosophy. However, the objective of this paper is to explore in what sense and how far Kantian moral theory is claimed to be universalizable.

Before delving into this issue, let us address one point. There is no question of doubt that the concept of universal is a logical concept. More succinctly, it can be said that logical propositions can be interpreted in terms of universal. Thus, logical propositions, such as ‘All men are mortal’ or ‘No men are mortal’ are universal in the sense that in each case the predicate term in such propositions either universally affirms or denies the subject term. Secondly, it can also be said that since logic is formal based on the form or structure of an argument, once a structure of an argument is valid any argument whatsoever that can be assimilated with this structure can equally be valid without exception. This again confirms the logical universality of logical argument. However, when we are talking of universalisability in ethics, we are rather talking differently. Here one would like to say that what is good to one can equally be good to every other human being. For example, if the moral action such as “one ought to do x” is good to “a”, then it ought to be good to everyone. The fulfillment of this moral principle deserves so many clarifications and unless and until a moral standard has not been set up, it would be difficult to establish the view that moral judgments are universalisable.

Since ethics in general deals with ought questions, ethical laws or maxims always have the propensity to be universalizable. One should not, however, confuse the term ‘universalizability’ with the term ‘universal’. Universal means all without exception and we can use this concept in logic, known as Universal Generalization or Universal Instantiation. However, when we are dealing with the term ‘universalizability’ in moral philosophy, it means to say that moral or ethical principles are not universal straightway; they have the potentiality to be universal. More succinctly, we can say that deductive argument can be valid universally and the canons of deductive argument can also be applied universally. Ethical rules and principles in this sense can never be universal as like logic there is no *decision procedure* in ethics through which it can be guided. There is no logical luck in logic as logic unlike ethics is formal, whereas there are moral lucks in ethics which stand beyond the control of moral agents. Moreover following Wittgenstein *Tractatus*, it can be said that there is nothing accidental in logic. However, in the case of moral universality one cannot overlook ‘moral luck’ which actually may

vitiates or stands as an obstruction of making some moral action universalizable. This would, however, not be the case in the logical universalizability. Unlike moral, logic is formal and what is formal is above of moral luck or external factors. The cornerstone of morality is to generalize ethical rules and principles and Kantian principle of morality plays an important role in this direction. The principle of morality as understood by Kant is embedded in his first principle of *Categorical Imperative* where he proclaims: “Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.”<sup>1</sup> This principle is known as the principle of moral universalizability or Kant’s first moral principle. During our discussion we do not delve into the debate whether the principle of moral universalizability is the necessary or sufficient or both necessary and sufficient conditions of morality or not. Rather we propose to lay bare in what sense Kant conceives the principle of moral universalizability and how far his view of moral universalizability is tenable.

One of the notable features of Kantian principle of moral universalizability is that it is logically or excessively formal in the sense that it does not take account of individual situations, personal differences. It does not take into account facts that might be regarded as an excuse. In this regard Kantian principle of moral universalizability is inviolable and hence admits no exception. So the negation of this principle of universalizability would not be possible. The other important aspect of this principle of moral universalizability is that it would not be self-defeating. Since the principle of moral universalizability rules out exception, there we do not find any counter case or moral dichotomy that can violate the principle under consideration. To say that a principle is universalizable, whether moral or non-moral, equally means to say that it ought to be applied or abided by everyone without exception. This is what Kant has conceived in his first formulation of his categorical imperative. When a moral principle is claimed to be universalizable by virtue of the fact that it should be abided by everyone, it then logically entails that the principle under consideration would not be self-defeating.

According to Kant universal morality is valid for all rational human beings. In this regard, Kant suggests an ultimate justification of morality, first, by rejecting the relevance of empirical content for universal moral principles and secondly, by affirming universal human reason as the source and authority of all moral principles. Fox says, “Kant formulates the supreme principle of morality, arriving at it what he takes to be purely *a priori* manner. By a categorical imperative....he means a moral command whose force is absolute, which applies equally to all men and in every actual or possible moral situation.”<sup>2</sup> In Kant’s own words it can be said that ‘we must admit that its (morality’s) law must be valid not merely for men, but for all rational creatures generally, not, merely under certain contingent conditions or with exceptions, but with *absolute necessity*.”<sup>3</sup> According to Kant moral law applies to all rational beings and that all moral conceptions have their seat and origin completely apriori in the reason that they cannot be obtained by abstraction from any empirical or contingent sources. Although the so-called moral relativism was not developed at the time of Kant, but his own moral reflection

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<sup>1</sup> Paton, H.J.: *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Moral*, Harper & Row Publishers, New York, 1964, p.30.

<sup>2</sup> Fox, Marvin. :*Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, tr. Thomas K. Abbott, 1949, “Introduction”, pp.xiii-xiv

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p.26.

suggests that there is no place of moral relativism in ethics. If moral laws or norms are conditioned culturally or derived from experience, or history, or anthropology, they do not deserve to be categorized as moral. Kant tells us that a maxim of our action can only be treated moral law, if it conforms to a universal law and it is this conformity alone that makes the imperative as necessary.

The moral universalisability of Kant is the outcome of universal law which is applicable to or valid for every rational being without exceptions. According to Kant if the maxim which seeks to justify a particular exception were universalized, it would result in self-contradiction. For example, breaking a promise is a case in point. Kant therefore wishes to equate universality with necessity and absoluteness. The latter, however, is based on Kant's apriori conceptions of morality as obedience to moral law, and of moral laws as an expression of universal human reason. The universality and necessity of moral law, Kant contends, presupposes and implies the autonomy of will as determined by pure reason and the dignity of moral agent. This would again reflect at length that the foundation of categorical imperatives actually hinges on the axiomatic truth that "rational nature exists as an end in itself" Thus, the second formulation of the categorical imperative which commands to treat humanity in every person as an end in itself, and never as a means.<sup>4</sup> According to Kant the will of every rational being is a 'universal legislative will' which in turn is determined by universal reason. Autonomy or freedom is the property of all rational beings and reason and freedom are equated, together characterizing the moral agent. For Kant reason is in some sense transcendental and human will shares in that transcendental nature.

It seems clear to us that Kant deliberates a rational approach in establishing his theory of moral universalizability. In fact it has been supported by a large numbers of ethical thinkers that a morality would not be worth being called one unless it is willing to be put to rational tests and to provide a rational justification for its principles and standards. Kant himself asserted that our moral principles have their source in reason which is both universal and transcendental. The rational categorical imperative, Kant maintains, is the source of the maxims of our actions. We think, following Kant, that the conception of moral imperative as categorical and of reason as universal and transcendental gives rise to the surest foundation to universal morality. In fact, Kant's own finding of morality on universal reason as shared by all persons could provide the greatest ground or foundation for any assertion of universal morality. In this regard the comment of Thomas is particularly relevant. Thomas says, "In appealing to the reason which Kant thought to be universally the same in all men, we transcend the limitations of particular societies and cultures, and we free ourselves from any considerations of individual difference among men.....For to consider difference among men and cultures would mean to restrict morality to a realistic or even an individualistic subjectivistic foundation. The good would then differ from person to person, and society to society. If on the other hand, we are able to ground the morality in reason alone, then we have achieved the foundations of a universal morality, whose basic principles, like the rules of logic and mathematics, are the same for all men, in all places and for all times."<sup>5</sup> It is

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p.46.

<sup>5</sup> Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals*, 1984, trans., Thomas K. Abbott, Introduction, pp.ix-x

further contended that since the maxims of our actions can be justified on the basis of the categorical imperative, the latter, being a rational principle, does not require another principle to justify. That means a rational principle is self-validating and it immensely assists us to avoid infinite regress in moral reasoning. Thomas says, “A rational principle carries its own obligatory force for all rational creatures. When for example, a man recognizes the validity of a conclusion, he is no longer denies its logical claims. It forces itself upon him, and he cannot escape it. “In precisely similar fashion the rational moral principle is self-validating, and carries his own binding force. To a rational creature its obligatory character becomes immediately evident...”<sup>6</sup>

As far as the Kantian principle of moral universalizability is concerned, there we find two versions of it; namely, maxim version or maxim oriented universalizability and will version or will oriented universalizability. A maxim is said to be universalizable if it would be practiced by everyone without exception. On the contrary, a certain maxim is universalizable if the moral agent can consistently *will* that the maxim under consideration is practiced by everyone in their dealings with each other. The will version of moral universalizability, so to speak, would be the guiding force of designating a certain maxim to be universalizable. It is the will of the moral agent that designates a certain maxim to be universalizable. However, this does not make sense to say that a consistently willable maxim has been a universal practice. The term universal practice may be interpreted in two ways. In one sense it would mean that everyone has the right to act on that maxim and in other sense it would mean that everyone exercising that right. To say that a maxim is consistently willable towards universal practice is to say that everyone has the right to act on that maxim. Here the question of one’s ability of doing that act simply does not arise. Accordingly, we can standardize the principle of moral universalizability as conceived by Kant like this: A maxim is thought to be universalizable if everyone has the right to act on that maxim irrespective of anyone’s doing or having the capacity of doing the type of action required by the maxim in question. In this sense Kantian principle of moral universalizability at times designated as absolute.

So far we are involving ourselves in discussing that the maxim of an act is willable as a universal law. Does it make sense to say that the maxim of an action is different from the action itself? Kant elsewhere mixes up the maxim of an action with the action itself. Kant says, “The rule of the judgment according to the laws of pure practical reason is this: asks yourself whether, if the action you propose were to take place by the law of the system of nature of which you were yourself a part, you could regard it as possible by your own will. Everyone does, in fact, decide by this rule whether actions are morally good or evil. Thus, people say: If everyone permitted to deceive when he thought it to his advantage; or thought himself justified in shortening his life as soon as he was thoroughly weary of it or looked with perfect indifference on the necessity of other...”<sup>7</sup> The above passage clearly indicates that Kant did not make any significant distinction between the maxim of an action and the action itself. Arguably, there we do not find any significant distinction between “If everyone acted in that way...” and “If everyone acted on that maxim...” In fact it makes no difference in the application of the principle of

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* p. 98.

<sup>7</sup> Kant: *Practical Reason*, p.192.

moral universalizability. The question then is: if there underlies no significant distinction between ‘the maxims of an action’ and ‘the action itself’, then what would be the justification of the introduction of the term ‘maxim’ in Kantian principle of moral universalizability? Of course, the introduction of maxim in the principle of moral universalizability has certain edge. It guides us that the principle of moral universalizability can be used not simply as a test of maxims or rules of actions, but also as a test of maxims or rules of actions. Although it is partially true to say that we do not always adopt a policy in advance and thus do not always act on rules that we make for ourselves, nevertheless we at times rules of action whether we act on them or not. For example someone might undertake the maxim always to be polite to people or someone else might resolve to speak the truth always. There can be no doubt that people very often prefer to undertake such maxim for guiding their future. The logical force of the principle of moral universalizability can be used to determine not simply whether a particular action, which may or may not be acted with someone’s self-imposed rule, is right or wrong, but also whether such maxims are right or wrong in context to all moral agents. It aims at to determine what would happen if everyone in certain circumstances decided to act on such a maxim.

## II

### **Moral Standardization of the principle of moral universalizability:**

So far we have discussed the very meaning of the term of moral universalizability. In this section let us examine in what sense Kantian principle of moral universalizability could be standardized. Kant himself explicates his principle of moral universalizability by citing the example of false or lying promise. According to Kant to make a false promise is to make a promise without the intention of keeping it. There is no question of doubt that the person who makes a false promise is very much aware at the time of promising that he will not keep it. On the contrary, the person who makes a true promise is equally very much conscious at least at the time of his promising that he will keep it. It is, therefore, an integral part of the meaning of a promise that one who promises to do something intends to do what he has promised to do. This is all about the meaning of promising. This does not, however, makes sense to say that it would not be impossible to make a promise without the intention of keeping it, nor does it mean to say that every promise must be promised to be made honestly. However, what Kant wishes to suggest is that there always underlies a general assumption that promises are made honestly, otherwise the very meaning of promise would be vitiated. This is needed simply because of the fact that if we could not ordinarily assume that a promise that was made to us was made with the intention of keeping it, then ‘there could properly be no promise at all.’ Accordingly, it could not be willed to be a universal law that everyone may make any promise he pleases with the intention not to keep it, for such a law would make promising and the very purpose of promising itself impossible. When a promise was made, it would generally be assumed that the promise was made honestly and that is why it would presume that the promise ought to be kept. If anyone were to break any promise he pleases, i.e. if everyone tends to break his own promises whenever he feels, then this would make promising and the very purpose of promising itself impossible. In such a case it would not be willed to be a universal law that everyone may break a promise anytime he pleases, and one who wishes to do could not be willing to have anyone else do the same. The reason is that if everyone else did the same, it would not be possible to

make any promise at all. The reason is very simple. Every promise requires at least two parties, the person who promises and the person to whom it has been promised. That means it is a transaction involving two parties and one could not be willing to have other people break their promises to him. One who wishes to break any promise does not consider promises as binding on him. Arguably, if promises are not binding on them it means to say that promises are binding on no one and this is self-contradictory.

The example of false promise as discussed above clearly indicates in what sense Kant understands his principle of moral universalizability. Kant tries to show in what sense the negation of the principle of moral universalizability involves into a self-contradiction. Since the moral principle as adopted by Kant is absolute in nature, it rules out any sort of violation, moral dichotomy and moral contradiction. It is context free. Elsewhere in the *Groundwork* Kant wishes to claim that there are certain ends that every rational person, by virtue of his rationality, would necessarily 'will', certain purpose that every rational being necessarily has. Kant himself gives importance on individual rationality as he senses that individual rationality would play the all important role in fulfilling the motto of moral universalizability. Here lies the relevance of coherence kind of twines between *freedom and responsibility*. In fact individual freedom and individual responsibility are the two important keys of understanding Kantian form of moral universalizability. It is important to mention here that there is a general perception which states that freedom and responsibility are two opposite terms that can not be co-related and the question of their coherence simply does not arise. But Kant thinks the other way round. For Kant individual responsibility and freedom are not apposite in nature. Every individual must be an autonomous moral agent; otherwise the sanctity of his moral action would be vitiated. At the same time by virtue of possessing rationality, the individual being as moral agent, must be responsible for his action. So like Hare, Kantian ethics is the outcome of the byproduct of both freedom and responsibility. Kant elsewhere maintains that a person who does not wish to cultivate his talent may conceive that 'he cannot precisely will that this should become a universal law of nature. This, Kant conceives, is wrong on his part, for being a rational agent he should necessarily will that all his powers should be developed. So the concept of moral universalizability as conceived by Kant actually hinges on two important notions, such as, the impossibility of willing as such examined by citing the case of false promise and the notions of essential or rational ends. Although these two notions are thought to be the distinct interpretation of the principle of moral universalizability, but in reality they are the two sides of the same coin and one may be the subset of another. Whether the criterion of 'the impossibility of willing as such' is a sub-class of the idea of 'what rational being would necessarily will' would be a matter of dispute or not, but what we think of, of course, undisputedly is that when Kant conceives that it is impossible to will that a certain maxim should become a universal law, he thereby means that the consequences of everyone's acting on that maxim would be undesirable. This is how the principle of moral universalizability can be standardized.

We think that the concept of moral universalizability as comprehended by Kant can best be approached by Paton. According to Paton, Kantian principle of moral universalizability is the outcome of 'a systematic harmony of purpose'. Paton says, "If we wish to test the maxim of a proposed action we must ask whether, if universally adopted, it would further a systematic harmony of purposes in the individual and the

human race. Only if it would do this can we say that it is fit to be willed as a universal moral law... When we ask whether we can will a proposed maxim as if it were to become thereby a law of nature, we are asking whether a will which aimed at a systematic harmony of purposes in human nature could consistently will this particular maxim as a law of human nature.”<sup>8</sup> If we carefully go through the principle of moral universalizability of Kant, it would seem clear to us that Paton’s own observation of Kant deserves special significance even though Kant did not clearly state that this is what he had in mind. However, in his *Practical Reason*, Kant conceives that the idea of systematic harmony would seem to be involved in his principle of moral universalizability. Kant says, “Whereas in other cases a universal law of nature makes everything harmonious; here, on the contrary, if we attribute to the maxim the universality of a law, the extreme opposite of harmony will follow the greatest opposition, and the complete destruction of the maxim itself and its purpose.”<sup>9</sup> Even in his ‘Lectures on Ethics’ Kant echoes the same and says that if the will of moral agent is subordinated to the dictates of ends universally valid, it will be in harmony with all human purposes. And this is the way through which its inherent goodness can be found. Moral goodness, Kant conceives, consists of in the submission of our will to rules whereby all our voluntary actions are brought into a harmony which is universally valid. This indicates that the principle of moral universalizability requires the harmony of all free will. The principle of moral universalizability would be fulfilled if our harmonious actions are required by the moral rule or maxim. In this regard Kant makes a contrast between a moral maxim and a pragmatic maxim. A pragmatic maxim like a moral maxim makes our actions consistent with our own will; but unlike a moral maxim a pragmatic maxim will not bring then (actions) into harmony with the will of others. Kant therefore proclaims that ‘we must have rules to give our actions universal valid and to mould them into a general harmony. These rules are derived from the universal ends of mankind, and they are the moral rules.’<sup>10</sup>

### **Critical Observations:**

Kantian principle of moral universalizability as expressed by the sentence: “We must be able to will that a maxim of our action should become a universal law” often makes confusion and therefore difficult to apprehend. It has been out rightly criticized by many on the account that such principle lacks its foothold as far as its application is concerned. It is criticized by saying that Kantian principle of moral universalizability would be an empty formulation as it was based on ethical absolutism or ethical rigorism. Some other would like to say that Kantian theory of moral universalizability would definitely be wrong if not absurd. Here we particularly call upon the name of Field who says, “The notion of the test of universalization as a practical criterion has been unanimously rejected by the critics, and doubtless with good reason. The arguments against it are probably familiar to every student in the elementary stages of moral philosophy. We have all been introduced very early to the figure of the innocent man pursued by murderers whose life can be saved by a timely life. There is no need to work

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<sup>8</sup> Paton, H.J. *The Moral Law*, p.31.

<sup>9</sup> Kant: *Practical Reason*, p.137-38.

<sup>10</sup>Kant: *Lectures on Ethics*, p.17.

over this well-trodden ground again.”<sup>11</sup> It is observed that Kant’s way of connecting the principle with the particulars rule of morality seems to involve that each such rule or maxim should be treated as in itself universally. He conceives the universal principle of morality as a formal principle of self-consistency and thereby conceives each of the moral rules as an absolute law. The most vital question then is: how the formal principle can be used to determine the relation of different rules which express the different interest in the moral life? Is it not absurd to claim that an ethical maxim relating to individual action would be universalizable? Is the principle of moral universalizability subjectively objective? In fact, in standardizing moral law in the sense of absolute law, Kant himself misapplied his own principle of moral universalizability. Thus, it is claimed that the Kantian principle of moral universalizability is not tenable in the true moral sense.

It is further contended that the moral principle that ‘it is one’s duty to speak the truth, if it were taken singly and unconditionally, would make all societies impossible. In fact the moral standard can vary from society to society and different societies are guided by different moral standards. The question naturally crops up in mind is that how can it be possible that different societies having different moral standards follow the unconditional principle of veracity as echoed by Kant? The very meaning of the term ‘the unconditional principle of veracity’ is that truth in utterances that cannot be avoided in the formal duty of a man to everyone, however great the advantages that may arise from it to him or any other. Kant further conceives that although there is nothing wrong to tell a lie to a person who unjustly compels him to speak, but he (Kant), of course, does wrong to men in general in the most essential point of view. Kant says, “A lie ...always injures another; if not another individual, yet mankind generally, since it violates the source of justice.”<sup>12</sup> Kant inclines to say that although lying does not injure one particular individual, but still it is thought to be wrong as it would injure mankind in general. To tell a lie, even in the situation cited above, must hurt mankind generally, because it would be wrong to tell a lie. A lie would remain as a lie in whatever situation one makes a lie as it would violate the source of justice. This again is question bagging as it would miss the point what has been raised above. In fact, what Kant has said above is not relevant to the principle of moral universalizability based on categorical imperative. Critics would like to say that instead of arguing that it would be wrong to lie in such a situation because it could not be willed to be a universal law that everyone do so, Kant contents himself with the assertions: “To be truthful (honest) in all declarations is therefore a sacred unconditional commands of reason, and not to be limited by any expediency ....”<sup>13</sup>

The duty of veracity, according to Kant, is an unconditional duty which must be maintained in all circumstances. In fact, the rule of veracity by its very nature rules out exceptions and any sort of violation of such rule would be self-contradictory. Having said this, what is mostly noted here is that the rule of veracity is the outcome of categorical imperative and it may not be relevant to the principle of moral universalizability. If the rule of veracity is taken into account, it has to be applied without exception in forfeiting the situation whatever it may be. Arguably, this is supposed to be wrong as ethical evaluation can not ignore the sort of situation or circumstances in which an action is

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<sup>11</sup> Field, G.C. ‘Kant’s First Moral Principle’ *Mind*, Vol.XLI, January, 1932, p.19.

<sup>12</sup> Abbott, p.262.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* p.363.

performed. We have noted that in formulating the principle of moral universalizability Kant has cited an example of false lying and thereby asserted that it would always wrong to make a promise which is not kept. Kant says, "I can indeed will a lie, but I can by no means will a universal law of lying; for such a law there could properly be no promise at all, since it would be futile to profess a will for future action to others who would not believe any profession or who, if they did so over hastily, would pay me back in like coin; and consequently my maxim, as soon as it was made universal law, would be bound to annual itself."<sup>14</sup> For Kant it would be self-contradictory to say that everyone has the right to make a false promise whenever he feels. It is the very meaning of the nature of promise, Kant conceives, that when one promises to do something he can generally be presumed to intend to do it. The phrase 'I promise' loses its very meaning if no one is keen to carry out his promise. All that Kant has intended to show that it is generally wrong without exception. When Kant proclaims that a lie is wrong or a false promise is wrong without exception, he thereby means to say that a false promise is wrong in every situation or circumstance whatever the circumstance or situation may be. This assertion of Kant is again question begging. It is always possible to imagine situations where everyone may make a false promise in those situations without making 'promising' and the very purpose of promising itself impossible. Quite contrary to Kant, it would be self-contradictory to maintain that lying is always wrong, because the reasons in terms of which the rule is established are the very same reasons which, in certain circumstances, would suffice to override it. For example, telling a lie owing to save an innocent person from harm is precisely of this type.

Let us explain this point by citing an example. Let us suppose that the person A is hiding in B's house which is known to B. The murderer arrives all in sudden in B's house along with C and asks B whether A is in his house or not. In this situation B has various options to answer the murderer. B may be answered to the murderer or may not be answered to the murderer truly. Further suppose that if B were turn down to answer then he (B) and C will be killed. If B can tell the truth that A hides in B's house, then A would be murdered. Finally, B can answered to the murdered by telling a lie in order to save the life of A, C and B himself. However, the moral question is: could it be willed to be a universal law that everyone should lie in the sort of situation just mentioned? Kant however would rule out such proposal. Instead of voicing such question, Kant simply proclaims the duty of veracity as 'an unconditional duty which holds in every circumstance'. We think what is stated above is very much from the perspective of situational ethics where the so-called ethical standard would be determined in terms of situation. Kantian ethics by no means is situational. Accordingly, it can be said that the objections rose against Kant in the above were not as much as effective as they appear to be.

Kant further conceives that it would always be wrong to lie even in a situation of the type described. In this regard, Kant has cited the principle of humanity or personality. Kant says, "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end." Applying this principle in the case of lying cited above Kant says, "The man who has in mind to make a false promise to others ...is intending to make use of

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p.48-49.

another man merely as a means to an end he does not share. For the man whom I seek to use for my own purposes by such a promise cannot precisely agree with my way of behaving to him, and so cannot himself share the end of the action."<sup>15</sup> Since the murderer could not possibly share the end of the action, nor possibly agree to have a lie told to him, it would therefore be wrong to lie to him. For Kant, to lie to someone is always, no matter what the purpose of lying it, to treat him merely as a means. Kant has vehemently said that one who tells a lie is not only treating the person lied to as a mere means, but is mistreating 'humanity in his own person'. This makes sense to say that by making a lie to a person, he is treating himself as a mere means. When a person considers himself as a mere means, it means that there underlies something defective about the so-called principle of personality. However, Kant elsewhere equates the principle of moral universalizability with the principle of personality.

It is further claimed that there are many actions condemned by Kant whose maxims can be universalized. Suicide, for example, is a case in point. It is our duty, Kant inclines to say, not to commit suicide. However, many would like to say that there is nothing self-contradictory about a prospective suicide willing that everyone else commit suicide. The categorical imperative—the cornerstone of the principle of moral universality—does not show suicide per se to be immoral. There is no reason, it is contended, why it cannot be willed to be a universal law that everyone may take his own life 'if its continuance threatens more evil than it promises pleasure', provided that in doing so one does not violate the rights of another. There is no reason why the universal adoption of this maxim would be self-defeating. For example, one's maxim in the case, it should be noted, is not simply to commit suicide, but to commit suicide if further life appears to be unbearable. We think what is relevant to this issue is to decide whether suicide is moral or immoral. If it is thought to be moral, what would be the evidence for this? Suicide, however, may be comprehended both as moral as well as immoral. When, for example, suicide involves an obligation to another, then it is said to be immoral and in this regard, it cannot be said to be universalizable. However, there are other cases in which no one's rights are violated in committing suicide. In such a case what ground is there for maintaining it to be wrong? By telling suicide as not wrong, we are, of course, not recommending suicide; rather do we propose to say that there are cases where suicide is not immoral, it is almost senseless to be presumed as wrong. Preserving one's life not as a means to an end but as an end in itself is the sole objective of every person and it is morally universalizable. In this regard, it can be said that attempt to make suicide is the outcome of unbalanced mind as it goes against the natural propensity of humans. However, one cannot rule out the greatest hedonism arising out of one's suicide. To commit a suicide by a freedom fighter in the true sense of the term is not only the act of greatest hedonism; it would equally be treated as an act of moral instance containing singularity. There is thus good reason to believe that the principle of moral universalizability has not been adequately sorted out. A principle is thought to be universalizable when everyone or merely everyone thinks it to be inviolable. Kantian principle of moral universalizability at times fails to deserve this rank.

Kant has been criticized by saying that his categorical imperative is empty as it has no content. Consequently, it fails to provide an supreme norm or standard for

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

morality. As Kant's ethics of the categorical imperative allows of no exception and is therefore said to be an absolutist and rigorous doctrine. The revival of virtue ethics would criticize Kant for neglecting the surroundings of our social life, the situation, the external factors or moral luck. Ethics without emotion, love, care compassion, friendship would be completely fruitless. By attributing his categorical imperative absolute, Kant seems to reject any possibility of exceptions to moral principles or imperatives. He inclines to say that the moral law and the maxims based on categorical imperatives are applicable to, or obligatory upon, every human being under all possible circumstances and in this process he rules out moral exceptions. For Kant there is no scope of moral exception or moral dilemma in morality guided by categorical imperatives.

M.G. Singer has argued that Kant has interpreted his categorical imperatives in such a rigid manner that leaves no scope for considerations of the special circumstances of particular situations. Singer contends that if lying can save a life of an innocent person, then there is nothing wrong with it. Exception, says Singer, must be granted even in cases of universal and uncontroversial moral imperatives. Singer further contends that Kant perhaps confuses the term 'categorical'. Singer conceives two senses of the term 'categorical' as in one sense it is opposed to hypothetical and in other sense it is unconditional, absolute and exceptionless. Singer believes that by confusing these two senses of the term categorical, he makes an easy transition from the first innocent meaning of the 'categorical' to the second meaning which is contestable. Kant ethical argument, Singer concludes, arguments can only prove that lying or making false promise is generally wrong, but not that it is unconditionally wrong or wrong in all circumstances without exception.<sup>16</sup>

We also observe interesting remarks even from Hare who has developed as well as modified Kantian ethical universalism. Hare agrees with Kant on the issues such as: (a) conceiving ethical assertions as imperatives; (b) asserting the essential universal character of all moral imperatives and (c) affirming freedom or autonomy of will as equally essential for the authenticity of ethical imperatives. However, Hare disagrees with Kant as unlike Kant; Hare does not elaborate ethical system on the foundations of his implicit metaphysical assumptions of the universal reason shared by all human being and the freedom or legislating power of the noumenal self. That means Kant's principle of moral universalism hinges on metaphysical foundation, while Hare's own account of moral universalism is contrary to that of Kant. Hare not only rejects and criticizes Kantian transcendentalism; he equally rejects Kantian absolutism and thereby accepts various possibilities of exception to a given moral law. Hare's own conclusion is that

Kantian principle of moral universalizability which stands with the principle that 'we must be able to will that a maxim of our action should become a universal law' has been vehemently criticized by Mill. Mill elsewhere remarks that Kant fails almost grotesquely to show that there would be any contradiction, any logical impossibility, in the adoption of all rational beings of the most outrageously immoral rules of conduct. All he shows, Mill opines, is that the consequences of their universal adoption would be such as no one would chose to incur. For Mill a rule even of utter selfishness could not possibly be adopted by all rational beings that- there is any insuperable obstacle in the nature of things to its adoption -cannot even be possibly maintained. Therefore to give

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p.229.

any meaning to Kant's principle, Mill opines, the sense put upon it must be, that we ought to shape our conduct by a rule which all rational beings might adopt with benefit to their collective interest.<sup>17</sup>

Hegel's criticism against Kant is even more forceful than Mill. Hegel says, "The proposition: "Act as if the maxim of this action could be laid down as a universal principle", would be admirable if we already had determinate principles of conduct. That is to say, to demand of a principle that it shall be able to serve in addition as a determinant of universal legislation is to presuppose that it already possesses content. Given the content, then of course, the application of the principle would be a simple matter. In Kant's sense, however, this principle itself is still not available and his criterion of non-contradiction is productive of nothing, since where there is nothing, there can be no-contradiction either..."<sup>18</sup> What Hegel wants to say above is that the Kantian principle of moral universalizability as guided by categorical imperative is itself a determinate principle of conduct already possesses a content. Accordingly, it is supposed to be applied in a vacuum with the possible exception of itself. Thus, Hegel's charges against Kant recall the common objection based on the slogan that 'Kantian ethics is an empty formalism'. To act in a certain way in certain circumstances in order to achieve a certain purpose, we already have a determinate principle of conduct something that already possesses a content to which the principle of moral universalizability as the outcome of categorical imperative can be applied. The ground reality is that although we have been given the content, but unfortunately the application of the principle is not always a simple matter.

Hegel further appears to conceive that if everyone stole, whenever and whatever he pleased, there would be no such thing as property and therefore the very purpose of stealing as such would be made impossible. This is exactly what Hegel means by his reference to 'the absence of property'. Hegel's own perception, we think, in somehow or other, has a simile with Wittgenstein's remarks that the principles of tautology and self-contradictory say nothing and therefore they are empty formalism. Kant, however, never says that 'the absence of property contains in itself' a contradiction. Neither Kant opines that the existence of property is not a logical necessity, nor even does he mean that it is a contradiction to commit theft or murder. Rather Kant's point is relatively simple one which is perhaps why the profundities of Hegel are so far from the mark. It could not be willed to be a universal law that everyone could steal whenever he wished to, for if everyone stole whenever he wished to, there would be no property and hence nothing to steal. Thus, stealing presupposes that there is such a thing as property-something to be stolen- and this presupposes some measure of stability in society. When someone wishes to steal something he thereby wishes to keep it as his property, but if everyone were to act in such a way, no one would be able to keep anything as his property, and hence there would in effect be no such thing as property. To put in another way: if everyone were to act in this way, no one would be able to do. Hence not everyone has the right to act in this way. Since not everyone has the right to steal, stealing as such is wrong. It recalls the generalization principle as echoed by Singer: what is right for one person must be right for every similar person in similar circumstances. Therefore, the conclusion 'no one has

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<sup>17</sup> See Mill *Utilitarianism*, Everyman's Library ed. New York, 1910, p.4

<sup>18</sup> Hegel: *The Philosophy of Right*, trans., T. M. Knox, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1942, p.90.

the right to steal' is understood as 'no one has the right to steal without a reason or justification'. The very fact is that, at least we think, Kant in establishing his principle of moral universalizability conclusively nullified or boiled down the situation or circumstance in which the action, if any, is performed. However, if the circumstances of the act are such that everyone could steal in those circumstances, then his principle of moral universalizability may perhaps be in applicable.

Many would like to criticize Kant by saying that Kantian principle of moral universalizability fails to overcome egoism. Sidgwick himself substantiates this argument against Kant. He goes on to say that we can certainly conceive that a man in whom the spirit of independence and the distaste for incurring obligations would be so strong that he would choose to endure any privations rather than receive aid from others. Even granting that, Sidgwick opines, everyone, in the actual amount of distress, must necessarily wish for the assistance of others; still a strong man, after balancing the chances of life, may easily think that he and such as he have more to gain, on the whole, by the general adoption of the egoistic maxim. Benevolence brings more trouble than profit. The difficulty is here in the reference to benevolence. The obligation to help others in need of help is not a matter of benevolence. Kant perhaps thought of it in this way. Benevolence-the doing of good to others-does beyond what one can normally be required to do. This is not to say that it must be wrong, but rather to say that it is not mandatory. Helping other in need of help is mandatory if one is in a position to do so. Undoubtedly, an egoist may easily think that he and such as he has more to gain by the adoptions of the egoistic maxim and in that sense he may be right. This is, however, not to say it is moral. The egoistic maxim is the maxims not to help others when one is not in need of help one without receiving some tangible return. One can act on this maxim, but one who does so is immoral. For no one could be willing to have it adopted by others at his expense. Thus, no one could will it to be a universal law that everyone can act on it. If an egoistic is somehow interested of others only in so far as it is conducive to his own, then he is certainly the last person in the world who could will egoism to be a universal law.

We think what is said above is based on subtle confusion, because Kant has never said that the relation of helping is symmetrical. He has never said that the reason why I ought to help those in need of help is that if I do not help them, they will refuse to help me when I am in need of help. He never believes that the consequence of my refusal to help others will be that they will refuse to help me and this is the only moral reason for which one has prompted to help others. Instead of that Kant rather thinks what will actually happen if everyone adopts this maxim, and not to what will happen if I do. Kant's principle therefore involves an appeal to what one could be willing to have happen. The appeal in the moral argument is not to the importance of so acting, but to its unfairness. Again by recalling false promise or lying, we can say that it is not at all true that if we should refrain from telling lies only because of universalized lying would defect itself, that would be the same as saying, "Don't be a fool, it does not pay."<sup>19</sup> Truly speaking the purpose of lying would be defeated if everyone were to lie. However, this does not mean that a particular lie must be self-defeating or that 'does not pay'. It would be absurd to assume that if one person adopts a policy of lying, this will cause

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<sup>19</sup> Teale, A. E. *Kantian Ethics*, London, Oxford University Press, 1951, p.106

everyone to do, yet it is only on such an assumption that such an inference could be made.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES ABOUT VOLUNTARY EUTHANASIA**

JYOTISH CHANDRA BASAK

Euthanasia is a highly emotive and contentious issue, giving rise to a great deal of debate. In spite of its frequent discussion in public and professional media, there appears to be a lack of clarity about the concepts and definitions used in the debate. The ethical focus of the euthanasia debate concerns the moral legitimacy of voluntary euthanasia.

An effort to trace the origin of the controversy takes us back to Greek period. In ancient Greece we find Pythagoras, Plato and Aristotle are engaged in discussing the issue. Right from that time till presently thinkers devote considerable time in discussing this vexing issue. The rapid advancement of medical science along with the advent of sophisticated technology has made the issue more complicated.

The term 'euthanasia' refers to a manner of dying and particularly means a way of easy and good death. The term used in the sense at present time and the term as was used in the past, mainly in ancient Greece, varies in scope as the later was broader than the present one. The modern discussions restrict the concept to discussions of mercifully ending the life of a hopelessly suffering or defective patient. But the Greeks sometimes employed the term to describe the spiritual state of the dying person at the impending approach of death. There the meaning of the term was not anchored in medical context alone, though some of these contexts were also covered by it.

For the Greeks euthanasia did not necessarily imply a means or method of causing or hastening death. However, when quick-acting and relatively painless drugs such as hemlock were developed by the Greeks in the fifth century B. C., which allowed the individual to quit life in an efficient and bloodless manner, the linguistic result was that these forms of suicide were sometimes described as instances of euthanasia. But, even then, this ascription primarily involved a favourable appraisal of the subject's state of mind, not the means by which death came. Hence, on the whole, there were no rigidly followed rules which fixed the application of the term euthanasia to contexts involving terminal illness or suicide alone, even though these situations could be properly referred to in selected cases.

Thus it becomes evident that the term 'euthanasia' enjoyed in ancient Greece a broader scope in comparison to the narrower contemporary English usage of the term. Voluntary euthanasia is characteristically defined to mean that with the *prior consent of the patient*, either the doctor or someone else may bring about a relatively quick and painless death to one who is judged on medical grounds to be the victim of an untreatable, painful terminal illness or disability. This definition captures two allied meanings which wed to its older Greek ancestor:

1. Voluntary euthanasia normally connotes a genuine human concern for the *psychological state of mind* of the suffering patient for whom life has apparently become an intolerable burden; and

2. It crucially links the *moral appraisal* of the conduct of the patient and those supplying his medical services to the precondition that *the patient is free to make a reasoned decision* regarding the option to hasten or not to hasten his own death.

It should be borne in mind that Greek did not admit in voluntary euthanasia as part of their general concept of euthanasia at all. If someone's life was terminated without his consent, normally this was *prima facie* a case of homicide. Such cases did not qualify as euthanasia principally because for adults, at least, it was popularly held that those who involuntarily died at the hands of others did not die well. Typically, they were not thought to have experienced good deaths.

An obvious exception to all this was infanticide. In Hellenistic culture the victim of infanticide was treated in a peculiar way - it claimed that the infant was not really a human being until he was first fed. Since infants were usually killed before they were fed, popular moral condemnation did not normally attach to this deed. As for those infants who were fed, though they were later involuntarily killed as an act of mercy or prudence owing to their chronic and painful ill-health, their deaths were customarily deemed tragic and pitiable. Such deaths were not well considered good or easy deaths either for the victims or for the parents. Therefore, infanticide, which by its very nature involuntary since the infant lacks the verbal skills by which to give or withhold consent, was not customarily included in the Greek concept of euthanasia.

While talking about voluntary euthanasia, the current tendency is to freight the concept heavily with its moral, appraising sense. But in so doing, we miss the dominant ancient connotation of this term which *primarily* involved a psychological appraisal, and only secondarily a moral one. In order to illustrate the subtle difference let us put the two questions on after another.

- Pivotal ancient question regarding euthanasia: Did the subject voluntarily meet death with peace of mind and minimal pain?
- The looming contemporary question involving euthanasia is: Is euthanasia under any conditions morally justifiable?

If we juxtapose above two questions, it becomes evident that Greek thinkers put premium on psychological appraisal of the apparent stage of the subject's mind during his final conscious days and hours; whereas the contemporary thinkers emphasized on moral issues. However, there are no reasons to think that Greeks were oblivious to the moral challenge that voluntary euthanasia posed. They did not ignore the task of trying to furnish a coherent ethical defence of the practice. It is doubtless true that a psychological appraisal is not readily separable from the allied moral appraisal of whether the subject evinced sound thinking, on moral or other grounds, for choosing to withdraw from life. Hence the Greek thinking of euthanasia was indeed capable of bearing two senses, both psychological and moral, and in everyday discourse these two senses were mingled together.

What we now call voluntary euthanasia was construed by the Greeks and Romans as one possible type of suicide. The phrase bears a definite family resemblance to the Latin expression for suicide, *mors voluntaria*, which also stressed the voluntary nature of such dying. English word 'suicide', which literally means self-killing, lays stress on the peculiar fact that oneself is the object of one's killing. Greek and Roman expressions for suicide tended to emphasize suicide as a mode of death. Margolis has

argued that, given the culturally variable character of the ascription of suicide, there can be no truly value-neutral concept of suicide.<sup>1</sup>

Among the various divisions of euthanasia done on the basis of different principles voluntary euthanasia is only one. It (Voluntary euthanasia) means, as we have already seen, with the prior consent of the patient, either the patient or someone else may bring about a relatively quick and painless death to one who is judged on medical grounds to be victim of an untreatable, painful terminal illness or disability. Pythagorean opposed euthanasia on the basis of a moral principle which was predominantly religious. The religious principle was that it was a direct violation of an individual's higher duty to God to behave in such a way as to prematurely end his or another's life. The entire argument presupposes the crucial premises that:

- God exists.
- Man's highest moral duty is always to obey the commands of God.
- One of these divine commands unconditionally bars the individual from taking early leave from his embodied, earthly existence.

In *Republic* we find Plato supporting voluntary euthanasia for adults. He supported it in case of incurably debilitating disablement and incurably debilitating disease. By extension, involuntary euthanasia may also here be understood to be justified on similar grounds for incurably defective younger children. His grounds for supporting euthanasia appear to be primarily utilitarian and not religious in nature. In his ideal society, Plato envisions the welfare of the state as a whole to hold a higher worth than the welfare of any individual. Duties to the state here override duties to self and to family. Aristotle disagreed with Plato on his stand on euthanasia. In *Nicomachean Ethics* we find his unqualified opposition to suicide. We also find his opposition to the proposition that it is morally acceptable for a person suffering from an incurable disease or disability to quit life. His opposition is expressed in the context of his broader examination of the question of whether a person can be properly said to treat himself unjustly.

Stoics view death as nothing to fear. Death was viewed as the natural and inevitable resolution of human life itself. If it is so, the question then is: Did the stoic held euthanasia a rational act? Moreover, did they hold that each person possessed what amounts to a moral right to end his own life? Seneca's writings suggest affirmative answers to both these queries. But it has been done on strict qualifications. Stoic founder Zeno committed suicide in his old age prompted by the agonizing pain of a foot injury. When a person carries out an act of euthanasia, he brings about the death of another person because he believes the latter's present existence is so bad that he would be better off dead, or believes that unless he intervenes and ends his life, it will become so bad that he would be better off dead. The motive of the person who commits an act of euthanasia is to benefit the one whose death is brought about.

Debate about the morality and legality of voluntary euthanasia has been, for the most part, a phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century and continued in the twenty first century. In the sixteenth century, Thomas More, in describing a utopian community, envisaged such a community as one that would facilitate the death of those

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<sup>1</sup> *Ethical Issues in Death and Dying*, (Ed. Beauchamp, Tom L. and Perlin Seymour, 1978); Prentice Hall, New Jersey, pp.92-7.

whose lives had become burdensome as a result of ‘torturing and lingering pain’. But it has only been in the last hundred years that there have been concerted efforts to make legal provision for voluntary euthanasia. Until quite recently, there had been no success in obtaining such legal provision (though assisted suicide has been legally tolerated in some countries for many years).

Those who are in favour of voluntary euthanasia set out certain conditions for making it legally permissible. The conditions are stated with some care so as to give focus to the moral debate about legalization. There is also positive moral case underpinning the push to make voluntary euthanasia legally permissible. We also find morally grounded objections that have been advanced by those who opposed to the legalization of voluntary euthanasia. The following necessary conditions are given for admitting voluntary euthanasia. Advocates of voluntary euthanasia contend that if a person

- a. is suffering from a terminal illness;
- b. is unlikely to benefit from the discovery of a cure for that illness during what remains of his/her life expectancy;
- c. is, as a direct result of the illness, either suffering intolerable pain, or only has available a life that is unacceptably burdensome;
- d. has an enduring, voluntary and competent wish to die; and
- e. is unable without assistance to commit suicide,

then there should be legal and medical provision to enable him/her to be allowed to die or assisted to die.

The central ethical argument for voluntary euthanasia - that respect for persons demands respect for their *autonomous choices* as long as those choices do not result in harm to others - is directly connected with the issue of competence because autonomy presupposes competence. People have an interest in making important decisions about their lives in accordance with their own conception of how they want their lives to go. In exercising autonomy or self-determination, people take responsibility for their lives; since dying is a part of life, choices about the manner of their dying and the timing of their death are, for many people, part of what is involved in taking responsibility for their lives. Many people are concerned about what the last phase of their lives will be like, not merely because of fears that their dying might involve them in great suffering, but also because of the desire to retain their *dignity* and as much control over their lives as possible during this phase.

### **Should Doctors Have A Dual Role - Preserving Life And Assisting Death?**

Professional medical organizations maintain the position that medical assistance in dying conflicts with the basic role of doctors. It is assumed that if we legalize assisted suicide we need a doctor to do it. One day, in some brave new world, hope for by some and dreaded by others, assisted suicide may come to be regarded as the right of every citizen purely on the grounds of autonomy. Until then doctors looking after a patient—and presumably at least one independent doctor—will always be needed to advice on at least three points.

- Whether every reasonable option for good care and relief of symptoms has been carefully considered.

- The likely course of events if life is allowed to continue.
- The patient's mental state, in particular whether there is any evidence of a treatable depression.

In order to obviate the above difficulty it has sometimes been suggested that the state could provide - preferably not anywhere where patients are being cared for, but either in the patient's own home or in some special state euthanasia unit - whichever way of assisted suicide it judges to be the most humane - perhaps just the touch of a switch by the patient to emphasize total autonomy, or perhaps in some other way.

It is sometimes argued that legalization of euthanasia may increase openness in the doctor-patient relationship. It will create openness about care at the end of patients' lives, enabling a doctor to improve skills in providing supportive care to dying patients. Illegality, data suggest, constrains communication between patient and doctor. The illegality of euthanasia prompted some incurably ill patients to make their own arrangements to hasten their death rather than seek assistance from health professionals. Illegality creates a gulf between and separates interested patients and willing doctors, restricting communication about treatment in the final stages. The law not only denies patients the option of euthanasia, but also restricts discussion between doctor and patient about when to withhold treatment to prolong life, which is increasingly becoming an option. It is said that if higher status is attached to the 'living will' and greater use made of it to facilitate communication between doctor and patient, the gap could be bridged.

A society moving towards an open approach to assisted dying should carefully identify tasks to assign exclusively to medical doctors, and distinguish those possibly better performed by other professionals. The medical profession has traditionally maintained a clear distance from euthanasia and assisted suicide. However, since there is active debate in many countries and even enacted legislation in some countries, it has become increasingly difficult to justify such distances by simply referring to the law or to ethical arguments against any assistance in dying. It does not make it any easier for doctors that discussions in the media, courts, and legislatures often assume assistance in dying to be exclusively a physician's task. Legal regulations and medical ethical positions in regard to euthanasia, an empirical study suggest, are highly country specific. The country is the most important predictor of doctors' attitudes and practices in the field of end-of-life.

There are some medical academies which point out the basic incompatibility of assisted dying with the role of doctor. Faced with the increasing public acceptance of assisted dying, corresponding attempts to change the penal code, and actual changes of the law, the medical profession mostly strives to prevent or to slow down the process. What is actually happening may be described as a power struggle: society wants the option of physician-assisted death to be available, while the overwhelming majority of medical organizations continue to view such assistance as incompatible with their codes of professional ethics. Even so, there is no unanimity within the medical profession. Those specialists who are most likely to be entrusted with assisting in death, e.g. oncologists, palliative care doctors, are those who oppose legalization of assisted dying most strongly. The conflict is essentially between those who want the option of assisted dying to be available, and those who would be responsible for implementing it. A group of legal experts proposed that doctors assisting patients in suicide should neither be

prosecuted under criminal law nor censured by medical professional ethics. Some medical academy opined that assistance in suicide is not a part of a doctor's activity but assistance in suicide in individual cases has to be respected as the doctor's personal decision.

Open regulations of assisted dying brings doctors into a basic conflict: on the one hand, many doctors do not wish to have anything to do with a practice that they regard as incompatible with professional ethics; on the other hand, once opening up seems inevitable, they want to introduce safeguards they deem necessary. The more they get involved in these discussions, the more they are drawn, though unwillingly, into the role of experts in a field that extends far beyond medicine. Utilization of exclusive experts becomes pertinent exactly here.

It has been suggested that open regulation of assisted dying could also be implemented by establishing a suicide service outside clinical care, run by a designated interdisciplinary team. In this model assistance in dying would be restricted to these specialized services rather than to any one profession. It could ensure competent assessment of the person wanting to die according to standard regulations agreed on by the public. Any role conflict for clinicians faced with a patient's request for assistance in dying would thereby be avoided, as their role would be clearly confined to openly discussing the situation, indicating possible treatment or palliative care options, and offering further support in this respect.

If our society is willing to make assisted death an available option, the responsibility for such decisions must be spread as widely as possible, i. e., borne by the society as a whole. It is not enough that the law and ethical guidelines lay down limits for doctors who assist in dying and that observance of these conditions is monitored by lawyers and ethicists. Religious leaders (spiritual advisors), nurses, pharmacists, social workers be roped in when a particular difficult decision has to be taken. Whether or not a state-run-service for assisted dying is most appropriate instrument is another moot point, as this might be too bureaucratic and impersonal to meet the expectations and needs of the individuals wanting to die and their families. What doctors can do at this stage is to identify where medical expertise is essential in this field and to define those questions to which medical knowledge provides no answer.

Against this background of increasing public acceptance of assisted dying, the fundamental question of the appropriate role of doctors in an area that goes beyond medicine remains contentious. A society striving for an open approach towards assisted dying should carefully identify the tasks that should be assigned exclusively to medical doctors and separate out those that might be better performed by other professions.

We find instances where doctors argue against euthanasia. Peter Ravenscroft, a medical Professor in palliative care (of Australia), argues that when people suffers from an incurable illness, they should be given palliative care. Palliative care tries to improve the quality of a person's life, even the very last part of their life, without brining death. He says: 'I value sitting with dying patients or holding their hands. It reminds me that life is a great mystery and we all share characteristics of being human. We take part in all of life, including dying, but we are not masters of it.' If euthanasia is legalized, it may be easier to choose death instead of continuing to look for a better treatment. Ravenscroft's another argument for not making euthanasia legal is that people can be persuaded to

choose euthanasia when they do not really want to. It is unlikely that legal safeguards or guidelines can stop this from happening.

The oath of Hippocrates, from where the growth of medical ethics began, states: 'I will give no deadly medicine to anyone, even if asked'. On the other hand, some modern medical associations recommend preparing patients to use the mechanisms of medical decision-making that support the patients' exercise of control over end-of-life decisions. These mechanisms include

- Living wills
- Durable powers of attorney
- Advance directives

If we juxtapose the above two, it is found that medical associations have thus gone on record to reject euthanasia and physician assisted suicide as being incompatible with the nature and purpose of the healing arts. The prospect of the availability of euthanasia raises numerous concerns. Will euthanasia and physician assisted suicide prevent us from developing and advancing alternative methods of end-of-life care? Will euthanasia and physician assisted suicide become the tools of economic efficiency in an era of increasing health-care cost containment. And, will euthanasia and physician assisted suicide promote death as the solution to health and societal problems other than terminal illness.

### **Normative Ethical Theories and Euthanasia:**

The controversy regarding the practice of euthanasia is essentially a controversy about ethics. The debate is a value debate among debaters who weigh values differently, who see the nature of the world and the place of humans in that world differently. The differences among the debaters can best be seen through an examination of value hierarchies. A value hierarchy is the manner in which a person orders his or her value system by ranking different values in order of importance. Such a value hierarchy was developed by Abraham Maslow, an American professor of psychology, in his book *Motivation and Personality*<sup>2</sup>. His hierarchy of needs attempts to explain various facets of human behaviour by showing how people can move up or down the hierarchy depending on which needs are met.

Proponents of euthanasia have a different value hierarchy than do the opponents. Doerflinger argues for a particular value hierarchy when he contends that life is the supreme good and that all other good must come only after life is secured<sup>3</sup>. His logic states that without life, no other value or good can exist, and hence it is a prerequisite for all other values. Proponents of euthanasia also believe in the value of life, but they do not place it as highly on their hierarchy. Instead a proponent of euthanasia might argue that individual rights are supreme value, or that quality of life is more important than the value of life itself. The logic here is that although life is clearly an important value, there may be times when life itself is not worth living. If a person has no individual rights, or if a person has a low quality of life, they may make the decision to end their life because it is no longer worth living, no longer a good life.

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<sup>2</sup> Maslow, Abraham; *Motivation and Personality*: NY: Harper, 1987.

<sup>3</sup> Doerflinger, R.: Assisted Suicide: pro-choice or anti-life? 1989, Hastings Center Report.

One of the main reasons for which the debate about euthanasia has been so hotly contested was that it challenged the value systems of people. The people who believe in individual rights and quality of life as the supreme value see their value hierarchy threatened by the power of the state. One way of examining values and ethics is to see if they are worthwhile is through the use of normative ethical theories. By examining a problem or particular policy through the lens of a normative ethical theory, we can determine if the system needs changing or if a particular policy option is an ethical one. There are several normative ethical theories that have been proposed by philosophers. Let us recount some of these.

**Ethical Egoism:** Ethical egoism is found in the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes. It operates from the general rule that if any action increases my own good, then it is right. Hobbes argues that we cannot help but act in our own self-interest, and therefore, such actions are ethical. Ethical egoism in the context of euthanasia would contend that if a person wants or does not want to end their life using euthanasia, the desire is motivated by a need for self-benefit, and is therefore an ethical action.

**Utilitarianism:** John Stuart Mill articulated utilitarianism. It operates from the general rule that if any action increases overall good, then it is right. The corollary to this is that if any proposed direct moral rule, when generally acted from, increases overall good, then it is a correct direct moral rule. In the context of euthanasia, we must examine the practice to determine if it increases the overall good in order to determine if it is ethical.

**Rights Theory:** Based on Kant and Locke, Jefferson and some others used rights theory as the basis for government. Rights were established in the constitution and assigned to the judiciary for their protection. Rights were conceived as natural, protected by law and not created by law. There are very few natural rights, and most of these are established negatively. Euthanasia proponents rely heavily on rights theory as justification for euthanasia.

These normative ethical theories can be used to illustrate the conflicts that surround the various actors involved when the problem of euthanasia considered. When a decision needs to be taken, there are several points where a decision can potentially occur. These points are where decision makers reside: the individual, the family, the physician, and the state. In each of these cases, there are normative ethical theories that can illustrate the value conflict which occurs at each level.

The normative ethical theories of ethical egoism and utilitarianism illustrate the value conflict and the ethical dilemma involved. Egoism may lead one to die as the individual may believe that based on their self-interest and to their personal benefit, it would be better to die. The individual may be experiencing a great deal of pain, loss of bodily functions, and face with the spending the remainder of their life as an invalid. On the other hand, egoism may lead one to want to live under conditions that might dictate otherwise. A person might dictate that all available medical technology ought to be brought to bear in the preservation of their life.

Seen from utilitarian perspective, a person may choose to live for the good of others. For the sake of loved ones and the pain they might feel because of death, or because of the premium that society places on life, a person may choose to go on living even though they might make an individual choice to die if such considerations did not exist. By the same token, a utilitarian perspective may lead to a person to choose death.

The pain and financial burdens that family members or society might have to endure could be so great that although the person might want to go on living, it would be in the best interest of the family or of society that the individual should choose to die.

The family might also experience an ethical dilemma that is also illustrated by the competing theories of ethical egoism and utilitarianism. The dilemma would be most relevant in the case of an incompetent individual who is unable to make their own decision whether to die. Egoism might lead the family to choose to keep the individual alive because they are unable to live with the knowledge that they pulled the plug on a loved one. They would be more at peace knowing that they had done all they could to keep the individual alive. Alternatively, egoism might entice the family to choose to allow the individual to die. They may conclude that the emotional and financial trauma on the family would be so intense that it would be in their interest to prevent medical treatment from continuing.

A utilitarian perspective may cause the family to keep an individual alive. They may decide that it is harmful to society to weaken the value of life, and that there is a possibility of saving life, in any condition, it should be done for the good of everyone. However, the same perspective may lead the family to conclude that the individual should be allowed to die. They may believe that society would be forced to bear the burden of an individual utilizing such expensive medical care, and that such resources might be better allocated if they were used on those who were not beyond hope.

The physician also faces an ethical dilemma. The universal imperative of the profession revolves around the Hippocratic Oath. Doctors have a duty to preserve life at all costs. Society commits physicians to preserve life. Since life is most precious commodity, nothing should be done to take it away. It is this universal imperative that generates arguments for the opposition of euthanasia which intimate that the practice would severely damage the ethical image of the profession. In conflict with the universal imperative stands the doctrine of patient autonomy and the rights of the patient. The physician has a duty to respect the wishes of the patient. If the patient is in a permanent vegetative state, and the individual or family has indicated a preference for death of that person, the doctor has a duty to respect those wishes.

Rights theory and patient autonomy have generated arguments regarding paternalism, and also have proponents to assert privacy and self-determination interests in the right to die.

At the state level, the value conflict can be illustrated by examining utilitarianism and rights theory. Rights theory contend that the state has a limited right to intrude on the affairs of the individual. Only in the face of a compelling state interest does the state have the right to limit individual rights to privacy and self-determination. In most cases, there is no compelling state interest when an individual decides to die. A compelling state interest can only exist if there is a significant threat to society, or the interest of a third party at stake. The state make utilitarian considerations that include the risk of physician abuse, the image of medical profession, the effect that such practices would have on the value accorded to life in society, the costs of keeping terminally ill patients alive, and the burden those patients place on social support systems. The state must balance all of these utilitarian considerations, and then must decide what power the state has in the face of individual rights.

From the above discussion it becomes clear that an analysis of normative ethical theories does not provide a clear answer to what should be done in the case of euthanasia. Normative ethical theories provide no basis for consistent decision making because there is no consensus of the good. Differences between individual value hierarchies and lack of agreement on what constitutes 'good' means that people can use normative ethical theories, but they provide no clear mechanism for determining which decision is the best. Further factors complicating the discussion on euthanasia are the power interests which attempt to control both the subject and the debate. Two of the most powerful professions involved in the debate is - the medical profession and the legal profession, as they have a significant stake in the outcome of the debate. Foucault's landmark study of the medical profession demonstrates how the medical profession has empowered itself through the development of a specific knowledge and concerning the body. It is this discursive formation about and knowledge of the body that has given the medical profession a privileged position of power in our society. Physicians have the power over issue of life and death in our society and they have used this power to shape the debate on euthanasia. The medical profession has a significant stake in this debate because they do not want to be seen by society as killers. They want to retain their image as healers. More importantly, they want the power to decide when the treatment of the patient should be terminated. The legal profession is in an analogous position to the medical profession. As a profession with a specialized knowledge and vocabulary concerning the legal system, the legal profession is in a similar position of power. If the legal community advocates the legalization of euthanasia, its power over this legal issue gives the profession an abnormally large voice in the debate.

R. Pirsig, an American philosopher, in order to examine the issue of euthanasia from both philosophical and practical standpoint examines the metaphysics of quality and the ethic of care<sup>3</sup>. Pirsig argues that the world is not composed of substance, subject and object, mind and matter; it is composed primarily of value. The value is the reality that brings the thought into mind. Value is not a subspecies of substance rather substance is a subspecies of value. When we reverse the containment process and define substance in terms of value, the mystery disappears: substance is a stable pattern of inorganic values. Using the terms quality, value and moral almost interchangeably, Pirsig says that quality and morality is the primary reality of the world and the world is primarily a moral order. He talks of two sorts of quality: static and dynamic quality. Dynamic quality is responsible for progress. It is the evolutionary force that has led to the explosion of life, the creation of cultures, cities, art and literature. Static quality is responsible for preservation. Once a dynamic advance has occurred, static quality is what prevents the slide back down the evolutionary spiral. Retention of adaptations such as clothing, fur, tools; and things like libraries, ritual and laws are examples of static quality or static pattern of value preserving the advances made by the dynamic quality.

Having divided the concept of quality into dynamic and static, Pirsig talks about four separate levels of value or quality. These he terms, in ascending order of level of evolution, inorganic quality, biological quality, social quality, and intellectual quality. Each level of quality has worth in its own right. Each higher level of quality depends on

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<sup>3</sup> Pirsig, R. : *Lila: An Enquiry into Morals*, 1991.

the lower levels of quality for existence, but each higher level of quality is also more valuable than its lower level. This evolutionary structure of the metaphysics of quality shows that there is not just one moral system rather there are many. In the metaphysics of quality there is the morality called the 'laws of nature' by which organic patterns of value triumph over chaos. There is a morality called the 'law of the jungle' where biology triumphs over the inorganic forces of starvation and death. Again, there is a morality where social patterns triumph over biology, 'the law'. And finally, there is an intellectual morality, which is still struggling with its attempts to control society.

The metaphysics of quality says that if moral judgments are essentially assertions of value and if value is the fundamental ground-stuff of the world, then moral judgments is the fundamental ground-stuff of the world. Because the metaphysics of quality takes such a fundamentally different view of the universe and because it claims to be able to easily resolve ethical dilemmas, it would be useful to use this new metaphysics to examine the intractable ethical problem of euthanasia. To determine which course of action is morally correct, Pirsig says the process is simple. One simply acts to preserve the highest form of evolutionary quality. Pirsig uses the following example to illustrate this principle: '... given a choice of two courses to follow and all other thing being equal, that choice which is more dynamic, i.e. at a higher level of evolution, is more moral...it is more moral for a doctor to kill a germ than to allow the germ to kill his patient...the patient has moral precedence because he is at a higher level of evolution.' In the course of euthanasia we can determine which courses of action are morally correct by examining the patterns of value that are associated with it.

This unique value of making value judgments allows us to move from a dualistic life/death, healing/killing framework toward a more logical and moral ethic of care. Such a move places the intellectual capacity of the individual in the center of the issue and moves the rule based approach out. This also displaces the power roles of the legal system and the medical establishment. When the intellectual capacity of the individual, and the dynamic quality which engenders it, is placed in the forefront, the legal system and the medical establishment are placed in their appropriate roles of protecting the right of the individual so long as the right of the individual does not harm the rights of others, and helping the individual carry our decisions regarding their own medical condition. The individual plays the role of actor, the legal system to the role of protector, and the medical establishment to the role of helper. The proper ethical choices are now made by the appropriate actors, and individuals in all parts of the system are empowered.

### **Slippery Slope:**

Slippery slope is the notion that a small steps today will inevitably lead to bad policies later on. When applied to the euthanasia debate, it claims that the acceptance of certain practices, e.g. voluntary euthanasia, will invariably lead to the acceptance or practice of concepts which are currently deemed unacceptable, such as non-voluntary or involuntary euthanasia. In order to prevent these undesirable practices from occurring, it is argued, we need to resist taking the first step. British bioethicist David Albert Jones makes a vigorous defense of a famous statement of the slippery slope from voluntary active euthanasia to nonvoluntary active euthanasia. John Keown is of the opinion that the slippery slope is a logical one which does not require empirical support. If death is a benefit, it will be regarded as inconsistent to deny it to people just because they cannot

request it. Dr. Jones argues: The validity of this logical slippery slope argument does not decide the issue of whether it is right or wise to legalize voluntary euthanasia. Faced with the valid conclusion that voluntary active euthanasia implies nonvoluntary active euthanasia: either to accept both together or to reject both together. "An argument is not like a bus where you can get off at any stop you like; rather, once you have accepted premises you have to follow it to the end of the line. If voluntary euthanasia were accepted as a legitimate form of medical assistance in dying, then it would also be acceptable for noncompetent patients. An advocate of legalizing Voluntary active euthanasia either must bite the bullet and also accept nonvoluntary active euthanasia or must concede that if nonvoluntary active euthanasia is regarded as too dangerous or unpalatable, then this is a valid and cogent reason for rejection of voluntary active euthanasia as well.



## IS *TARKA PRAMĀN* A OR AN ACCESSORY TO A *PRAMĀN* A? SOME OBSERVATIONS

NIRMAL KUMAR ROY

### I

The Naiyāyikas unanimously accept that *tarka* is not an independent instrument of knowledge; rather it is just a helping condition to it. That is why they are saying that *tarka* itself is not a *pramān* a but a promoter to a *pramān* a. But the *Mādhvas* raise strong objections against this view and maintain that, as a matter of fact, *tarka* itself is an independent means of knowledge i.e. a *pramān* a but not a helping condition to an independent instrument of cognition, i.e. a promoter to a *pramān* a. In this context it is worthy to point out that the fact that sometimes *tarka* does play the role of a helping condition to an independent organ of cognition can not be denied. But here the other *pramān* as are not exception to it. The other *pramān* as, such as *Anumāna* and *Śabda* also do the same. The *Nyāya* School, unlike Buddhism, believes in *pramān* a *sam* plava. Keeping the spirit of *pramān* a *sam* plava in view it can be maintained that sometimes one *pramān* a serves as a promoter to other *pramān* a. This view will be explained with suitable example in the course of our discussion. So, the fact that sometimes *tarka* plays the role of a promoter to a *pramān* a does not establish that *tarka* can not be an independent *pramān* a itself. The *Mādhvas* observe that *tarka* fulfils all the necessary as well as sufficient conditions for being an independent means of knowledge. Jayatirtha deals with this elaborately and beautifully in his two epoch-making works *Pramān* apaddhati and *Nyāyasudhā*.

Jayatirtha regards *tarka* as an independent means of knowledge and subsumes under inference. In the chapter of inference of *Pramān* apaddhati, he deals with the classification of inference. Here several ways of classification of inference have been suggested by him. One of them brings inference under two broad heads – (a) inference for establishing a conclusion (*sāadhanānumāna*) and (b) inference for refutation of the opponent's view (*dus* ānānumāna). The latter one has again be subdivided into two kinds, viz. (i) inference for proving the defect in the argument employed by the opponent (*dus* tipramitisādhana) and (ii) reasoning or *tarka*.<sup>1</sup> The first one is employed in proving the incompetency of the probans which is used to establish the probandum. And reasoning or *tarka*, the second one, is called in to refute the position of the opponent in the form of *reductio-ad-absurdum*. So, as far as our discussion is concerned we see that *Tarka* has been considered by Jayatirtha as a variety of inference for refutation of position of the opponent (*dus* an ānumānaviśes a). *Tarka* has been defined as an admission of an

undesirable contingency necessitated by the admission of false issue. To understand *tarka* as conceived by Jayatirtha, the observation of the commentator, Janardan Bhatta, is worthy to note. He maintains *tarka* as the enforced admission of a contingency as the condition and presupposition by the admission of a fact necessarily conditioned by the former, through the reason of the necessary concomitance between them. When 'A' is necessarily occurred by B, that is to say, A cannot be taken place without B, and then A is considered to be a necessary concomitant (*vyāpya*) and B as the determinant of the concomitance (*vyāpaka*). Here B, the determinant of concomitance (*vyāpaka*) is inferred on the ground of the determinate in concomitance (*vyāpya*). So, the meaning of Janardana's aforesaid comment stands thus: The admission of a determinate concomitant makes the admission of a determinant concomitant inevitable.<sup>2</sup> Janardana like Jayatirtha uses to think that *tarka*, in fact, is nothing but inference. And he proves his contention through inference in the following way:—"tarka is a species of inference, because it generates mediate cognition by virtue of necessary concomitance, in the same way in which the well known case of the inference of fire from smoke is taken place in terms of the necessary concomitance, held between smoke and fire".<sup>3</sup> *Tarka* has a great similarity with inference in its form and nature. Say for example, the ground of *tarka* which is hypothetically assumed stands for the probans of inference for both of them work on the basis of necessary concomitance. Besides, necessary concomitance is the foundation and nerve centre for both of the inference and *tarka*. So, it is quite proper and justified to consider *tarka* as an inference.

Jayatirtha thinks that some objections may be raised against his aforesaid view. So, he notes those possible objections and also replies to them from his own view point. One may observe that though *tarka* appears to be an inference but actually this is not the case. We think that *tarka* should be considered to be inference for it fulfils all the necessary conditions for being an inference. But if we ponder over the problem, we shall see that the fact is otherwise. Two conditions are taken to be necessary for an inference – (i) the probans is shown to stand in necessary concomitance with the probandum in major premise (*vyāpti*), and (ii) Probans is shown to be actually present in the subject in the minor premise (*paks adharmatā*). The former one is seen to be fulfilled by the *tarka* too. For the ground of *tarka* is necessarily related to its consequent. But the latter one is not satisfied as the ground is never actually present in the subject in the case of a *tarka*. On the contrary the subject is qualified by the absence of the probans, the ground. Here, in *tarka*, the ground is hypothetically superimposed upon the subject and the arguer is quite conscious of this super imposition. To make this point more clear an instance may be cited. "If the lake were possessed of smoke, it must be possessed of fire," is a case of *tarka*. In this *tarka*, in fact, the ground, the presence of smoke, is absent in the subject, i.e. in the lake. And the arguer is definitely aware that smoke is not actually present in the lake. The lack of the minor premise, that is to say, the lack of the actual presence of the probans in the subject is known as the fallacy of the non-existent probans. Thus, *tarka* becomes the subject of this fallacy and therefore cannot be regarded as an inference proper as maintained by Jayatirtha. Moreover, in an inference, the knowledge of the probans is the ground depending upon which the knowledge of the probandum is established. For example, in the inference "There is fire in the hill because there is smoke

in it” one gets the inferential knowledge of fire, probandum, on the basis of the perceptual knowledge of smoke i.e. probans. And this condition again is seen not to be fulfilled by *tarka*, since, there is no such thing as knowledge of the ground or the knowledge of the consequent but only an assumption in either. Inference is a case of definite and authentic knowledge. It is also categorical. But *tarka* is a case of assumption and hypothetical supposition and therefore not knowledge at all. Why assumption cannot be a case of knowledge can be explained here in terms of western criteria as well as the criteria of knowledge imposed by *Nyāya* School. So it is proved once again that *tarka* cannot be considered as inference.<sup>4</sup>

Jayathirtha replies to these objections mentioned above clearly as well as beautifully. He maintains that the aforesaid objection has been raised due to the lack of the proper understanding of the logical value of the fallacy called the ‘non-existent probans’. The second condition that the probans be actually present in the subject is held to be a necessary condition for inference. But actually this is not the case. This is nothing but a logical convention. And this convention is mistaken for a necessary condition. Though the actual presence of the probans in the subject is the general rule of inference, it is not an essential condition at all. What is essential is the belief in the presence of the probans in the subject and this belief again is the condition of the belief in the presence of the probandum. And this condition is fulfilled by the *tarka*, so far as the opponent is concerned, as he believes that the probans or the ground under consideration is present in the subject and again this probans, ground, actually stands in the relation of a necessary concomitance to the probandum or the consequent. As the opponent believes in the presence of the ground and its necessary relation to the consequent, so just on the basis of this belief, the belief in the consequent can be deduced.<sup>5</sup>

One point is very important to note here. Though *tarka* is an inference, it is not an ordinary type of inference. Consequently, it does not exactly match with an ordinary inference in all its characteristics. So, just on the basis of the differences mentioned, if one concludes that *tarka* is not an inference, and then it will be a great mistake. *Tarka* is an inference of a special type, having some special properties and acting as *reductio-ad-absurdum*. As it is a special type of inference and its significance does not resemble the ordinary ones we are generally acquainted with we think that *tarka* is not a case of inference. And the significance of this inference lies in the fact that this inference is applied by a person to stand his own position indirectly by showing the absurdity of the position of his opponent, and here, the probans is accepted not by both of the opponent and proponent. The probans is accepted to be true only by the opponent and it is only hypothetically assumed by the proponent. So as far as our discussion goes it is quite clear that the arguer or the proponent does not believe in the presence of the probans in the subject in such cases of inference. But this lack of belief from the part of the proponent has nothing to do with affecting the validity of inference so far as the opponent is concerned, for the latter believes in the presence of the probans. And the probandum is shown to be only a logical necessary conclusion by the proponent just on the basis of the opponent’s belief in the probans. So, the validity of this type of inference is determined only by the belief of the opponent. Even the proponent’s belief makes this type of inference useless and impossible. Because, it is already seen that type of inference is caused by an arguer who holds a different view from that of the opponent. The main

objective is to show the later view as absurd and unacceptable and hence the former view is true and acceptable. So, the difference of the views between the arguer and the opponent is the only cause due to which this inference is used and applied. If the arguer like the opponent believes in the presence of the probans in the subject then it means that both of the parties agree in their views. Consequently, the very question of applying this type of inference does not arise. So, it can be concluded that the belief in the presence of the probans in the subject from the part of the opponent and disbelief in the same from the part of the arguer are essential conditions for the application of such inference.<sup>6</sup>

To understand the above view more clearly an example may be cited. "If the lake were possessed of smoke, it would be possessed of fire. But as a matter of fact it is not possessed of fire. So it cannot be possessed of smoke."

This argument represents both absurdity of the opponent's position and the truth of the position of the arguer. The opponent's view consists in the belief in the presence of smoke in the lake, whereas, the arguer's view is just opposite to it, that is to say, arguer believes in the absence of smoke in the lake. Here this argument is applied to show the absurdity of the opponent's view. More clearly to say, if the opponent's view i.e. the presence of smoke in the lake is taken as granted then as a logical necessity an absurdity will follow. The presence of smoke stands in relation to a necessary concomitance with the presence of fire. So, to believe in the former amounts to believe in the latter and this latter belief in turn gives birth to an absurdity. Thus through the application of this type of argument the position of the opponent is reduced to an absurdity and thereby through the backdoor the arguer's view is proved to be true and acceptable. So, if the proponent would believe in the presence of smoke in the lake as the opponent does, and yet would apply this argument, then it would become self-defeating for it would cancel what he likes to establish. Thus, the foregoing discussion shows that the probans of the *tarka* is believed to be present in the subject only by the opponent and not by the proponent and yet it should be considered as an inference proper, as far as it fulfils all the necessary conditions for being an inference.<sup>7</sup>

Jayatirtha thinks that another objection from a different point of view may be raised against him. He shows that objection and also replies to it. *Tarka* becomes the subject of another logical fallacy called the fallacy of contradicted probans (*bādha*) as long as the absence of the probandum in the subject in conclusion is concerned.<sup>8</sup> But the *Mādhvas* react to this objection by saying that this objection too is applicable only to the categorical type of inference and it is already stated that *tarka* is not a categorical inference at all. So, this objection cannot be applied to *tarka* which is an inference of the type called *reductio-ad-absurdum*.<sup>9</sup> Even to endorse this inference to make free from the fallacy in question is to push it into another fallacy called acceptance of a position opposite to his own accepted conclusion (*apasiddhānta*). For, in the example given above, the absence of fire in the lake is an established fact of which the arguer is fully conscious. Now if the arguer intends to establish the probandum in the subject, i.e. the existence of fire in the lake then, no doubt, it would give birth to the said fallacy.

*Tarka* as maintained by Jayatirtha, has two conclusions side by side – a false conclusion and a negative conclusion. The former one remains in the explicit form,

whereas, the latter one lies in the implicit and hidden form. Both of the conclusions are implied by the *tarka* but not in the same way. The false conclusion is implied directly but the negative conclusion, on the contrary, is implied indirectly. As the negative conclusion remains in the implicit form, generally it is over looked by us. And we think that *tarka* like the categorical inference has only one conclusion. Thus, only the one half which is, infact, incomplete is mistakenly held by us to be whole and complete.<sup>10</sup> This misconception leads us to think that *tarka* becomes the subject of the charges mentioned. As soon as we can be free from this misconception we can understand that the aforesaid objections are groundless and pseudo.

Jayatirtha's view can be substantiated through the clarification and consideration of the Western view regarding *reductio-ad-absurdum*. The European logicians also consider *reductio-ad-absurdum* as a kind of inference. Hence their view is somehow similar to that of the *Mādhvas*. But one point is worthy to note here. A vital difference is found between the Western and the Indian logic. The Western logic is concerned only with the formal validity, while the Indian logic is concerned with both the formal and material validity. The logic of *Madhva*-school belongs to the Indian one. So, the material condition cannot be ignored by them in the case of the determination of the validity of inference. *Tarka* does not satisfy any material condition, as long as the minor premise and the conclusion do not correspond to the fact. Hence, the *Mādhvas* are not justified in regarding *tarka* as an inference in the true sense of the term. But this objection can again be beautifully met from the viewpoint of Jayatirtha. If we look into the full formed *tarka* as conceived by him already mentioned then only the minor premise is seen not to be materially true. But both the major premise and conclusion do correspond to the fact and therefore materially true. So, the objection in question raised against Jayatirtha's view does not hold good.

In order to have a clear conception of Jayatirtha's view regarding *tarka* another point should be highlighted. Jayatirtha partially agrees and partially disagrees with the *Naiyāyikas* in observing the nature and status of *tarka*. He agrees with *Naiyāyikas* in maintaining that *tarka* acts as a helpful condition by eliminating doubt and thereby it helps in paving the impediment from the way of the means of knowledge. But he disagrees with them in pointing out that *tarka* sometimes acts as an independent organ of knowledge. So, according to the *Naiyāyikas*, only one type of activity is performed by *tarka*, but to Jayatirtha two fold activities are seen to be performed by *tarka*.<sup>11</sup> For the sake of better understanding two instances may be cited. : When a person is deterred from inferring fire in a hill on the ground of the perception of smoke by a doubt of the necessary of fire's occurrence, *tarka* stands by him to eliminate that doubt. *Tarka* here acts as an auxiliary factor to an independent categorical inference. But in another instance let us suppose a controversy is seen between two persons in the form - "The hill is either possessed of fire or not". Here *tarka* may be resorted to in the following way:- "If the hill were devoid of fire, it would be devoid of smoke. But it is a fact that hill is not devoid of smoke and so it is not devoid of fire too". Here in this case, *tarka* as a hypothetical argument establishes the conclusion that the hill cannot be devoid of fire and so by the negation of absence of fire establishes by implication that the hill is possessed of fire.<sup>12</sup>

Here *tarka* serves to establish a conclusion independently of a categorical inference and therefore performs the second type of activity mentioned.

Jayatirtha further observes that the function of *tarka* as a helping factor can not be a bar for its being an independent organ of knowledge. The same thing is admitted by the *Naiyāyikas* themselves when they declare the possibility of convergence of several cognitive organs on a self same object of knowledge (*pramān \*asam \*plava*).<sup>13</sup> To make this position more clear a concrete instance can be taken. A is told by a reliable person B that there is fire in the hill nearby. As A goes closer to the hill sees smoke there and infers the existence of fire in it. Ultimately he reaches the hill and perceives fire. Here, in this case, one and the same knowledge i.e. the knowledge of fire is derived through three different independent means of knowledge, testimonial, inferential and perceptual. And the first knowledge is confirmed by the second and the second by the third. So, last two i.e. the inferential and the perceptual knowledge act as an auxiliary factor. But yet they are properly considered as independent organs of knowledge. The same is true in the case of *tarka*. No doubt some times *tarka* is seen to act as an auxiliary factor to other independent means of knowledge. But this does not mean that it is incapable of being an independent organ of knowledge itself. Thus, Jayatirtha establishes his own view that *tarka* is an accredited means of knowledge which can be subsumed under inference by rejecting the view that it is only an auxiliary factor as maintained by the *Naiyāyikas*.

## II

As long as the observations of Jayatirtha, as found in his works *Pramān \*apaddhati* and *Nyāyasudhā* and of his commentator, Janardana Bhatta from the view point of *Mādhvas*' school are concerned it is seen that they vehemently criticize the status of *tarka* as an auxiliary factor to the instrument of knowledge as given and stated by the *Naiyāyikas*. They hold that *tarka* or reasoning should be considered as an independent and separate means of knowledge for it fulfils all the necessary as well as sufficient conditions for being so. Therefore, as *tarka* itself is an independent means of knowledge, it cannot be taken as an auxiliary factor to it as the *Naiyāyikas* hold. They maintain that the form of *tarka* exactly tallies with that of inference. The ground of *tarka* which is hypothetically assumed and the conclusion of it stand for the probans and the probandum of inference respectively. Besides, necessary concomitance is the foundation and nerve centre for both of the inference and *tarka*. That is why they regard *Tarka* as a species of inference. Being a species of inference *tarka* like inference is a separate and independent instrument of knowledge, but is not a helping condition to it.

Here a number of objections raised by the *Naiyāyikas* against the view of Jayatirtha and the defenses from the part of him are noted down and ultimately my personal reflection against these defenses of Jayatirtha be recorded.

No doubt, the arguments produced by Jayatirtha and Janardana Bhatta to substantiate their own view by negating the view of *Naiyāyikas* are apparently seemed to be excellent and sound. But if we ponder over them then it can be understood that actually they are not as excellent and sound as they appear to be. Those arguments are shown to be groundless if they are considered in the light of the definition, characteristics and the conditions of a proper instrument of knowledge as suggested and stated by

*Naiyāyikas* particularly. One of the vital questions the theory of knowledge deals with is how the validity of *pramāṇa* be established? The *Niyayikas* say in reply that it is inference through which the validity of *pramāṇa* be established. The inference is as follows:- *Pramāṇam arthavat, Pravr̥ttisāmarthyāt* which means *pramāṇa* is invariably connected with the object it indicates, since it gives rise to successful activity. And by *pramāṇa* which is invariably connected with the object it indicates' it means that an object as well as its nature as indicated by the *pramāṇa* are really so and never otherwise. A pseudo - *pramāṇa* or instrument of knowledge cannot be invariably related to the object it indicates. So, the object and its nature as indicated by a pseudo *pramāṇa* is not really so. The validity of the instrument of knowledge is the inference of the invariable relationship between instrument and the object it indicates. The probans of this inference is *pravr̥ttisāmartha* which means the capability of producing successful activity. *Pramāṇa* produces successful activity for it is invariably related to the object it indicates, whereas, a pseudo-*pramāṇa* does not do so, as it is not invariably related to the object it indicates. Say for example, the pseudo perception of water in mirage cannot lead to the quenching of the thirst but a genuine perception of water leads to the quenching of the thirst. Now if the validity of *tarka* as *pramāṇa* is tested in terms of the inference mentioned then it can easily be understood that *tarka* cannot be regarded as *pramāṇa* proper. It is not *pramāṇa* for it is not invariably connected with the object it indicates. That is to say, object as well as its nature as indicated by *tarka* are different from what they actually are. And owing to that reason *tarka* cannot lead to a successful activity. This can be illustrated by citing an example to get a clear conception that *tarka* cannot properly be considered as *pramāṇa* since it does not fulfil all the necessary and sufficient conditions for being a *pramāṇa* as it is held by Jayatirtha and Janardana. "If there were smoke in the lake then there would be fire too" – is a form of *tarka*. Here, the object indicated by *tarka* is the presence of fire in the lake. But, in fact, there is no fire in the lake. So, *tarka* is not invariably connected with the object it indicates and thereby it cannot lead to a successful activity. As far as our foregoing discussion is concerned it is clear that the necessary condition for being a *pramāṇa* is not satisfied by *tarka* as long as it is not invariably connected with the object it indicates. That is why *tarka* cannot be taken as *pramāṇa* proper. So, the view of Jayatirtha and Janardana cannot be accepted.

Secondly, to my mind, the view of Jayatirtha and Janardana that *tarka* is a species of *anumāna* falls from its ground if it is considered from the point of view of the very meaning of the term '*anumāna*'. The term '*anumāna*' consists of two different terms '*anu*' and '*māna*'. '*Anu*' means latter and '*māna*' means knowledge. So, the etymological meaning of the whole term '*anumāna*' is the knowledge that follows some other knowledge. In other words, *anumāna* is a kind of knowledge that comes depending upon some other knowledge. So, it is an indirect knowledge. But the knowledge depending upon which *anumāna*, the indirect knowledge comes into being, must be direct one. And being direct it necessarily is perceptual knowledge, since perceptual knowledge is the only direct knowledge as particularly the *Navya-Naiyāyikas* maintain. Let us explain this by citing an example. Let us suppose one perceives smoke arising from hill and infers that there is fire in it. Here the knowledge one ascertains through inference is the knowledge of the existence of fire in the hill. And this knowledge is based upon the

perceptual knowledge of smoke in the hill accompanied by the knowledge of necessary concomitance between smoke and fire. If one does not perceive smoke in the hill and does not know that where there is smoke there necessarily be fire then the very question of one's inferring the existence of fire in the hill does not arise at all. So, the perceptual knowledge is a necessary pre-requirement for the inferential knowledge. Now keeping this in view, let us examine whether *tarka* satisfies this necessary precondition for being an inference. In the case of *tarka* also it is seen that the knowledge established through it necessarily follows some other knowledge i.e. the knowledge of the ground along with the knowledge of the necessary concomitance between the ground and the consequent. But it is worthy to note that the knowledge of the ground is not a perceptual one like that of inference. Rather it is just an assumption. So, *tarka* cannot fulfill the said necessary pre-requirement of having the perceptual knowledge as its ground which is the case with inference. Moreover, unlike inference *tarka* negates its conclusion what is perceptual depending upon the assumption in its ground. In inference, indirect knowledge is established on the ground of the direct knowledge. Whereas, in *tarka* direct knowledge is negated on the basis of indirect knowledge or assumption. Now let us explain this point with the help of an example. Let us suppose that A infers the existence of fire in the hill on the basis of his perceptual knowledge of smoke in it. Let us again suppose that 'B' in spite of entertaining 'A's perceptual knowledge of smoke in the hill does not accept his inferential knowledge of fire in it (hill). Now to stand his own view and to negate his opponent's i.e. 'B's view 'A' resorts to *tarka* in the following way :- 'If there were no fire in the hill, then there cannot be smoke in it.' Here this *tarka* can be divided into two parts – 'If there were no fire in the hill' and 'then there can not be smoke in it.' The first part is called *āpādaka* or ground and the second part is known as *āpādya* or conclusion. Here in this *tarka*, like in inference, conclusion or *āpādya*, i.e. the absence of smoke is deduced on the basis of the ground or *āpādaka* i.e. the absence of fire accompanied by the knowledge of the necessary and universal concomitance between the ground (*āpādaka*) and the conclusion (*āpādya*). But here the knowledge of the ground, i.e. the knowledge of the absence of fire is not perceptual like inference rather it is an assumption. In *tarka* depending upon the assumption, i.e. the absence of fire in its ground the direct or perceptual knowledge of smoke in its conclusion is negated.

Thirdly, Jayatirtha and Janardana can be charged from the view point of another special characteristic of Indian Logic called *paks'adharmatā* i.e. the presence of probans in the subject. This characteristic is not satisfied by *tarka* as the ground of it which stands for the probans of inference is not present in the subject. In the example already cited the smoke is not present in the lake. So, *tarka* cannot be considered as a case of *anumāna*. But here Jayatirtha observes that this characteristic is not a necessary condition for an *anumāna*. He further maintains that what is necessary is the belief in the presence of probans in the subject. And this condition is fulfilled by *tarka* as far as the opponent is concerned, since he believes in the presence of the ground in the subject. Say for example, the opponent believes in the presence of smoke in the lake. So, according to Jayatirtha, all the necessary conditions of inference are fulfilled by *tarka* and that is why it is a species of inference.

Fourthly, The *Naiyāyikas* observe that a charge of a fallacy of contradicted probans (*bādha*) be advanced against the inferential status of *tarka* as maintained by

Jayatirtha as the probandum which is necessarily deduced in *tarka*, does not actually belong to the subject. Say for example, in the case of *tarka* “ If there were smoke in the lake then there would be fire too” both the probans, namely, the presence of smoke and the probandum, namely, the presence of fire, do not exist in the subject, lake. The *Naiyāyikas* further hold that another objection called the fallacy of the admission of a contrary conclusion (*apasiddhānta*) be raised against the view of Jayatirtha, since, the arguer concerned infer an unreal probandum in opposition to his previous commitment regarding the absence of the probandum.

Jayatirtha replies to the aforesaid objections by maintaining that the charges of contradiction be applied only in the case of inference where the person in question intends to establish the conclusion independently. But in the case of *tarka* the arguer does not like to establish the conclusion independently, rather he seeks to establish the same on the ground of the admission of the opponent. The arguer, in *tarka*, demonstrates only the logical connection between the ground and the consequent. In other words, the arguer likes to imply that the admission of the ground necessarily entails the admission of the consequent, but he does not like to imply that the ground and the consequent are actual historical truth. Thus Jayatirtha shows that the charges of contradicted reason and contradiction of the accepted position do not hold well in the case of *tarka*.

Fifthly, the *Naiyāyikas* argue that in the case of *tarka* the necessary concomitance between the probans and the probandum is not real, since the probans, namely, the presence of smoke and the probandum, namely, the presence of fire do not co-present in the subject, lake. And this falsity of the necessary concomitance invalidates the claim of Jayatirtha that *tarka* is a case of inference. But Jayatirtha, from the view point of *Mādhvas*, replies to the objection by saying that the said objection is nothing but a result of misconception of necessary concomitance. He observes with the *Mādhvas* and the *Jainas* that necessary concomitance between the probans and the probandum is not necessarily one of co-existence in the same substratum. Necessary and universal concomitance be established where the one term cannot be conceived to be possible without the presence of the other. Spatio-temporal co-presence is not a necessary factor of universal concomitance. Besides this, the *Mādhvas* and the *Jainas* hold that the objective concomitance between the ground and the consequent is not a necessary requirement in *Reductio-ad-absurdum* called *tarka*.

Sixthly, another vital objection has been shown by the *Naiyāyikas* against the inferential status of *tarka*. The conditions of inference proper and that of *tarka* are basically different and this difference, in turn, brings a fundamental difference in the character of the result. Accredited inference entails categorical assertions and the probans of it is admitted to be materially true by both parties, the opponent and the proponent, whereas, *tarka* consists of a hypothetical minor premise and the probans affirmed of the subject is materially false. This difference gives birth to another material difference in the result. In the inference proper the result is a true conclusion, but in the case of *tarka* the conclusion is a false issue. But, in response to this objection Jayatirtha maintains that though the difference in conditions appears to be fundamental but actually this is not the case. The fundamental conditions of both of the categorical inference and the hypothetical inference called *tarka* are one and the same. So, the aforesaid difference of

conditions actually is nothing but a negligible one. And this negligible difference in conditions does not entail a fundamental difference in the character of the result.

But as far as our own observation is concerned the aforesaid five defenses of Jayatirtha against the five objections mentioned above are not actually sound and firm footed as they appear to be. One of the fundamental differences between the Western and the Indian logic lies in the fact that while the former aims at satisfying only the formal condition, the latter aims at satisfying both the formal and material ones. In so far as an inference follows all the rules prescribed for it, the inference is said to have fulfilled its formal condition, whereas, as long as the premise or premises and the conclusion correspond to the fact an inference is said to have satisfied its material condition. Now keeping this point in view it can be maintained that *tarka* can not be regarded as a case of inference for even if it satisfies the formal condition, it can never meet the material one as neither the ground nor the consequent of it which are taken to stand for probans and probandum or conclusion of inference respectively correspond to the fact. In the case of the example mentioned above neither smoke nor even fire is seen to exist in the lake. Thus Jayatirtha's defenses are proved to be groundless.

Besides these, some additional arguments may be put forward against the view of Jayatirtha that "*tarka* is a *pramān •a*". First, *tarka* conforms to the definition of invalid cognition given by the *Naiyāyikas*. The definition of invalid cognition (*apramā*) given in TS stands thus : " Non – veridical *anubhava* is a cognition which has for its determinans (*prakāra*) something, when its determinandum (*viśes •ya*) is characterized by the absence of that something." Let us suppose, someone is going to infer the existence of fire in the hill on the perception of smoke in it. Here if one doubts the existence of fire in the hill in spite of the perception of smoke in it, then the inferer concerned resorts to *tarka* in the following way, to establish his own view proving his opponents' view as impossibility. "If there were no fire, then, there would be no smoke". Here *tarka* has for its determinans (*prakāra*), absence of smoke, but its determinandum (*viśes •ya*) is actually characterized by the absence of the absence of smoke. That is why, the *Naiyāyikas* regard *tarka* as an invalid cognition. And an invalid cognition can never be a *pramān •a*.

Secondly, a *pramān •a* must have a direct bearing upon the ascertainment of truth. The main characteristic features of the object of knowledge are deliberated through *pramān •a*. But *tarka* has no any direct bearing; rather it has an indirect bearing upon the determination of truth. *Tarka* by pointing out some real grounds asserts one of the alternatives, but it does not point out this alternative definitely as having such and such characteristics. In other words, *tarka* does not definitely assert a particular alternative, in the form, 'This object is of such nature'. So, the main characteristic features of the object are not deliberated through the method of *tarka*. The real nature of an object be known only through the relevant cognitive instrument like perception, inference etc.

Thirdly, *pramān •a* is adopted to ascertain the knowledge of an object, whereas, *tarka* is applied to eliminate doubt which acts as an impediment to the attainment of knowledge. *Pramān •a* is applied independently to other *pramān •as*. But the application of *Tarka* is not independent of other *pramān •as*. Say for example, to know the colour of

the flower in my garden I have to resort to perception. Here application of other *pramān* \*as before hand is not essential. That is to say, the application of a *pramān* \*a does not necessarily pre-suppose the application of other *pramān* \*as. The application of one *pramān* \*a may be preceded by that of another *pramān* \*a. Say for example, I can infer the existence of fire in the hill on the perception of smoke in it. But to be sure of it, I may go to the hill and have a perception. Here inferential knowledge is confirmed by perceptual one. Prior application of one *pramān* \*a of the other is desirable but not essential. But *tarka* is adopted only when some independent means of knowledge is applied before hand. In other words, the application of *tarka* necessarily pre-supposes the application of other *pramān* \*as. If some means of knowledge is already applied but it cannot operate its proper function due to the imposition of doubt only then *tarka* is resorted to in order to eliminate the doubt in question.

Fourthly, if *tarka* is judged from the view point of the defining characteristics of knowledge as suggested and stated by the Western philosophers, *tarka* cannot be taken as a case of knowledge in the true sense of the term. Even if we put aside the fourth condition of knowledge as suggested by E.L. Gettier, knowledge is defined as justified true belief. As far as this definition is concerned the following three conditions are the necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge:

- Belief condition,
- Truth condition and
- Justification condition.

More clearly to say, if one claims to know a proposition called p, then his claim be valid if and only if firstly he believes that p is true , secondly, p is really true and thirdly, he is justified in his belief that p is true . Now let us examine whether *tarka* fulfils these three necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge. The *Mādhvas* and the Jainas maintain that *tarka* is a case of knowledge proper and it subsumed under inference. The ground and the consequent in *tarka* stand for the probans and the probandum respectively in inference. Inference aims at providing the knowledge of the probandum on the basis of the knowledge of the probans accompanied by the knowledge of the necessary concomitance between the probans and the probandum. Likewise, *tarka* demonstrates the knowledge of the consequent on the basis of the knowledge of the ground accompanied by the knowledge of the necessary concomitance between the ground and the consequent. Keeping this similarity in view Jayatirtha also observes that *tarka* is a case of knowledge and a sub-species of inference. But only keeping this aforesaid similarity in view it should not be justified to identify one with another. If we ponder over the problem we see that inference and *tarka* differ, one from another, in a fundamental way. Inference satisfies all the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge mentioned, whereas *tarka* does not fulfill the same. This can be illustrated clearly by citing a concrete example. Let us suppose, 'A' infers the existence of fire in the hill on the basis of his perception of smoke in it. Here in this inference, first, he believes in the existence of fire in the hill, secondly, his belief is true since fire really exists in the hill and thirdly, his belief is justified by virtue of his perceptual ( perception of smoke) and rational ( necessary concomitance between smoke and fire) evidence. Inference is a case of knowledge proper, for it fulfils these three conditions. But *tarka* does not meet

these conditions. Let us suppose that 'B' also perceives smoke in the hill but yet he raises objection against the inference of the existence of fire in it. Now 'A' resorts to *tarka* in order to deny the position of 'B' in the way: "If there were no fire in the hill then there cannot be smoke too." Here in this *tarka* absence of fire is the ground or probans and absence of smoke is the consequent or probandum. Let us suppose P stands for the consequent or probandum. Here, neither the opponent 'B' nor even the arguer 'A' believes in P. Secondly, P is not true, for actually hill is qualified not by the absence of smoke but by the presence of smoke. Thirdly, since none of 'A' and 'B' believes in P the very question of the justification of their belief is absolutely absurd. So, as far as *tarka* is concerned, it is seen that the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge as prescribed and stated by the Western philosophers are not satisfied. Thus, it is proved once again that *tarka* is not a case of knowledge proper, and therefore, Jayatirtha's defenses mentioned are in vain.

Jayatirtha maintains that inferences can be brought under two heads - categorical and hypothetical called *tarka*. These two types of inference differ in their conditions. In the case of categorical inference all the factors of it must be accepted to be true by both of the parties, the opponent and the proponent. If difference of opinion is seen between the opponent and the proponent regarding the validity either of the probans or of the necessary concomitance or the universal proposition or of both, then inference is brought to a standstill, and it can be set in motion only by keeping aside the differences. But this is not true in the case of *tarka*. In this inference the apparatus is accepted to be true by the opponent and not by the arguer. The defect of categorical inference is not the defect of hypothetical inference called *tarka*. Rather the defect of the categorical inference is the condition of *tarka*. The falsity of the minor term and of the probans, for example, is the defect in categorical inference but these are not defects in *tarka* but rather are the conditions of it. The arguer is quite conscious of the falsity of the probans, namely, the absence of fire, yet he assumes the probans, for bringing out the absurd consequence or probandum, namely, the absence of smoke. But as far as the observation of Jayatirtha regarding the conditions of *tarka* goes we fully agree with him. We also go hand in hand with Jayatirtha in maintaining that the belief in the presence of the probans in the subject from the part of the opponent and disbelief in the same from the part of the proponent is the very condition of *tarka*. If both of the opponent and the proponent would believe the same then the very question of the application of *tarka* does not arise at all. We only disagree with Jayatirtha when he maintains that *tarka* is a case of knowledge proper and subsumed under inference. He holds that *tarka* is a case of a special type of inference. But even if it is a special type of inference it is not a special type of knowledge of course. It may be a different species of the same genus called knowledge. But it is already shown that *tarka* is not a case of knowledge. So, its being a subspecies of knowledge is absurd. And since *tarka* is not a subspecies of knowledge, it cannot also be subcategory of inference.

In the strongest and most important defense against the charge of material invalidity of *tarka* as an inference, a vital defect in Indian logic, Jayatirtha maintains that a misconception regarding the component parts of *tarka* gives birth to this charge. Jayatirtha observes that in fact *tarka* has two conclusions side by side, of which one is false and the other is negative. The false conclusion remains in the explicit form but the

negative conclusion lies in implicit form. So, two conclusions are implied by *tarka* at the same time. But they are implied not in the same way. The false conclusion is implied directly but the negative conclusion, on the contrary, is implied indirectly. As the negative conclusion remains in the implicit form it is generally overlooked by us and we tentatively think that *tarka* like categorical inference has only one conclusion. Thus, we wrongly take only the one half which is in fact, incomplete for the whole and complete. If we look into the full formed *tarka* or *tarka* then we can see that only the minor premise is materially false. But both the major premise and conclusion do correspond to the fact and therefore materially true. This can clearly be illustrated in the following way. “If there were no fire in the hill then there can not be smoke. But as a matter of fact there is smoke in the hill. So, there is also fire in it”. For the sake of better understanding we can divide this full formed *tarka* into two halves. “If there were no fire in the hill then there can not be smoke” and “As a matter of fact there is smoke in the hill. So, there is also fire in it”. The first part of *tarka* does not correspond to the fact but the second part of it corresponds to the fact. So, *tarka* does not satisfy the material condition of inference as long as the first half of it is concerned but it meets the same as far as the second half of it is concerned. So, if *tarka* is seen in its full form then it would be clear that the aforesaid objection of material invalidity is fully out of place in the case of *tarka*.

But here again his view can not be accepted as far as our observation is concerned, think that Jayatirtha here commits a blunder of taking two different instruments of knowledge for one. Actually, the instance of the full formed *tarka* already cited is nothing but the combination of two different means of knowledge, one invalid and another valid. Each and every half mentioned above makes a separate instrument of knowledge. The first part “if there were no fire in the hill then there cannot be smoke” is called *tarka*. This is an instrument of invalid knowledge. Now let us examine why the second half mentioned above is considered as a separate instrument of knowledge. The second half “As a matter of fact there is smoke in the hill. So, there is also fire in it”, is an instrument of knowledge called inference. It is an inference for it satisfies all the necessary and sufficient conditions of an inference. In this example, hill, smoke and fire are the subject, the probans and the probandum respectively. Through this instrument the knowledge of the probandum, namely, the presence of fire is operated on the basis of the perceptual knowledge of the probans, namely, the presence of smoke coupled with the knowledge of the necessary concomitance between the probans and the probandum. And this knowledge of the probandum, that is the knowledge of the presence of fire in the hill is valid as per as the defining marks of valid cognition as suggested and stated by both of the Indian and the Western philosophers are concerned. Besides, the explanation given by Jayatirtha itself substantiates our own position and falsifies the position of Jayatirtha himself. Jayatirtha holds that *tarka* has two conclusions, one is false and the other is negative. But how can one and the same inference possess the two conclusions at the same time? It is quite plausible to maintain that one argument possesses only one conclusion. So, the statement that *tarka* in its full-form has two conclusions implies clearly that it is nothing but the combination of the two different instruments of knowledge. Jayatirtha himself fails to understand the actual implication of his own statement. And his defense mentioned above is the result of his misunderstanding just said. Thus it is shown that the full formed *tarka* as stated by Jayatirtha is nothing but a

combination of the two separate instruments of knowledge, invalid and valid. So, *tarka* as stated above never satisfies the material condition of inference as it is maintained by Jayatirtha.

But two points are important to note here. First, the two instruments mentioned are closely connected and secondly, the term ‘instrument’ has been used in the two cases in two different senses. Let us first explain the second one. The term ‘instrument’ has been used in the case of inference in question in the sense of accredited means of valid knowledge, whereas, the same has been used in the case of *tarka* in the sense of an auxiliary factor to an accredited means of valid cognition. Now let us turn to the illustration of the first point. The aforesaid inference here cannot operate its function due to some impediment, called doubt, imposed by the opponent. In this situation the arguer resorts to *tarka* to eliminate the impediment. And how *tarka* helps in eliminating the impediment and thereby becomes an auxiliary factor (promoter) to an accredited organ of knowledge has already been discussed. So, we need not deal with the same to avoid repetition.

#### REFERENCE:

1. *Sādhana-numānam dūs •an •ānumānām • ce'ti. Dūs •an •ānumānām • api dvedhā. Dūs •tipramitisāadhanam • tarkaś ce'ti. Pramān •apaddhati (PP) edit. T. R. Krishnamacharya, Kumbhakonam, p.36.*
2. *Pramān •apaddhatitikā of Janardana Bhatta, edit. T.R. Krishnamacharya, kumbhakonam. P.36-37.*
3. *'Tarko' numānam vyāptibalena paroks •ajñānanakatvāt. Ibid, p.38.*
4. *Nānutarkasy' ānumānatve āpādakam • nirvahnitvam • nirdhumatvam •, pratilin •gam iti vācyam. Nirvahnitvasya vahnimati parvatepaks •e' siddhatven□a katham • tarkasy' ānumānatvam •. Pramān •apaddhati, pp. 38-39. Vide also PPT, pp. 38-39.*
5. *Anumānatve'pi tarkasy āpādakāsiddhir adūs •an •am parābhyupagamamātrasya tatra siddhipadārthatvāt. Pramān •apaddhati, p. 38-39.*
6. *Vastutah •paks •e vidyamānatve āpādatva-vyāghātah •. Katham anyathā na cā'yam • nirdhūmah • tasmān na niragnika iti viparyaye paryavasānam •. Tadabhāve ca tarka evā' bhāsaḥ • syāt.*
7. *PPT, p.39.*
8. *Nānu tathā'pi na tarkasy'ānumānatvam • san •gacchate. Tarkasy'ānumānatve āpādyam • nirdhūmatvam • lingi'ti vācyam •. Tasya dhūmavatyabhāvād bādhaḥ •. Ibid.*
9. *Sādhyarūpasyaiva lingino bādhdos •ah •. Na tvāpādyarūpasya. Āpādyatvavyāghātāt. Yad āpādyam • tat pramān •abādhitam eva. Anist •am • hy āpādyam •, pramān •abādha evā'nis •t •atvam •. Na cā'tra nirdhūmatvam • sādhyam •. Ibid.*
10. *Yathā sādhanānumāne na vyāptimātram •, nā'pi paks •adhar matāmātram • sādhyapramitisāadhanam • kintu militam eva. evam anis •t□apādanam • viparyaye paryavasānam • co'bhayam • militam evā'numitisāadhanam • bhavati' titarkasya prāmān •yam upapadyate. Pramān •apaddhati, p.40.*
11. *Kvacid viparitaśan •kānirasanadvāren •a pramān •anām • anugrāhako'pi bhavati'ti. Pramān •apaddhati.*
12. *Adrir agnimān na ve'ti vipratipattau sādhanānumānam • vinai'va yadi niragnikah • syāt tarhi nirdhūmah • syāt na cā'yam • nirdhūma iti tarkarūpānumānen aiva' gnisiddheh •. PPT, p.40.*

13. *Tasmād yathā pramān •asam •plave dvitīyam • pramān •abhūtam eva, prathamadārdhyahetutvena pramān •anugrāhakam • tathā tarko'pi pramān •am eva pramān •ānugrāhakah • . PPT, p.40.*

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## THE VALUE OF LIFE IN RADHAKRISHNAN'S PHILOSOPHY

BIMAL CHANDRA PAL

One of the main questions in philosophy is that where does man find his real goal of life or 'good'? The world's complexity is enough to divert man to achieve his real goal of life. The world is the scene of misery so we can not get the true good by analyzing the worldly events. It is not gained in the arena of worldly scene. No real achievement is possible in the outer world. According to *Buddha* the life of man is full of sorrows and sufferings. So, where the man will get any meaning or add any value to his earthly life? Therefore, Indian Philosophers consider the value of life is to attain freedom from the bonds of empirical life which is automatically refers to the negation of experience of life.

Many western thinkers like John Mackenzie and Schweitzer<sup>1</sup> characterized Indian Philosophy in the same tone cited above. They find no value of life in Indian Thought. Indian Philosophers talk about not the present life but after this life. There is no significance in the present life. But this is not the real case in Indian thought. All these objections are raised by some western thinkers due to their improper understanding of the special characters of Indian Thought. Indian Philosophers have conceived the goal of life is the achievement of *mokṣa* (redemption) i.e., the release from nature's toil.

Radhakrishnan tries to refute the above charges against Indian Thought. He introduces his discussion in his book *The Hindu View of Life* with the remarks that the most important objection raised against Hindu Ethical theory that it prescribes us life negating-world views. He says, "Doctrine of *māyā* is supposed to repudiate the reality of the world and thus make all ethical relation meaningless. The world of nature is said to be unreal and human history illusory. There is no meaning in time and no significance in life"<sup>2</sup>

The Western thinkers particularly the students of ethics have distorted the basic principles of Indian Philosophy. The other critic John McKenzie<sup>3</sup> also remarks that Indian Philosophy leaves no room for ethics because it identifies *dharma* with morality. *Dharma* is intellectually rootless. He also says "the duties of social life can not be deduced from ultimate goal of attainment as the orthodox understand it, nor can they be shown to stand in any vital relation to it. *Dharma* is imposed by authority, and that is the end of it."<sup>4</sup> But when Sidgwick says in his book 'The Method of Ethics' "Ethics is

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<sup>1</sup> Albert Schweitzer, *Indian Thought and its Development*, Mrs. Charles E.B. Russell, trans. London, Adam and Charles Black, 1951.

<sup>2</sup> Radhakrishnan, *the Hindu View of Life*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1948, P-61.

<sup>3</sup> John McKenzie, *Hindu Ethics*, Oxford Univ. Press 1922, pp-206-207.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* pp-209-210.

sometimes considered as an investigation of the true moral laws or rational precepts of conduct; sometimes as an enquiry into the nature of the Ultimate End of reasonable human action-the Good or 'True Good' of man – and the method of attaining it”<sup>5</sup>According to Sidgwick “If a man accepts any end as ultimate and paramount, he accepts implicitly as his ‘method of ethics’ whatever process of reasoning enables him to determine the actions most conducive to this end” and “it can hardly be denied that the recognition of an end as ultimately reasonable involves the recognition of an obligation to do such acts as most conduce to the end”.<sup>6</sup> The acceptance of ultimate end which is teleological in purport includes the method of ethics. It regulates the life of man which is most conducive to that end.

Now considering the framework of Sidgwick’s approach to ethics we can reformulate the objections to Indian moral philosophy. It offers a theory of “Ultimate Good” which excludes all natural things and experiences from the *Summum Bonum*. It postulates an experience which is characterized as alone of intrinsic worth i.e, as ‘ultimately good’ yet which in its nature stands in no comprehensible relation to the moral teaching advocated as alone conducive to its realization.

Radhakrishnan says that the value of life has extrinsic value or we can say the instrumental value as it supports or help the way of realizing the life of sorrowlessness. The value of life means to achieve the goal of life i.e. to overcome the sorrows and sufferings of life. So we can not fully satisfy with the help of finite objects in this world. Radhakrishnan remarks that “finite objects can not give us satisfaction for which our soul hungers. As in the field of intellect we miss the ultimate reality in the objects of the empirical world, even so the absolute good we seek for in morality is not to be found in finite satisfaction”<sup>7</sup> The spirit in us seeks the true satisfaction and nothing less than the infinite can give us that. Therefore, we can say that there is no permanent satisfaction in nature. Our soul always hunger for infinite, search for eternal reality. The perfect ideal of our life is found only in the eternal reality.

The value of life or the ideal of life is derived from the metaphysical standpoint of Radhakrishnan’s philosophy. His philosophy can be described as monistic idealism. It is monistic because the realty is one and it is called idealism for more than one reason. One is idea-ism and the other is ideal-ism.<sup>8</sup> The former indicates the reality as a nature of an idea that means mental or spiritual. The later one insisted on the ultimacy and value of some ideal. He prefers this sense and believes that there is a spiritual ideal towards which the whole world-process is progressing to achieve some goal. According to Radhakrishnan the real meaning of the word idea is that what is the principle involved in it when we ask with reference to any thing or action? It indicates the meaning or purpose of its being or the aim or value of that action. It shows that when we say about the nature of an idea we try to determine what that thing is driving at? Thus if we assert that the universe is driving at something-that it has a meaning and a value, that it is not a blind force striving or an irrational movements onwards but it is a constant progression towards some higher end, and then we are an idealist. In this sense, an idealist is a teleologist who

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<sup>5</sup> Henry Sidgwick, *the Methods of Ethics* (7<sup>th</sup>ed.) London: Macmillan & Co.1913, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup> Santayana, *the Life of Reason*, Vol-V,pp-240-241.

<sup>7</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*,Vol. I, pp.212-213.

<sup>8</sup> B. K. Lal, *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi, 2005, p.259.

believes in the ultimate meaning and purpose of the universe. So a man who is earnestly searching for the value of his life “can find no rest until he gains a view or a vision of the world of things and process which will enable him to interpret the manifold experiences as expressive, in some sort of a purpose”<sup>9</sup>

The nature of man has two aspects. One is the finite aspect and the other is the infinite or the divine aspect. According to Radhakrishnan the finite aspects of man are those aspects that are determined by the empirical or environmental conditions. This aspect of man is not final. He has another aspect of divine or infinite aspect. That is why every action of man is goal oriented. The end of every action is to achieve some goal. Here the goal of man is to achieve the Supreme. “There is in the self of man, at the very centre of this being, something deeper than the intellect, which is akin to the supreme”.<sup>10</sup> So a man always searches for the goal of his action. In moral life the goal is perfection. One can not attain the goal so long as he remains merely moral. Radhakrishnan says “the love of the finite has only instrumental value while the love of the eternal has intrinsic worth”.<sup>11</sup>

The finite aspect of man is the creative activity of man which has an instrumental value. It relates to the empirical events. The supreme value or the intrinsic value is identified with the unchanging, the perfect for Radhakrishnan’s point of view. As he remarks “The end we seek is becoming *Brahman* or touching the eternal. This is the only absolute value”<sup>12</sup>

Radhakrishnan conceived value in such a manner that nothing natural can be of intrinsic worth. The only satisfaction ultimately worthwhile is that which is by nature immutable, *moksā*, release from nature’s toil is the final goal of life. If sorrowlessness to be the only intrinsic good, all life, both individual and social becomes a cosmic pilgrimage which will not come to an end until nature is obliterated, or transmuted or come to be totally disregarded. Radhakrishnan tells us “All ethical goods bound up as they are with the world of distinctions are valuable as means to the end. While self realization is the absolute good, ethical goods are only relatively so. The ethically ‘good’ is what helps the realization of the infinite and the ethically ‘bad’ is its opposite”.<sup>13</sup>

Indians have considered spiritual values are the ultimate end from ancient times. The four human ends i.e., wealth, pleasure, righteousness and *moksā* (spiritual freedom) of which the first two have no intrinsic value, the third one has instrumental value to achieve the *moksā*, the supreme value of human life. It is considered as escape from the cycle of rebirth. According to Radhakrishnan the world is the training ground for uplifting another higher stage of the world and “the meaning of man’s life is to be found not in this world but in more than historical reality. His highest aim is to release from the historical succession denoted by birth and death”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Radhakrishnan, *an Idealist View of Life*, p-10

<sup>10</sup> Radhakrishnan, *an Idealist View of Life*, p-103

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* p.214.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*-p-553.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol-II, P-614.

<sup>14</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1939 pp-75, 83.

In Indian sense the value of life has never been separated from the metaphysical insight. The moral discipline and the metaphysical insight go together. The four stages of life is directly oriented towards liberation. It is a journey to the eternal life through different stages is as follows:

- *Brahmacharya* or the period of training.
- *Gārhasṭhya* or the period of work for the world as a house holder.
- *Vānaprastha* or the period of retreat for the loosening of the social bonds.
- *Sanyāsa* or the period of renunciation.

The four stages of life what Vyasa says in the *Mahābhārata* a ladder or flight of four steps. By ascending that flight one reaches the region of *Brahman*.<sup>15</sup> According to *Hindu Dharmaśāstra*, each individual should pass through these four stages of life, one after another and live in them in accordance with the *Śāstras* if he desires to obtain salvation or moksa. But according to Radhakrishnan these four stages are “helpful but not indispensable”<sup>16</sup> because duties of life mentioned in these four stages are not externally imposed upon our life. It is a natural growth of our life.

The different stages of life are not divided by the limitation of ages. There is no particular age; one is expected to enter into each of the four stages. It is depended upon individual ability and also depends upon social condition. Now-a-days the young ones or brahmacharin does not enter into the next stage (*Gārhasṭhya*) due to their economic insecurity. The four stages of life in the modern period are strongly affected by socio-economic conditions of the society. As the social order change day to day so the individual also change their attitudes. It is relevant in the present context of society what Vatsayana says about the four stages of life. Due to uncertainty of life one should follow *Vidyā, Kāma, Dharma* and *Mokṣa* as they came to him at any period of life.<sup>17</sup> It means whenever a man gets opportunities to practice any one of these, he should properly avail himself of the same, in whatever stage he may be.

The first stage in life is the period of training and education. The very word Brahmacharin indicates that it is oriented towards the knowledge of the *Brahman*. The discipline of body and mind is the aim of this stage. Both boys and girls went through this stage. “The students are subject to the direction of *guru* who diligently guides them and supervises their education. They learn the sacred without overlooking the secular.”<sup>18</sup>

The second stage is that of the householder or the *Gārhasṭha*. All other stages are sustained by this one. Hence, a high place of honour is given to it. This stage alone can three *puruṣārthas* be practiced together and the three *ṛinas* (*Devarṇa, Pitrūrṇa* and *Rṣirṇa*) could all be discharged satisfactorily. The life of householder which is working for the others overcomes his narrowness and selfishness. Being in the world means that men are pledged to one another, the individuals for the family, the family for the community, the community for the nation, and the nation for the world. The householder establishes himself in the supreme reality after the fulfillment of his duties. He then dedicates all his actions in his married and social life to God.

<sup>15</sup> *Mahabharata, Shantiparva*, 242, 15.

<sup>16</sup> *Kamasutra of Vatsayanamuni* Ed. Goswami D.S., (Aksi Sanskrit series) Banares-1919, I, II, 1-6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Radhakrishnan, *the Heart of Hindusthan*, p-39

The third and the fourth stage i.e., *Vānaprastha* and *Sanyāsa* where *Dharma* and *Mokṣa* are the main concern of life. Here *Dharma* becomes identified with *Mokṣa*. The later one occupies the supreme position in the stages of life. To achieve *Mokṣa* is to make the life meaningful on earth. It is the stage of the meditation where there is no force applied to control the passions but an easy spontaneous self-control. Radhakrishnan describes the fourth or the final stage of life as “a freedom and fearlessness of spirit, an immensity of courage, which no defeat of obstacle can touch, a faith in the power that works in the universe, a love that lavishes itself without demand of return and makes life a free servitude to the universal spirit are the signs of the perfected man.”<sup>19</sup> Radhakrishnan reminds us by saying that this perfected men or the meditants are never other-worldly, rather they are concerned about the world and works for all men. He gave the example of *Buddha* and *Mahadeva* as embodying the great ideal of the meditant. *Buddha* was always engaged to remove the suffering from human life after his enlightenment. *Mahadeva* in mythology is said to have drunk poison in order to save the world from death.

So, we have seen that the realization can occur only after a lifetime of training, go through the four meaningful and valuable stages of life in which the individual is drawn away from the world, comes to know the true worth of the nature and finally attached with the ultimate metaphysical intuition. So the value of life on earth is never denied by the Indian Philosophers.

The moral categories are relative to the phenomenal space-time order. But our action is like saints action where “the conventional standards, the external duties and the ethical rules become meaningless to us.”<sup>20</sup> The question of value does not arise here because “sin and stain there can not be; for we have overcome that creation full of desire and its work and reactions which belongs to the ignorance, and living in the supreme and Divine nature there is no longer fault or defect on our works; for these are created by in equalities of the ignorance. The equal *Brahman* is faultless, beyond the confusion of good and evil, and living in the *Brahman* we too raise beyond good and evil; we act in that purity, stainlessly, with an equal and single purpose of fulfilling the welfare of all existences.”<sup>21</sup> When we rise beyond the level of distinctions then we felt us totally different from others. The value of our life is our constant cravings to achieve the highest goal of life. As Radhakrishnan says, “an ideal which requires us to integrate ourselves, to maintain a constant fight with the passions which impede the growth of the soul, to wage war on lust, anger and worry, can not but be deeply ethical.”<sup>22</sup>

The man who attains the state of liberation does not require ethical principles because at that time morality has become his second nature. The liberated soul acts in such a way that natural order has not so relevant for him any longer. But Radhakrishnan says that it does not mean that he has lost any meaning of his life. “For the liberated *Yogi* there is no other law, rule, *dharma* than simply this, to live in the Divine and love the Divine and be one with all beings; his freedom is ...not dependent any longer on any rule of conduct, law of life or limitation of any kind.”<sup>23</sup> The man who has achieved liberation

<sup>19</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp – 380-381

<sup>20</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I p. 229.

<sup>21</sup> Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religion and Western Thought*, p-298

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*-p-53

<sup>23</sup> Radhakrishnan, *the Bhagavatgita*, pp-71-72.

*dharma* is no longer binding upon him. He works for the welfare of his less enlightened fellows in the sense of helping them to come to a realization of their true nature, or of what they are potentially; he values them for what they would be if liberated, or as some would contend, for what they are without knowing it. The liberated soul works for the welfare of the world.

Radhakrishnan says that one must begin with a faith in reality. The lack of this faith makes man frustrated and isolated animal in the world. He says it is the faith in religious experience. According to Radhakrishnan, "Religion is not a creed or a code but an insight into reality"<sup>24</sup>. This insight will reveal that man is always confronted with something greater and higher than him, which makes his life meaningful and valuable. The main task of religion is to make a bridge between the finite and infinite insight. Therefore he says that Religion is that way of life which helps men to "make a change in his own nature to let the Divine in him manifest himself."<sup>25</sup> Religion implies a faith in the supremacy of absolute spiritual values and a way of life to realize them.

The eternal or the Absolute Reality which is present in the soul of man as its secret ground provides a driving force to that man to harness his life in this world. This purposive act of man makes human life valuable and worthy to live in this world. We find a vivid illustration of this kind when Radhakrishnan says "Any serious pursuit of ideas, any search after conviction, and any adventure after virtue arises from resources whose name is religion. The search of the mind for beauty, goodness and truth is the search for God. The child nursing at the breast of his mother, the illiterate savage gazing at the numberless stars, the scientists in his laboratories studying life under a microscope, the poet meditating in solitudes on the beauty and pathos of the world, the ordinary men standing reverently before a starlit sky, the Himalayan heights or a quiet sea or before the highest miracle of all, a human being who is both great and good, they all possess dimly the sense of the eternal, the feeling of heaven".<sup>26</sup>

We are organically related to the universe or parts of it, so our life has a value. According to Radhakrishnan the universe is driving at something - that it has a meaning and a value. We are the moral agents who take part in the world process of progressing. The value of life is to realize the divinity. Radhakrishnan says that in the ever growing flow of nature there is neither repose nor halt. Nature is never satisfied with the level it has reached. So our destination of life is to find out a meaningful way to overcome the present situation of life. In search of certainty and supreme reality our life has meaningful and valuable on this earth.

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<sup>24</sup> Radhakrishnan, *My Search for Truth*, p.27

<sup>25</sup> Schilpp Ed. *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, p.59.

<sup>26</sup> . Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society*, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1947 p.47

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN AND RABINDRANATH TAGORE: SOME REFLECTIONS\***

SANGHAMITRA DASGUPTA

Human beings' history of civilisation, broadly speaking, is their history of emancipation from Nature. It is an ongoing process of exercising their power of reason to conquer Nature. By means of their technological and rational astuteness they are trying to emancipate from the compulsion of natural necessity. Their power of reasoning leads them to make a distinction between human and non-human nature and on the basis of power of reasoning they deny the strength and integrity of every living and non-living being and dominates over Nature too. As a result human beings alienate themselves from the whole Nature. But the great divorce between human and nature is threatening now the entire humanity. Human beings are now is forced to 'rethink' about Nature. As a consequence, various environmental issues are emerged and thoughts are developed. But most of these are raised from the interest of their own species. The aim of these thoughts is to protect environment in order to protect human species. Such a view is anthropocentric and ultimately leads them to think human beings as an individual detached from Nature. It treats Nature as 'other' than human beings and environmental degradation is going on in the interest of human.

Thinkers of different countries express their views on environment in different times. Rabindranath Tagore is aptly considered as one of the fifty leading thinkers of the world on environment. His poems, short stories, novels and essays exhibit his love, concern and responsibility for Nature. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the contention that Tagore's approach is different from anthropocentric view in this sense that he "who's soul seems at once to vibrate in full harmony with the orchestra of melodies and echoes reflected from the sound of rushing waters, from the songs of birds, from the rustling of leaves" cannot see himself detached from Nature. Tagore compares this detachment of the man from Nature is like "dividing the bud and the blossom into separate categories and putting their grace to the credit of two different and antithetical principles" (Tagore, 1972 p. 7). His love and care for Nature on aesthetic ground, on the

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other hand, has become one of the major thrust of field of concern for environmentalists throughout the world today.

The development and progress of civilization is always taking place at the cost of Nature which includes not only non-human beings but also human beings of marginalized class. The logic behind to build a dam on the river, or more nuclear power station, or to open a new mine on the edge of a national park, is to increase employment or to bring comfort for the human beings. All these are doing through the destruction of biological diversity, disturbing the harmony of nature and ecological balance.

The basic structure of world view through which human beings continues the domination over and destruction of Nature is based on the rules of two-valued logic. It always divides the world into two opposite parts where the one always is considered superior to the other. Thus, Nature is subordinated to human and the progress of civilization is going on at the expense of the Nature.<sup>1</sup> Peter Singer, in *Practical Ethics* upholds the view that the Western culture and tradition is somehow responsible for the dominating attitude of human over nature. He states that Aristotle maintained a hierarchy in Nature where creatures with less reasoning ability exist for the sake of beings with more reasoning ability.<sup>2</sup>

This dichotomy is nurtured by the enlightenment theory too. The Cartesian concept of dualism makes a difference between spirit and matter. Later, Darwin's theory of survival of the fittest makes the difference broad. The mainstream Christianity, at least its first eighteen centuries, was dominated by the tradition that the natural world exists for the benefit of human beings. As a result, the entire universe other than the human beings is treated as the means of the progress of human civilization. Nature has no intrinsic value. Even the preservation of Nature is considered only from the standpoint of human interest. Environmental concern of Rabindranath is different from such attitude. Through his writings and speeches he has spoken about the kinship of man and Nature, the breaking of which, according to him, brings sorrow and misery. He admits the intrinsic value of Nature.

Rabindranath acknowledges the kinship of man with Nature, the unbroken relation of man and Nature. According to him, the unity of man and Nature was felt by the ancient seers of India. The Indian seers "felt in serene depth of their mind that the same energy which vibrates and passes into endless forms of the world, manifests itself in our inner being as consciousness and there is no break in unity" (Tagore, 1972, p.21). There is no such thing, in his opinion, which is absolutely isolated in existence. Rabindranath criticizes the western attitude to Nature. "In the West the prevalent feeling is that Nature belongs exclusively to inanimate things and to beasts, that there is sudden unaccountable break where human-nature begins". (*Ibid*, p.6) Attacking their reason-based attitude to measure the value of objects he says, "According to it, everything that is low in the scale of beings is merely nature, and whatever is the stamp of perfection on it intellectual or moral is human nature" (*Ibid*, p.7). It is his realization that... "the Indian mind never has any hesitation in acknowledging its kinship with nature, its unbroken relation with all" (*Ibid*, p. 7). He feels that because of wrong perspective of man Nature appears separate or alien or antagonistic to us. He brings the analogy of 'the goal and road'; sometimes he uses the metaphor 'the river and its banks'. All these analogies show that in his opinion the boundaries or the bondages that we see in Nature are actually ways of our onward direction. In his notion of man the concept of 'unity' and harmony has

been always emphasized. Being an *Upanisadic* poet he can easily make the philosophical foundation of unity of man and Nature. In contrast with western cultural tradition the Indian culture projects a holistic all-life embracing view. An all inclusive thought is in the centre of all *Upanisads*. Rabindranath, in a true sense, was an *Upanisadic* poet who harmonized the man and the Nature and recognized the diversities and interconnectedness among human beings and other life forms.

It may be noted that the contemporary environmental ethics speaks about the unity and harmony between man and nature. It recognizes the interdependence of living species and ecosystem. Arne Naess, a philosopher from Norway, proposes an eco-centric theory of environmental ethics which is known as deep ecology. It directs us to preserve the integrity of the environment for its own sake and emphasizes a high degree of symbiosis as a common feature in mature eco systems, interdependence for the benefit of all. The Cosmo-centric theory of environmental ethics believes that “through the extension of our understanding of the ecological context, it will ultimately be possible to develop a sense of belonging with a more expansive perspective eco-spheric belonging” (Srivastava (ed), 2005, p. 27).

In his short story *Balai*, Rabindranath has shown the unity of man and Nature very beautifully. *Balai*, the central character of the story, expands his consciousness to the whole nature by uniting himself with the black clouds of the sky, with the raindrops, with the sunshine. He feels the harmony of the nature at the time of his playing with grasses and feels sorrow when grasses are cut by the gardener. Such attitude leads to a loving and protective attitude towards the world. In the same way Rabindranath points out the kinship of man and Nature in his another story titled *Atithi*. Tarapada, a boy realizes his freedom in the lap of nature, in playing with nature and emancipates himself from the bondage of home. The home and the social customs appear to him as a cause of his alienation from the Nature and it makes a road block to unite him with Nature.

Alienation from Nature, for Rabindranath, brings sorrow to our life and the destruction of Nature is felt as if the destruction of one’s self. He always gives stress on compassion, a lesson of care ethics with Nature which is full of diversity. For Rabindranath, “when we become merely man, not man in the universe”, it creates wildering problems, and having shut off the source of their solution, we try all kinds of artificial methods each of which brings its own crop of interminable difficulties. (Tagore, 1972, pp. 9-10) The problem, according to Rabindranath, lies in maintaining man’s attitude of separate identity and keeps man away from the inner harmony of the universe.

Three elements of human nature namely, pride, greed and power, Rabindranath thinks, are the root causes of man’s separateness from the harmony of the nature. In the play *Muktadhara* through the construction of a dam over the river, Rabindranath has shown that modern development uses its technology, which is a product of human’s rational element, only to conquer Nature. The dam not only would stop the flow of water but also stop to grow the crops of peasants and break the harmony between human and Nature. The Nature is like a mother to Abhijit, the son of the king of *Muktadhara*. The prince revolted against the attempt of putting chain on the river. In *Muktadhara* Rabindranath has given shape the idea that man with his power has attempted to establish his absolute power over Nature. It ultimately destroys the relation of man with Nature and breaks the harmony in Nature. The harmony can be realized through love and care, but not by power. It appears to us as a voice of Eco-feminists, who propagate that modern

development policy, which causes environmental degradation, ignores the symbioses, the interconnections of Nature and sustainability of life. It is a matter of grave concern how common people's life are sacrificed for the sake of the so-called development<sup>3</sup>.

In *Raktakarabi*, Nandini, who is the centre of the play, appears not from the place where labourers are digging the earth for gold, but from that rhythm of nature. Here Rabindranath pointed out that the greed of human's power alienates them from enjoying the beauty of growing grass on the earth, the blooming flower of plants. He was very much aware that human's greed gradually was taking away the fertility of land, caused global warming. Plantation, in his view, is necessary to fulfill the damage occurred by human due to deforestation. He introduced it in Shriniketan and Shantiniketan under the name of Halokarsana.

From the standpoint of moral philosophy there is a distinction between intrinsic value and instrumental value. According to Peter Singer, "something is of intrinsic value if it is good or desirable in itself; the contrast is with 'instrumental value', that is, value as a means to some other end or purpose." (Singer, 2003, p.274) Money is valuable to us only, because it is a means to bring happiness in our life, but if we are in a desert it has no value. Today's environmental ethics emphasizes on the integrity of the biosphere for its own sake. At its most fundamental level it considers the interest of all sentient as well non-sentient creatures and recognizes the value of nature as the source of the greatest value of aesthetic appreciation.

Nature, for Rabindranath, with her varied forms and beauty is not only a "physical phenomena to be turned to use and left aside," but the varied forms of nature are "necessary... in the attainment of the ideal of perfection as every note is necessary to the completeness of the symphony." (Tagore, 1972, p -21) From what has been reflected is that Rabindranath admitted the intrinsic value of nature. His admission of intrinsic value of nature is to be understood in a different way. He adds an aesthetic value to nature. The nature, in the view of Rabindranath, should be preserved because it with all its enthralling beauty causes our aesthetic appreciation. It outwardly appears that Rabindranath takes an anthropocentric attitude in preserving nature and therefore, Nature has only an instrumental value to him. But a close observation shows that his intention is *not to claim that Nature is a means for satisfying human interest, but a source of aesthetic enjoyment – the enjoyment which is disinterested*. In describing the nature of disinterested aesthetic enjoyment Kalyan Sengupta mentioned: "The same forest which is the source of one's livelihood can open a different horizon – an alternative world – which is unconnected with any question of livelihood, with any pragmatic concern or interest" (Palmer, 2001, Routledge, p.145). It does not mean any pragmatic or any instrumental value of Nature. He holds that in our aesthetic experience with nature the relation of love or of heart works and when we love anyone we cannot think of seeing our beloved in the light of any usefulness or interestedness. So the relation of man with nature as a source of aesthetic experience is beyond the bounds of any narrow interest related to material world and disinterested. Rabindranath describes it as "an element of surplus in our heart's relation with the world. When the smile of her baby creates aesthetic experience to the mother this does not mean that the value of baby is instrumental. This type of experience cannot occur unless we feel the unity between the perceiver and the object perceived.

L.E. Johnson, the writer of *A Morally Deep World*, describes the environmental degradation as a time bomb which can explode any time unless man changes his present

attitude to nature which is a suicidal attitude. He feels that today we need an eco-centric view. Such a view recognizes that life in nature (which includes human being) is interdependent and co-operation, mutual care and love should be maintained. From this perspective Tagore is rightly considered as one of the leading thinkers of the world on environment. Tagore's attitude to nature can provide a single motivating force for all the activities and movements aimed at saving the plant from human exploitation and domination.

#### NOTES:

1. The two-valued logic works through the laws of thought which are three in number, namely, law of identity, law of contradiction and law of excluded middle. It dichotomizes the reality into two parts 'p' and 'not-p', which hierarchically opposes to each other and the one always is considered superior to the other. In this way man is superior to women, 'have' to 'have not', developed to underdeveloped, global to local and so on. Therefore, the intra-human discrimination with its multidimensional aspects is also taking place on the basis of rationality and its three laws of thought).
2. Aristotle in his book Politics stated that "Plants exist for the sake of animals, and brute beast for the sake of man – domestic animals for his use and food, wild ones (at any rate most of them) and other accessories of life, such as clothing and various tools." (London, 1916, p -16)
3. Vandana Shiva, a renowned eco-feminist in her article titled 'Homeless in the Global village' says that dams, energy plants, military bases etc. are built up at the cost of nature's life and people's life and also causes the ruins and desecration of sacred soil, the mother of common people, especially the tribal. She writes, "The World bank-financed Suvarnarekha dam is being US\$ 127 million loan, primarily to provide industrial water for the expanding steel city of Jamshedpur. These dams will displace 80,000 tribal". She further points out that the people of Balliapal in coastal Orissa, protested against the setting up of the national rocket test range which would break their link with their 'mother earth' who has nurtured and sustained generations of balliapal farmers. (Mies & Shiva, 2010, pp. 98-101)

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## TRUTH AND TRUTHS: EXPERIMENTS GANDHI MADE

KOUSHIK JOARDAR

The word “experiment” has an empirical tone. Dictionary meanings of “experiment” are “demonstration”, “investigation”, “practical”, “research”, “test”, “trial”, “try-out”, “examine”, “probe” etc. and that of “experimental” is “empirical”, “experiential” etc. It is not unexpected that the word “experiments” appears in the title of the autobiography of a *karmayogi* like Gandhi. The title “My Experiments with Truths” suggests that one is experimenting like a scientist with many alternatives or testing a hypothesis to reach the final truth or to confirm some assumption. Experiments start with assumption rather than conviction. Interestingly, it is “Truth” and not “truths” appear in the title of his autobiography. It suggests that Gandhi was not experimenting with many alternatives or truths but with one truth. Was he then testing a hypothesis?

Gandhi was certain of the Truth he was experimenting with from the very beginning of his experiments and this Truth was God. In his own words, “I think it is wrong to expect certainties in this world, where all else but God that is Truth is an uncertainty.”<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit word for “truth” is “*satya*”. *Satya* means that which is or exists. According to Gandhi, nothing is or exists except Truth. This may mean that what really exists in the ultimate sense (i.e., not an illusion) is the Truth. That is why according to him *sat* or *satya* is the right name for God. Often Gandhi states that it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say God is Truth. But this is not a statement about the ontological priority of Truth over God because he also at times defines God as “God is Truth”.<sup>2</sup> The real significance of the above is that he identifies God with Truth and thinks that in so doing, the real nature of the ultimate is revealed with more clarity. The identification of Truth and God provides the ontological foundation of Gandhi’s ethical teachings. As Truth is one and “all knowledge is necessarily included in it”, one can do no harm to none. Thus, it becomes the philosophical foundation for *ahimsā*. Gandhi’s belief in God or Truth is not a result of his experiments. The strongest proof for the existence of God, Gandhi states, that “If living beings have existence, God is the sum total of all life...”<sup>3</sup> In this proof, the existence of the subordinates becomes the antecedent of God’s existence where *ahimsā* demands that God should be the point of departure. In

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<sup>1</sup> *My Experiments with Truth*, p 243

<sup>2</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 231

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p 156

his metaphysical speculations regarding God, Gandhi fails to remain consistent or sound because his God is neither the result of rationalism nor of empiricism. Faith is the basis of his belief in God. "I have not seen Him, neither have I know Him. I have made the world's faith in God my own." and this faith is ineffaceable.<sup>4</sup> Again, "I have not seen face to face God who is Truth. I have had only a glimpse of Him. But my faith is unshakeable."<sup>5</sup> This faith in God was inherited by him from his *Vaishnava* ancestry through his extremely religious parents. Gandhi suggests in his autobiography that he had "crossed the Sahara of atheism" but there is not much evidence in any form of this claim. Nevertheless, he was critical about many old traditions including *varnavyāvasthā*, child-marriage and some age-old conventions derived from *Manusmṛti*. With time, his concept of God evolved into a profound philosophical one but at no point of his life he was without the belief in one Supreme Being called God. In Gandhi's own words, "There was a time when I doubted the existence of God, but even then at that time I did not doubt the existence of Truth. This Truth is not a material quality but is pure consciousness. That alone holds the universe together. It is God because it rules the whole universe."<sup>6</sup> Thus, the so called doubt may mean only a doubt in some anthropomorphic God, but his faith in God (or Truth) as the highest authority of the universe was continuous. The belief in this Truth which is God was not an outcome of experiments but handed down to him by tradition. Bhikhu Parekh rightly observes "... although Gandhi thought otherwise, he was not so much experimenting with truths as living according to already accepted truths, an important distinction blurred by the English expression "experiments with truth" as well as its Gujarati original (*satyana prayago*). He took a good deal of Hindu metaphysics and morality for granted. He accepted that Brahman alone was real, all life was one, selfhood was an illusion, and so on, none of which was a truth based on his own or anyone else's experiments."<sup>7</sup>

What then Gandhi was doing in the name of experiments? Is the title of the autobiography a misnomer? In the concluding chapter of *My Experiments with Truth*, he writes, "To describe truth, as it has appeared to me, and in the exact manner, in which I have arrived at it, has been my ceaseless effort." Effort, no doubt was there. But experiment? We already have seen that His Truth was not something to which he arrived at. But one must notice his use of the words "Truth" and "truth". Whatever the title of the autobiography may suggest, Gandhi was actually experimenting with truths ("truth" with small "t"). Indeed his faith in Truth was unshakeable; nevertheless, he also had tried to experience Truth. His desire to 'see' the Truth was no less strong than his belief in the same. His quest was in fact the means that would lead to that very experience of the already accepted Truth, the means that would face him God. These means are truths. For Gandhi, as it was for Aristotle, means are no less important than the end and it is only with respect to means that we are free. However, the means he adopted are again mostly the traditional Hindu ways or moral codes prescribed in *Śāstras* (Hindu Scriptures) although he was very critical about some of the codes and customs of Hindu tradition, especially of the caste system. Gandhi's experiments were really to live according to the

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<sup>4</sup> *My Experiments with Truth*, p 270

<sup>5</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 234

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p 234

<sup>7</sup> *Colonialism, Tradition and Reform*, p 84

means (truths) in order to achieve, to experience the end (Truth). Although he remained firm in his belief in Truth till his death, he never claimed to “know” the same. “Have you seen God?” young Vivekananda once asked Sri Ramakrishna. “Yes I have seen Her as I can see you.” replied Ramakrishna. Gandhi wished to have such a claim but all he could say that he had been able to have the little fleeting glimpses of Truth. More he became desperate to “know” the Truth, more his *āgraha* (firmness) in truths, i.e., in means increased and Truth and truths became closer and closer. *Ahimsā* is not just a way but Gandhi sometimes spoke of it as an end in itself. However, all the means Gandhi prescribed and adopted were guided by his concept of all embracing Truth. In his autobiography Gandhi mentions the following means he tried to live in accordance with: *ahimsā*, truthfulness, faithfulness, vegetarianism and other experiments in dietetics, *brahmacharya* or celibacy and various other self-restraints, non-possession, self-dependency, nature treatments, service to the nation (*satyāgraha*, non-cooperation, *khadi* movements and some other ways), etc. These means are also virtues. Here again like Aristotle Gandhi maintains that virtues are not innate but to be acquired by constant practice. These means are also called as *vrata* or vow in Gandhian philosophy. The original meaning of *vrata* was ‘the divine command’, but in due course of time it acquires the meaning of taking resolution and observance of some means like fasting etc., especially for religious purpose. In *Ashrama observance in Action* and *From Yeravda Mandir*, Gandhi mentions of eleven cardinal virtues which are to be observed by any *satyāgrahi* and these are: truth, non-violence, chastity, control of the palate, non-stealing, non-possession, physical labour, *swadeshi* (service to nation), fearlessness, removal of untouchability and Tolerance.<sup>8</sup>

*Ahimsā* is the fundamental principle behind all of Gandhi’s experiments. Search for Truth is vain unless it is founded on *ahimsā* as the basis, maintains Gandhi. “...if every page of these chapters [of *My Experiments with Truth*] does not proclaim to the reader that the only means for the realisation of Truth is *Ahimsā*, I shall deem all my labour in writing these chapters to have been in vain.”<sup>9</sup> *Ahimsā* necessarily follows from Gandhi’s concept Truth. God is one, nothing can lie outside Him, and therefore, one can harm none. The word *ahimsā* (non-violence) has a negative import in Yoga system of philosophical tradition. In *Yoga* tradition, *ahimsā* means dissociation from things. Non-violence in that sense is passiveness. Gandhi took great care to distinguish his theory of non-violence from mere passiveness. A non-violent person in the sense that has been expressed in *Yoga* cannot love others. For Gandhi, love must express itself in action. X loves Y implies if Y is in distress then X will go out of his way to relieve Y. Someone is in distress means she is under violence. To love is to act against violence without doing harm to any person. Thus, although the word “*ahimsā*” is taken from Hindu philosophical schools, Christianity has considerable influence upon building the concept of *ahimsā* as active love. A. C. Bouquet observes “Gandhiji was nobly inconsistent when he made unselfish service of his fellowmen part of the discipline to which he subjected himself in order to free his soul from the bonds of the flesh, since self-forgetful service of others is a Christian, not a Hindu idea.”<sup>10</sup> The impression behind such comment is that an ideal

<sup>8</sup> *The Moral Philosophy of Gandhi*, p 198

<sup>9</sup> *My Experiments with Truth*, p 490

<sup>10</sup> *Comparative Religion*, p 150

Hindu is a world-renouncing ascetic seeking his own *mokṣa*. The observation is partially true.

Throughout his life Gandhi tried his best to live according to the ideal of *ahimsā*. All his actions, in family, social and political life were guided by the principle of non-violence. *Ahimsā* as a struggle, we have already seen, is to be distinguished from passive resistance. In order to signal the difference he coined the term *satyāgraha*. The word is constituted of two Sanskrit words, *satya* (= *sat*), meaning truth and *āgraha*, meaning firmness. Passive resistance was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, characterised by hatred and could finally manifest itself as violence. The term *satyāgraha* was coined to designate the political struggle of the South African-Indian and later on that of the People of the sub-continent under the leadership of Gandhi but gradually it acquired a greater connotation. In his speech “The secret of *satyāgraha* in South Africa”, Gandhi explains that there are two ways of combating injustice. One way is to smash the head of the wrong doer and even get one’s own head smashed in the process and the other method is *satyāgraha* in which one opposes the atrocious policies of Government without restoring to violence, although the activist himself might have to suffer pain and even death.<sup>11</sup> He further differentiates *satyāgraha* from passive resistance by mentioning three essentials of the former: *satyāgraha* is the weapon of the strong, it admits no violence under any circumstances and it always insists upon truth.<sup>12</sup> A violent method may bring a desired change but it cannot be done without hurting anybody which is contrary to Truth. Moreover, when change in any social, political, moral or any other field is brought under compulsion, it never lasts for long. Change under force vanishes when the force is withdrawn. *Satyāgraha* brings it desired change by changing the wrong doer’s mind. Justice that is done freely endures. Moreover, *satyāgraha* acts as a kind of catharsis in which the participants direct violence against themselves (by accepting violence from the other side.). *Satyāgraha* is also a force but a force devoid of violence. Gandhi explains – there is no religion other than truth (this “truth” relates religion with Truth) and religion is also love. As there is only one religion, it follows that truth (as means) and love are identical. He continues – conduct based on truth is impossible without love (we have seen earlier that *ahimsā* is action out of love and the only conduct consistent with Truth). “Truth-force [=truth force] is then love-force.”<sup>13</sup> Civil disobedience and submission to the penalty of the disobedience, non-cooperation, boycott, labour and social service, *charkha*, hartal, fasting etc. are some of Gandhi’s weapon in experimenting *satyāgraha* in his political and social struggle. In its greater connotation, all sorts of struggle of a Truth-seeker in any field are *satyāgraha*. Gandhi’s experiments with *satyāgraha* faced much criticism from moral and philosophical point of view for his support to the British Empire in Boer war, Zulu rebellion and world wars. Even Mr. Pollock, his friend, co-worker and follower of ideals, the very person who gave him Ruskin’s *Unto This Last* to read that changed Gandhi’s life, questioned the very act of taking part in the war. The main point was that war is not consistent with *ahimsā*.

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<sup>11</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 304-5

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, p 318

<sup>13</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 316

One may not be satisfied but the justification of the above from Gandhi's point of view is as follows. Gandhi never concealed his 'genuine sense of loyalty' to the British Rule. Till the late twenties he was a believer in the Empire and was of the opinion that British Rule was over all good for India. What he wished was an equal status of the Indians with the British and that with the British help. In South Africa, he fought for the equal right and status of the Indians and not against the Rule. He knew that when two nations are at war, the primary duty of a votary of *ahimsā* is to stop it. But first of all he was in no position to persuade any side to stop the First World War. He has not become the great Mahatma Gandhi at that time and the war was already started. The only option left was, as a representative of an exploited nation who was enjoying the protection of the British Fleet and its armed might, and who also want to elevate his country men's status with British help, to take part in the war in favour of the Empire and combat the immediate danger. The logic is simple. If you expect something, something is also expected from you. Socrates was not against the State but only expected it to be a perfect one. So, as an obedient but critical citizen, he was subject to the laws of the state. He accepted the death-sentence given unto him by the court knowing that justice was not done; the very institution of State demands from its citizens to obey its laws. Socrates and Gandhi were not like us. We criticize and expect care and service from our State, municipalities, hospitals, railways and various other bodies without playing our part in those fields. As to the Second World War, Gandhi had tried to stop it. He himself wrote to Hitler regarding that but his effort ended up in smoke. The formula Hitler offered to the British for dealing with Indian National Congress during a meeting with Lord Halifax in 1938 was: kill Gandhi.<sup>14</sup> In his letters to Hitler, Gandhi addressed him as "my friend". Gandhi wrote two letters to Hitler, one in 1939 and the other in 1940. In his letters Gandhi explained the value of non-violence and requested Hitler to stop the war because he was the only person who could do that. As it was quite Gandhian to try to sell non-violence to the merchant of violence, it was also quite Hitlerian to reject Gandhi's appeal for peace. Realising that preventing war was beyond his capacity and Adolf Hitler as a greater danger, Gandhi decided to support the British in the war. Complete *ahimsā* is not achievable in our mundane life. Gandhi maintains that in so far as one possesses a physical body, one has to consciously or unconsciously commit *himsā* (violence). The very act of living (eating, drinking and moving around) involves some *himsā*, destruction of life, be it ever so minute.

Gandhi's experiments with dietetics and his vegetarianism follow directly from his concept of *ahimsā*. Vegetarianism, to some extent he inherits from his *vaisnava* ancestry. *Vaisnavas* are worshiper of Lord Visnu, one of the deities of the famous trinity (Brahmā-Visnu-Maheśvara) and refrain from killing any animal as they see Him in all creatures. But when Gandhi was in high school he was persuaded by his friends to believe that English are mightier because they are meat-eater. Thus persuaded he started taking meat but soon gave it up for the sake of truthfulness to his parents. However, his vegetarianism had its moral basis only when he began to understand the principle of *ahimsā* with all its bearings. If Truth is one, how can one kill any animal just for one's own enjoyment? Moreover, as superior animal, humans should protect lower ones rather than causing harm to them. Gandhi seems to have become aware of the anti utilitarian

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<sup>14</sup> Dr. Koenraad ELST in "Mahatma Gandhi's letters to Hitler"

stand that humans take food primarily for the satisfaction of their instinct of hunger, not for enjoyment or pleasure. Thus, animal flesh neither could be a basic need for sustaining life. Gandhi often campaigned for vegetarianism for its being beneficial on hygienic, economic and other grounds but the main reason behind was ethical. He did not subscribe to doctor's advice for taking meat on health-ground even when his life was in danger. Only once he broke his vow. For him, milk taking was also *himsā* to cow and its calves. Cow-milk is not meant for men and so he took a vow to give up drinking milk. In 1919, when he was almost near death-door, doctors declared that he could not survive without at least milk. Gandhi succumbed to the advice and took goat's milk for recovery. He took goat-milk because, as he reasoned for himself, when he took the vow, only cows and buffaloes were in his mind. Gandhi himself was not so much convinced and satisfied with this argument because his experiments in dietetics were dear to him "as a part of his researches in *ahimsā*". He saw this compromise as a defeat of the truth but at that time his will to continue the *satyāgraha* against Rowlatt Bill was so strong that he had to make the compromise. Moreover, he already knew that complete *ahimsā* is unachievable in so far one dwells in a body.

*Brahmacharya* or celibacy along with fasting, simple living etc., constitute Gandhi's asceticism which is a part of his *satyāgraha*. "[M]orally I have no doubt that all self-denial is good for the soul", he writes.<sup>15</sup> Why self-denial is good? In Indian tradition, what-questions rather than why-questions in morality are encouraged more. Nevertheless, we can have an answer by reflecting on the metaphysical and religious doctrines of India and world as a whole. Cartesian dualism can be traced back long before Descartes has offered it in his unique rationalistic presentation. A mind sits in an alien body. The ghost began to occupy the machine from the time of emergence of Spiritism out of mere Animism in the history of the human thought. Asceticism identifies self with mind or soul and holds that religious excellence can be achieved by extreme bodily mortification. West has a long tradition of asceticism from Pythagoreans to Kierkegaard through medieval Gnostics. It has a significant place in Christianity as well. In India too, rigourism has been a popular religious path to be followed by the aspirants. The land has always shown great reverence to *sanyasis* who have sacrificed bodily comfort for achieving spiritual excellence. It is animals who live just to satisfy their bodily instincts and are governed wholly by the laws of nature. But human laws cannot be the laws of body only. Body they all have. But soul? It resides only in the human body and is the essence of its being. So ignoring, denying, rejecting body has become a popular practice among philosophers and religious moral aspirants. Gandhi, who was influenced both by western and Indian religious traditions took asceticism for granted and tried to live according to that ideal. "The body exists because of our ego. The utter extinction of the body is *moksa*. He who has achieved such extinction of the ego becomes the very image of Truth; he may also be called the Brahman."<sup>16</sup>

Gandhi's asceticism can be looked upon from another stand point. Our relation with our body is ambiguous. I have body as well as I am a body. When I say that "I am thirsty", I do not really mean that only my body is thirsty. Thus, as sometimes I dissociate

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<sup>15</sup> *My Experiments with Truth*, p 317

<sup>16</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 227

myself from my body, I also identify myself at times with my body. By identifying oneself with one's body one pains it to arouse pity and sympathy in others. Children and also adults sometimes refuse to take food for the same purpose. From religious point of view, the same is done to draw the attention of the God. Thus, from this point, self-mortification is a conspicuous act. Gandhi's religious asceticism can well be looked upon from this point. His political fasting was surely conspicuous and produced a hand full of positive results. Ethically, Gandhi was anti-utilitarian and was a critic of their 'greatest number' as well as 'pleasure' theory. Gandhi was convinced that our basic need is not pleasure but to sustain life. Thus, to Gandhi, a life of bodily pleasure could have justification from no point of view.

His *brahmacharya* has another moral significance. Kant has distinguished between pathological and moral love. Love is pathological when nature inclines one to do so. Pathological love is generally determined by biology, e.g. when mother loves her sibling. Pathological love is not morally valuable because the agent's action is determined by non-moral factors. Love is rational or moral when nature does not play any role and it springs from one's will only. Gandhi's celibacy was inspired by such kind of thought ignited him by his friend Raychandbhai. The devotion of the wife to her husband or vice versa is natural because of the (sexual) bond they have between them but it is not as worthy as the devotion of the servant to his master because the latter is unconditional. "What then, I asked myself, should be my relation with my wife? Did my faithfulness consist in making my wife the instrument of my lust? So long as I was the slave of lust, my faithfulness was worth nothing....It was therefore the easiest thing for me to take the vow of *brahmacharya*, if only I willed it."<sup>17</sup> It is not clear however whether Gandhi would maintain that a Truth-seeker is better not to have a wife because in that case (if married), it would be difficult to answer what makes my wife *my* wife. She (or he) should not be an instrument of my celibacy either.

Let us now turn our attention from the discussion of asceticism to different meanings of truth. We have already seen that the Sanskrit counterpart of the word "truth" is "*satya*" that again comes from "*sat*", meaning to be or to exist or simply what *is*. What exists? Only God exists in the ultimate sense. Other senses of "truth" are accuracy, authenticity, correctness, exactness, factuality, genuineness, integrity, reliability, truthfulness, faithfulness, veracity etc. Gandhi was loyal to all the senses of "truth". All these senses of truth of course are related and what is common to them can be stated in the language of the logicians as "what is the case". Falsity is "what is not the case" or simply what *is* not. Truthfulness is must for a Truth-seeker. As a lawyer, he realised the paramount importance of facts. "Facts mean truth and once we adhere to truth, the law comes to our aid naturally."<sup>18</sup> This is true for human (legal) as well as divine (moral) laws. True words were immensely important to him because these describe the fact or what is the case. That is why writing (autobiography) is itself one of the experiments with truth – says Gandhi.<sup>19</sup> Confession of his stealing coppers from servant's pocket-money to satisfy his desire for smoking in his very early age before his father and the reader, stating his physical relationship with his wife when his father was in deathbed, statement

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<sup>17</sup> *My Experiments with Truth*, p 198

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p 128

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, p 271

of his injustice that he made towards his wife etc. made him unique as a person and as an autobiographer. Throughout his life Gandhi tried to remain faithful to his parents, his wife and friends. His autobiography is also an experiment to state exactly what he is. He hated to deceive anybody.

*Aparigraha* (non-possession) is another ideal Gandhi tried to realise in its completeness. Two of Gandhi's allied ideals – non-possession and non-stealing (*asteya*), along with his study of English law ultimately give rise to his concept of trusteeship. Stealing means to deprive one of one's property and this causes harm to that person. Thus, non-stealing is an integral part of *ahimsā*. Again, to possess property what one does not need means somebody is deprived of what one needs. In that way, possessing property without needing it is also considered as stealing from the Gandhian point of view. Next, God is the sole proprietor of everything. How can one claim something to be his or her own when that something truly belongs to the God? “[A]ny claim to anything as our own property, according to Gandhi, is a violation of divine law.”<sup>20</sup> Moreover, property is possessed by people for future security which indicates lack of faith in God's grace and kindness. Is not the body itself possession enough? The *Gītā*, as Gandhi claims, with its teaching of non-attachment (*anāsakti*) also nourished the theory of trusteeship.

A trustee is a person who preserves and protects certain property for the welfare of others. Gandhi rejects ownership of property by individual human beings because all have come from God. A person who by some chance happens to inherit or acquire some amount of property should take for himself only enough to satisfy basic needs and spend the rest for social service – this was his moral as well as political prescription. The formula regarding trusteeship that has been approved by Gandhi is as follows:

- Trusteeship provides a means of transforming the capitalist order of society into an egalitarian one.
- The right of private property is not recognised by it.
- It does not exclude legislative regulation of the ownership and use of wealth.
- An individual is not free to use his wealth only for his own sake under state regulated trusteeship.
- A justified and reasonable minimum and maximum living wage should be fixed.
- The character of production will be determined by social necessity.

The significance of the theory of trusteeship is to be understood also from the socio-political scene of India at Gandhi's time. It is an appeal to the privileged classes (zaminders, ruling chiefs etc.) to come down to the level of those who earn their bread and butter by labour. In principle, Gandhi accepted the active part of the state in ending private ownership. But state is a soul-less machinery and depends on violence for bringing in any change. In the ultimate analysis, Gandhi was against the institution of state. State regulated trusteeship is thus only a step towards a trusteeship driven by conscience. The theory of trusteeship is very much akin to the socialistic rejection of private ownership of properties. In his answer to the question regarding the relation between trusteeship and non-violence<sup>21</sup> Gandhi points out the difference between his theory and the theory of the socialists. As to the abolition of private properties, Gandhi

<sup>20</sup> *The Moral Philosophy of Gandhi*, p 230

<sup>21</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 403-4

and the socialists were of the same opinion but unlike the latter, Gandhi was against using force in doing so because that would amount to violence. Any change brought by force from outside is only a temporary one. Trustees should be made from within the agents at their free will. Thus, a complete realisation of non-violence will lead to a stateless autonomous society in which the society itself will be the only trustee to protect the properties for the use of its members. Karl Marx also dreamt of a stateless society where all the humans will enjoy equal opportunity, right and honour but he admitted of violent method in bringing in the desired change. Gandhi hated to contradict his thought and speech by his deeds. As soon as he realised the moral significance of trusteeship in his mind, he stopped saving anything then after for himself and his family. He would not agree that he was escaping his responsibility to support his own family because the meaning of ‘family’ for him got widened after that realisation. If one ceases to be possessive, one makes no distinction between mine and others and acquires equability (*samabhāva*) towards others.<sup>22</sup>

All of Gandhi’s experiments were aimed at realising, contemplating and knowing Truth. That is why, all the truths, all his concepts follow from his concept of Truth and are internally related to each other. Fearlessness, for example, is a necessary condition for *ahimsā*. We have already seen that *ahimsā* is not passivity but an activity out of love. How can one act out of love and fight for justice if one is coward? Physical labour, even from moral point of view is valuable for it makes one independent. Dependency on others produces expectation and this again may give rise to *himsā* if not fulfilled. Tolerance is a virtue necessarily to be possessed by a votary of Truth. Truth can be looked at from different angles and represented in various ways. What he says about books is his general view about Truth and truths – “A writer almost always presents one aspect of a case, whereas every case can be seen from no less than seven points of view, all of which are probably correct by themselves, but not correct at the same time and in the same circumstances.”<sup>23</sup> It is not a small thing that Gandhi, who is considered as not much modern in his mindset by many, is suggesting a postmodern concept of many possible interpretations of a text; although from a different agenda (the postmoderners of course would not admit of the ultimate one). Different religions have described the same Truth at different times and places. To think that only my religion is true is not only a failure to understand God but inevitably would amount to *himsā* and history proves this. *Swadeshi* is another Gandhian virtue which is not to be understood only as service to one’s own country. If self-dependency is true for an individual, the same is also true for one’s own country – this is the true sense of *swadeshi* in Gandhi’s philosophy and *khadi* (home spinning and weaving industry) is the symbol of that vow. A country is not independent if all its members are not independent. So, besides pursuit of your own independence, you must support your own neighbours to earn their own livelihood. If I allow and support some trader from outside which ultimately will compel my neighbour to leave his or her place for earning, then it will be contrary to the ideal of *swadeshi*. In the same line, if I deprive my neighbour of the fruits of my trade, I violate the ideal. “I suggest to you we are departing from one of the sacred laws of being when we leave our neighbour and go

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<sup>22</sup> *My Experiments with Truth*, p 257

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p 262

out somewhere else in order to satisfy our wants.”<sup>24</sup> This interpretation of *swadeshi* by Gandhi himself leaves an ample scope of criticism but the present incidents of violence in India resulting from sectarian agitations may suggest us to rethink over the matter from this point of view. Moreover, the point is not so much about allowing the outsider to trade in my place but to support the trader at my own door and see that he doesn't have to leave his own place for his livelihood.

Gandhi surely was a philosopher but of a different kind from what the word suggests. He has realised many deeper truths not by wide reading and just reasoning within himself but through his actions. He built his concepts and established their relations gradually in his experiments with truths. If *yogi* is a seeker of the truth then he has chosen the path of the *karmayogi* rather than that of the *bhaktiyogi* or *jñānayogi*. But the true spirit of Gandhi is not to be found in his philosophy. It is the fearless love for others that made him the *Mahatma*. There may be many greater philosophers in the world than Gandhi but only few lovers of mankind than him. No experiment can produce love but experiments without love are valueless.

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<sup>24</sup> *Essential Writings*, p 288

## **THE MORAL STATUS OF ANIMALS**

LAXMIKANTA PADHI

Is moral concern something owed by human beings only to human beings? Certainly two thousand five hundred years of moral philosophy have tended to suggest that this is the case, surprisingly enough, not by systematic argument, but simply by taking it for granted. Yet this answer is by no means obvious, and it crumbles when exposed to the most childlike question of all, "Why."

Animals are the most culturally and materially significant part of our earthly home. The evidence for this is obvious, sometimes surprising, and sometimes very close at hand. Say for instance, the first prehistoric art was primarily about animals. Wolves are the likely model for human civilization. Cattle, goats and sheep were domesticated before crops. Cats melded into human society without becoming fully domesticated. Companion animals remain our closest personal relation with non-human nature. Billions of animals are used for human purposes including research, experimentation, food and clothing. This implies that animals are simply ordinary entities and do not come under the purview of morality.

The practical field of animal ethics is animal right. Animal ethics examines the beliefs that are held about the moral status of animals. But animal ethics does not presume that any particular point of view is good and right. It accommodates a number of approaches for trying to resolve animal-human moral issues. Animal rights, on the other hand, is a doctrine about how humans should treat animals and states that animals should have rights, somewhat like but not exactly the same as humans rights. Animal rights concentrates on sentient animals and its basic doctrine is that using animals for human gain is morally wrong and should be stopped. Animal right is a movement that intends to protect all animals from being exploited and abused by humans. This includes the use of animals for anything that causes them pain and suffering, such as medical experimentation, imprisonment in circuses and zoos, and fur production.

There is an ethical dilemma and inconsistency in applied ethics with regard to our treatment of human life as opposed to our treatment of all other life-forms. In the traditional Western moral philosophy human's despot like attitude or human chauvinism (what Ryder, and Singer called speciesism) is prevalent. Traditionalist claims that animals are inferior to humans in power, intelligence and evolutionary status. They are

neither moral agent, nor rational, neither possessed with free will, nor are they capable of linguistic expressions thus, they are not bounded by social contract to humans and so on. Many key philosophers of the past centuries have largely given negative view about animals and rejected their moral status or standing and therefore, their rights. Say for example, philosophers from Plato to Rawls have shown their preferences for human chauvinism, which make human and only human to be worthy of moral consideration.

What is moral standing? An individual has moral standing for us if we believe that it makes a difference, morally, how that individual is treated, apart from the effects it has on others. That is, an individual has moral standing for us if, when making moral decisions, we feel we ought to take that individual's welfare into account for the individual's own sake and not merely for our benefit or someone else's benefit. Say for example, a doctor who attends to the physical welfare of her patients and believes that it would be morally wrong to mistreat them. Suppose that she believes this, not because of any benefits she will derive from taking good care of them nor because she is afraid of being sued, but only because she has a genuine concern for her patients' well-being. Her patients have moral standing for her. On the other hand, take a farmer who looks after the welfare of his cows and who also believes that it would be morally wrong to mistreat them. But suppose he believes this only because mistreating them would decrease their milk production and their milk is an essential source of nourishment and income for his family. Although this farmer considers his cows' welfare, he does so only for the sake of his family and not for the sake of the cows themselves. For the farmer, the cows have no moral standing.

For approximately the last three decades, attention paid to the issue of the moral consideration of animals has grown spectacularly. Many key philosophers in the past centuries have largely given negative view about animals and rejected their moral status. Say for example, for Aristotle, the most important faculty is the power of reasoning and only humans can reason. He said that:

Plant exist for the sake of animals, brute and beast for the sake of man, domestic animal for his use and food, wild one for food and other accessories of life such as clothing and various tools. Since nature makes nothing purposeless or in vain, it is undeniably true that she has made all animals for the sake of man.<sup>1</sup>

Aristotle concluded that we can use animals without considering what we give to human beings. Christian philosopher St. Thomas Aquinas argues that since the only beings that are rational are capable of determining their actions, they are the only beings towards which we should extend concern "for their own sakes". In his major work *The Summa Theologica* Aquinas followed the passage from Aristotle and made classification of sins. In the gradation of sins he has room only for sins against God, our neighbors and us. There is no possibility of sinning against nonhuman animals or the natural world<sup>2</sup>. Aquinas believes that if a being cannot direct its own actions then others must do so; these sorts of beings are merely instruments. Thus, for Aquinas only human beings are capable of achieving the final end, all other beings exist for the sake of human beings and their achievement of this final end of the universe. Descartes thought that "... Animals are "thoughtless brutes", *automata*, machines. Despite appearances to the contrary, they

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<sup>1</sup> Singer, P. *The Environment: Practical Ethics* 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

are not aware of anything, neither sounds nor smells, nor tastes, heat nor cold: they experience neither hunger nor thirst, fear nor rage, pleasure nor pain. They are like clocks: they are able to do something better than we can, just as a clock can keep better time: but, like the clock, animals are not conscious....”<sup>3</sup>

Kant believed that animals are not conscious and may therefore, be used as a means to an end, as a way of getting something we want. The absence of language in the nonhuman species indicates their absence of thought. This is the view also held by Descartes and Kant who give priority to rationality and power of communication, which is necessary to form concepts. In the natural order human beings have highest reasoning capacity. Inanimate objects and plants do not have this ability. Natural objects are incapable of planning, reasoning, analyzing and organizing, using or creating language. Extraordinarily, even Wittgenstein, the most anti-Cartesian of all philosophers, shares the Cartesian bias against animal mentation by virtue of the absence of language in animals. In one passage he tells us that:

“If a lion could speak, we could not understand him; in another he suggests that it is conceptually impossible for an animal to smile. He also suggests that a dog cannot simulate pain or feel remorse, that an animal can not hope or consciously imitate, and that a dog cannot mean something by wagging its tail and a crocodile cannot think.”<sup>4</sup>

The point here is Wittgenstein’s reasoning is somewhat different from that of Descartes’.<sup>5</sup> The comment about the lion suggests that since nonhuman species have a radically different form of life, we would not privy to it even if they did have a rule-governed language.<sup>6</sup> So it is clear that human beings have supremacy over nonhuman nature which goes against the moral status of animals or nonhuman species.

These and other philosophers spelt tragedy for many animals by doing nothing that challenged the deep-rooted assumption held by human beings. For them, the claims of humans always have priority over the needs of animals. Some physiologists make clear in believing that, “in contrast to ourselves, animal behaviour is mechanical, driven by the dictates of nature and immune to the processes of reflective cognition that we take for granted. It is a black, silent existence that is not conscious of its own processes or, at the very most, a dark murky experience that does not compare with our own.”<sup>7</sup>

In the religious tradition like the Judaic-Christian tradition a kind of dualistic view is found where it is said that God is a supernatural and spiritual being who shares his spirituality only with human beings. No other beings have such kind of spirituality. According to the ancient Hebrew tradition in 1450 B.C. the divine creator created the world as good and man and woman in His own image. It is said in the *Genesis* that:

God said “let us make man in our own image in the likeness of ourselves and let them be the master of the fish, of the sea, the birds of the heaven, the cattle, all the wild beasts and the earth”. God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God He created them. God blessed them saying to them “Be

<sup>3</sup> Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, (Portions reprinted in *Animal Rights*, edit. Regan and Singer), p.62

<sup>4</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations* Oxford: Blackwell, 1958, p. 90,153,166,174,224

<sup>5</sup> For Descartes, language expresses thought and codifies it, but an individual being in a solipstic universe logically *could* have thought even in the absence of public language. (Rollin, Bernard E. *Thought without Language: The Unheeded Cry*, OUP: 1989)

<sup>6</sup> Rollin, Bernard E. *Thought without Language: The Unheeded Cry*, OUP: 1989

<sup>7</sup> Internet Resources

fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and conquer it. Be masters of the sea, the birds of the heaven and all living animals of the earth.<sup>8</sup>

However, 18th century might have witnessed a beginning of rescue for animals. In his work *The Decent of Man* in 1871, Darwin claims that a moral sense, a conscience, is present to some degree in many other animals.<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Bentham wrote, “The question is not can they reason? Nor, can they talk? But can they suffer?”<sup>10</sup> He thought that animals can feel pain and the essential attribute qualifying an animal to be under moral consideration is the capacity for suffering and no other reference is necessary, not the power of reasoning, nor consciousness or cognition. Darwin argues “natural selection cannot possibly produce any modification in a species exclusively for the good of another species.” Darwin mentioned that:

Man is a part of nature and one of the products of the evolutionary processes. That man is an ecological species but this species has evolved with such unique and unprecedented properties on the animal level that in man the biological evolution has transcended itself.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to the careful observations he made, Darwin also pursued a variety of experiments on animal mentation. Darwin placed great emphasis on verifying any data subject to the slightest question. Furthermore, in *The Descent of Man* Darwin specifically affirmed that “there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher animals in their mental facilities,” and that “the lower animals, like man manifestly feel pleasure and pain, happiness, and misery.”<sup>12</sup> Joel Feinberg states that to have a right is to have a claim to something and against someone and declares that only beings that can be said to have interests are capable of claiming such rights.<sup>13</sup> He also asserts that though animals cannot express their feelings and emotions verbally, they have interests especially the interest for not to suffer pain and seek pleasure. In other words, the interest of every being that has interest is to be taken into consideration and treated equally with the like interests of any other beings. Though philosophers have different views regarding the “criteria of consideration” but our consideration for others must not depend whether they are possessed with certain characteristics. For Bentham, if a being suffers, there can be no moral justification to refute to take its suffering under moral consideration rather its sufferings can be counted equally with the like suffering of any other beings. One clear sign of moral agency or under moral consideration is the possession of personhood. John Locke notes:

“the word *person*, is a forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit; and so belongs only to intelligent agents, capable of a law, and happiness and misery.

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<sup>8</sup> *Genesis* 1-3: 26, 27-28

<sup>9</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, New York: Hafner Press, 1948, p. 310-311 and Singer, P. *Animal Liberation* 2nd edition, New York: Avon Books, 1990, p. 7-9

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>11</sup> Dobzhansky, T. Human Nature as a Product of Evolution: *The Range of Ethics* Harold H. Titus, Morris T. Keeton, East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1972, p.123

<sup>12</sup> Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* New York: Modern Library, 1971, p. 448

<sup>13</sup> Feinberg, J. Interest Theory of Rights, the Rights of Animals and Future Generations: *Philosophy and Environmental Crisis* edit. Blackstone, W. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1974, p.48-68

This personality extends itself beyond present existence to what is past, only by consciousness, - whereby it becomes concerned and accountable...”<sup>14</sup>

Thus, it can be said that if the possession of personhood is a sign of moral agency, then animals are not far behind from moral consideration. Also Locke, while responding to Rene Descartes’ claim that ‘animals were simply machines’, makes patent his belief in their mental lives. In some way inconsistently, he allows that they can reason, without the ability to abstract. After affirming that perception is indubitably in all animals, and thus that they have ideas, he asserts that if they have any ideas at all, and are not bare machines, we cannot deny them to have some reason.<sup>15</sup> For Locke,

It seems as evident to me, that they do some of them in certain instances reason, as that they have sense; but it is only in particular ideas, just as they received them from their senses. They are the best of them tied up within those narrow bounds, and have not (as I think) the faculty to enlarge them by any kind of abstraction.<sup>16</sup>

In another passage, he ridicules those who would assert “that dogs or elephants do not think when they give all the demonstration of it imaginable, except only telling us that they do so.”<sup>17</sup> Also it is David Hume who, among the empiricists, most unequivocally affirmed the existence of animal thought and mentation. Perhaps the greatest sceptic in the history of philosophy, Hume nonetheless extends no doubt to animal mind. In Section XIV of the *Treatise*, “of the Reason of Animals,” Hume affirms “next to the ridicule of denying an evident truth, is that of taking much pains to defend it; and no truth appears to me more evident, than that beasts are endowed with thought and reason as well as men. The arguments are in this case so obvious, that they never escape the most stupid and ignorant.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, it can be said that the certainty of animal thought is affirmed throughout subsequent empiricist British philosophy, with Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

From a religious perspective some verses in the ninth chapter of *Genesis*, revealed the fact that that God made his covenant with Noah to include not only human beings but also animals.

**Verse-12:** And God said this is the token of the covenant, which I make between one and you and every living creature that is with you for perpetual generations.

**Verse -15:** And I will remember my covenant, which is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.

For Kant, there can be more extensive indirect duties to animals. These duties extend not simply to the duty to refrain from harming the property of others and the duty to not offend animal lovers. Rather, we also have a duty to refrain from being cruel to

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<sup>14</sup> In addition to the normative component, there is also a descriptive component of the concept of person. A person, as Locke says, “is a thinking intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing, in different times and places ...” Besides self-awareness and intelligence (including the capacity to reason), autonomy to some extent can be considered as another essential part of personhood. (John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* edit. A. C. Fraser, New York: Dover Publications, 1959, p. 467)

<sup>15</sup> John Locke, *an Essay Concerning Human Understanding* New York: Dutton, 1871, p. 117

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 127

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p.87

<sup>18</sup> Hume,D. *A Treatise of Human Nature* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, p. 176

them. Kant argues that our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity. “Animal nature has analogies to human nature, and by doing our duties to animals in respect of manifestations of human nature, we indirectly do our duty to humanity.... We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals.”<sup>19</sup>

In *Animal Liberation* Peter Singer, the founder of modern practical ethics claims moral concern for animals. Translated into over seventeen languages this book in the twentieth century started a chain reaction of thought and publications, about animals and why they matter morally. According to the exponents of animal ethics, animals have soul, mind and feelings; therefore, they have moral rights. Paul Taylor rejected the view that only human beings have soul and therefore, nonhuman beings are subservient to human beings as held by the Cartesians. Keeping this view in mind Taylor asks, ‘Why substances like soul that adds value to its possessor’. ‘An immaterial soul, which does not think have value only if thinking itself has either instrumental or intrinsic value’<sup>20</sup>. Why is the existence of soul, the only criteria for having moral rights? Nonhuman beings, like some higher animals have their mind, to some extent similar like humans; they have sense experiences. They are capable of expressing their feelings, sensations, happiness and anger. But it needs proper observation to understand them. They are able to reason in their own way. Wild animals defend their own lives because they have a good of their own. Animals hunt and howl, seek shelter, build nests and sing, care for their young, flee from threats, grow hungry, thirst, hot, cold, tired, excited, sleepy, and weak, seek out their habitats and mates. They suffer injury and lick their wounds. They can know their security and fear, endurance and fatigue, comfort and pain. All these, make us understood that man is not the only measurer of all things and intrinsically valuable.

Question may be raised that do nonhuman animals have sentience, awareness, self-consciousness, thoughts, beliefs or desires? The questions regarding the mental status of animals thus, have important ethical consequences if we assume that one’s moral status is at least partly a function of one’s mental status. There are also certain non-mental features relevant to the moral status of an individual. One may argue that an individual can come under the purview of morality without mental status e.g., perhaps simply by virtue of “being alive”. Thus, it seems clear that one’s mental status is an important determinant to come under the purview of morality and certain species at a certain stage of development have mental status.

In fact, Kant is right in thinking that we have direct moral duties only to rational beings and indirect duties towards animals.<sup>21</sup> Jeremy Bentham and Peter Singer are right in believing that the capacity to suffer is sufficient for coming under the purview of moral concern.<sup>22</sup> In both cases, mental status of an individual has consequences regarding how we should or should not treat the individual and requires answering some difficult questions regarding the nature of mind. One may say that there are different kinds of reasoning, say for example, theoretical, mathematical, practical, inductive, causal, and normative. But the point remains here is that, if we think that the capacity to reason

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<sup>19</sup> Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, L. Infield (trans.) New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963, p. 239-240

<sup>20</sup> Taylor, Paul W. *Respect for Nature* Princeton University Press, Princeton: NJ 1986

<sup>21</sup> Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, L. Infield (trans.) New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963, p. 239-240

<sup>22</sup> Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* New York: Hafner Press, 1948, p. 310-311 and Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* 2nd Edition New York: Avon Books, 1990, p. 7-9

makes an individual an object of moral concern, we need to decide which varieties of reasoning and to what degree are the most ethically significant?<sup>23</sup>

It can be said that moral status of an individual is a function of its mental status. Particularly in case of moral agency this seems to be true. It is arguable that being a suitable object of moral concern does not require moral agency. According to Bentham and Singer, the capacity to suffer is enough to make an individual a potential object of our moral obligations, even if the individual does not qualify as an agent that bears moral responsibility for its actions. So the question arises: Do any nonhuman animals qualify as moral agents?

According to Charles Darwin a moral sense, a conscience, is present to some degree in many other animals.<sup>24</sup> Gould and Gould note that “dolphins keep injured members of the group afloat, vampire bats share food with starving inhabitants of their colony, [and] childless elephants help from a defensive circle to protect the young of the herd.”<sup>25</sup> This is called behaviour characteristic of altruism, i.e. behaviour which is normally associated with genuinely altruistic mental states like in human beings. Yet, whether mental status is necessary for altruism that really underlies “caring” behaviour of these animals, remains a significant question. It requires a conceptual inquiry into the nature of altruism along with difficult empirical investigation which is needed to provide adequate evidence for or against its presence in other animals.<sup>26</sup>

There are significant continuities between the cognitive life of some non-linguistic animals and the cognitive life of human animals. Some species of animal are genuine thinkers in much the same way that humans count as genuine thinkers. According to Bermudez<sup>27</sup> a genuine thinker is that kind of thinkers who behave in ways that reflect their desires and their beliefs about the environment. There are also others who can be considered as genuine thinkers in a weaker sense - the sense characterized by Bermudez as “minimalist conception of non-linguistic thought.” Even at the minimalist level we are dealing with forms of behaviour that cannot be explained purely in terms of conditioning or innate releasing mechanisms. Animal ethicists who think that moral significance of animals is a function of their level of cognitive sophistication will need to take account of the subtle gradations between different types of thinking without words. They also need to consider the limits to non-linguistic thought. There are serious consequences in making the moral significance of animals depending upon the capacity for higher-order thought. By a “higher-order thought” Bermudez means a thought that takes another thought as its object. Thoughts about another’s mental states count as higher-order thoughts, for example, as reflection does on one’s own mental states. As Bermudez brought out with reference to non-linguistic “mind-reading” and non-linguistic reasoning, non-linguistic animals can get a long way without thinking about thinking.

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Franciscotti ‘Animal Mind and Animal Ethics: an Introduction’ the Journal of Ethics 11:2007, p.239-252

<sup>24</sup> Darwin, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex* London: D. Appleton, 1897, Chapter 4

<sup>25</sup> J. L. Gould and C. G. Gould, *The Animal Mind* 2nd Edition, New York, 1999 p. 150

<sup>26</sup> Deceptive behaviour is another possible source of evidence for the kind of higher-order intentionality involved in moral agency. Desiring to produce a false belief in others, and acting upon that desire, might be enough to make one morally blameworthy for one’s action - provided there is suitable autonomy involved. (J. L. Bermudez, *Thinking without Words*)

<sup>27</sup> J. L. Bermudez, *Thinking without Words*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003

Those who are experimenting on animals like researchers are doing so, for the benefit of humans and argument on this variety is essentially utilitarian. It is based upon the calculation of the net product, in pains and pleasures, resulting from experimenting on animals. The reason is nonhumans are so different from humans that we cannot know whether they suffer. But the defender of vivisection cannot use this argument because he stresses on the point that there are a lot of similarities between human beings and other animals. Researchers experiment on rats, which have nervous system very similar to humans. For them, the way a rat reacts with electric shock is presumably similar with that of a human. They consider it normal and regard animals as statistics rather than sentient beings with interests. Thus, the experimenter shows a bias for his own species, when he carries out a painful experiment on a nonhuman, thinking that it would not be justified for him to experiment on a human. If this bias is eliminated then the disparity of thought between man and animal and animal experiments will be less. Thus, it can be said that using animals in research as ‘experimental torture’ and the scientist’s and the vivisectionist’s satisfaction at discovering knowledge through animal experimentation is “pathological”. From Singer’s animal liberation manifesto, it can be observed that moral obligation towards animals and their well-being may be interpreted in two ways.

- Obligations and duties to the nonhuman animals may be based upon the principle that cruelty to the animals is obnoxious. People must not inflict any needless pain on animals especially for profit. It is considered as a moral revulsion. It is not just pain in animals but the way it is inflicted which justifies moral outrage.
- Human beings are obliged to prevent and relieve animal suffering. So far as philosophical claims like animal equality is concerned it is an obligation to serve or protect the interest of all animals who suffer whether in the farm or in the wild forest.

‘Whether animals have rights or not’ is a controversial question in environmental ethics. Bentham’s conception of “suffering and pain”, Singer’s conception of “sentience”, and the concept of “potential autonomous beings” perhaps strengthen us to say that they have moral status. Even a deeper study of biology reveals that those species that have nervous system are capable of feeling, suffering and pain. But when we talk about animal rights we simply deal with the issue that whether animals have rights for not to be tortured by humans. The best thing we can say about animal rights is to say that if we human beings have rights then it can rationally and morally be extended to the animals of some kind i.e. mammals. It is we human beings, inflict rights on them and that is a kind of indirect obligation towards them. So, on the basis of suffering and pleasure or nervous system we can not say that they have rights. Rather we can say that they are not to be killed by us unnecessarily for our non-basic or luxury needs and we are not to be so cruel towards them.

If animals are sentient and the capacity to come under substantive moral concern match together does it follow that animals have rights? One answer may be given that though animals are sentient and feel pain and pleasure, they do not enjoy happiness and unhappiness in the way as human beings feel.<sup>28</sup> But this does not justify us to claim that animals do not suffer and therefore, not sentient. *The objective of this paper is not to*

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<sup>28</sup> Sprigge, T.L.S. *Respect for the Nonhuman: The Philosophy of Environment*, edit. T.D.J Chappell, Edinburgh University Press 1983

*establish the whole arguments and the issues of a typical animal right activist, but to persuade others that there are examples of animal rights.*

The philosophical question in animal right is not that it is wrong to kill animals, but that why it is wrong. Following Aquinas and Kant, many philosophers will say if people treat animals as instruments then this attitude will develop a habit, which may be extended towards the treatment of fellow human beings. People who tortures animal will torture human. According to Kant, we should be kind to the animals since that will help us to treat our fellow human beings with greater consideration. “That is, our duties to animals are simply indirect duties to other beings. Tender feelings towards animals develop humane feelings towards mankind.<sup>29</sup> That is why killing animal is wrong. Also for Kant, we can judge a heart of a man by his treatment towards animals. The more we come in contact with animals and observe their behavior, the more we love them, because we see how great is their care for their young. It is then difficult for us to be cruel in thought even to a wolf.” If human beings have rights because they have life and being alive makes those intrinsically valuable then this line of thinking can rationally be extended towards animals. Our duty is to put an end to the harm towards animals and the belief that they are made to endure sufferings and pain. Animals cannot speak out themselves on behalf of them. They cannot organize, march, and file petitions by using their conscience as we humans do. But all this cannot weaken our obligations towards them. Their importance in ecology makes our obligation more meaningful and strong.

Tom Regan another exponents of animal rights, believes that animals have same moral status as human beings, which is grounded on the concept of ‘inherent value’. He argues that any being that is a ‘subject-of-a-life’ has inherent value.<sup>31</sup> If a being has inherent value then we must show respect to that being. In order to show respect to a being we cannot use it merely as a means to our ends rather such a being must be treated with end in itself. From Regan it can be said that a being with inherent value has rights and these rights act as trumps against the encouragement of the overall good. Regan claims that when we raise animals for food and when we experiment on animals to develop human science, we are using animals merely as a means to our ends. But we need to treat them as ends in themselves. T.L.S Sprigge suggested that there are some basic animal rights, not the only basic animal rights, which can be summed up in the following ways.<sup>32</sup>

- Each animal has a right for not to be subjected to serious suffering, except for its own sake (e.g. medical treatments by moral agents i.e. human beings).

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<sup>29</sup> Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, L. Infield (trans.) New York: Harper Torch books, 1963

<sup>31</sup> One may ask, what are the criterias of a ‘subject-of-a-life’? According to Regan if a being have belief and desires, perception, memory, a sense of the future, an emotional life together the feelings of pain and pleasure, the ability to initiate action for pursuit of desires and goals, a psychological identity over time, an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them, logically independently of their utility for others, and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else's interests. These properties are in all human beings and on the basis of that we think that they have rights. But these properties are also present in many animals especially in the mammals. Thus if human deserves rights then so do animals like mammals? (Regan, T. *The Case for Animal Rights* Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983)

<sup>32</sup> Sprigge, T.L.S. *Respect for the Nonhuman: The Philosophy of Environment*, edit. T.D.J Chappell, Edinburgh University Press 1983

- Each animal, in so far as its life is under control of human agents has a right to life of worth living and in particular to an environment in which it can involve in a fair amount of its inherited behavior patterns.
- Each animal has a right to some respect by human beings as a fellow conscious subject.

We do grant that humans have comparable rights to these above rights because each human being is an individual capable of enjoying its life or being miserable. This is equally true with animals so they must have kindred rights. Among the rights that some philosophers have attributed to nonhuman animals is the right to life. If animals have a right to life, then it must be asked, what specific moral duties do we have towards them? Clearly, one duty we would have to them is a duty to refrain from killing them. But does an animal's right to life also entail that we have a duty to assist animals in preserving their lives when they are endangered? It is often thought that human right to life entails not only a duty not to kill humans but also a duty to assist humans in preserving their lives. So, it seems that if animals have a right to life, it follows that we also have a duty to assist animals in preserving their lives.

This provides the background for a unique objection to the view that animals have a right to life. It is a fact of nature that animals routinely die in their natural habitat. They are killed by predators which depend upon killing prey for food in order to survive, or they suffer death from starvation or disease. Some philosophers have suggested that if animals truly have a right to life, then we morally ought to interfere in the wild to help animals in preserving their lives, whether this means protecting animals from their predators or feeding them for which they do not starve to death. But the idea that we ought to save wild animals from their predators or from starvation seems absurd difficult to accept for most of us. Thus, according to the objection, it is not reasonable to think that animals have a right to life.

In his article, 'Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce', Mark Sagoff describes the condition of animals in their natural habitat. He states that "Nature ruthlessly limits animal populations by doing violence to virtually every individual before it reaches maturity; these conditions respect animal equality only in the darkest sense."<sup>33</sup> What is this violence that nature routinely does to animals? Sagoff explains, "The ways in which creatures in nature die are typically violent: predation, starvation, disease, and parasitism, cold".<sup>34</sup>

Following this description of the conditions for animals in the wild, Sagoff suggests that if it is true that animals have basic rights like, right to life then we ought to be committed to assisting animals in preserving their lives and relieving them from suffering. For Sagoff,

If people have basic rights - and I have no doubt they do - then society has a positive obligation to satisfy those rights. It is not enough for society simply to refrain from violating them. This, surely, is true of the basic rights of animals as well, if we are to give the conception of "right" the same meaning for both people and animals. For example, to allow animals to be killed for food or to permit them to die of disease or starvation when it is within human

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<sup>33</sup> Sagoff, M. 'Animal Liberation and Environmental Ethics: Bad Marriage, Quick Divorce' *Environmental Philosophy* (3rd edition), ed. M. Zimmerman, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2001, p. 89

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 92

power to prevent it does not seem to balance fairly the interests of animals with those of human beings. To speak of the rights of animals, of treating them as equals, of liberating them, and at the same time to let nearly all of them perish unnecessarily in the most brutal and horrible ways is not to display humanity but hypocrisy in the extreme.<sup>35</sup>

Although we do not believe that we have a duty to save wild animals from predators, but we can think that we have some duties to animals, both wild and domesticated. For example, if it is within our control to save animals from drowning or other natural accidents, without great risk to ourselves, then we ought to do so. Similarly, we ought to try to save animals from human-caused accidents, such as when animals are under cars. We also have a duty to protect animals from intentional killing or harm by humans.

It can be said that if animals have a right to life, then we have a duty to save animals from being killed by predators in the wild. However, it is absurd to think that we have a duty to stop predators from killing their prey, and therefore, it is absurd to think that animals have a right to life. In response to this objection, it can be argued that though we have no duty to save wild animals from their predators but it does not follow that animals do not have a right to life i.e. a right for not to be killed. This is because whether we have a duty to save another being's life in a given situation depends on a number of factors other than whether that being has a right to life. In fact, there may be cases in which we must allow some humans to die, even when it is within our purview to save them, but this does not mean that those humans do not still have a right for not to be killed. Similarly, in the case of predators, we must allow wild animals to be killed because saving them on any large scale would have disastrous ecological consequences, but this does not mean that animals do not still have a right for not to be killed. We do have a number of duties to preserve both domesticated and wild animals' lives, just not when doing so would result in ecological catastrophe.<sup>36</sup>

Even if we think that animals do not have any rights and therefore, there may be nothing wrong in treating animals in ways in which it would be wrong to treat humans, the fact remains that animals are mistreated and this mistreatment of animals raises questions that as individuals, what we should do. If we consider rearing of animals for food especially, when it involves some of the methods currently employed is wrong, then, by becoming vegetarians, we can refuse to participate in this method. If we think that using animals to test cosmetics or killing animals for their fur is wrong, then we can refuse to participate. It may be suggested that before asking the question that 'do animals have rights' we must examine our treatment of animals far more carefully and be guided by our answers to the following questions.

- Is the treatment being dictated by our love or excitement or pleasure, or by the desire to maximize profit? If so are we not being selfish?
- Has due account been taken to the fact that sentient beings are suffering and dying? Are there alternative ways of achieving the same or similar ends?

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 91

<sup>36</sup> Simons, A. 'Animals, Predators, the Right to Life, and the Duty to Save Lives' *Ethics & the Environment*, 14(1), 2009, p.26.

- If habitats have to be destroyed, can the effects be minimized? Can alternative habitats be found?

In twentieth century, many empirically-oriented philosophers and scientists were sceptical about attributing mentality to other animals. But their attitude is not at per with the beliefs of their empirically-minded ancestors. Accepting Bernard Rollin it can be pointed out that Locke, David Hume, Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Bermudez credited other animals with a variety of mental states, from the capacity of feeling pain to the ability to reason and genuine thinking, with the scientific culmination of Darwin. In *Animal Mind: Science, Philosophy, and Ethics* Rollin offers useful information about how this change in ideas came about. He mentioned: "In 1982, I was asked to respond to a noted pain researcher who gave a speech at a conference saying that since the electro-chemical activity in the cerebral cortex of dogs was different from that of humans, and the cerebral cortex was the area that processed pain, the dog "did not really feel pain as humans did." My refutation was singularly brief. I asked him, "As a prominent researcher in pain, you do your research on dogs." "Yes," he replied. "You extrapolate your results to people?" I queried. "Of course," he said, "that is why I do my work." "In that case," I said, *either your speech is false or your life's work is.*

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## **RORTY'S SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE**

SUTAPA RAY

Richard Rorty is one of the most original and important philosophers who is influential beyond the confines of professional academic philosophy. The views that have made him famous as public intellectual arise out of his specifically philosophical reflections on topics that remain central to the Anglo-American tradition of analytic philosophy: the nature and significance of objective reality and truth, and of our knowledge of them.

Rorty's distinctive and controversial brand of pragmatism expresses itself along two main axes. One is negative – a critical diagnosis of what Rorty takes to be defining projects of modern philosophy. The other is positive – an attempt to show what intellectual culture might look like, once we free ourselves from the governing metaphors of mind and the world in which the traditional problems of epistemology and metaphysics are rooted. The centerpiece of Rorty's critique is the provocative account offered in *Philosophy and The Mirror of Nature* (1979). In this book, and in the closely related essays collected in *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982), Rorty's principal target is the philosophical idea of knowledge as representation, as a mental mirroring of a mind-external world. This is the centerpiece of his attack against classical epistemology. In denouncing traditional epistemology, Rorty denounces that there are entities which possess any justificatory force prior to human interpretation and his central contention is that there can be no intrinsically veridical relation between the mind, or language and the world. Rorty has shown that there is no privileged 'grid' of concepts against which the variety of human practices and beliefs can be judged in order to determine them rationally. The pertinent question which crops up is: is Rorty's rejection of mirror imagery in epistemology a rejection of epistemology as such? Or is he sponsoring a novel and different kind of epistemology that is to be subsumed under sociology of knowledge? This paper is an endeavour to outline his sociological theory of knowledge, especially with reference to the notion of truth.

### **Sociological Turn in Rorty's Epistemology:**

The consequence of Rorty's antirepresentationalism is his conversationalism that denies that the world-by-itself rationally constrains choices of vocabulary with which to

cope with it. He claims to find a viable notion of interpretive constraint in the solidarity of interpretive communities. Rorty says:

“...there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational ones – no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of the objects, or of the mind, or of language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow inquiries... The pragmatist tells us that it is useless to hope that objects will constrain us to believe the truth about them, if only they are approached with an unclouded mental eye, or a rigorous method, or a perspicuous language....The only sense in which we are constrained to truth is that, as Peirce suggested,<sup>1</sup> we can make no sense of the notion that the view which can survive all objections might be false.”<sup>2</sup>

Rorty thus hammers on the quintessential point of his antirepresentationalist programme that constraints on our knowledge or interpretations are not objective or imposed by the world, but instead are conversational. This is Rorty’s conversational epistemology which he espouses as an alternative to traditional representational epistemology. This would be a bone of contention between Rorty and Putnam because Putnam believed that interpretation is not without external constraints. He says: “Internalism does not deny that there are experiential inputs to knowledge; knowledge is not a story with any constraints except internal coherence; ...The very inputs upon which our knowledge is based are conceptually contaminated; but contaminated inputs are better than none.”<sup>3</sup> This would be a point of contrast between Putnam and Rorty.

Rorty’s conversational epistemology has some important consequences. The consequences of replacing the representational model by his epistemological antifoundationalism are the contingency of language, the contingency of selfhood and the contingency of community. In this chapter I would concentrate only on the contingency of language for contextual reasons. Rorty’s antirepresentationalism decries the idea that the world decides which descriptions of the world are true. Those who accept absolute reality admit that there is only one true absolute description of this reality. On the contrary Rorty rejects the idea that the vocabulary is somehow already out there in the world, waiting for us to discover it. The world does not speak. Only we humans can do that. Once we adopt a language which is to be used as a tool to describe the world, then the world can cause us to hold beliefs. But it cannot propose a language for us to speak. Only human beings can do that. According to Rorty, the persuasive power of the language of sciences comes not from its relation to reality, but from its historically contingent utility. Thus we do not have access to any objective truth; all we have are the vocabularies we create.

Rorty argues that one who is convinced of this view is a ‘liberal ironist’. And a liberal ironist is one who does not aspire to achieve objectivity. Her goal is different. It is solidarity. It is a transition from objectivity guaranteed by a non-human factual world to human solidarity. The switch from objectivity to solidarity implies freedom from the iron

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<sup>1</sup> From this passage it seems that Rorty claims to be following the pragmatist tradition as was propounded by Peirce. But I will argue that Rorty’s pragmatism is very different from Peirce’s pragmatism insofar as Rorty is a pragmatist antirealist whereas Peirce is a pragmatist realist.

<sup>2</sup> Rorty, Richard (1982), *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays 1972-1980*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p-165.

<sup>3</sup> Putnam, Hilary (1981), *Reason, Truth and History*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p 54.

grasp of an objective world which had long been held to be that which controls and determines our thoughts and activities. The emphasis is on freedom. Thus solidarity has nothing to do with bonding between humans and non-human facts, but according to Rorty, it is to be understood in terms of human bonding. Hence Rorty says that solidarity is not discovered, but is created by increasing our sensitivity to the suffering of other people. On Rorty's account solidarity may be achieved through a social bond between humans. Rorty's ironist is a historicist. She abandons the idea that her central beliefs and desires refer to something beyond the reach of time and chance.

Rorty envisages this solidarity as a process of redescription of ourselves. This can be achieved, according to Rorty, not by theory, but by ethnography, journalists' report, novel, fiction etc. That is why the novel, movie and TV programme have gradually but steadily replaced the Sermon and the Treatise as the principle vehicles of moral change and progress. Rorty wants to give recognition to this replacement and this recognition is tantamount to a general turn against theory and towards narrative. Such a turn would mean that we have given up the attempt to describe the world with a single vocabulary. It would amount to recognition of what Rorty calls contingency of language.

#### **Rorty on Language:**

Contingency of language is the fact that there is no way to step outside the various vocabularies employed and find a metavocabulary which sits in judgment over all the vocabularies. One who can reconcile to the idea of contingency of language would accept that languages are made rather than found, and that truth is a property of linguistic entities.<sup>4</sup> Thus Rorty says that we make truths with our languages. This is clearly a constructivist strain in his thoughts. According to Rorty, since no language is privileged over any other, all languages being contingent in their origins and not mediums for representations, our intellectual and moral progress becomes a history of increasingly useful metaphors rather than the understanding of how things really are.

Rorty draws inspiration from Donald Davidson's work in philosophy of language as a manifestation of a willingness to drop the idea of "intrinsic nature", a willingness to face up to the contingency of the language we use. Rorty shows how recognition of this contingency leads to recognition of the contingency of conscience, and how both recognitions lead to a picture of intellectual and moral progress as a history of increasingly useful metaphors rather than of increasing understanding of how things really are.

In arguing for the contingency in language, Rorty spells out in clear terms that only sentences are true and that human beings make truths by making languages in which to phrase sentences. Rorty delves into Davidson's treatment of language which breaks completely with the notion of language as something which can be adequate or inadequate to the world or to the self. For Davidson breaks with the notion that language is a medium – a medium either of representation or of expression.

Davidson does not view language as a medium for either expression or representation and thus sets aside the idea that both the self and reality have intrinsic natures which are out there waiting to be known. Davidson like Wittgenstein treats alternative vocabularies as more like alternative tools than like bits of a jigsaw puzzle.

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<sup>4</sup> Rorty, Richard (1989), *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, p 4-7

Davidson's account of linguistic communication dispenses with the picture of language as a third thing intervening between self and reality, and of different languages as barriers between persons or cultures. To say that one's previous language was inappropriate for dealing with some segment of the world is just to say that one is now, having learned a new language, able to handle that segment more easily. Davidson lets us think of the history of language and thus of culture as Darwin taught us to think of the history of a coral reef. Old metaphors are constantly dying off into literalness, and then serving as platform and foil for new metaphors. This analogy lets us think of "our language" – that is, of the science and culture of twentieth century Europe – as something that took shape as a result of a great number of sheer contingencies.

Thus Rorty says that the world does not provide us with any criterion of choice between alternative metaphors, that we can only compare languages or metaphors with one another, not with something beyond language called 'facts'. To drop the idea of languages as representations, and to be thoroughly Wittgensteinian in our approach to language, would be to de-divinize the world. Only if we do that we can accept Rorty's argument that since truth is a property of sentences, since sentences are dependent for their existence upon vocabularies, and since vocabularies are made by human beings, so are truths. It is essential to Rorty's view that we have no prelinguistic consciousness to which language needs to be adequate, no deep sense of how things are which it is the duty of philosophers to spell out in language. If Rorty's arguments for the contingency of language are accepted then a problem arises. It is the problem of constraint in interpretation.

- If the world does not constrain our vocabulary or the descriptions of it then what does?
- Can an utterance or text mean just anything at all, or are there limits to semiosis?
- And if there are constraints then where do they come from?
- Is it the world or the text which constrain our interpretations?

Rorty claims to find a viable notion of interpretive constraint in the solidarity of interpretive communities as noted before. He writes that "there are no constraints on inquiry save conversational one – no wholesale constraints derived from the nature of the objects, or of the mind, or of language, but only those retail constraints provided by the remarks of our fellow inquirers."<sup>5</sup> Like Davidson, Rorty looks to the conditions for intersubjective communication for an account of interpretive constraint, but he casts his argument in different terms. As an alternative to objectivity (any kind of mind-independent and language – independent reality) – Rorty introduces the notion of solidarity (following Dewey and James). Pragmatists would like to replace the desire for objectivity with the desire for solidarity. Solidarity is the desire for as much intersubjective agreement as possible, the desire to extend the reference of 'us' as far as we can."<sup>6</sup> Rorty's model interpretive community is marked by "the habits of relying on

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<sup>5</sup> Rorty, Richard (1982), *Consequences of Pragmatism: Essays 1972-1980*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p-165.

<sup>6</sup> Rorty, Richard (1991), *Objectivity, relativism, and truth, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p-22-23.

persuasion rather than the force, of respect for the opinions of colleagues, of curiosity and eagerness for new data and ideas.”<sup>7</sup>

Rorty considers those habits to have been historically, most consistently practiced in the scientific community. But in his essay “Texts and Lumps”, he argues that science is no different in kind from literary or other humanistic inquiry. The so-called ‘hard’ subjects like science, he says, have no epistemological superiority to the ‘soft’ subjects like literary criticism. Science has no special method for reaching the truth, Rorty insists; and the lumps that it studies are no different in ontological kind from the texts that humanists study. “Hardness of fact is simply the hardness of the previous agreements within a community about the consequences of a certain event. The same hardness prevails in morality or literary criticism if and only if the relevant community is equally firm about who loses and who wins.”<sup>8</sup> Rorty’s aim is to replace objectivity, the notion that somehow the world makes our interpretations right or wrong, with solidarity, the unforced agreement achieved by persuasion in a free and open community of inquirers. We see that Rorty has attempted to eradicate the distinction between science and literary studies. He harps on the fact that the constraints on our knowledge or interpretations are not objective or imposed by the world. But instead are conversational. Thus according to Rorty, literature is an important practice in the enlargement of our cultural conversation. He further argues that cultural conversation is possible only when communication is possible. And communication between the two strange individuals will be possible only when each can guess what the other is going to do next, what noises they will make, and their expectation about what they shall do or say under certain circumstances will coincide. Thus on Davidson’s interpretation, to speak the same language is to tend to converge.

According to Rorty, who follows Davidson’s line of thinking, a proposition or a text is not a matter of grasping the meanings of words – meanings that are grounded either by their analytic relations with the other or by their ostensive connections to the world. Meaning belongs to the marks or noises we can call sentences. A sentence is related to another sentence, but a sentence cannot be related to the mind or the world. But for generations thinkers have thought that meaning depends on the mind or the world. It seems that the world does decide whether a sentence is true or false. So, if we have to decide “between alternative sentences (namely, e.g. Between ‘Red wins’ and ‘Black wins’ or between ‘The butler did it’ and ‘The doctor did it’) in such cases, it is easy to run together the fact that the world contains the causes of our being justified in holding a belief with the claim that some nonlinguistic state of the world is itself an example of truth, or that some such state “makes a belief true” by “corresponding to it.”<sup>9</sup> To decide between alternative sentences we have to turn to the world. However it would not be easy to draw this conclusion when we turn from individual sentences to vocabularies as wholes. When we consider whole vocabularies and not individual sentences “it is difficult to think of the world as making one of these better than another, of the world as deciding between them.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p-39. Emphasis is mine.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, P.80.

<sup>9</sup> Rorty, Richard (1989), *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, p-5.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 5-6.

Thus, Rorty's main target of philosophical criticism is the correspondence theory of truth which characterizes synthetic propositions – the theory that parts of the world, facts, or states of affairs logically correspond to propositions. Rorty notes: It is hard enough to make sense of correspondence in the expression “on the mat” in the proposition “Cat is on the mat”. It seems hopeless to account in correspondence terms to negative propositions like “There is no dog by the window”. Furthermore, the theory generally relies on a verificationist account of meaning and a notion of ostensive definitions of primitive terms that are very problematic.

If all of these arguments seems counter intuitive – if it seems that, in the realm of commonsense observations of glasses and tables that it is the world that surely tells us what is the case – then Rorty reminds us that “there is no way of transferring this nonlinguistic brutality to facts, to the truth of sentences. The way in which a blank takes on the form of the die which stamps it has no analogy to the relation between the truth of a sentence and the event which the sentence is about.”<sup>11</sup> The world does not make sentences true, though stimuli may indeed cause speakers to make certain statements. In effect, Rorty tries telling us that the world does not tell us what to say about it.

Against the backdrop of the preceding discussions on the contingency of language which Rorty espouses, I would like to raise a few questions in the context of the sociological view of knowledge which reduces knowledge to a matter of conversation and agreement or consensus. The questions are:

- Who is to take part in the conversation?
- What will constitute agreement?

Rorty does not speak of solidarity of human selves who are ‘selves’ in the absolutist metaphysical sense of the term. Solidarity is of human with selves plunged in history, immersed in and sensitized to culture. So, solidarity is to be conceived with reference to cultural historical groups. If that be so, the answer to the first question would perhaps be that those who take part in the conversation are members of a particular group. Knowledge is supposed to be agreement with the cultural peers of that group. So agreement here is agreement or unanimity within a group, it is not unanimity as such. The answer to the second question raised above, therefore would be conformity to what the peers of that group say. If, however, agreement is said to be constituted by conformity to what the peers say, then, as Putnam remarks, one may ask: “What determines what my cultural peers would say?”<sup>12</sup> Obviously the peers will not say anything which is said to them from outside, for, both the peers and those who follow them are committed to one particular culture and group. None of them can transcend their group-identity. So when they say that something is true they mean that it is true according to the norms of their culture.

This kind of extreme relativism seems to lead to an absurd consequence as Putnam shows. If what Karl says is true according to the norms of his own culture, then Karl can indeed say “...schnee ist weiss” and say that it is true according to his own culture. But

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<sup>11</sup> Rorty, Richard (1991), *Objectivity, relativism, and truth, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge

<sup>12</sup> Putnam, Hilary (1992), *Renewing Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, Harvard University Press, p-69.

suppose somebody also wants to say this, she cannot take a transcendent stance and make a similar utterance. For this utterance itself, when made by her, would be true according to the norms of her culture, say, the American culture. She would be driven into saying “What Karl says is true, as determined by the norms of German culture, is true according to the norms of American culture.” This is the absurdity to which any consistent relativist would be driven.

The question about agreement and the Rortian response to it reminds one of similar questions which had been raised about Thomas Kuhn’s notion of unanimity and consensus within a group. Kuhn strongly sponsored a sociological account of scientific rationality. Scientific rationality, according to him, was a paradigm-bound rationality rooted in a concrete tradition and not a transcendent kind of rationality drawing on abstract and universal criteria. What guided a scientist belonging to a community in exercising her choice therefore were not abstract paramount criteria like ‘unanimity as such’. Rather the agreement or unanimity which conditioned the scientist’s choice was ‘unanimity of one particular group’.<sup>13</sup> This swing in the direction of rules and criteria governing concrete research tradition is a patently sociological account of rationality. But if the scientist’s choice depended thus on her submission to a particular paradigm-bound criterion then there can be no comparison and trans-valuation between what she chooses and what the others belonging to a different scientific community would choose. This would lead ultimately to a collapse of communication between proponents of different scientific paradigms. Even Kuhn had to retreat from this drastic thesis of incommensurability in his later works.

Rorty, too, as we have seen forbids any reference to transcendent criteria, to a non-human power to which humans are responsible,<sup>14</sup> to objective truth, correspondence to reality, method and “criteria for (scientific) success laid down in advance”<sup>15</sup> Rather he understands rationality in terms of reasonableness, tolerance, respect for the opinions of those around, willingness to listen, reliance on persuasion rather than force. Members of a group must possess these virtues.<sup>16</sup> Thus Rorty’s sociology of knowledge leads to this extreme relativistic corollary. He insists on group-unanimity. Rorty himself raises a question about this notion of agreement and answers it. “Unforced agreement among whom? Us? Any arbitrary culture or group?” The answer of course is ‘us’<sup>17</sup>

Rorty’s answer seems to suggest that the members of a group engaged in conversation are hermetically sealed within their own group. They are imprisoned within the walls of their own culture. They have no option but to crawl within their own groups. They can be said to be living in a cultural island where though conversation within the island is possible, but members of that particular island cannot enter into conversation with people belonging to other such cultural islands. Conversation is thus group-bound. If that be so, then it would ring the bell for total collapse of communication.

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<sup>13</sup> See M.D. King, ‘Reason, Tradition and the Progressiveness in Science’ in G. Gutting (ed.) *Paradigms and Revolutions*, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, 1980, p.113. Also see Gupta, Chhanda (1995), *Realism Versus Realism*, Calcutta, Allied Publishers, p.176.

<sup>14</sup> Rorty, Richard (1991), *Objectivity, relativism, and truth, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p-39.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p-36.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p-37.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p-38.

Communication between members of the various cultural islands would be impossible. Rorty's human self which has a cultural anchorage would then seem to close the doors of conversation. So the very foundation on which Rorty develops his sociology of knowledge, that is, conversation, can only be group-bound. How would Rorty steer away from the mess which his ethnocentrism had created? What kind of human solidarity is Rorty talking about? Rorty must answer the question with reference to solidarity which has a cultural anchorage, nevertheless, which does not lead to an extreme kind of relativism and consequently to incommensurability.

To be fair we must remember that Rorty does have a response to the points being raised. He himself has vehemently opposed the characterization of his work as a kind of extreme relativism. He establishes why he is not a relativist. He says: "But the pragmatist, dominated by the desire for solidarity, can only be criticized for taking his own community too seriously. He can only be criticized for ethnocentrism, not for relativism."<sup>18</sup> How far this response is satisfactory would be discussed in the final chapter. I would confine myself in this chapter to a consideration of Rorty's sociological view of truth.

### **Rorty on Truth:**

Rorty insists that the notion of truth which he espouses is a sociological or a communitarian construal of the notion of truth. He believes that truth, like, knowledge, is simply a compliment paid to the beliefs which we think so well justified that for the moment, further justification is not needed. Thus, according to Rorty, an inquiry into the nature of truth can only be a sociohistorical account of how various people have tried to reach agreement on what to believe. In the formation of his sociological construal of truth, Rorty is highly influenced by Nietzsche and he writes: "Nietzsche thought that the test of human character was the ability to live with the thought that there was no convergence. He wanted us to be able to think of truth as: a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms – in short a sum of human relations, which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically and which after long use can seem firm, canonical, and obligatory to a people."<sup>19</sup>

Rorty derives his inspiration to think of truth as entirely a matter of solidarity from Nietzsche. He therefore says: "...I think we need to say, despite Putnam, 'there is only the dialogue,' only us, and to throw out the last residues of the notion of "trans-cultural rationality"."<sup>20</sup>

Besides acknowledging his debt to Nietzsche, Rorty also recognizes his debt to Davidson and William James as both helped him in shaping the notion of truth. All the three, James, Davidson and Rorty were content to have dissolved traditional representationalist problems concerning truth. For they were unanimous in rejecting the traditional correspondence theory of truth where correspondence is understood with reference to the image of mirroring or representing. They urged that the only reason why philosophers thought they needed an explanation of what truths consists in was that they

<sup>18</sup> Rorty, Richard (1991), *Objectivity, relativism, and truth, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p-30.

<sup>19</sup> Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense", in the Viking Portable Nietzsche, Walter Kaufmann, ed. And trans., pp-46-47.

<sup>20</sup> Rorty, Richard (1991), *Objectivity, relativism, and truth, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p-32

were held captive by a representationalist picture of dualism between scheme and content. The upshot of their critique of this correspondist notion of truth is their pragmatic theory of truth. However, notwithstanding their unanimity in rejection of the traditional classical notion of truth, they differ widely in their respective views on the positive theory of truth.

Rorty's notion of truth does not retain objectivity. He does not consider truth to be an objective concept. Rorty denounces the foundationalist attempts to represent reality and distances himself from the associated idea that truth is a matter of correspondence to reality. Rorty is convinced that there is no theory of truth at all. He seems inclined to dispense with the notion of truth altogether. Following Davidson and James, he says that truth can be said to have the following uses:

- An endorsing use
- A cautionary use
- A disquotational use

Truth can be said to have an endorsing use as it can be understood as a term which we use to endorse or praise. It is not a term referring to some actual state-of-affairs, the existence of which is supposed to explain the success of those who hold true beliefs.

The cautionary use of truth is the most significant use and the neglect of the cautionary use leads to the association of Rorty's view of truth with relativism. I will expand on this remark when I discuss relativism in Rorty in the final chapter. For now I would only explain what Rorty meant by the cautionary use. In a paper entitled "Universality and Truth",<sup>21</sup> Rorty compares 'truth' with 'danger'. He argues that the principal reason we have a word like 'danger' in the language is to caution people: to warn them that they may not have envisaged all the consequences of their proposed action. Rorty compares truth with danger and holds that it is no more necessary to have a philosophical theory about the nature of truth than it is to have one about the nature of danger. "True" is not a word used for describing or portraying or mirroring or representing which underpins the correspondence account of truth. Rorty says that people who think beliefs are habits of action rather than attempts to correspond to reality see the cautionary use of the word 'true' as flagging a special sort of danger. He writes:

"We use it to remind ourselves that people in different circumstances – people facing future audiences – may not be able to justify the belief which we have triumphantly justified to all the audiences we have encountered."<sup>22</sup>

The third is the disquotational use of truth. In disquotation, we specify the truth-condition of a sentence in the following manner: we first put the sentence in quotation marks as this is the standard way of talking about the sentence. Then we append the words 'is true' followed by the bi-conditional connective. This is followed by the very same sentence whose truth-condition we are thus specifying, but without quotes. Thus the familiar bi-conditional: " "Snow is white" is true if and only if snow is white." Rorty embraces this disquotational property of 'is true' because it does not bring with it claims about the 'representational' nature of thought and language, and therefore is not accompanied by the associated claim to how truth is a form of 'correspondence' to the

<sup>21</sup> Brandom, B. (1999), (ed.), *Rorty and His Critics*, in "Truth Rehabilitated" by Donald, Davidson, Blackwell Publishers, p-1.

<sup>22</sup> Brandom, Robert B. (ed.) (1999), *Rorty and His Critics*, Blackwell Publishers Richard Rorty's 'Universality and Truth', p-4.

world. In disquotation, the role of truth is justified as making sense of an agent's behaviour and so it meets the pragmatists' demand that truth must make a difference to practice. Rorty thus thinks that disquotation is an acceptable characterization of 'is true'. Rorty has thus identified these three uses of truth. Following Davidson and James, Rorty gives a definition of pragmatism. He writes: Pragmatism can be understood as signifying "adherence to the following theses:

- 'True' has no explanatory uses.
- We understand all there is to know about the relation of beliefs to the world when we understand their causal relations with the world; ...
- There are no relations of 'being made true' which hold between beliefs and the world.
- There is no point to debates between realism and antirealism, for such debates presuppose the empty and misleading idea of beliefs 'being made true'.<sup>23</sup>

Rorty's views on Pragmatism intend to dispense with the notion of objective truth as correspondence to reality. Rorty is ready to accept truth as one concept among a number of other related concepts which we use in describing, explaining and predicting human behaviour. Rorty in fact asks: "But why ... is truth anymore important than such concepts as intention, belief, desire and so on?"<sup>24</sup>

Rorty indeed does not consider truth to be important. He is convinced that truth cannot be a goal of inquiry. He says: "... because I do not know how to aim at it, I do not think that "truth" names such a goal. I know how to aim at greater honesty, greater charity, greater patience, and greater inclusiveness and so on... But I do not see that it helps things to add "truth" or "universality" or "unconditionality" to our list of goals, for I do not see what we shall do differently if such additions are made."<sup>25</sup> Rather than make a hue and cry about truth which the traditional epistemologists have done, Rorty feels that we "should leave truth alone, as a sublimely undiscussable topic, and instead turn to the question of how to persuade people to broaden the size of the audience they take to be competent, to increase the size of the relevant community of justification.

Here we find Rorty's emphasis on the community. Rorty harps on the fact that making a truth claim is nothing more than informing one's interlocutor about one's habits of actions, giving her hints about how to predict and control one's future conversational and non-conversational behaviour. Thus, on Rorty's account, truth has been reduced to mere conversation. Rorty does agree with Davidson that the cautionary aspect of truth shows that truth is beyond all justification and that is why we cannot ever know when any of our beliefs is true, as opposed to justified. Using the term 'true' in a cautionary sense is to win the approval of future audiences for our beliefs. Since there will never be a final future audience we have to go on seeking the approval of ever newer audiences. And since this process goes on ad infinitum truth can never be achieved. For Rorty justification is always to an audience. And the gap between truth and justification emerges when we find that even when we have satisfactorily justified a certain belief or

<sup>23</sup> Rorty, Richard (1991), *Objectivity, relativism, and truth, Philosophical Papers, Volume 1*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p-128.

<sup>24</sup> Rorty, Richard (1995), "'Is Truth a goal of inquiry?' Davidson vs. Wright" in *Philosophical Quarterly*, July 1995, Vol. 45, No.180, p-286.

<sup>25</sup> Brandom, Robert B. (ed.) (1999), *Rorty And His Critics*, Blackwell Publishers Richard Rorty's 'Universality and Truth', p-7.

sentence to the currently available audience, there can always be newer audiences to whom we still have to justify it. The idea of truth will then have to be the impossible ideal of a justification after which no further justification is needed. Truth is thus not a reachable goal, and so it is no goal at all. Rorty's premise is couched in terms of justification to audiences, but in effect Rorty says the same thing as Davidson that we can never know when one of our beliefs (however justified we take it to be) is true. Rorty, is therefore, happy to reject truth as a goal and commit that the only goal can be justification. We have seen earlier that Davidson has also made a similar commitment. They both go from the so-called cautionary aspect of truth to the conclusion that truth cannot be a goal of inquiry, on the ground that the cautionary aspect of truth forces the idea that we can never tell which of our beliefs is true. Truth cannot be a goal of inquiry on the ground that there are inexhaustible audiences to whom we might have to justify a belief of ours.

Despite their affinity, they do have differences. Rorty differs from Davidson insofar as he draws a further conclusion which Davidson does not. Rorty argues that if truth is not a goal of inquiry, it does not deserve the attention which philosophers have given to it. This is a pragmatic lesson which lays down that any bit of philosophy which is not relevant to practice is not of genuine interest. To be relevant to practice, truth must be a goal of inquiry. Since it is not such a goal, it is of no particular interest. Rorty writes: "Truth neither comes nor goes. That is not because it is an entity that enjoys an atemporal existence, but because it is not an entity at all."<sup>26</sup> Davidson does not reduce truth to a non-entity. Davidson is very much aware of his differences with Rorty on the issue of truth and notes his point of departure from Rorty when he writes: "Where we differ, if we do, is on whether there remains a question how, given that we cannot 'get outside' our beliefs and our language so as to find some test other coherence', we nevertheless can have knowledge of, and talk about, an objective public world which is not our own making. I think this question does remain, while I suspect that Rorty does not think so."<sup>27</sup>

From this it is evident that Rorty questions our very urge to find truth. He thus is a coherentist who denounces foundationalist correspondence but differs from other coherentists like Davidson and Putnam who denounce correspondence but do not jettison the objectivity of the notion of truth. We have here two groups of antifoundationalist philosophers who remain divided on what needs to be said about truth. This division has been well accepted by Rorty when he says: "I think that, once one has explicated the distinction between justification and truth by that between present and future justifiability, there is little more to be said. My fellow-coherentists – Apel, Habermas, and Putnam – think, as Peirce also did, that there is a lot more to be said, and saying it is important for democratic politics."<sup>28</sup>

The view which Rorty's fellow-coherentists held was the celebrated view sponsored by C. S. Peirce. The pragmatist tradition in philosophy actually follows from

<sup>26</sup> Rorty, Richard (1993), 'Putnam and the relativist menace' in *Journal of Philosophy*, September 1993, XC, p. 444.

<sup>27</sup> Malachowski, Alan R. (ed.) (1990), *Reading Rorty: Critical Responses to Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (and Beyond)*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, Donald Davidson's "A Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge", p.123.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid,p.5.

the founder, Charles Sanders Peirce whom the pragmatists like Rorty claim to have followed. Even Putnam seems to be highly influenced by Peirce and Peirce's concept of reality seems to move in the direction of Putnamian realism famously known as internal realism. The first pragmatist seeds sprouted in Peirce's work who upheld the 'externalist' ideal of achieving a true description of the totality of real things, nevertheless, maintaining that 'reality' is not a thing existing independently of all relation to the mind's conception of it. Peirce did not conceive the 'real' as having an intrinsic nature independently of how it appears to us. The mind which Peirce refers to is not to be understood as the mind of the ultimate community of inquirers, who are supposed to reach final agreement at the end of the long journey of inquiry. Thus we see that Peirce had in mind the idea of convergence upon One Truth. Peirce does not say that reality is one and truth corresponds to that One Reality, rather he says that convergence is gradually achieved through the road of self-corrective inquiry. And this road of self-corrective inquiry ultimately would lead to the 'one true description'. The goal of the inquiry of the ultimate community of inquirers is a stable set of beliefs about the real world. Peirce's reference to the community of inquirers need not slide into a communitarian or sociological view of truth. Because despite reference to the human mind, Peirce did retain reference to the 'external' which has no effect on our thinking. He says: "What the inquirers ultimately agree to, that is truth, is determined 'by nothing human, but by some external permanency – by something upon which our thinking has no effect.'"<sup>29</sup>

Hence Peirce, unlike Rorty, did not subscribe to a pure consensus view of truth. He does not hold the view that truth is created by the consensus ultimately destined to be reached by all inquirers. Retention of this objective external reality in Peirce's pragmatism is clearly illustrated in the following passage cited below. He believed "that there are Real things, whose characters are entirely independent of our opinions about them ..." and "... we can ascertain by reasoning how things really and truly are; and any man, if he has sufficient experience and he reason enough about it, will be led to the one true conclusion."<sup>30</sup>

In the above passage, Peirce says that the characters of Real things are entirely independent of 'our opinions'. This seems to be self-contradictory on the face of it because Peirce seems to hold two inconsistent views simultaneously – the first is that reality does not exist independently of the mind's conception of it and the second view is that reality is entirely independent of 'our opinions'. This apparent contradiction can be dissolved if we realize that Peirce was actually referring to two different interpretations of the human mind in the two views. In the first view, mind referred to the mind of the ultimate community of inquirers and in the second view by 'our opinions', Peirce means our present opinions in the individual minds and not the opinions which will appear to the mind of the ultimate community of inquirers.

Having dissolved the apparent contradiction in Peirce's notion of truth, it is important that Peirce's view must not be misunderstood as sliding in the direction of external, old style metaphysical realism. Like Rorty, Peirce also does not adhere to the traditional representational picture of truth as correspondence with reality. But unlike Rorty, he does not dismiss the notion of 'truth' as unimportant. He retains the notion of

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<sup>29</sup> Gupta, Chhanda (1995), *Realism versus Realism*, Calcutta, Allied Publishers, p.141.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.137.

truth and understands it as ‘agreement with reality’. But this agreement is neither to be achieved by mirroring facts nor is to be achieved by solidarity or unanimity among peer members. Rather Peirce understands agreement with reality as James had understood it. “Both James and Peirce held that a true belief is one which a person is prepared to act, and by acting upon it, the subsequent experiences do not come as unpleasant surprises. This is a far cry from the ‘copying’ metaphor which the correspondence theorist tries to explain agreement with reality.”<sup>31</sup>

We find the echo of Peircean amalgamation of the externalist and the internalist perspectives of truth in Putnam. Putnam agrees with Rorty insofar as he understands truth in an internalist way which is opposed to the absolute conception of truth or the externalist interpretation of truth as something absolute, radically non-epistemic and recognition-transcendent. Whether or not we are able to justify our claim that a theory is true hardly matters. A theory is simply true ‘in itself’ apart from all observers, according to external realists. Internal realism rejects this idea and understands truth as something that involves a reference to human observers. Putnam and Rorty both share this rejection of the absolute conception of truth and this may be a point of contact between them. But when it comes to understanding truth as agreement with reality, we see a sharp contrast between them. Putnam offers an explanationist argument to defend the realist commitment to truth. I give a brief account of the explanationist argument here.

Putnam argues that through long-drawn out investigations by trial and error, some conceptions may be given up and some may be replaced by others. These conceptions may then be shared and also assumed to be true. Gradually the truth-seeking investigators agree on a stable set of conceptions and beliefs. These beliefs may be taken as justified true beliefs. The explanationist argument shows that this is the best explanation of the successful predictions made on the basis of such shared beliefs. If these beliefs were not assumed to be true, success of science would then be a miracle. This explanationist defense of the truth of beliefs as agreement with reality is a development of the view of C. S. Peirce which has been discussed above.

Following Peirce, Putnam also maintained that provisionally accepted beliefs fixed by investigators through a long-drawn process of self-corrective and adaptive inquiry should be regarded as knowledge. For this is the best explanation of success. If the “real” had not really been what it appears to be in its effect upon us, then the success we achieve in predicting these effects will seem to be fortuitous. The assumption about the truth of some shared beliefs offers the rationale-and the best explanation of experimental success.

Putnam may be criticized for equating truth with success. Putnam’s response to this criticism is available in his response to remove a misconception about William James’s view on truth. James does not equate ‘truth’ with usefulness – as many believe. On the contrary, James thinks, as Putnam points out, that the usefulness of true ideas is the result of their ‘agreement’ with reality; their usefulness alone does not constitute that agreement. They are useful by ‘leading’ us to act in such a way that our subsequent experiences do not come as unpleasant surprises.<sup>32</sup> The warrant for saying that such ideas are true then is issued by agreement with reality. This agreement is not to be understood

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<sup>31</sup> Gupta, Chhanda (1995), *Realism versus Realism*, Calcutta, Allied Publishers, p-143

<sup>32</sup> Putnam, Hilary (1992), *Renewing Philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. and London, Harvard University Press, p-221. See also Gupta’s *Realism versus Realism*, p-156.

in the way traditional correspondence theorists understood it, that is, as a representational or copying relation. An idea agrees with fact in the sense that it works in leading us to what it purports. Peirce and Putnam are not suggesting that an idea agrees with fact because it works. Rather it works because it agrees with fact, that is, because it is true.

Putnam's conception of truth as agreement with reality belongs to the Peircean pragmatist tradition and we have seen already how it differs from Rortian view and even Rorty's acceptance of the difference. So this is a point of contrast between Putnam and Rorty. Putnam strongly objects to Rorty's reduction of truth to a purely emotive practice of social consensus based on choices of peers. He voices his disagreement when he says:

“Although my view has points of agreement with some of the views Richard Rorty has defended, I do not share his skepticism about the very existence of a substantial notion of truth...I try to explain ...how Rortian relativism cum pragmatism fails as an alternative to metaphysical realism. Rorty's present 'position' is not so much a position as the illusion or mirage of a position; in this respect it resembles solipsism, which looks like a possible (if unbelievable) position from a distance, but which disappears into thin air when closely examined. Indeed, Rorty's view is just solipsism with a “we” instead of an “I”.<sup>33</sup>

Putnam opposes Rorty's attempt to relativize truth to any particular cultural practice. He holds that truth is a normative notion and normativity cannot be relativized. Putnam retains objectivity in truth and says that we have no reason to doubt that there are tables and chairs, houses and trees in our environment because they are real. Putnam's pragmatism involves his pragmatic conceptions of truth from his realistic positions whereas Rorty's pragmatism seems to slant towards anti-realist notion of solidarity and conversation. Rorty grounds truth in the community. Putnam does not disapprove of conversation and solidarity – both are essential to inquiry. But he would insist that what prompts the inquiry is interactions between a human organism and its environment. Thus Putnam acknowledges Rorty's emphasis on inquiry, on practice, on the agent's point of view. But he shuns a complete subscription to a communitarian view of truth and knowledge. Rather he considers Rorty's sociological construal of truth as relapsing into relativism. Rorty's argument on truth can be formulated in the following way:

- *Only sentences can be true as truth is a property of sentences.*
- *Sentences are dependent for their existence on vocabularies.*
- *Vocabularies are made by human beings.*
- *Therefore, truths are made by human beings.*

In the above argument, it is seen that Rorty's account of a fact is merely an exotic illustration of the way he 'describes' or 'explains' what is actually a *construct* of his own current linguistic or conceptual scheme. Rorty's conception of truth is relative to human beings and hence involves relativism. Since he claims that truths are *made* by human beings, he also seems to sponsor constructivism. *Rorty's rejection of mirror imagery and his sociological account of knowledge and truth seem to lead to the acceptance of relativism.*

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<sup>33</sup> Putnam, Hilary (1990), *Realism with a Human Face*, ed. And int. James Conant, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, p.IX.

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## METAPHYSICS OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ŚAMKARA'S ADVAITA

SURYA KANTA MAHARANA

### Introduction

Indian philosophy stands as one of the foremost Eastern traditions of abstract metaphysical enquiry. Metaphysics, as understood in Western sense, constitutes the most important part of doing philosophy in India. The metaphysical quest is a search for 'ontos', or 'Being', a study of reality, which plays a pivotal role in Śamkara's *Advaita Vedānta*. Śamkara defines reality as "that the ascertained nature of which does not undergo any change."<sup>1</sup> At another place he says, "that object which necessarily remains what it is, is truly real."<sup>2</sup> The most distinguishing feature of Śamkara's Advaita is the concept 'reality' which is none other than the Unqualified *Brahman* (*Nirgunā Brahman*). *Brahman* is one and the only reality and is admitted as devoid of all determinations (*Nirviśesa*). Plotinus' transcendent and ineffable One or God is in itself beyond all qualifications of thought and is in this sense similar to Śamkara's *Brahman*.<sup>3</sup> Hence the philosophy of *Advaita* is often named as *Nirviśesa Brahman-vāda* (doctrine of Unqualified *Brahman*). The *Nirviśesa Brahman-vāda*, however, has its root in the *Upanisads*.

### Nature of Consciousness

The goal of philosophy for *Advaita Vedānta* of Śamkara is similar to the one expressed by Socrates and others, it is self-knowledge. It is a discovery of man and his essence as a complicated passionate being or a being whose nature is centered in a divine reality. This quest for self-knowledge is pervasive in Indian thought and is given a preeminent place in the *Vedānta*. For in the *Upanisads*, which are the main source of systematic *Vedānta*, it is held that a knowledge of the self is a "saving" knowledge; that he who knows himself knows reality and overcomes all pain, misery, ignorance, and bondage (e.g., *Mundaka Upanisad*, III, 2, 9). The 'Self' in *Advaita Vedānta* is pure, undifferentiated self-shining consciousness, which is beyond time and space, is beyond thought which is not-different from *Brahman* which underlies and supports the individual human person. *Ātman* is pure, undifferentiated, self-shining consciousness, a supreme power of awareness, transcendent to ordinary sense-mental consciousness, aware only of the oneness of being. *Ātman* is the name for that state of conscious being wherein the division of subject and object, which characterizes ordinary consciousness, is overcome. Nothing can condition this transcendental state of consciousness. *Ātman* is thus void of

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<sup>1</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (*Yadrupenā yanniscitam tadrupam nā vyabhicārati tatsatyam*, II.1)

<sup>2</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (Eka-rupenā hyavastho'rthah sa paramārthah, II.I.11.)

<sup>3</sup> Stall, J.F. (1961) *Advaita and Neo-Platonism : A Critical Study in Comparative Philosophy* University of Madras, NMadras, p.180.

difference, but it is not for *Advaita* simply a void; it is the infinite richness of spiritual being, the real.

### Vedic Speculations about Consciousness

In order to understand the true nature of consciousness in the metaphysics of *Advaita*, we should trace its source in the earlier tradition. If we take a review of the philosophical reflections of the time from the *R̥ig Veda* to the *Upanis̥ad*, we arrive at the following successive findings regarding consciousness.

At first there is recognition of the oneness of the principle of the universe. This principle is both transcendental and immanent in it. A complete transformation of this principle from the region of the outer to the inner is in man. The absolute identification of the outer macrocosm with the inner microcosm is also in man. The recognition of the nature of this principle as absolute consciousness is all-pervading, immutable and eternally present. Insistence on the transcendental nature of this consciousness which is entirely unlike any other known object of the empirical world, and providing solid bedrock to the later transcendental theories of consciousness in the *S̥āmkhya-Yoga*, and the *Advaita Vedānta*.

Accordingly, the seed of this non-dual consciousness could be traced in the *Vedic* source though it is in the *Upanis̥ads* that consciousness is conceived and propounded as an independent and eternal reality without any distinctions whatever, in it, as completely inactive, capable of existing as pure ‘*jñā*’, pure light without content, untainted by experience and yet, strangely foundational of all experience. This theory of the foundational nature of consciousness is the legacy of the *Upanis̥ads*. The subsequent systems have sometimes deduced from it quite contradictory doctrines about the nature and function of consciousness. Kanāda and Gautama, for instance, have relapsed into the reality of the empirical and the conditional consciousness only, as against the transcendental and the Absolute consciousness which marked the last stages of the *Upanis̥ads*.<sup>4</sup> Historically, it is for the first time perhaps, that in the *Aitareya Āran̥yaka* we find a determined effort to reflect systematically on the different stages of the development of consciousness in the universe. Here a beginning is made in the successive gradation of reality on the basis of degrees of sensibility and intelligence discovered in plants, beasts and men. The *Āran̥yaka* says, “There are herbs and trees and all that is animal, and he knows the *Ātman* is gradually developing in them. For in herbs and trees, sap only is seen but ‘*citta*’ is seen in animated beings. Among animated beings, again, the *Ātman* develops gradually; and in man, again, the *Ātman* develops gradually for he is most endowed with ‘*prān̥a*’. He says what he has known, he sees what he has known, he knows what is to happen tomorrow, he knows the visible and the invisible world, and by means of the mortal he desires the immortal. Thus is he endowed? With regard to other animals, hunger and thirst are a kind of understanding, but they do not say what

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<sup>4</sup> Saxena, S.K. (1971) *Nature of Consciousness in Hindu Philosophy*, Motilal Banarasidass, Delhi. p.32

they have known, they do not know what is to happen tomorrow, etc. They go so far and no further.”<sup>5</sup>

### Consciousness in the *Upanisads*

In the *Chāndogya Upanisad*, Prajapati unfolds successively the nature of the Self in the dialogue between Indra and Virochana.<sup>28</sup> *Ātman* is progressive and step by step identified with the body consciousness, the dream consciousness, and the deep sleep unconsciousness till finally it is declared to be the one which persists unaffected through all these conditions of the empirical existence. A similar physico-psychological method is adopted in the *Taittiriya*,<sup>29</sup> and here too, the successive unfolding of the essence of the *Ātman* finally ends in its characterization as *Ānandamaya*. In the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad*, the *Ātman* as pure consciousness has been described as the fundamental and the basic reality. Pure ‘*Cit*’ exists independently and by its own light. Even if no phenomenal reality of the sun, moon, the sense-organs, and the ‘*mānasa*’ is manifest, absolute consciousness always exists. It eternally exists as the ‘*svayam-jyotiḥ*’, through the light of which all else shines.<sup>30</sup> This eternal consciousness thus shines unconditionally. Like a lump of salt which consists through and through of savour, the *Ātman* is through and through conscious.<sup>31</sup>

The keynote of this Absolute and unconditional consciousness is that, though it has no consciousness of particular objects, as it is not characterized by the distinction of subject and the object, yet it is not unconscious. It is non-dual and unitary consciousness without the consciousness of differentiation like the consciousness of a man embraced by his wife. This eternal and unconditional consciousness which at times appears to be non-existent, as in deep sleep, does not disappear even for a while. It has no specific cognition, not because it ceases to be conscious, but because there are no objects separate from it which it can see.<sup>32</sup> If the *Ātman* were not unceasingly and unconditionally conscious, and if consciousness actually became extinct, whence could it come back later on?<sup>33</sup> It, therefore, appears not to see, because when the unity of the *Ātman* with the ‘all’ (*sarvam*) has been realized, and when there is nothing left beside itself, who shall see whom? The characterization of the Ultimate Reality which reaches its climax in the Absolute consciousness of Yajñavalkya’s *vijñānaghana*, and which is beyond the categories of time, space and causation, is yet not the last one. The true nature of the

<sup>5</sup> *Aitareya Āraṇyaka*, 2.3.2., quoted in Saxena, S.K. op. cit., p.23.

<sup>28</sup> Jha, Ganganatha. (1942) (tr.) *Chāndogyopanīśad* 8.7.1 ff. *A Treatise on Vedānta Philosophy* Translated into English with the Commentary of Śamkara, Oriental Book Agency, Poona.

<sup>29</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (*Annam brahmetivyajanāt, prāṇo, mano, vijñānam, ānando brahmatī vyajanāt*, 3.2 – 6)

<sup>30</sup> Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) (tr.) *Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad* (4.3.1. ff.) with the commentary of Śamkarācārya (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Advaita Ashrama, Culcutta.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.5.13.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3.23.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3.11- 15.

*Ātman* is 'Saccidānanda'. The concept of 'Cit' and 'Ānanda' though arrived at by different methods, are later on identified as ultimate qualities. Pure and absolute consciousness cannot be differentiated from 'Ānanda', while 'Ānanda' is the same as 'Bhūmān'.<sup>34</sup> This highest *Ātman* is 'Ānanda', because in it there is not want, no second, no more tension or limitation. The *Brahman* is 'Ānanda' as the last super-conscious stage and as absolutely different from empirical consciousness.

The *Upanisads* teach a principle of consciousness which differs so entirely from a state of consciousness which will be able to enjoy or feel *Ānanda* or bliss as not to be indicated by that name at all. This bliss is of a being which has no consciousness or feeling of any kind, and which is better designated as 'Silence rather than as *Ānanda*', as in 'I teach you indeed, but you understand not, Silence is the *Ātman*'.<sup>35</sup> It is clear that such an Absolute consciousness cannot be regarded as 'Ānanda' in any empirical sense of the term. The term 'Ānanda' is only to indicate that the nature of Reality is positive, and no negative. Reality is 'Saccidānanda'. It is 'Sat' as unchanging, 'Cit' as it is not 'acit' (unconscious) or 'Jada' and 'Ānanda' (bliss) as it cannot be of the nature of pain or discord, for all negation must have a basis in something positive. Even this description of *Brahman* as 'Saccidānanda' can only express the reality in the best way possible.<sup>36</sup> In Śamkara *Bhāṣya* of the *Brahma Sutra* (1.4.22) and the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad Bhāṣya*, (2.4.12) Śamkara says that 'no more particular consciousness there is', and not that there is total loss of it.

Ultimately, the reality is 'jñā' or 'cinmātra', for as repeated so frequently,<sup>37</sup> this is the very meaning of 'eternal witness' or the 'dr̥ast̥ā', or 'dr̥s̥mātra' that it is eternally conscious, 'kutastha sākṣin, nitya caitanya svarupa' which is a compact mass of intelligence 'vijñānaghana'.<sup>38</sup> Though the Absolute consciousness is logically and empirically uncharacterisable, it is yet not unknown, and its nature is 'jñā' or pure intelligence as opposed to unintelligence. Its nature is not that of the variable moulds of intelligence of which we have an experience in our daily life of mediated consciousness, but its nature is of the constant, unchanging and basic consciousness, which is the presupposition of all distinctions and manifoldness. According to Śamkara, the 'real' is that whose negation is not possible. And the only thing that satisfies this criterion is consciousness, because denial of consciousness presupposes that very consciousness which denies its own status. It is conceivable that any object is not existent, but the absence of consciousness is not conceivable. If difference cannot be predicated of it, then consciousness is the only reality and anything different from it would be unreal. If the other three kinds of absence are not predicable of it, then consciousness should be beginningless, without end, and ubiquitous. Consequently, it would be without change. Furthermore, consciousness is self-intimating; all objects depend upon consciousness for their manifestation. There are not many consciousnesses; the plurality of many centers of

<sup>34</sup> Jha, Ganganatha. op.cit, 7.23.1., 7.24.1.

<sup>35</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Brahma-Sutra-Bhāṣya of Sri Śamkarācārya Advaita Ashrama*, Calcutta. (*Brūmāh̄ khalutvam tu nā vijānasi upasānto 'yam ātmā*, 3.2.17).

<sup>36</sup> Saxena, S.K., op.cit, p. 31

<sup>37</sup> Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) (tr.) *Brhadāraṇyaka Upanisad* (4.3.11, 4.3.30, and 4.3.23) with the commentary of Śamkarācārya (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.), Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 4.5.13.

consciousness should be viewed as an appearance. There is no reality other than consciousness. It does not admit any internal parts. This ever present consciousness should not be confused with determinate and objectified consciousness because the very grammatical form of the language in which we have to express our thoughts have encouraged the conception that it is something like the table or the chair. But consciousness cannot be so defined in as much as it is the ultimate presupposition of all knowable objects. Once it is admitted that consciousness is *sui-generis*, it must also be admitted that it cannot be defined in the ordinary way. Pure consciousness cannot be defined because it is something entirely different '*anyad-eva*'. From this we must not conclude that it is unknown.

For Śamkara, consciousness is awareness, intelligence or knowledge that can be viewed from two perspectives, namely, absolute or transcendental (*Paramārthika*) perspective and relative or phenomenal (*Vyavahārika*) perspective. From the transcendental perspective, consciousness as *Brahman* exists eternally and is identical with reality itself which is conceived as pure knowledge, "a solid mass of knowledge only."<sup>39</sup> From the phenomenal perspective, consciousness also persists in all phenomenal experience as well where it is called an enjoyer (*bhoktr*).<sup>40</sup> The *Upanisads* say that the absolute consciousness or consciousness *per se* cannot be "known as an object of mediate knowledge, yet it is known as involved in every act of knowledge."<sup>41</sup> Consciousness, Śamkara urges, has to be something different '*vyatireka*' from the material elements and it being essentially knowledge in its nature '*upalabdhisvarupa*', cannot be the same as the physical body. Firstly, because whatever is presented to consciousness cannot be identified with it, it must be entirely different from matter. Secondly, the object of consciousness cannot be a precedent factor in the genesis of consciousness. As it would be absurd on the part of a physiologist to explain the vital processes of the body with reference to the movement of the muscles etc., for it is the vital process itself that render the movement possible not vice-verse. Similarly it is absurd on the part of a materialist to explain the conscious process with reference to the movement of the material elements. Consciousness therefore has none of the characteristics that belong to any or all of the collection of knowable objects. It is peculiarly itself and '*sui-generis*'.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, all objects of knowledge have temporal determinations, such as past, present or future, but that for which these temporal determinations have meaning cannot itself be in time. It is an eternal presence, '*Sarvadā vartamānasvabhāva*'.<sup>43</sup>

However, these two perspectives or orders of consciousness do not lead to an ultimate duality between these two orders. Instead, the higher order consciousness persists as the underlying, unifying and intelligent ground of all phenomenal states of

<sup>39</sup> Vijñānaghana eva, *Ibid.*, 2.4.12.

<sup>40</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (*Katha Upanisad*, 3.4.)

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid* 1.4.

<sup>42</sup> Saxena, S.K. op.cit.p.49

<sup>43</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Śamkarācārya* (2.3.7.), Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta; also see Works of Śamkarācārya in Original Sanskrit, Vol.11. *Bhagavadgita with Śamkara Bhasya* (2.18.), Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1978.

consciousness. “Reality is consciousness”<sup>44</sup> and consciousness is “like a thread, that course through and holds together a collection of pearls”<sup>45</sup> but which is never identical with them. Perhaps the most complete statement of the hierarchical persistence of pure consciousness in phenomenal states of experience is found in the *Māndukya Upaniṣad*. Here, as we have seen in the first chapter, the waking, dream and deep sleep states, along with the “fourth” (*Tūriya*) state, or freedom itself, are identified as the four quarters of the Self (*Ātman*). Consciousness is said to be the witness who underlies the first three states and remains unaffected as it moves through them. For *Advaita Vedānta*, it was by means of these analyses of the levels of consciousness that an Advaitic student could “develop in himself .... the ability to discriminate the real from the non-real.”<sup>46</sup>

### Consciousness – Self – Reality Equation

All Vedantins agree that the essence of *Vedic* wisdom can be summarized by four great sayings (*mahāvākya*)<sup>47</sup>, each of which expresses the fundamental identification (*tādātmya*) of individual consciousness with pure consciousness and with reality. The four statements are:

- a) *Brahman* is consciousness (*prajñānam Brahma*)
- b) I am *Brahman* (*aham Brahmāsmi*)
- c) Thou Art That (*tat tvam asi*)
- d) This *Ātman* is *Brahman* (*ayam Ātmā Brahma*).

Śamkara accepts the relation of ‘*tādātmya*’ or Identity between ‘*Ātman*’ and ‘*Cit*’. He argues that the relation between intelligence and Self must be either of difference or of identity, or of both identity and difference. If the two are absolutely different, there cannot be any relation of substance and attribute link between them. They cannot be related by the external relation of ‘*samyoga*’ also, for they are not corporeal objects, nor can the internal relation of ‘*samavāya*’ holds between them for fear of infinite regress. Thus the two cannot be different. To say that they are both different and identical would be to make contradictory statements; and if the two are identical, there is no meaning in saying that one is the attribute of the other. Hence intelligence and Self are identical “*Ātmā-chaitanya*’or *abhedah*”.<sup>48</sup> Consciousness or intelligence and self are, therefore, one. A distinction between the two is, however, allowed for practical convenience, in so far as the term consciousness is used to denote the self in relation to objects.

<sup>44</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Eight Upanisads With the Commentary of Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (*Prajñānam Brahma, Aitareya Upanisad*, 3.3.)

<sup>45</sup> Mahadevan, T.M.P. (1969) (ed. & tr.) *The Pancadasi of Bharatitirtha-Vidyaranya* University of Madras, p. 9

<sup>46</sup> Mahadevan, T.M.P., *op cit.*, p. xxii.

<sup>47</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (*Aitareya Upaniṣad* 3.5.3); Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) *Op. Cit.*, *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 1.4.10 and 2.5.19; Jha, Ganganatha. (1942) (tr.) *Op. Cit.*, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 6.8.7 ff.

<sup>48</sup> Saxena, S.K. , *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56

This identification is portrayed throughout the *Vedic* literature. For example, the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* mentions that the transcendental, infinite and limitless *Brahman* is “a solid mass of knowledge (*viññānaghana-eva*), that is, a mass of homogeneous, pure intelligence or consciousness.<sup>49</sup> Further, it identifies *Brahman* with *Ātman*, the innermost essence of all forms that transforms itself in accordance with the likeness of all forms.<sup>50</sup> Thus *Brahman*, the utterly distinctionless and transcendental reality, is identical with the immanent essence of all things. In this sense the *Upaniṣadic* doctrine of absolute consciousness establishes at once the transcendence and immanence of consciousness with respect to the world. Advaitins thus use the term *Ātman* to refer to reality or consciousness immanent in the world, and the term *Brahman* to refer to consciousness in its purely transcendental state, which is conceived as the utter perfection of non-duality, free from limitations (*ūpādhi*) of *Brahman* that bring about creation and dissolve in the highest realisation. With his preference for the purely transcendental view of consciousness, Śamkara concludes in his commentary on the second of the verses quoted above from the *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, “Obviously, in a passage like this, the differences are mentioned only for the purpose of canceling them.”<sup>51</sup> Making the same point in a different context, Śamkara asks why the Lord came in so many forms. He answers: Were name and form not manifested, the transcendent nature of this Self as Pure Intelligence would not be known.”<sup>52</sup> Thus, the realization of the identity of the Self with transcendental consciousness is the highest goal of human life from the Advaitic perspective.

### ***Neti... Neti...*, the Negative Formula**

Śamkara says that pure consciousness “has no distinguishing mark such as name, or form, or action, or heterogeneity, or species, or qualities.”<sup>53</sup> The only way to describe the true nature of reality is “to describe it as ‘not this, not this’, by eliminating all possible specifications of it that one may know of.”<sup>54</sup>

### **Self-revelation of Consciousness**

Because consciousness transcends the duality between the knower and the objects of knowledge which characterizes cognitive activity, the essential nature of consciousness is itself self-revelation.<sup>55</sup> Consciousness is essentially self-revealing that its nature can be directly and immediately known (but not indirectly cognized) to be identity of existence (*satyam*), knowledge (*jñānam*) and infinity (*anantam*) (*Satyam Jñānam Anantam Brahma*).<sup>56</sup> It is “undecaying, immortal, beyond fear, pure, homogeneous”<sup>57</sup> and fully in and by itself. It is eternally self-luminous, that is, aware of

<sup>49</sup> Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) Op. Cit., *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 2.4.12.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 2.5.19.

<sup>51</sup> Date, V.H. (1954) (tr.) *Brahma Sutra Samkara Bhāṣya*, 3.2.21, *Vedanta Explained, Samkara's Commentary on the Brahma Sutras*. 2 Vols. Bombay, Bookseller's Publishing Company.

<sup>52</sup> Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) Op. Cit., 2.5.19.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 2.3.6.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Date, V.H. (1954) Op. Cit, 2.3.7

<sup>56</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Eight Upanisads with the Commentary of Śamkarācārya*, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. (*Taittiriya Upanisad*, 2.1.)

<sup>57</sup> Date, V.H. (1954) Op. Cit, 2.4.12; Cf. 4.4.25; 3.2.21.

its own essential existence and perfection, and that it is the unmanifest (to thought), omnipotent witness of all that is apprehended.<sup>58</sup> No argument can be offered to prove the reality of this self-revealing experience itself. Firstly, Śamkara argues by the *Svabhāva* principle that reality would not exist at all if it were not identical with its own unchanging and eternally existing, original self-cause (*svabhāva*). If reality “were to be only an effect, then in the absence of an original cause, the effects will not be what they are, and there will be nothing but the theory of void.”<sup>59</sup> This argument is based on applying the Advaitic analysis of the nature of phenomenal causality (*satkāryavāda*) to absolute consciousness. The phenomenal analysis offers a variety of a substantialist causal model which maintains that an effect is nothing more than, and is ontologically not different from, its material cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*).<sup>60</sup> Secondly, to Śamkara, “none can doubt its existence; for it is involved even in doubting. Fire cannot cancel its own heat; even so self-consciousness can never doubt itself.”<sup>61</sup> This argument however seems to be similar to Descartes’ *cogito* argument.

What follows from the aforementioned premises is that consciousness is eternal, transcendental, unchanging, uncaused and homogeneous. It is *sui generis*, ‘*svayambhūh*’, a reality in itself, unlike any other object, sharing no other quality with any other object excepting existence or Reality, and absolutely uncharacterisable in terms of either a quality, an action, or even a substance. It exists as ‘*cinmātra*’ and as the source of all ‘*Citta*’. It is a contentless consciousness in which there is no consciousness of either ‘I’ or ‘this’, ‘*Aham*’ or ‘*Idam*’.<sup>62</sup> It is eternal, pure, unobjectified and distinctionless infinite-reality, a transcendental and a foundational consciousness with no distinction of ego and non-ego.<sup>63</sup> “All this is guided by intelligence is based on intelligence. The world is guided by intelligence. The basis is intelligence. *Brahman* is intelligence.”<sup>64</sup> “There is nothing but Intelligence at the time of the origin, continuance and dissolution of the universe.”<sup>65</sup> The three states of experience in the *Māndukya Upaniṣad* portray that intelligence or knowledge is the essential nature of the substance which persists through and witnesses these different states.<sup>66</sup> Śamkara further argues that existence and intelligence, as essences of absolute consciousness, are identical not only with each other but with: “existence is intelligence and intelligence is existence.”<sup>67</sup> Knowledge as the essence of consciousness is neither a product nor an activity. Further, infinity (*anantam*)

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.2.22 ff.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.3.7.

<sup>60</sup> Deutsch, Eliot. (1969) *Advaita Vedanta: a Philosophical Reconstruction*, University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, pp.35-37.

<sup>61</sup> Date, V.H. (1954) *Op. Cit.*, 2,3,7; Cf. Mahadevan, T.M.P. (1969) (ed.& tr.) *The Pancadasi of Bharatitirtha-Vidyaranya*. University of Madras, Madras. (*Pancadasi*, 3.23 – 4.)

<sup>62</sup> Saxena, S.K. *op. cit.*, p.44.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p.45.

<sup>64</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) *Aitareya Upaniṣad*, 3.5.3; Cf. Sharma, Baldev Raj, (1972) *The Concept of Atman in the Principal Upaniṣads*, Dinesh Publications, New Delhi, pp. 7-8. (For discussion of the debate regarding the date of this *Upaniṣad*)

<sup>65</sup> Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) *Op. Cit.*, 2.4.11.

<sup>66</sup> Nikhilananda, Swami. (1955) (Tr.) *Mandukya Upaniṣad with Gaudapada’s Karika & Samkara’s Commentary*, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore, p.1.6.

<sup>67</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Śamkarācārya* (2.1.14), Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

and bliss (*Ānanda*) are synonymous for Advaitins because consciousness is revealed to be full (*पूर्ण*), perfect and beyond all determination and qualifications, and because the realisation of perfection is the source of ultimate value in the universe. “There is nothing else which could be desired in addition to the absolute unity of *Brahman*,”<sup>68</sup> because “this Self is dearer than the son, dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else, and is innermost.”<sup>69</sup>

### A Few Metaphors for Consciousness

The theater metaphor for consciousness has attained a certain prominence in Western thought as a result of Hume’s analysis of experience. Hume, like the British Empiricists before him, emphasized the priority of individual experience in the formation and content of fundamentally passive consciousness. In carrying basic empiricist premises to their logical conclusion, Hume rejected the simple mental substance of Locke and Berkeley and offered an analysis of mind in terms of a “bundle or collection of different perceptions.” Reflecting his belief that consciousness is passive and changing in response to the variety of human experience, Hume says: “The mind is a kind of theater, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations... The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only that constitute the mind, nor have we the most distinct notion of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials, of which it is composed.”<sup>70</sup>

Reflecting upon this, it can be argued in favour of Śamkara that the theater metaphor, describing Hume’s empirical theory of consciousness, leaves us with a very limited vision of the scope and potential of intellectual and spiritual experience. For Śamkara, consciousness has the radically transformative power to throw light on darkness and to unify the knower with the known. In comparison with Advaitic transcendental consciousness Hume’s passive theater fails to consider, let alone explain, this revolution at all. Consciousness has also been described as a stream. The most influential theory of consciousness as stream in the Western thought is the radical empiricism of William James. James was particularly opposed to the classical Empiricist model of a passive consciousness receiving simple sensations. He tried to counter this with a more active, process-oriented analysis. Trying to account for the “warmth and intimacy” with which the self greets its own past thoughts and feelings, James emphasized the continuity experienced by mind. He says: “Consciousness, then, does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as “chain” or “train” do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is nothing jointed; it flows. A “river” or “stream” are the metaphors by which it is most naturally described.”<sup>71</sup> For James, the stream of consciousness was neither a substance nor an entity but a continuous, active process which was selective in dealing with objects independent of itself. Against this thesis, Śamkara may observe that the continuity of consciousness experience emphasized by the stream metaphor fails to

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Madhavananda, Swami. (1975) Op. Cit., 1.4.8.

<sup>70</sup> Selby-Bigge, L.A. (1888) Hume, David (ed.) *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Oxford : Bk.I, sect. VI.

<sup>71</sup> James, William. (1950) *The Principles of Psychology*, 2 vols., Dover, New York, p. 239.

allow for the radical discontinuity which characterizes the distinction between empirical and transcendental consciousness, and thus fails to convey the panoramic, illuminating and witnessing dimension of consciousness.

Secondly, the storehouse metaphor for consciousness has been dealt with the Buddhistic *Vijñānavāda* theory of the existence of a plurality of individual series of “streams” of consciousness. Unlike James’ stream of consciousness, which orders objects independent of itself, the Vijñānavādins denied that there were any objects independent of consciousness. Thus in order to account for the coherence of experience, the Vijñānavādins claimed that the stream of consciousness has a storehouse (*ālayavijñāna*) of past impressions (*samāskāra*) buried within it, and that these impressions rise to the surface of the consciousness in the form of an appropriate cognition at the proper moment.<sup>72</sup> Against this thesis it can be argued in favour of Śamkara that a momentary, continuously changing series cannot consistently be a substratum of impressions at the same time.<sup>73</sup>

To conclude, Śamkara’s vision of consciousness submits that the absolute consciousness is identical with the essence of subjective and objective reality and that it is pure, homogeneous, autonomous, self-revealing and self-validating. While *Advaita* has insisted that consciousness is ultimately beyond determination and qualification in terms of the categories of thought, and have criticized various attempts to classify consciousness according to conventional philosophical categories, they have nevertheless tried to indicate what consciousness is not, that is, it is not ignorant, not unreal and not painful. Finally, in more poetic terms, *Advaita* has likened consciousness to the undifferentiated light of the sun, which illuminates itself while witnessing and giving birth to all creation. And it may well be the case, after all, that the most effective way to convey a sense of transcendental consciousness is through the use of just such a metaphor.



<sup>72</sup> Chatterjee, S. & Datta, D.M. (1984) *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, University of Calcutta, Calcutta, pp. 148- 150.

<sup>73</sup> Gambhirananda, Swami. (1977) (tr.) *Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya of Sri Śamkarācārya* (2.3.31), Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

## A REFLECTION ON WITTGENSTEIN'S THERAPEUTIC PHILOSOPHY

HASEN ALI AHMED

In the history of linguistic philosophy Ludwig Wittgenstein holds a unique position. He in his short philosophical career addresses upon two contradictory linguistic methods of which one is philosophically known as early Wittgenstein and the other is known as later Wittgenstein. In short his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* is known as early Wittgenstein and his *Philosophical Investigations* is known as later Wittgenstein. In his *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein proposes ideal language and in his *Philosophical Investigations*, he proposes ordinary language as a method of doing philosophy. Consequently, there we hardly notice any philosophical consistency between early and later Wittgenstein. Rather we come across a dramatic shift in mode, style and purpose between his early and later works. Max Black remarks, "Turning from the early book to the later is like leaving the ruins of a Greek temple for a Baroque Church."<sup>1</sup> Even though Wittgenstein initiates a spectacular shift from early to later philosophy, he nonetheless consistently maintains that analysis or clarification of language either in terms of meaning or in terms of use is all about of doing philosophy.

The linguistic method Wittgenstein introduces in his *Philosophical Investigations* (now on PI) is therapeutic in nature. Wittgenstein says, "The philosopher's treatment of a question is like a treatment of an illness."<sup>2</sup> A philosopher takes a curative measure while dealing with a philosophical question. In this sense a philosopher is both a doctor and a patient. Like a doctor, he has to aware the root cause of philosophical problem, the very nature of it and then finds out a proper solution of it. So long a philosopher fails to understand the locus and nature of philosophical muddle, his solution of this problem would be ad hoc and superficial in nature. It would then not be treated a sustainable solution. As a matter of fact he would be duped by the same problem again and again. Let us explain this point further with the help of example.

Suppose there are two types of patient, such as, a cancerous patient and a neurotic patient. Here the therapy of cancerous patient would be different from the therapy of neurotic patient. In the case of cancerous patient, the treatment of the patient would be effective without the awareness of the disease he suffers from. However, in the case of a neurotic patient there would a different therapy. Unlike the cancerous patient the neurotic patient must know the root cause of his disease. If he does not know the cause of his own disease, his treatment would not be effective like the cancerous patient.

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<sup>1</sup> Black, M " Wittgenstein's View About Language", *Indian Review of Philosophy*, vol.1, January 1972, p.8

<sup>2</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, p.91e

In the case of a cancerous patient, the cause of his disease may be unknown to him and without knowing anything about the disease the patient may be cured. But this would not happen in the case of a neurotic patient. Here a neurotic patient has to play a dual role. He is the patient and also the physician of his own disease. As a patient he must be self-convinced that he is a neurotic patient. As a physician he has to diagnosis the disease, the root cause of the disease and eventually he has to introduce a proper therapy so that the disease would in due course be cured. Thus, unlike the cancerous patient the proper therapy of a neurotic patient is completely different. It is different in the sense that it tries to wipe out the root cause of the disease. A patient may be cured without knowing the cause of his own disease. In such a case his cure would not be perfect because he may further be infected with the same disease so long he does not know the cause and preventive measure of such disease.

Now Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosophy is very much similar to the therapy employed in neurotic patient. The root of philosophical problem is deep. According to Wittgenstein, a philosophical problem has the form: "I don't know my way about"<sup>3</sup> Philosophers have been duped by the grammar of language. They have failed to understand the logic of language, the actual and authentic use of language. They fail to tackle the multifarious uses of language. More importantly, linguistic philosophers have mostly been bewitched by means of language. Here we do not have a clear view of the use of words because our grammar is deficient or lacking in this sort of perspicuity. Philosophy always seeks clarity even though at times clarity is not enough. The problem with ideal or logical language is that it has held up language. For Wittgenstein a picture held us captive and we could not get outside it. It lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably. The problem with speculative metaphysics is that it does not leave everything as it is. Speculative metaphysics survives within so many uncovering issues which according to Wittgenstein are pure nonsense. They live up beyond the limits of language.

Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosophy takes natural or ordinary language as a genuine philosophical method. For Wittgenstein ordinary language is all right for doing philosophy. There is no point of relevance of taking leave from ordinary language. Ordinary language is all right. Philosophy therefore must strict to proper analyses of ordinary language. Philosophy by no means departs from the actual use of language. Philosophy can in the end only describe ordinary language. Philosophy simply puts everything before us. Accordingly, there is nothing remains to explain, nor there anything to deduce. As everything lies open to view, there remains nothing to explain. That is why Wittgenstein has rightly pointed out what is hidden before us has no interest to us, because we the community cannot take part of it. It does not belong to our form of life. So long natural language functions in accordance with our form of life, discloses everything before the society or community, there remains no confusion in natural language. However, confusions arise 'when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work'.<sup>4</sup> That is why Wittgenstein contends that philosophical problems arise when language goes on holidays. As language bewitches us, philosophy must stand against the bewitchments of intelligence by means of language.

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<sup>3</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, p. 49e

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p.52e.

According to Wittgenstein philosophical problems are not really problems but language puzzles. Such puzzles, Wittgenstein opines, are inevitable in philosophical practice and that is why Wittgenstein aptly remarks that *Philosophical Investigations* starts with the riddle. Wittgenstein says, “The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one of another piece of plain non-sense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head against the limits of language.”<sup>5</sup> Traditional philosophy is adjusted as non-sensical as it outranges the limits of language fixed by the conventional rules of usage. Wittgenstein remarks, “When we do philosophy we are like savages, primitive people who hear the expressions of civilized men, put a false interpretation on them and then draw the queerest conclusions from it.”<sup>6</sup>

So the function of philosophy, Wittgenstein suggests, is to clarify the confusions in language or to teach ‘the correct usage of the language’. Wittgenstein conceives philosophy as a form of therapy, which by correcting misuse of language, removes the conceptual confusions. The philosophers’ treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness. Philosophical analysis is a description of the ordinary uses of words and expressions which aims at dissolving the philosophical problems caused by their misuse. Wittgenstein considers such ‘cures’ to be worse than the original disease. However, whatever the malady, it is the job of philosophy to clear up the puzzle, to cure the ills of the understanding. Wittgenstein in this regard says, “What we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday usage...”<sup>7</sup>

While elucidating the nature of philosophical problem, Wittgenstein in his *PI* goes on to say that ‘a philosophical problem has the form: “I do not know my way about.”’<sup>8</sup> The reason is that the grammar of natural language has played dubious role. The use of natural language is complicated and comprehensive because of the ambiguity of the verb ‘to be’. In natural language same word may be used by same person in different context differently. He says, “Language is a labyrinth of paths. You approach from one side and know your way about; you approach the same place from another side and no longer know your way about.”<sup>9</sup> The very nature of natural language is that it always bewitches us. Philosophers are duped by it. Thus, philosophical problems are linguistic in nature because such problems are engendered due to the misinterpretation or misuse of language. Thus philosophical diseases are not something external, rather they are internal in the sense that they are committed by the philosophers while doing their own philosophical activities. As language bewitches us, we must take care against these bewitchments. We must protect ourselves by making careful analysis of ordinary language. There is no need for different language other than ordinary language. Wittgenstein rightly puts: “Philosophy may no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it.”<sup>10</sup> Philosophy leaves everything as it is. Philosophy simply puts everything before us. Hence, there remains nothing to explain, nothing to describe. For Wittgenstein what is hidden is of no interest to us. There is no question of reforming ordinary language for doing philosophy; rather we do philosophy

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<sup>5</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, Sec. 191

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Sect.194.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* sec.29, 40, 41.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* sec.123.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Sec.203.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Sec.124.

by describing ordinary language. Wittgenstein therefore criticizes the philosophers who seek to improve upon actual language by appealing to an ideal language. The word 'ideal', Wittgenstein opines, is liable to mislead. He says, "The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it, you must always turn back. There is no outside. It never occurs to us to take them off."<sup>11</sup> In contrary, Wittgenstein remarks that 'ordinary language is all right'. He further contends that we should leave the slippery ice of ideal language. He comments metaphorically, " We have got on to slippery ice where there is no fiction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that , we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need friction. Back to the rough ground."<sup>12</sup>

Wittgenstein, however, does not incline to say that ordinary language is free from failure and misuse. Rather he would say that pseudo-philosophical problems arise due to the misinterpretations of the rules of ordinary language. For Wittgenstein ordinary language is not to be examined by means of a depth grammar. Language has to be explained in all its great variety and complexity. It has to be described and understood as it is found, not reduced some basic structure. His therapeutic approach guards against the picture theory of meaning. He tells us that picturing is not the sole and whole function of language. It is not at all true to say that that metaphysical sentences are meaningless because they are incapable of picturing facts. There are other means through which the worthlessness of metaphysics can be apprehended. Generally, the term 'metaphysics' is used by Wittgenstein in a pejorative sense. At times he maintains that the characteristic of a metaphysical question is "that we express an unclarity about the grammar of words in the form of a scientific question."<sup>13</sup> Often he uses the term 'metaphysics' more broadly to connote those misleading uses of language by philosophers. In both cases we make a wrong syntactical structure with words. Therefore, what we do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use. Philosophy requires therapy or curative measure because the majority of traditional philosophical problems arose due to the failure of grasping the complexity and multiplicity of ordinary language. Therefore, linguistic philosophers should give deeper attention to the actual use of language. They must take guard against the erroneous function of language. There is no point of divorcing natural language for its unbounded complexity. There is no point of formalizing an artificial language instead of ordinary language. Artificial language, opines Wittgenstein, looks at the logical form of language. But the logical form of language by no means touches upon the steam of human life. According to later Wittgenstein, the meaning of a linguistic expression is not to be determined by correlation with some antecedently and independently existing structure of reality, rather it should be determined by the rules of use that the members of the community have adopted in their form of life. Since language is always a part of a form of life, its function, says Wittgenstein, must be defined anew for each form of life.

The other important dimension of Wittgenstein's therapeutic philosophy is that he determines the meaning of a sentence not in terms of reference, but in terms if its use.

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<sup>11</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe, Blackwell, Oxford, 1976, Sec..107

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* Sec.107.

<sup>13</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *The Blue and Brown Books*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1972, p.28.

Here Wittgenstein tells us, “Don’t ask for the meaning, ask for the use.” He is concerned about the use of words, but not so-much concerned about their meaning. One cannot guess how a word functions rather one has to look at the use and learn from that. There remains nothing captive in therapeutic philosophy as conceived by Wittgenstein. Here everything is open to us. Every member of the community takes part in the therapeutic analysis. It is a form of life based on psychotherapy. There remains nothing private. For Wittgenstein the meaning of sentence is determined by the rules of its conventional usages. The same view has been supported by Ryle, Austin, Strawson as well. It is, therefore, not the task of philosopher to discover the logic of language, but to shift from logic to the natural history of language. Therapeutic philosophy of Wittgenstein thus requires a kind of natural language which can perform in concrete situations of life with concrete ends in mind.

Language being a conceptual device originates in the human mind. Noam Chomsky has said that language is the mirror of human mind. The meaning of linguistic expressions is determined by rules of use of language adopted by the members of the community. There need not be any rule which can determine language irrespective of human needs and purposes. Language, Wittgenstein opines, is a part of natural history of man. The logomorphism of *Tractatus* had banished the concrete means for the sake of attaining purism in language. The PI rehabilitates men in the centre. The shift may be described as a return from Platonism. The craving for generality was essentially Platonic. It betrayed an attitude of indifference towards the particular and the concrete. The therapeutic philosophy of Wittgenstein just opposes it. It states that language is not defined for us as an arrangement fulfilling a definite purpose; it is *an experience* or a *practice* called ‘linguistic phenomena’ and not a means to a particular end. For Wittgenstein the problem of meaning is a verbal problem which we learn from the use of it. He however does not understand the term ‘use’ in the pragmatic sense of usefulness, but the role it plays in a language game. The term ‘language game’ says Wittgenstein “is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.”<sup>14</sup> In reflecting upon Wittgenstein, Max Black has argued that ordinarily the term activity means ‘the systematic character of speech and the dependence of the linguistic act upon the invisible context of the developing speech community.’ For Wittgenstein since the use of language is involved *in the form of life* based on the possibility of conviction of another person, it is impossible that it should be employed in a private use.

The therapeutic philosophy of Wittgenstein also suggests that philosophical problems can be understood by examining the natural and inevitable consequence of thinking. A language guides us how to attain an appropriate use of language. Wittgenstein calls this perspective of language a ‘synoptic presentation’ of language. Language is not a single activity, but multifarious, comprising of many different sorts of ‘language games’. The purpose of therapeutic philosophy is to show the path to those philosophers arrested in a cave enclosed by philosophical muddles, i.e. to show them in Wittgensteinian metaphor *the fly out of fly-bottle*. But it should be kept in mind that in philosophy every *fly-bottle* is different; every language game is different just like different therapies. Thus, there is not a therapy in philosophy, but there are different

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<sup>14</sup> Wittgenstein, L. *Philosophical Investigations*, op.cit. Sec.23.

therapies just like there are different language-games or different fly-bottles. However, there are over-lapping and criss-cross relations among language games just like there are similarities and dissimilarities among different therapies. Having said this, such overlapping uses of natural language are bound together by an underlying layer of non-linguistic behaviour. This instinctive behaviour is akin to what Wittgenstein calls a form of life. The analogy between language and game is extended to the idea that the different uses of language form a family resemblance. Family resemblance means the likeness that the members of a family share. Both in PI and in *The Blue and Brown Book*, Wittgenstein says that language forms a family, the members of it share family resemblances.

According to Wittgenstein speaking of language is a part of communal activity, a way of living in society what he calls *a form of life*. Describing a form of life of a species is tantamount to describe its natural history. In conceiving the use of language within the form of life, Wittgenstein suggests that a language is embedded in different activities performed by a large number of people. The daily exchange of greeting can be called a practice, a custom, an institution. It also belongs to a form of life. It is also a part of natural history of human beings. Hacker and Backer remark that when Wittgenstein goes on to say that *following a rule is a practice*; he thereby suggests that there remains nothing *essentially individual* which may be done in privacy. Thus, Malcolm aptly says, “It seems clear to me, however, that Wittgenstein in saying that the concept of following a rule is ‘essentially social’, in the sense that it can have its root only in setting where there is a people, with common life and common language.”<sup>15</sup>

According to Black, from a myopic perspective one should see a game of chess as a movement of a wooden black from one point to another by the two players. But one is in a position to see the moves as a game he would see players ‘checking the king’. It is a practice having meaning which in its turn exemplifies a system of rules of use having its root deep in the form of our life. Language is rule-following and one can practice language by following rules. Similar to this, language-game is also rule following and one can play or practice game by following rules. The rules of language are not something extraneous. They are part of language rooted deep in the form of our life. Such rules are not regulative, but constitutive. Similarly, the rules of games are not extraneous. They are part of games. They are not regulative but constitutive. Thus, it is claimed that the notion of language game through a form of life is connected with the notion of use as a major key to the analysis of the concept of meaning. Here Pitcher’s remark is particularly relevant. He says, “The way to escape from philosophical puzzlement, he (Wittgenstein) told us, is to abandon our a priori, oversimplified picture of the use of words, but look at the actual use of words to see what goes on.”<sup>16</sup> Every sentence in our language, therefore, is in order. Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language. Problems of philosophy arise when we are not faithful in using words according to rules. Such problems can be dispensed with if we stop building up a theory of language, and only adopt a descriptive method. Philosophical problems are not empirical, they are linguistics in nature because they can be solved or resolved or dissolved by a proper analysis and clarification of language. Therefore, they can be solved by looking at the working of our language. The therapeutic philosophy teaches us

<sup>15</sup> Malcolm, N. “Wittgenstein on Language and Rules”, *Journal of Philosophy*, January, 1989, vol.64, p.23

<sup>16</sup> Pitcher, G. *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*, Prentice Hall, 1964, p.236.

about the correct use of language. Therapeutic philosophy, then for Wittgenstein, is a pure method, a pure therapy, its aim being intellectual health. Barnett in his recent article "The Rhetoric of Grammar" says, "It is well known that Wittgenstein conceived of a philosophical problem as a symptom of a "diseases of thought" and of its treatment as "therapy""<sup>17</sup> By the phrase 'diseases of thought', Wittgenstein perhaps means the *psychopathic disorder* of the philosophers who have been struggling hard to release discharge from philosophical muddles. A person worried by a philosophical problem is like one who is suffering from a psychopathic disorder. So the task of an analyst is like that of a psycho-analyst. The patient in each case is cured by way of detecting the cause of the disorder. The nature of therapy is determined by the nature of illness to which it is applied. He is his own physician. The cure of the symptom of the disease is based on the unique diagnosis of the roots of the philosophical puzzlements. Thus, the philosopher's treatment of a question is like the treatment of an illness. In answering to the question: What is your aim in philosophy? Wittgenstein says," To show the fly the way out of the fly-bottle". Thus, we can conclude with Wittgenstein that language bewitches our intellect. The proper method of therapeutic philosophy is analysis and the proper business of philosophy is not to advance any metaphysical theory but to show the fly out of the fly-bottle. Wittgenstein invites us to look at the actual use of language, actual functioning of language. There is no longer the urge to see the world rightly by seeing through the underlying formal simplicity of ordinary language because ordinary language is no longer treated as mirrors of things but pieces used in various language games.

Now we are in a position to assess the therapeutic philosophy of Wittgenstein. His therapeutic philosophy as a philosophical method opens up a new dimension in philosophy. He has not only resisted the philosophers' tendency of making a drastic revision of ordinary language, but he equally establishes how the actual use of ordinary language in our form of our life would be effective in overcoming philosophical muddles. His therapeutic interpretation of philosophy is holistic in nature. It is holistic in the sense that there is a common participation of the members of the community. It is also said to be naturalistic philosophy as here everything is open to us, nothing remains hidden. Most importantly, Wittgenstein ultimately has succeeded to show the philosophers how to get rid of from philosophical muddles just by looking at the actual use of words within the form of life.

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<sup>17</sup> Barnett, W. " The Rhetoric of Grammar: Understanding Wittgenstein's Method", *Meta Philosophy*, Vol.21, Nos. 1&2, 1990, p.57.

## ART AND MUSIC IN LANGUAGE-GAME: PRIVATE LANGUAGE PROBLEM REVISITED

PURBAYAN JHA

The virginity of an art lies in the depiction of human feelings, desires, flux of emotions; these direct our attention to the art with the feeling of “how it is like” experience. The work of art must have a subjective perspective, the essence of specificity or particularity, yet a writer or painter may manifest their work in terms of communicating “what we judge or recognize as *essential* to these and to indefinitely many analogous instances in reality”.<sup>1</sup> Art invites us to an amalgam of value-judgement and set of beliefs that help us to assess the work. A painting offers a broad range of experiences or events, it may signify love, betrayal, hatred or it may exhibit a crisis of a specific city or its people. The painting of Monalisa is a signifier to the reaction of the audience in the sense of its exquisite depth in the eyes. It tempts us to offer our opinions in opposite directions, and every time we try to evaluate the worth of the art we fall into the trap of collisions in our own reactions. We have the opportunity to grasp the meaning of an art through our worldview. At the same time, one has to accept that the artist might have some personal association with his work which may not come into the purview of our evaluation of the art. The discovery of his vision is expected to come out in his artistic venture and there should be a parallel view or ‘sahṛdayatā’ (Indian sense) among the audience to make the art successful. But is it all about communication of an art through language?

Susanne Langer claims that art picks up where language signs off; art has some unanswerable parts of human life. An artist is just like a poet because of the creativity he possesses. This point has also been echoed by Martin Heidegger. Heidegger frequently offers poetry as our path to the unsayable, while Wittgenstein simply prefers silence or showing, although both are very cautious about the essentially unsayable.<sup>2</sup> When Jibanananda Das talks about the grey world of Bimbisāra-Asoka, about a journey the character makes in his legendary poem “Banalata Sen”, he pictures the illustration of a possible reality with his creative imagination. There lies the creativity of a poet, when he goes beyond the social parameter of language to set up his own world; yet it does have a

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<sup>1</sup> Ronald W. Hepburn, *the Reach of the Aesthetic: Collected essays on art and nature* (Hampshire, UK: Ashgate, 2001), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas F. Gier, *Wittgenstein and Phenomenology: A Comparative Study of the Later Wittgenstein, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1981), p. 217.

meaning. It is by virtue of the mirroring or picturing of facts that language acquires meaning, as far as the *Tractarian* interpretation is concerned. Langer gives it special importance in the sense of the logical necessity. Her interpretation of art is inspired by the *Tractatus* outlook of logico-pictorial form. In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein talks about the pictorial representation of reality. Langer goes even beyond that to claim that where language cannot speak, art takes off. She offers a similarity between the meaning that art confers and that of the world of inner feeling.<sup>3</sup> The emotional quotient of art has something beyond the reach of language. In Langer's interpretation, whereof we cannot speak, there we must endeavour ourselves in composing, painting, writing, making sculpture, so on and so forth.

The above view can be encouraging for supporting some sort of private language. But that is not enough, because interpretation or evaluation of an art is not something totally dissociated from the making of an art. We may object to Langer's view by pointing out that the art is not socially excluded, whatever it offers has a social reflection. Although the artist has an emotional share while making the art, he always has the expectation from the audience for the evaluation of his art. In this sense, he cannot make something which is beyond the appraisal of the audience; otherwise he would not be a successful artist. We may also say that when a person writes his autobiography, he might have some sort of reservation about expressing his most personal incidents, as they might damage one's image in the society. However, this type of concealing is also concerned with the choice that one has to make while giving his account of life to the readers.

The artist has a creative imagination which encourages him to pull out the talent in him to execute it into work. He has a thought process going on that marks the creative aspect in his work. His creativity is evident by his performance at the public gathering. An artist has an intention to perform a certain mission. Wittgenstein's philosophy of language gives a bit of hint in this regard. In his line of thinking an artist's intention is embedded in human customs and social institutions, the intention is not concerned with the mental image of the work. It could bring in confusion to think that the mental imagery brings out the motivation or intention of an artist. Thought can be said to be an enduring part of the work; imagination and thought make an artist creative, although the creative aspect might not be dependent upon the image that is inside the mind of an artist.<sup>4</sup> The artist thrives for the excellence in his art by the depiction that he makes about something that has some personal association, at the same time reflects his vision about an aspect of the world. Meaning is not a constitution of correlations between mental images and the world, according to Wittgenstein. The understanding of music could be used here as a model for understanding language. In the *Brown Book* Wittgenstein clarifies the linguistic practice that constitutes meaning. Here we can see how he compares the understanding of a sentence to the understanding of music:

What we call "understanding a sentence" has, in many cases, a much greater similarity to understanding a musical theme than we might be inclined to think. But I don't mean that understanding a musical theme is more like the picture which one tends to make oneself of understanding a sentence; but rather that this picture is wrong, and that understanding a sentence is much more like what

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<sup>3</sup> G.L. Hagberg, *Art as Language: Wittgenstein, Meaning and Aesthetic Theory* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1995), P. 12.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

really happens when we understand a tune than at first sight appears. For understanding a sentence, we say, points to a reality outside the sentence. Whereas one might say “Understanding a sentence means getting hold of its content; and the content of the sentence is *in* the sentence.”<sup>5</sup>

Understanding music requires an understanding of rules that are associated with the music. Music is also a kind of practice; it is something to be learned under the system of rules governing it. The musical tones represent a particular practice; tones are the symbol of the way music is directed to. The dimensions of music represent a vast arena of a culture; it depicts the reality of a community too. Therefore, music can be a form of life, it really is. The reaction to the different genres of music demands some attention from the listener, even he may have to have some competence in terms of understanding the music. But then, it is hard to believe that understanding music is a mental event that is totally under control of a person’s mind.<sup>6</sup> The composer makes a music that could reach the understanding level of a listener as much as possible. Not only this is a practice for understanding, it is the composer’s or the singer’s skill that makes a musical piece enjoyable for the audience. The rules that one follows in composing music, comes with the perspective of the composer. The composer’s creativity lies in his understanding of the tunes that would be worthy enough for fulfilling the expectation of the audience. His choice of singer in this respect could also make the difference. Having said this, what I like to propose is that there is music lying in our language-game too which needs to be looked at.

We have our musicality in our language. We talk in different tunes in different occasions; we express ourselves in various modulations; our gestures are often musical. Wittgenstein makes this point in *Zettel*: “There is a strongly musical element in verbal language. (A sigh, the intonation of voice in a question, in an announcement, in longing; all the innumerable *gestures* made with the voice.)”<sup>7</sup>

The music can also be called a language-game. A performer understands the role assigned to him in terms of his performance. A violinist understands about the music of violin differently than the pianist knows it and vice-versa. The more one practises, the more he reaches the level of perfection. Practice is a part of language game and is followed by rules. Wittgenstein says, “Understanding a musical phrase may also be called understanding a *language*.”<sup>8</sup> The learning of music requires some technicalities. When a teacher explains a musical piece to a student, he has to read the response of the student to know whether he is learning in a proper way or not. In this way the learning process can be comprehended by a musical practice. One is in the endeavour for a better understanding of the music he is performing, he yearns for the comprehensive knowledge of the musical notes.<sup>9</sup> The meaning of a musical piece is a transportation of our thought

<sup>5</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books: Preliminary Studies for the “Philosophical Investigations”* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1972), p. 167.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Johnston, *Wittgenstein: Rethinking the Inner* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 106.

<sup>7</sup> Wittgenstein, *Zettel* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), G.E.M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright (eds.), tr. G.E.M. Anscombe, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1981), §161.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, §172.

<sup>9</sup> I have been benefited by the article “Wittgenstein and Haydn on Understanding Music” by Yael Kaduri (available online @ <http://www.contempaesthetics.org/newvolume/pages/article.php?articleID=397>). One might object that there is a part of emotion that contributes to the understanding of music, but I take a rather

to an artistic creation, whether in playing an instrumental, writing a lyric of a song, composing a musical note, or singing a song. About the understanding of music, Wittgenstein explains in *Culture and Value*:

Someone who understands music will listen differently (e.g. with a different expression on his face), he will talk differently, from someone who does not. But he will show that he understands a particular theme not just in manifestations that accompany his hearing or playing that theme but in his understanding for music in general.<sup>10</sup>

We have so far outlined a sketch of the involvement of art and music in our linguistic understanding. Art and music both enrich our understanding of the language we are familiar with or not. Even they cross the entire linguistic hurdle in touching a man's heart. The artistic aspect of a language extends the prospect of the understanding; the musicality of language is evident even from our daily life. Thought lies at the root of all the creativities, it is probably human urge of expression of thought that brings about the creativity. The artistic and musical dimensions of language have to be realised in the backdrop of the dimensions of thought. Though we are not claiming that the understanding of language presupposes the understanding of thought in a private activity, one can always examine whether language is determined by the thought, or thought is independent of language. Wittgenstein has rejected the notion of a purely phenomenological language on the basis of the rule-governed use of language. A rule is like a sign-post. Language is never detached from the rules; neither is it dissociated from the social use. Yet, I believe that the understanding of language is an intricate issue, the more I drive to understand language, I deviate from the location of what it actually means.

The artist may not be able to completely put across his inner feelings by his creation as his tormented life could become an impediment. Yet, it is quite possible to assume that the artist tries hard to express, may be his tormented life has come into the being in his painting, may be it becomes a painting of solitude. Even the painting of solitude is expected to produce many interpretations, and those interpretations make the work more fulfilling. The solitude helps the artist to reformulate his ideas, but he gains from the experience he has with the world. His interface with the reality enriches his world-view in the sense that he gets a wide landscape of viewpoints that could fulfil the art. The privacy or individuality of an artist is not a property of the artist himself; it carries the potential of being conveyed to the audience. Although it is sometimes very difficult to pick up the artist's intention, it is assumed that the artist is inescapable to the eyes of the audience; he is always under the scanner. The artist has only to judge how much he can deliver his thoughts into his art. But the deliberation does not necessarily clash with his projection of the art which he might have done in a private frame of mind.

We are now at a point to specify our objective regarding the layers of the language in the backdrop of the private language problem. The following statements can be taken into consideration in describing the artistic imagination and expression in a nutshell:

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Wittgensteinian approach in this regard. It is the musical language game that makes music and emotion to meet together, and it is also evident from the reception or criticism of a musical piece.

<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, Georg Henrik von Wright [ed.], (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), p. 80.

- An artist is the possessor of his imagination and his creative sense; he is the architect of his creative explorations.
- The audience is the evaluator of the relation between the creation as well as the intention of the artist that is instrumental in the making of his creation.
- The artist can claim that he had certain presuppositions in making the art that are not visible for the spectators.
- The spectators can also claim that the work of the artist is not isolated from the *form of life*, the ‘emotional content’ of the art is related with a particular aspect of life and the work is an activity that is governed by rules which the audience is in a position to substantiate.
- It is not a privileged access to the artist that only he can know about the intention of his work, as his intention is manifested in his work and opens to the public arena for evaluation; a successful artist must do something that is parallel to the understanding of the audience.

We conclude that a painting of an artist or a musical note of a composer or a performance of a singer in the web of imagination, is not confined to the artist, composer or singer concerned. It is left to the audience or the critique since it is not a private sensation or language that is understandable only to the creator, it is a partaking activity for both the creator or performer and the audience or spectator. We are not claiming that a private language is not possible at all, but it is not possible in this way. The point I want to make is that the artist always leaves some scope to the audience for review. It validates Wittgenstein’s stance that the language-game is a social institution, and it also establishes that while making the art as an object for evaluation, the artist expects that the audience has the background to some extent in detecting the objective. Only thing is that it is still difficult to grasp the original intention of the artist, whether he has the same intention which the evaluator understands to be so is a matter of dispute. However, this is an investigation that makes the relation between language and aesthetic object more interesting and hence there is a great prospect with regard to the private language problem to evaluate the artistic and musical dimensions of language. The problem lies at the interface between the artistic intention and the audience evaluation. One has to admit that there is an emotional share between the artist and the audience as the reference. There is also a form of life that comes into play where the art can be seen as a platform of participatory activity on the parts of both the artist and the audience group. In that sense the meaning must have a use even in the form of artistic explorations. This is the reason for acknowledging the greatness of the *private language argument* of Wittgenstein. It opens an avenue for the aesthetic appreciation apart from the conventional language-game. Here I have tried to show a very small glimpse of its contribution to aesthetics. The way art and music play pivotal roles in the language-game, is very significant even to our understanding of the *language-game* in conventional verbal discourse. It is hard to ignore, I think, the artistic and musical dimensions of language if one has to explore the broader scopes of the private language problem.

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## MEANING AND MUSIC: SOME REFLECTIONS\*

SUDIP GOSWAMI

Edmund Husserl in his *Logical Investigations* (volume one)<sup>1</sup>, presents interesting ideas on ‘meaning’. He distinguishes sign from expression. To be a sign is to be sign for some thing. Signs always point to something. Sign has wider extension than expression. The main feature of sign is indication and the essence of indication is motivation. Motivation is purely subjective and it really gives us a clue as to how the subject is carried from one thought to another. The communication between speaker and hearer is possible only when a speaker has some intention of ‘expressing himself about something’ and the speaker not only does utter some sound (physical phenomenon), but he also attaches some sense which he wants to share. This desire for sharing is called *meaning-conferring act*. Now the meaning that is attached to a physical phenomenon may or may not be confirmed by the actual world. If the meaning-conferring-act is confirmed by the actual world, then what we have is a *meaning-fulfilling act*.<sup>2</sup>

When we consider expression in general and we go for the meaning through expression, we really move from the subjective act of making a sound towards the ideal meaning. It is a psychological fact that I am trying to say something, but what is intimated and what is asserted in the judgment involves nothing subjective. This leads us to the objective meaning. This unity between subjective expression and objective meaning is called by Husserl the ideal unity and we do not arbitrarily attribute this ideal unity through our assertions, instead we discover it. Vagaries of meaning can be found in the psychological aspect of the meaning which is called ‘act of meaning’ but the content of meaning or the meaning itself which is the essence of meaning is constant and pure logic is concerned with this meaning.<sup>3</sup>

Jacques Derrida regards Husserl to have greatly influenced his (Derrida’s) philosophy. In fact Derrida’s early philosophical programme seems to arise out of his tussle with phenomenology. Derrida through his close reading and thread bear analysis of Husserl’s text brings out the tension, the anomalies and doctrinal inconsistencies in Husserlian phenomenology. It is the phenomenological attempt to ground knowledge on evidence and self-presence and its apparent failure that leads Derrida to conclude that such an attempt itself is fundamentally ill-conceived.

One of the major tensions in Husserl’s phenomenology, according to Derrida, arise out of an initial failure to reconcile the demands of structure with those of genesis.

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\*Some portions of this paper is taken from my Ph.D Dissertation entitled “Meaning, Music and Communication: A Phenomenological Analysis”.

<sup>1</sup> Edmund Husserl *Logical Investigations* (vol.I), Tr. J. N. Findlay, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, P.281

<sup>3</sup> For detail see *Ibid.*, P.282- P.295

This is manifest in Husserl's attempt to analyse the concept of number in terms of subjective act, though later in face of Frege's criticism Husserl abandons his earlier leaning toward psychologism.

One of the key criticisms Derrida levels against Husserl is that the basic premises of phenomenology viz., original evidence and the unmediated presence of the thing itself to consciousness are susceptible to doubt by the method of phenomenology itself. Reason, according to Husserl, is the metaphysics of presence as it is produced in history. It is *self-presence*<sup>4</sup> mediated through language only to return to its original self-identity. Derrida devotes considerable time in deconstructing this Husserlian thesis. Husserl's brand of phenomenology, according to Derrida, has been entrapped in the system it aims at criticizing.

Husserl transcends the limits of its specific subject viz., geometry and goes on exploring the conditions of possibility of the history of science in general. Husserl is not interested in empirical origin; rather he is concerned with the very notion of origin itself. Husserl sometime considers geometry and science in general as cultural forms among others; at other times he depicts science as a unique cultural form that transcends cultural relativism. This contradiction, according to Derrida, originates from Husserl's hesitation about the significance of historical errors. Reacting to Husserl's allusion to Galileo's fatal negligence, Derrida argues that non-communication and misunderstanding are the part of a finitude that can never be entirely overcome.

Derrida's disagreements with Husserl are evident where the former vehemently opposes Husserl's attempt to arrive at linguistic objectivities and mathematical symbolization as a way of maintaining ideality. Derrida thinks that even if the absence of subjectivity from the transcendental field may ensure objectivity, such an absence can only be an artificial one. In Husserl's account writing enjoys a very special status; it is the locus of a whole series of ambiguities involving movement between essence and contingency, purely potential and empirical, dependence and independence. According to Derrida, Husserl gets irreparably trapped in the tension between thinking of language and symbolization as necessary to science and truth as well as the occasion of their alienation and disagreement.

I would like to throw light on Derrida's thought provoking critical appraisal of Husserl's theory of meaning by extending phenomenological analysis to our appreciation of music. If meaning is to be understood in the context of communication, a view which even Husserl would be sympathetic to, then Derrida's opposition to Husserlian ideality of meaning acquires great significance from a detail analysis of what we understand when we understand music. And the key concept that I would like to invoke in this context is *musical pattern*.

Any work of Art is related to the value of its creation. If we consider music as a work of art, then we can say that a theory of musical understanding should lie at the heart of a theory of musical value. Although the listener can find the experience of a piece of music intrinsically rewarding whether or not he understands the music, it is only when he hears and understands the work that the value of the music can be realized in his

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<sup>4</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, Translated with an Introduction by David B. Allison preface by Newton Garver, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1973, P.35

experience. A piece of music can produce a certain sort of pleasure with respect to the hearer, but without the musical understanding it is not possible for the hearer to apprehend the musical value of that particular piece of music. Hence, the listener can be aware of, in his experience, the value of the music as music only if he hears the music with understanding. This musical understanding is related to the possibility of musical communication. If music is something that can be understood, it can be possible for many people to share the correct understanding of a piece of music. The composer simulates certain sound in certain way and he intends the listener to hear in a certain manner; and if he succeeds in his intention, the listener understands his work and at the same time he undergoes the experience the composer intends him to have. To listen to music with understanding involves having the experiences the composer wants or intends the listener to have and it is this experience that is communicated from composer to hearer. Composer can also view his work from the point of view of the listener. All these things are possible only in the context of possibility of musical communication. Hence, if a mode of hearing a composition is valued, and if the value resides specifically in hearing the composition in a certain manner, then the value is not detachable from the experience of the composition. The musical value of a work can be located in an experience the composer communicates to the listener only if what is communicated is nothing other than an experience that minimally involves hearing the sounds that constitute the music. To hear a composition with understanding is to have the experience the composer intends the listener to have; and it is the experience that can be said to be communicated from composer to listener. What is communicated is an experience constituted by the experience of hearing sounds.

But the question still remains: What exactly does music communicate; what constitutes musical meaning? What do we understand when we understand a piece of music? One could make a distinction between absolute meaning and referential meaning. The absolute meaning of a piece of music is intramusical which concerns solely the patterns and relationships established within the work and the intrinsic nature of the process contained within the work. The referential meaning of a musical work consists in the relation in which the work stands to any extramusical phenomenon to which it refers<sup>5</sup>. Here we find two rival views about the nature of absolute meaning of music. According to Formalism, the intramusical meaning is purely intellectual. Different types of musical relationship contained within a musical work are grasped intellectually and provide intellectual interest and satisfaction. Formalism defines music as a communication of a meaningful process which is apprehended by the intellect. According to Absolute Expressionism, intramusical meaning of music is emotional. This view holds that the different types of musical relationships established within a musical work arouse emotion in the listeners who understand the style of the music. For them, music is a constant process which is experienced with emotion and its value is communicated to listener depending on its ability to arouse emotion in the listener. Moreover, Formalism gives important to intellect in music and for Absolute Expressionism, emotion is the central element which has to be defined.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Malcolm Budd, *Music and the Emotions*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley, 1985, P. 153

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Even if there is no communication of speech or emotion through music, it must be accepted that there is a communication of at least a pattern of sound waves which may be called 'musical pattern'. When a sound wave is created at 256 cycles / second (Middle C in Piano) and immediately after that another sound wave is created at 440 cycles/second (A above Middle C in Piano), the interval between the second and the first is that of 'La' and 'Do' of the 'Do, Re, Me, Fa, So, La, Ti' relation of sound waves. The consecutive sounding of these two notes creates what may be called a musical pattern and this musical pattern viz. the relation between 'La' and 'Do' gets communicated to the hearer. In other words, what the musical notation represents gets communicated through music. Even through there is a controversy over whether intramusical meanings or emotion gets communicated through music, I hold that this much is certain that at least musical patterns in the above sense are communicated through music. Phenomenological analysis of the communication of such musical patterns may also throw light on the difference between Western harmonic music and Indian solo music.

An analysis of the notion of musical pattern reveals that there are gaps or fissures that make communication possible. So it is not self-presence, but difference between the notes (auditory or conceptual) that makes musical appreciation possible. Non-communication is not inessential, for it is through some failure new and new musical patterns are discovered. Understanding musical pattern shows that subjectivity is not to be shunned altogether; rather a blend of subjective and objective is the need of the hour in order to take care of both the creative and the communicative aspect of musical pattern.

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## **BOOK-REVIEW**

Ratna Datta Sharma: *Nyāyadarśane Nigrahasthān*, Jadavpur University, Kolkata in association with Mahabodhi Book agency, Kolkata, 2011, price: Rs.400/-

The book under review has got five sub-divisions, viz, Preface, Introduction, content, sixteen chapters on different topics and Bibliography.

In ‘Preface’ the author gives an analysis of the circumstances under which she had to undertake this work and shows her indebtedness to various Professors, colleagues, scholars etc for the successful completion of the book.

The introductory portion of the book deals with the enumeration of the sixteen categories and their philosophical significance in attaining ‘Highest Good’ (*nihśreyasa*) with special reference to the category of *nigrahasthāna*. She deals with some philosophically significant points like the concept of philosophical reflection (*vicāra*) and its varieties. In exercising such reflection she has carefully discussed the situations under which a particular school fails to substantiate its position leading to the probable points of defeat called *nigrahasthāna* along with some examples. Though Gautama has made a mention of twenty-two varieties of *nigrahasthāna*-s, it has to be taken as infinite, all of which cannot be discussed. All the logicians of Bengal and Mithila were deeply influenced by Udayana and hence there is an indirect bearing of Udayana in the philosophical writings of them particularly on *nigrahasthāna*. This type of philosophical deliberation is based on two principles- disseminating correct knowledge to others and achieving victory over the opponents. For this reason we have to follow certain rules without which the philosophical rejection can never be done.

The first chapter is concentrated on the concept of *nigrahasthāna* and the situations under which it can be raised. The author has given an explanation of the definition of *nigrahasthāna* which runs as follows: ‘*Vipratipattirapratipattisca nigrahasthānam*’. The word ‘*vipratipatti*’ means the opposite cognition, i.e., knowing an object in such a way which is not its actual nature. The term ‘*apratipatti*’ means the non-beginning of the cognition of an object. The second chapter deals with twenty-two types of *nigrahasthāna*. Of them some are originated from *apratipatti* and some from *vipratipatti*. The *nigrahasthāna*-s like *ananubhāṣana*, *ajnāna*, *apratibhā*, *vikṣepa*, *matānujña*, *paryanuyojyopakṣaṇa* belong to the former while the rest belongs to the latter. The third chapter is very much interesting in the sense that it contains the nature of *nigrahasthāna* as depicted in the *Carakasamhitā*. We were unaware about the fact that the *Carakasamhitā* which is nothing but a book of medicine is the storehouse of logical tools like *nigrahasthāna*. To Caraka the deliberation of texts, if discussed in the evening with mutual understanding, is called evening discourse (*sandhyā-sambhāṣa*). If the discussion is held being annoyed with each other, it is called *vigrhya sambhāṣa*. The fourth chapter is chiefly concentrated on the critical study of the view of Uddyotakara on

*nigrahasthāna*. To him the real cause of defeat is *nigrahasthāna* (*nigrahasthānāni parājayavastuni*). There does not arise any question of victory or defeat in the case of *vāda* type of debate, because it is meant for unveiling the truth (*tattvabubhutsu kathā*). Hence there is question of raising any point of defeat in the case of *vāda*. Uddyotakara is of the opinion that the inability to understand the desired meaning of the teacher and disciple involved in the debate is the point of defeat. That which is considered as an impediment of determining the intended meaning is called *nigrahasthāna*. The view of Vacaspati Misra, the author of *Tātparyāṭikā*, on the theory of *nigrahasthāna* is philosophically significant and hence it has discussed in a threadbare manner in the fifth chapter. The faults and arguments given by proponent and opponent are taken as mental ascriptions by the Buddhists, which is denied by Vācaspati. To him all these belong to the category of real, but not imaginary. The repetition of a word and meaning has been admitted by him as a separate category of *nigrahasthāna*. Udayana in his *Nyāyaparīṣiṣṭa* has thrown some light on the concept of *nigrahasthāna* which is also worth-pondering. To him the person whose ego is in tact while taking part in debate is not a good debater. The removal of ego of the participating opponent by a person whose ego is in tact is *nigraha* in the form of defeat. It is interesting to note that Udayana has elaborated at large different types of *nigrahasthāna* in the form of meaningless (*nirarthaka or anarthaka*). The author has left no stones unturned in delineating the nature of *nigrahasthāna* as per Jayanta Bhaṭṭa in his *magnum opus Nyāya-mañjarī*. Refuting the view of Dharmakīrti Jayanta Bhaṭṭa has emphasized two-fold *nigrahasthāna*, viz, *vipratipatti* and *apratipatti*. He has developed a critique of *adoṣodbhavana* as admitted by Dharmakīrti. If he undertakes the meaning of the term ‘*adoṣodbhavana*’ in the sense of presenting something as a defect which is not a defect at all and in the sense of not raising any kind of defect then it would be acceptable to Jayanta. He again has shown his reservation in admitting the Buddhist view on denying *nirarthaka* as a special type of *nigrahasthāna* and shown that it has to be taken as a separate type of *nigrahasthāna* without paying any heed to the Buddhist who believes that the meaningless statements are used by the insane people.

Bhāsarvajña who is commonly known as a follower of a particular group of the Naiyāyikas (*Naiyāyikaikadeśī*) is believed to have a separate view regarding *nigrahasthāna*. He has developed a critique of Dharmakīrti in his *Nyāyasāra*. Bhāsarvajña has given the concept of ‘repetition’ (*punarukti*) in two senses- repetition of a word without any necessity or to use a synonymous word. But Dharmakīrti opines that the repetition of the meaning is really a repetition, which has not been admitted by Bhāsarvajña. An attention has also been given to definition and varieties of *nigrahasthāna* as brought into focus by Baradarāja in his *Tārkikarakṣā*. He has interpreted the word ‘*ca*’ (meaning ‘and’) incorporated in the *sūtra* 5/2/7 and given an analysis of some other non-conventional *nigrahasthāna* which are taken into cognizance by the particle ‘*ca*’. To support Udayana in case of *pratijñāhāni* and to admit various *duṣanahāni* Baradarāja has shown his originality and philosophical contribution. The views of Keśava Mīśra and Maṇikantha have got commendable influence on the author as well as other scholars. Maṇikantha has refuted the view of Udayana who is of the opinion that if someone wants to convey something with the pronoun, it leads to a particular type of *nigrahasthāna* called *ananubhāṣaṇa*. These apart, Maṇikantha has given an account of various types of *matānujñā nigrahasthāna*, which is completely

different from conventional idea. The views of Sankara Mishra (in his *Vādi-vinoda*), Vācaspati Mishra (in his *Nyāya-tattvāloka*) Viśvanātha (in his *Gautamīya Sūtravṛtti*), Jayarāma (in his *Nyāyasiddhāntamālā*) and Rādhāgovinda Goswami (in his *Nyāyasūtra-vivaraṇa*) have been carefully discussed, critically adjudged and shown their contributions for the development of the concept of *nigrahasthāna*. In the concluding portion the author has made some evaluative statements about the views expressed by different scholars. To him among the Naiyāyikas the view of Udayana is original, contributive and followed by the later scholars, because he categorically pointed out that the question of *nigraha* arises only in the context of debate. She has dealt at length regarding the nature of *nirarthaka*, a form of *nigrahasthāna*. No one will show any venture to use such sentence particularly at the time of debate. But Udayana wants to justify it as *nigrahasthāna*, because an individual may use a sentence signifying nothing (*avācaka*) leading to the situation of having *nirarthaka nigrahasthāna*.

The book is the result of untiring effort of the author to collect all texts in Indian tradition and giving a free Bengali exposition of them. After going through the book one can have an idea why *nigrahasthāna* has been considered as a separate category by the Naiyāyikas and how it is essential for the attainment of this-worldly and other-worldly wellbeing (*nihśreyasa*) as endorsed by the Naiyāyikas. After noticing its encyclopedic value a serious researcher can easily understand the value and role of *nigrahasthāna* in the phenomenon of philosophizing. If an individual becomes aware about all types of points of defeat, he will try to avoid these in his debate, which may lead him to the attainment of personality development and communicative skill even in the modern world. This positive gain in life may be described as this-worldly wellbeing. The language is non-technical and lucid as far as practicable. The names of some Naiyāyikas like Jayarāma, Rādhāgovinda Goswami etc are found for the first time appearing in the list contributors to the development of the notion of *nigrahasthāna*.

The book would have been better, had there been no printing error, no repetitions and no technicality. It is true that sometimes it is very difficult to avoid technicality if the main flavor of the texts is retained. But it is also necessary to present the technical words in a non-technical way for understanding of the scholars having less knowledge of Sanskrit. Moreover, there should have been 'Index' at the end of the book to easily locate various concepts within a shorter period of time.

In spite of this the book is a pioneer one in so far as the concept of *nigrahasthāna* is concerned. I believe it will be an immortal work of the author presented to the future generation working on Indian Philosophy.

RAGHUNATH GHOSH

Ranjan K. Ghosh: *Great Indian Thinkers on Art: Creativity, Aesthetic Communication, and Freedom*. Black and White (An Imprint of Sundeep Prakashan), Delhi, pp. viii+105, Rs. 295/-.

The book under review carries a fundamental message that art is a unique endeavour of mankind, which provides in this mundane life an experience that is akin to experiencing Divinity. Art is viewed from the Indian perspective as a source of an order of experience that transcends all our experience that we have in our mundane life, and

this experience is acknowledged as proximate to *Bramhanubhuti*. Being an erudite philosopher and a pictorial artist of high calibre, Ranjan K. Ghosh (henceforth RKG) has repeatedly tried to bring home this point in this book, while interpreting the views of Coomaraswamy, Hiriyana, Sri Aurobinda, K. C. Bhattacharyya and Rabindranath by means of perceptive and insightful analysis. His own involvement in the artistic creation provides him an authentic and rightful platform to make us understand the nature of art and its significance for life. In order to make clear the Indian perspective on art in this book, he also compares and contrasts time and again the western viewpoints as his scholarship on the western aesthetics is evident from his earlier published seminal works.

In the introductory chapter, the author distinguishes the nature of emotion that one experiences in his encounter with a work of art from emotions that are experienced in the real life by invoking the story of Valmiki who feels extreme grief and sorrow at the sight of the tragic death of one of the *kraunch* birds by fowler's arrow, and then he starts giving expression of his personal emotion into the form of a poetic art that finally takes the shape of the *Ramayana*. For any author of Indian aesthetics, making the distinction between these two kinds of emotion is both a crucial as well as a challenging task. It is crucial, because on this distinction depends his claim for the unique status of aesthetic enjoyment, and it is challenging, because the charge of psychologism hangs over his subsequent claims like proverbial Democles' sword. So RKG dwells rightly at the beginning on making this distinction from Indian perspective and brings out its subtle nuances by means of insightful analysis. Further, he clearly shows as to how the classical Indian aestheticians like Avinavagupta, Anandavardhana and others keep emotion or feeling-content at the centre of aesthetic experience unlike those of their western colleagues. He even goes so far as for Indian thinkers to maintain that 'Emotion is the essence of art' (p.10). Like the western tradition, art is *not* considered to be a mere imitation of life or nature in the Indian tradition. What is created in art by imagination is something that is idealized. This idealized state is identified as the state of aesthetic enjoyment which is full of pure joy and is acknowledged as proximate to the apex state of Ultimate Reality. The author also shows as to how this view of art is in keeping with the Indian conception of life and world.

In Chapter II entitled 'The Aesthetic Divide', RKG argues that Indian thinker views art as *discontinuous* with life, and the dividing line between art and life is drawn by him at the level of *experience*. He points out that though the western thinker considers art as a break from life but he makes this distinction at the level of *objects*. That is, he looks for some objective properties in a work of art, which would make it so as distinguished from the object of utility. Noting in brief the inadequacy of the western approach, the author argues that an Indian thinker puts emphasis on the *experiential* aspect of a work of art to provide it a privileged status. That is, an object can be claimed to be a work of art only if it is capable of evoking a special sort of emotion as distinguished from our psychological states of mind. It is this sublime emotion that is created by the artist in a work of art and enjoyed by the qualified reader or spectator, which does not continue with our empirical life. And here lies the dividing line between art and life for an Indian thinker.

But exceptionally Bharata, a classical Indian aesthetician, puts emphasis on the *object* of experience (*asvadya*), according to Professor S. S. Barlingay's interpretation of Bharata's theory of *rasa*. According to Barlingay, Bharata understands by *rasa* that

which is the object of experience (*asvadya*) and not relish or its experience (*asvada*), the latter being the view of Abhinavagupta. On Barlingay's interpretation, *rasa* is objectified, according to Bharata, on the stage, and this holds true exclusively to dramatic arts. Thus the term *rasa* is used only in the context of dramatic production, and not applicable to other sorts of arts, such as poetry, painting, sculpture, etc. Bharata uses the term *rasa* to mean the enactment of emotion on the stage rather than to refer to the impingement of such creation upon spectator's experiential consciousness. What is created on the stage has an objective existence by being de-linked from the dramatist, as also by being independent of the spectator. Thus the *rasa* is medium-specific, for it is the medium of a work of art that provides it the distinctive aesthetic dimension. RKG endorses this view of Bharata as interpreted by Barlingay but not without pointing out the difficulties of Abhinavagupta's view on art as mere experience (*asvada*).

Chapter III deals with Ananda Coomaraswamy's view on art. What is essentially argued in the chapter is that Coomaraswamy considers art as a spiritual undertaking. Setting aside the western idea of 'art for art's sake', an Indian artist seeks to discover the Divinity in a work of art, and this is made possible by means of his memory images, strength of his visualization and his imagination rather than by mere imitating Nature. The Indian perspective puts emphasis on the *mental* intervention of an artist to create a work of art. The mental vision of 'Form' or 'Idea' is represented in a work of art in terms of line and colour. The 'Form' or 'Idea' that is visualized by an artist finds expression in a work of art, and this 'Form' or 'Idea' is nothing but *unmanifest* ideal reality that lies behind the empirical world. An Indian artist is always in quest for the Ultimate Reality that subsists behind the seeming empirical reality. Thus the work of art is considered in the Indian context as an expression of Divinity, and the viewer is called upon to share and relish the experience of Divinity underlying the world of multiplicity with an equally powerful intuitive vision and contemplative mood. The discovery of the ultimate truth in a work provides pure joy or *Ananda* to the spectator, and thereby the spiritual end of Indian art is fulfilled.

As its title 'Art-life Interface' indicates, Chapter IV centres on the issue that art is an integral part of human life, and that is insightfully discussed from Aurobinda's perspective. For Sri Aurobinda, human life or consciousness is not something that is static and fixed but always changing in terms of growth and development. Thus the evolution of human consciousness takes place. In this process of human evolution, the sense and experience of beauty accompany the different levels and stages of human life and play a crucial role in shaping up his outward personality as well as making him look at his own innermost being. As RKG has rightly pointed out, Sri Aurobinda's focus of attention is directed towards the question: 'what is the function or use of art in human life?' rather than towards the question: 'What is art?' the latter being the question often asked by the western thinker. At the primordial level of human consciousness, art regulates the instinctive bodily behaviour and wild passions, and develops a sense of beauty in him, and this is evident in the entire spectrum of our individual and social life. But he must soon transcend this level of consciousness and elevate himself to the next higher stage. At this stage, art purifies man's unruly emotions and facilitates him to achieve moral development and intellectual growth. But man is destined to move even beyond the stage of moral and intellectual development to become pure spiritual Self. After insightful analysis of these ideas of Sri Aurobinda, RKG argues as to how Sri

Aurobinda falls in line with the traditional Indian thinking on art and aesthetics as a means of reaching out to the Ultimate Reality. But this ultimate goal of human life must be preceded by the earlier stages of developing aesthetic sensibility and the shaping out of our moral and intellectual development. Among other insightful ideas, one point that has been brought out by the author very clearly is that the same work of art would receive multiple responses in accordance with various levels of consciousness of the people in a particular society.

In the penultimate chapter of the book, RKG begins by pointing out that though K. C. Bhattacharyya agrees with other Indian thinkers as to the nature of aesthetic experience as contemplative and impersonal, but his approach is quite distinct from other Indian thinkers in that his view is devoid of any metaphysical underpinnings, and hence spiritual end has *not* been taken by him as the ideal of Indian art. Delineating in brief K. C. Bhattacharyya's distinction between three levels of feeling, that is, the primary, sympathetic, and contemplative, RKG lays stress on Bhattacharyya's crucial distinction between 'abstractive or contemplative' and the 'creative' approach to art in order to bring out the distinctive feature of Indian thinking on art. The author shows the difficulty of taking what is called 'objective or creative' attitude to art in which the spectator projects himself in the object, and convincingly argues in favour of Bhattacharyya's concept of 'abstractive or contemplative' approach in which the viewer 'seeks freedom by dissolving the object in his own self...' (p. 75). And then RKG argues as to how, like other Indian thinkers, the experiential dimension gets preference over the objective aspect of art in K. C. Bhattacharyya's theory of art.

While examining Tagore's view on art and creativity in the concluding chapter, RKG points out at the outset that Tagore's focal point of attention is directed towards the nature of the process that makes possible the creation of a work of art rather than defining it. For Tagore, art is the self-expression of one's personality, which is prompted by some 'impulse' that is located in the realm of the 'superfluous' of the personality as against the need-based world. Tagore's initiation into pictorial art was not the result of formal technical training. His creative venture rather starts in making erasures or cuttings in his manuscripts, which usually take the shape of certain visual forms. And through this process, he came to realize that the 'rhythmic unity' of lines and forms is the essence of all artistic activity. The author argues for Tagore that an artist does not proceed to create a work of art with some pre-thought ideas but rather he is driven by what Tagore calls 'tide of creation'. The latter is an inner spontaneous force of the artist's personality that guides him through the creative process. But ultimately what comes through as a final product remains unknown to him until the creative process is finished. One cannot predict what the final product would be like. Much later artist 'discovers' it as a work of art.

This view of Tagore on art and creativity has been connected by RKG to poet's general philosophical outlook on life and beyond, which is based on *Upanishodic* philosophy. The *Upanishods* regard this empirical world as the manifestation of the Infinite Spirit including ourselves as individuals, and this identification takes us beyond the realm of finitude and enables us to experience infinite spiritual bliss or *Ananda*. An artist is also capable of getting the taste of this freedom and infinite bliss through his own creation. A point that has been touched but not elaborated upon by the author is that Tagore is greatly influenced by the Vaisnavite interpretation of Upanishodic thought, which holds that the highest goal of human life is the everlasting enjoyment of the

supreme blissful love for highest reality and not the attainment of liberation as it has been considered to be the highest goal of human life by most of the Indian Schools of philosophy.

It is interesting to note that in dealing with various Indian thinkers on art, RKG chooses a theme for each chapter that makes for Indian conception of art as a whole. One of the outstanding qualities of the book is that the author has brought out some significant insights of Indian aesthetics in the later part of each chapter, which engages the reader immediately in a reflective process – the latter being the hallmark of any philosophical writing. The reader placed in the contemporary Indian philosophy and art would, no doubt, find the book intellectually absorbing and stimulating. Needless to mention, the difficult themes of contemporary Indian aesthetics are analyzed in the book in a lucid and elegant style of language that has a natural flow. All these qualities make the book highly engaging and readable.

BENULAL DHAR



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## NOTES TO THE CONTRIBUTORS

This journal is a yearly philosophical journal published by the Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. Philosophical Papers: *Journal of the Department of Philosophy*, welcomes contributions from all fields of philosophy. The editorial policy of the journal is to promote the study of philosophy, Eastern and Western in all its branches: Epistemology, Metaphysics, Logic, Ethics, Social and Political Philosophy, and the Philosophy of Science, Mind, Religion and Language. However, it would like its contributors to focus on what they consider to be significantly new and important. The contributions should, as far as possible, avoid jargon and the author's contention should be stated in as simple a language as possible.

Philosophical Papers: *Journal of the Department of Philosophy* is thus, devoted to the publication of original papers in any other of these fields. We hope followers and seekers of philosophy will receive much light and guidance in the field of philosophical research from these discussions. It is also hoped that the papers in this journal will spark fruitful philosophical discussion of the vital issues raised in them. Please note that we are currently publishing behind schedule due to time-constraints and other engagements relating to our SAP (DRS-II) of UGC, Centre for Ambedkar Studies and Centre for Buddhist Studies associated with our department. We plead an apology to all for the delay.

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