

ISSN: - 0976 - 4496

# Philosophical Papers

JOURNAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

[jpp.nbu.ac.in](http://jpp.nbu.ac.in)

(UGC-CARE ENLISTED)



समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

SAP-DRS of UGC (2002-2020)

University of North Bengal

Accredited by NAAC with Grade B++

Volume - XIX

March 2023

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ACCREDITED BY NAAC WITH GRADE B++

**P.O.-NBU, (Siliguri), Dist.-Darjeeling, PIN – 734013**  
**West Bengal, India**

*A Tribute to ....*

**Prof. Sanat Kumar Sen**

**Former Professor, Department of Philosophy**

**University of North Bengal**

**(Period of service in NBU – 06.11.1970 to 28.12.1995)**



The Department of Philosophy mourns the demise of Prof Sanat Kumar Sen, one of its teachers who observed and actively contributed in the growth and development of the department from its early days. His students will never forget his calm and significant presence in the class room. He was probably the longest serving Head of the Department and continues to serve the department even after his demise through his collection of valuable books which his family donated to the department as per his wish. The present volume of "Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy" is dedicated to the memory of our invaluable member of the family of Philosophy Department, University of North Bengal.

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal is all set to publish the XIXth volume of its journal 'Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy. The department takes pride in the fact that the journal is now in the UGC-CARE list, and hence the editorial team is committed to maintaining the standard with utmost care for the sake of its rich legacy.

The present volume contains a collection of articles covering diverse areas of philosophy, each unique in its content and style. The motive for inclusion of such varied topics lies in presenting the dynamicity of the discipline, as also to exhibit the strength of its methodology to delve deep inside any rational discourse, breaking the barriers of traditionality and conventionality.

We take this opportunity to thank all our valuable and respected contributors. We express our sincere gratitude and thanks to all the esteemed members of the editorial board. We are also thankful to all the colleagues in our department for their all round guidance and also their valuable and thoughtful suggestions in publishing this journal. We express our warm regards and indebtedness to our most beloved honourable Vice-Chancellor. Last but not the least our special thanks are due to the Registrar (Officiating), Finance Officer, and the University Press whose constant support has made the publication possible.

Temisan` Ebijuwa in, "Democracy, Good Governance, and Social Solidarity in Africa" attempts to show that the drive for an adequate form of political organization to address the challenges of development in Africa has been on for quite some time. This quest is imperative and compelling today because of the complexity of Africa's heterogeneous social realities and the fact that their socio-political structures are ineffective for the management of their daily human activities. He argues that the aggregative model of democracy which shows that the decision-making process ought to aggregate the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials, political parties and policy outcomes as the appropriate response to their diverse socio-political experiences in Africa, is narrow and hence defective.

In his paper "The Language Acquisition Riddle and Factors Shaping the Process and its Outcome", Ravindra M. Singh aims at critically evaluating the Chomskyan position on



language acquisition as it affects the age-old nature-nurture debate in philosophy. Singh finds Chomsky's arguments to be problematic as they undermine the role of experience with the native language input to which all humans are exposed as a matter of their day-to-day upbringing in any society. He concludes that consideration of various other relevant facts tends to considerably strengthen the neuro-constructivist account, as articulated by Karmiloff-Smith and others, as a more plausible and satisfactory approach for understanding the process of language acquisition.

The problem of reality is multifaced from the different traditions of philosophical thought. Reena Kannojiya in her paper "An Analysis of the Ontological Aspect of Reality in the Philosophy of Sankara and G. W. F. Hegel" makes an effort to do a comparative study of the problem of reality with respect to its ontological aspect in both the Indian and Western traditions. The paper also explores the methodology of Sankara and Hegel by analyzing the phenomenal and the empirical aspect of Jiva and spirit respectively. Conclusively, this paper identifies consciousness to be subjective in both the thinkers (Sankara and Hegel).

In her paper "Existence and Morality: A Feminist Perspective", Somdatta Bhattacharyya has made an attempt to show how the existence of an individual can be taken as connected with the concept of morality following the line of feminist schools, especially according to Carol Gilligan. In this context, she has also made a contrast between the theory of moral development of humans as developed by Kohlberg and Gilligan. She concludes by touching upon some criticism that has been made against Gilligan's position by some feminists.

The aim of the article "Bankimchandra on Society, Equality and Women's Education" of Sujay Mondal is to reinterpret and reconstruct Bankimchandra's ideas regarding philosophically significant issues such as the idea of society, the idea of equality, and women's education and freedom. In doing so, the author has taken the help of some of the prominent philosophical writings and novels of Bankimchandra.

Pramod Kumar Dash in his paper "The Dialectical Synthesis of Action, Knowledge, and Devotion-The Bhagavat Gita Perspective" illustrates that action, knowledge and devotion are three distinct disciplines that directly impact the conative, cognitive, and affective aspects of human life. He observes that the Bhagavat Gita admits and admires both the dialectical oppositions between these three facilities and their synthesis. He

concludes that the complete personality (*PurnaByaktitva*) of a person flourishes like a yogi if he is perfect in all these three facilities of knowledge, action, and devotion.

In her paper “On the possibility of Absolute Freedom”, Purnima Das examines whether Absolute Freedom is possible in this phenomenal world (*Vyavahārikaprapañca*). In doing so, she has made an effort to show that excessive freedom is not always desirable. She concludes her paper by showing that Absolute Freedom is only possible in case of someone transcending this mundane world. She refers to Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan to support her thesis.

Scientific modernity has, in a way, compelled philosophy to re-define its objectives, although science is not different from philosophy regarding its aim. It differs from philosophy only in methodology. In her paper “What Does Philosophy Do?”, R. Sharmila elucidates the role of philosophy *vis-à-vis* the other branches of knowledge with focus on science.

The paper “What Justice Is? : An inquiry into Nagarjuna’s contemplation on ‘happiness’ and ‘liberation’ in *Ratnavali*” of David Khomdram is not an attempt to project a profound theory of justice, but a reverie on the concept of justice, if it has to arise from Nagarjuna’s writings. This paper is an attempt to realize that Nagarjuna’s sense of virtue is not the popular opposite or the binary other of non-virtue. The author’s endeavour is to show that justice can flourish only in the nature of ‘Supramundane’.

In her article, “A Philosophical Review on Modern Technology as the Future Mode of Education,” Bishnupriya Saha critically examines whether modern technology can provide better scope of quality education to students than the traditional mode of teaching. The author also studies carefully how far a virtual classroom can fulfill the purpose of education as also whether a virtual classroom can take the place of the traditional institutional education system.

The paper of Manik Konch entitled “John Doris’ Critique on Aristotle’s Character Formation” aims to explicate and examine John Doris’ notion of moral character, juxtaposed with the situationists’ conception of moral character, rather than explain the Aristotelian notion of character formation.

The primary objective of Bikash Mondal’s article “B.R. Ambedkar: Social Justice with Special Reference to Affirmative-action” is to argue that the reservation policy of India is a form of affirmative-action, because through the reservation for the deprived section

of the Indian society, Ambedkar tried to promote equal opportunities to the downtrodden people of India. Further, he has critically evaluated all the aspects of Ambedkar's views in this respect. The author concludes that the reservation policy initially needs to be implemented to satisfy the principle of equality, and it may be called an equity program.

Knowledge First Epistemology (KFE) is one of the promising views in contemporary epistemology. The paper, "Justification in Knowledge First Epistemology Style: A rejoinder to some criticisms" of Sreejith K. explores an intriguing claim of KFE that knowledge is a prerequisite for justification. The author considers the Gettier cases and Christoph Kelp's arguments in finally establishing the intriguing claim of KFE

The article "Dhvani: Beyond the Bounds of Literal Meaning" of Kavita Chauhan explores the nature of the relationship between literal meaning and suggested meaning in relation to the conceptual framework of Dhvani. A significant part of the article is also dedicated to discussing the fine interpretive works of Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta.

The Nineteenth century provided us significant atheist philosophical views through the rise of Nietzsche's existentialism, Marxian socialism, and Darwinian evolutionism. Malabika Chakraborty in her paper "Atheist Search for Morality in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century" discusses the approaches of these philosophers regarding ethics and the advent of morality, without considering God in the issue.

The paper "Neo-humanism: Reframing Humanism for Transcending the Scope of Mind" of Sunandita Bhowmik attempts to answer questions like 'What distinguishes Neo-humanism from Humanism? What is it that makes Neo-humanism special? How does Neo-humanism work for expansion of mind? etc.' The study also focuses on the effectiveness of Neo-humanism for universal harmony.

The paper "Mahabharata: A War for Whose Throne?" of Anmol Preet Kaur attempts to explore and analyze the rightful successor of the throne of Hastinapur. To fulfill the above-stated aim, the author divides the paper into three sections viz. i) the custom of *niyoga* ii) storyline and iii) debate. Finally, a conclusion is drawn based on the sections.

Arka Pratim Mukhoti begins his article, "An Attempt to Respond to Nagarjuna's Objections against Hetvabhasa" with an illustration of the notion of *hetvābhāsa* followed by an elucidation of Nagarjuna's objections against *hetvābhāsa* as found in *Vaidalya-*

*sūtra*. Along with the objections of Nagarjuna, the author has endeavoured to find out some possible responses on behalf of the Naiyayikas.

Downward causation is an important notion connected with the notion of emergence, especially the strong one. However, many speculate downward causation, and as a result emergence also, to be incoherent. The paper “Causal Closure and Emergence: Revisiting the Conflict between Them and Some Way-outs” of Kamalika Roy tries to sketch out the ways in which this has been done to establish emergence as a plausible concept.

Discursive space on Discursive(Spatial) Formation(s) is a philosophical conceptual import of the famous twentieth century French philosopher Michel Foucault. It is a signification of a complex heterogeneous apparatus. Shirsankar Basu in his article “The Discursive Apparatus between Haraway and Foucault: Locating the Formal Features of Discursive Space” has primarily tried to construct a theory of the instability or porosity of classical bivalence. He has attempted to construct a formal logical milieu to support the discursive formation of mind or gender that he has established through the discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault.

The article “Reflection on Nelson Goodman’s Concept of World-making” of Nasima Begam provides a comprehensive overview of the idea of world-making and an analysis of the concept of world versions.

Apabrita Bhattacharya’s paper entitled “An Enquiry into the Notion of Secularism” delineates the notion of ‘secularism’ as a socio-political ideology. The author has discussed the idea of ‘secularism’ as a dynamic process which focuses on human welfare. The author feels that in order to maintain social equilibrium and to create an unbiased society the notion of ‘secularism’ requires revisiting by taking recourse to practical analysis.

Subham Saha in his paper, “Collingwood on Art as Imaginative Experience” provides a comprehensive study of how Collingwood’s theory of art maintains art as an imaging thing without ignoring artistic media. The author has lucidly explained why Collingwood’s theory of art seems so puzzling and concludes by providing a way to dissolve the confusion.

Having thus given a brief idea of the contents of this volume, we would like to state that the department mourns the sad loss of two senior members of our Editorial Board. Prof. Ranjan Mukhopadhyay, Retired Professor in Philosophy, Visva- Bharati University, and

Prof. Geeta Ramana, Professor of Philosophy, University of Mumbai. We shall remain ever-grateful to their profound contributions towards the publication and improvement of our journal.

We declare that sincere effort has been made in editing the present volume. However, any mistake inadvertently made may be pointed out for future reference.

ANUREEMA BHATTACHARYYA  
KOUSHIK JOARDAR  
ANIRBAN MUKHERJEE

# **DEMOCRACY, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN AFRICA**

TEMISAN EBIJUWA

**KEYWORDS:** Democracy, Good Governance, Social solidarity, Collaborative Inquiry and Epistemic properties.

## **AGGREGATIVE AND DELIBERATIVE MODELS OF DEMOCRACY**

The world, indeed, Africa is bedeviled by a number of concerns that has questioned the realities of our social existence, as it relates to how we perceive ourselves, others and human social experiences in our contemporary lives. As a result of this, there seems to be a collapse of our sense of values, hope and confidence necessary for the activation and sustenance of the matrix of social solidarity and human development in Africa. Evidence abound of the different challenges facing Nigeria and in fact Africa's social and political landscape at the moment, namely; the problem of social order: armed robbery, kidnapping, banditry, Boko haram, poverty, hunger, unemployment, disease, injustice, corruption, uneven allocation of human and material resources among others. It is not that these concerns are intractable since similar matters have been clinically addressed in other climes. The question is, why have these challenges, despite the attempts to address them, remain resilient and a daunting task in many African states?

The demand therefore for an adequate political order to address the above challenges in Africa has not only been imperative and compelling because of the complexity of our heterogeneous social existence, arising partly from our ever increasing complex economic and political experiences, confusion seems to have arisen as to the liberal theory to adopt for the organization of these social realities. Employing Dewey's theory of rational inquiry, we argue aggregative model did not only constraint itself to voting and election procedures, legitimizing the disempowerment of her people and making the right of the people to prevent oppression and injustice outweigh their duty of obedience, rather, the emphasis on the epistemic features of democratic

communication reveal the frailty of the content of aggregative spirit in democratic discourse and consequently makes social solidarity a daunting task in Africa.

The attempt in this paper is to flatten the above confusion. What many scholars and/or opinion leaders have seen as the adequate response to this concern is what many scholars have called “aggregative democratic model”. In this model, “decision- making processes ought simply to aggregate the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and parties. An outcome is thus just, following this account of democracy, if it mirrors the preferences of the majority of people” (Farrelly, 2004: 224-225). This is how Iris Marion Young (2000:19) describes this aggregative model:

Individuals in the polity have varying preferences about what they want government institutions to do. They know other individuals also have preferences, which may or may not match their own. Democracy is a competitive process in which political parties and candidates offer their platforms and attempts to satisfy the largest number of people’s preferences. Citizens with similar preferences often organize interest in order to try to influence the actions of parties and policy- makers once they are elected. Individuals, interest groups, and public officials each may behave strategically, adjusting the orientation of their pressure tactics or coalition-building according to their perceptions of the activities of competing preferences.

From the foregoing, the aggregative model of democracy demands that citizens participate in the political process by making their choice known through elections by voting for their candidates and thereby increasing their chances of influencing public policy. This is the popular conception of democracy that has misguided our political direction in many African states and hence can be considered too narrow or largely defective to manage our complex social and political circumstances. This is because they base their emphasis on election and democratic processes rather than the outcome of deliberative discourse, which ought to address the diverse nature of our challenges. What aggregative democracy throws up sometimes are docile and incompetent political office-

holders that can hardly understand the epistemic content of the political discourse and policy direction. In other words, we should not see democracy as solely “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making people decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will” (Schumpeter, 1967:353) nor should we see it as “that which provides institutions for the expression and finally, the supremacy of the popular will on basic questions of social direction and policy” (Appadorai, 1975:139). Democracy is more than merely a means to check on political leaders and administrators or call them to account, ... “this misses out the importance of democracy for a wider range of social institutions than this narrow view captures, including the workplace” (Dewey, LW11:221). For Dewey, it is superficial to think that the government is in Washington and Albany. There is government in the family, in business, in the church, in every social group which regulates the behavior of its members.

From the above conception of democracy, at least in the sense of the range of institutions to which it applies, should not be construed narrowly. The legitimacy of democracy, “must be thought to result from the free and unconstrained public deliberation of all matters of common concern” (Benhabib, 1994:20). Since democracy is about public deliberation and not necessarily a flight of imagination, it is as recognized by Sunstein, not a mere procedure, but requires a certain sort of citizens, more specifically, it requires that citizens cultivate proper epistemic habits (Sunstein, 2003). As Dewey puts it:

Beyond governmental machinery (Universal suffrage, recurring elections, political parties, trial by peers etc), democracy was primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated-experience (MW9:93).

Such experience, expressed as collaborative inquiry, required the intellectual and emotional competences necessary to tackle shared problems and negotiate value differences (1991: 226-228).



The kind of collaborative inquiry been urged here is not the type that question the procedures and processes of political institutions. Of course, this is important for democracy but too narrow in relation to the epistemic content of the concept. What is being advocated here is to come up with inevitable provisional solutions to the practical and intellectual problems that sparked it- to resolve problematic circumstances. In other words, democracy is about reason and not merely about elections and voting. The democratic process offers proposals for how best to engage problems/challenges or meet legitimate needs and present arguments to convince others to accept their proposals. This is to say that the democratic process is primarily about argumentation; the discussion of problems, conflicts, and claims of needs or interest. Put differently, positions reached are tested through dialogic engagements and those not accepted are either rejected or refined by the deliberating public as the case may be. Under this arrangement, participants arrive at their decisions not by determining the preferences with the highest numerical support as the aggregative model of democracy are wont to argue, but by determining which proposals the collectives agree are supported by the best reasons.

The above model of democratic procedure has no place for party leaning, ethnic background, religious coloration or any form of primordial sentiments as we are experiencing in many parts of Africa. The goal is the wellbeing of the people and the state. This is to say then that inquiry should be understood as part of the struggle with an objectively precarious but improvable environment. It is demanded by a difficult concern that our inherited habits and standard ways of doing things run into trouble, perhaps through our actions having unexpected circumstances, through new needs and desires. These challenges prompt us to step back, look at the problems we are confronted with, and reflect on what to do next in a collaborative way. The practice of deliberation, therefore, as Gutmann and Thompson avers is an “ongoing activity or reciprocal reasoning, punctuated by collectively binding decisions. It is a process of reaching mutually binding decisions based on mutually justifiable reasons” (2004: 234). Here, decisions are not colored by sentiments, neither are they products of any form of primordial calculations.

From the foregoing, anything that tries to frustrate or undermine this collaborative free flow of inquiry engenders antagonism and destroys democracy. The case of the Federal Government of Nigeria and the Academic Staff Union of Universities on the ongoing industrial action is a good example. Decisions are not achieved by a show of strength, neither are they products of oppression. A well-functioning democracy, therefore, as Sunstein avers, has a culture of free speech, not simply legal protection of free speech (2003:110). This culture of free speech or unfettered communication requires that citizens embrace a certain set of attitudes such as ‘independence of mind’, a ‘willingness to challenge prevailing opinion’ and a ‘readiness to give a respecting hearing to those who do not embrace the conventional wisdom’ (ibid). Those who fall into this category of persons are those that are ready to submit themselves to the epistemic habit of change needed to command the commitment of people to a ‘life of on-going inquiry’.

The above is recognition of the allowance of diversity and difference in a discursive space. A recognition of the institutional guarantees of rights, an undistorted communication in a democratic arena where cooperative undertaking is key, instead of the suppression of another person or group through either subtle or overt violence or intimidation (Dewey, 1991: 226-228). Put differently, the expression of difference is not only the recognition of the rights of others in a dialogic space, but it also confers on others the inestimable virtue of rational inquiry in decision process and thus enriches other’s life-experiences. It is this dialogical process that is the source of authority and the means of choosing among competing alternatives.

### **THE CHALLENGE OF DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY**

One major attack that has been given to this mode of thought is that of Richard Posner on John Dewey’s deliberative democracy. In “Dewey and Democracy: A Critique” (2002: 2) Posner argues that:

Deliberative democracy, at least as conceived by Dewey, is a purely aspirational and unrealistic as rule by platonic guardians. With half of the

population having IQ below 100 (not a point that Dewey, himself ...would have been comfortable making, however), with issues confronting modern government highly complex, with ordinary people having as little interest in complex policy issues as they have aptitude for them, and with the officials whom the people elect buffeted by interest groups and the pressures of competitive elections, it would be unrealistic to expect good ideas and sensible policies be a process aptly turned deliberative.

What we can deduce from the above extract, like many of us won't argue in line with Richard Posner's thought, is that deliberative democracy is misguided and so not useful because many citizens do not always show interest in politics to warrant the conclusion that they can be politically engaged in a rationally organised discursive manner. And secondly, that even if we grant that they are disposed towards deliberative democracy, they lack the sophistication that is associated with the complexity of modern day governance. There seems to me a mistake in Posner's attack on Dewey's thought here. I doubt if Dewey is denying the fact that there are some people that are unable to deliberate on complex issues confronting the state since we are not all wired in the same manner. Rather, conceived as a way of life, Dewey argues that deliberative processes were fit to govern not simply the basic structure of government alone, but the whole of social association (LW2: 325). In other words, our take on this is that Deweyan democrats recognize different spheres of democratic politics, starting from all forms of human organizations in the family, school, local, state, and national levels of governance. The idea here is that the activities at the local level of human association will enhance democratic participation. But it should also be noted that it is not the case that all citizens are expected to be on the same page on issues of national policy concerns. Dewey did not see representation as the best solution to the challenge of governance. What is involved, he says, in all these levels of decision making is the idea of rational inquiry, which is the same at all levels of deliberation irrespective of its sophistication.

It is possible for Posner to argue that it is not only that complex issues of national policy may elicit a high level of intellectual engagement, but that the people lack the right intellectual resources to challenge even less complex concerns of the state to make proper human dialogue worthwhile and fulfilling. This seems to me like a strawman argument because Posner is ignoring the heart of Dewey's position. As a reaction to Posner's view here, it is imperative to note that central to the political decisions at the different levels of governance is the idea of inquiry; that is, discussants at the different levels of representation, be it national, family or local are expected to deliberate roughly the same manner, irrespective of the degree of the deliberation. And so for Posner to give a blanket approval that they lack the right intellectual resources to handle complex concerns of government is to assume that all issues of governance are complex reminiscent to rocket science.

Now, when Dewey says that the deliberative environment is that which is characterized by a certain kind of an epistemic habit of change, he is referring to a life of ongoing inquiry that requires that citizens irrespective of their intellectual sophistication embrace, as Cass Sustein says, "a certain set of attitudes such as independence of mind; a willingness to challenge prevailing opinion; and a readiness to give a respecting hearing to those who do not embrace the conventional wisdom" (Sustein: 110). This certainly does not require serious academic advancement to develop this kind of rational mind to engage people in a debate that concern issues of everyday experience. There are examples of age grades meetings of pre-colonial era in many communities in Africa where elders without formal education sit together to reason out concerns of their communities until decisions are taken on important matters that concern their socio-political realities (Ejiofor: 1981).

Yes, intellectual sophistication is needed to resolve complex matters of governance in any society, it is necessary but it is not sufficient because as Dewey says, "deliberative communicative process is fit to govern not only the basic structure of governance but the whole of human association" (LW2:325) starting from the family, school, local, state and national level. Since this mode of reasoning affects all shades of

human associations, it reaches into the whole of our lives, both individual and collective, and provides a social ideal of human flourishing (LW2: 325). Therefore, Dewey sees democracy as a way of life and consequently the reason for the wrong headedness of Posner's attack of Dewey's deliberative philosophy.

### **DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

Before we begin to discuss the issues of good governance, let us briefly talk about the conditions or the mode of dialogue that will ensure the emergence of acceptable decision by all stakeholders. This is with a view to providing a theoretical background for the analysis of the relationship between deliberative democracy and good governance. Since democracy allows for a diversity and difference of opinions, any manipulation of decisions at this point will make cooperation in a democratic system impossible. As Joshua Cohen avers, outcomes of any discourse are legitimate to the extent that they receive reflective assent through participation in authentic deliberation by all those subject to the decision in question (1989: 17-34). Put differently, the essence of deliberation is generally taken to mean that claims for or against collective decisions need to be justified to one another in terms that, given the time to reflect, these individuals can accept the decision agreed upon. The point is that in concrete terms not everybody or those affected by a given concern, for example, women and those considered to be weak in thought do appear to participate. Even when they participate, their presence is not reflective of even representation. What then are the conditions of dialogue that will ensure that participants arrive at decision not by determining what preferences have numerical strength, but by determining which proposals the collective agreed are supported by the best of reasons.

One major condition needed to enable participants arrive at decisions that are supported by reasons can be referred to as *political inclusion*. On this note, a democratic decision is acceptable only on the account that those affected by it are included in the process of decision- making. It should be noted that it is not practically possible for all the people the decision will affect to be, in real terms,

involved in the process of decision-making. This is why the involvement of even representation is imperative. This is because if they are not included in matters that concerns their existential realities, they are consequently going to be treated as means if they are to obey the rules and policy outcomes or adjust their actions according to the decisions they are not part of. By inclusion here we are saying, in line with Kwasi Wiredu (1995), the smoothing of edges or the sorting out of differences to arrive at what Ali Mazrui (1990) has called shared images. When inclusion as a political ideal is obtained, it allows for a clear expression of perspectives relevant to the concerns to which they seek solutions.

In addition to the above, as a normative ideal, democracy allows for the expression of political equality. When decision-makers are deliberating on any concern that affects their lives, those that are affected are not only included in the process of decision-making, they are to be included on equal terms. All are given equal opportunity to talk, make their voices heard and be able to criticize prevailing opinions and be ready to be criticized until decisions are reached. Such opportunity cannot exist in an atmosphere of one-party depositing idea on others. That deliberative democracy outlaws the elevation of privilege opinion in any dialogic sphere. As an act which denounces the relation of domination, dialogue is a state of responsible people operating in an arena of freedom. In Ejirofor's (1981:140) words:

When a motion is tabled there is exhaustive debate  
Everyone in the assembly is free to speak on it.  
Questions are asked and answered. Should who  
want to speak not have the opportunity the same  
day, debate is adjourned for as often as it is necessary  
to hear all speakers. The aim is general consensus. There  
is no formal voting (...). In the end one person advises that  
`we have seen the point clearly and cannot delay any longer:  
All approve and the presiding officer summarizes the point  
of consensus. All answer, that's it. The decision is taken.

When people operate in an atmosphere of freedom and are tolerant of each other's view-points, they are most likely operating with some high sense of humility. In other words, dialogue as the common task of transcending differences cannot exist without humility. Put differently, if a party considers itself as superior to others or that she has a monopoly of wisdom, what we will have will be a case of suppression. Hence, in a dialogic sphere, there are "neither utter ignoramuses nor perfect sages; there are only men who are attempting, together, to learn more than they now know" (Freire, 1970:13). What is necessary for dialogue therefore is ...openness to various viewpoints, a willingness to explore and empathy, for the relative truth of each position.

Taken together all these conditions for the evolution of meaningful dialogue, what are the implications for good governance and social solidarity? Note that for there to be any meaningful and sustainable democratic arrangement, there must be an intense faith in one another and a demonstrable disposition in the possibility of transcending differences. When this is in place, no one will doubt the processes of political decision and policy outcomes of any regime because they are considered being by-products of good reasons that emanated from the *tribunal of argumentations*.

Understood in this way, good governance means not only that the process of decision making must be in order, it is also to be noted that the process of the implementation of the decision must equally be transparent. Any government that undermines these two components of governance is running in the corridor of dictatorship and creating room for doubts and hatred of the regime. When a government is seen not to be transparent and is not accountable to her citizens, there is the tendency for the people to distance themselves from the regime, thereby questioning the legitimacy of the government. When this happens, it will be difficult to command the commitment of the people into a feeling of loyalty and support for the larger unit (Oladipo, 1998:112), just like we have it in present day Nigeria with all sorts of reaction from the different regions in the country. Hence the state lacking

the authority to command the commitment of the people, becomes an arena of conflict and social disorder, rather than integration and therefore unable to discharge its developmental duties. In a situation of this nature, it is difficult to build institutions that will guarantee peace, good neighborliness and help society foster common purposes and projects that will command the commitment of all to the common good. This is because those institutions will not be trusted and whatever comes out of it will be seen as a product of oppression and so must be avoided. This then becomes a recipe for disaster and a ready platform for antagonizing the state, as we find in various parts of Africa. It is therefore, imperative to note at this point that the purpose of the construction of an appropriate social order, or more appropriately their unsuccessful realization has unleashed certain challenges which have made the quest for social solidarity in Africa a problematic task. But how can social solidarity be achieved and enhanced in the evolution of good governance in a deliberative democracy?

The above question is important and germane to our discussion. Recall that we have said that good governance means accountability in all its ramifications. It also means unfettered access in the process of decision-making and policy, which gives room for transparency. Now, when people are included on the bases of equity and their voices are not excluded from the scheme of things, it will not only make people committed to the outcomes of the results of the decision, and consequently bring people of disparate views and ideas into a coherent whole, it makes social solidarity inevitable and achievable. Thereby, assuming the cementing force that binds individuals based on normative obligations that facilitate collective action and social order. In other words, social solidarity emphasizes interdependence between individuals on the bases of shared values, beliefs and goals among different groups in a society. This is what Emile Durkheim calls organic solidarity as against mechanical solidarity that is usually based on kinship ties of familial networks. When people are connected by their interdependence on one another by shared values in this way, it expresses the basis of many other human values, such as



friendship, companionship, and loyalty. It equally allows us to be sentimentally united to those people who are supported.

It is important to note that not everybody in a social group of this nature is there for the good of others, there are those usually referred to as *free riders*, that is, those that seek to reap, as Graham Crow says, “the benefits of the groups action without incurring any costs themselves” ( Crow,2002: 118). But as social beings, especially when we realize the way our present sordid circumstances has adversely affected our socio-economic and political lives, the need to recognize that we must push to work together to create a better society has become inevitable and urgent. We are all members of the same family and are connected in one way or the other, our coming together inspires action for the promotion of the common good of others. In other words, social solidarity is a value that makes our lives fruitful, more meaningful, and it is also a practice that strengthens societies in a meaningful manner.

From the outset, we have not said that democracy is wrongheaded, neither have we said it is a perfect form of human organization. What we have queried is the aggregative mode of democracy that emphasizes procedures and institutions, which demands that citizens participate in the political process by making their decisions through voting. Democracy is a fuller and wider idea than can be exemplified in this narrow manner. For its true meaning to be realized, it must affect all modes of human association. In fact, as Dewey avers, democracy is a way of life. It is not simply connected to a group of persons “living in a physical proximity”, rather, in a community where people share “aims, beliefs, aspirations, knowledge”, they cooperatively participate in the common life of the group, and consciously share experience” (DE, MW9:7). In this sense, as he further argues, democracy is “the idea of community life itself”, the clear consciousness of a communal life, in all its implications, constitutes the idea of democracy (PP, LW2:328). Hence, from a more generic sense, the idea of democracy from the perspective of the individual

...consists in having a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain. From the stand point of the groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are common.

(PP.LW2:327-328)

From the foregoing, the essence of a democratic society consists in creating the atmosphere for individuals to exercise their right to participate in activities that promote the values and interest supported by their groups. In such a society, nobody's word is the final authority on any concern, a democratic arena is a community which is “continually and cooperatively refining its values and redirecting its custom to expand the degree of growth” (Talissee, 2000). Thus, a democratic society is necessarily a progressive and inquisitive society with a reciprocal attitude punctuated by collectively binding decisions. Through individual participation, the individual, group and/ or the society grows, consequently widening the scope of shared concerns and the liberation of personal capacities (DE, MW9:93)

It is important to note that the above cultivated attitude of cooperative inquiry is not limited to the domain of politics alone, rather, it is in the “attitudes which human beings display to one another in all the incidents and relations of daily life” (LW14:226). As Dewey puts it:

...the heart and final guarantee of democracy is in free gathering of neighbors on the street corner to discuss back and forth what is read in uncensored news of the day, and in gathering of friends in the living rooms of houses and apartments to converse freely with one another (LW14:227).

This is to say that what is at the core of democracy is the active participation of people in the collective inquiry into matters of shared interests and continually engage in cooperative discourse and reasoned debate. In other words, democracy as

a mode of human association is a way of life that recognize different spheres of democratic politics, starting from all forms of social associations in the family, school, local, state and national levels of governance. Once this spirit of inquiry urged here is cultivated, the world will be a better place to live in.

### **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

From the foregoing, I have argued that the idea of democracy conceived in its aggregative mode of human social organization is too narrow and thus misguided in its quest to provide an appropriate direction to manage our socio-political and economic realities in Africa. What has made the response to our present sordid conditions compelling is not only the misguided and narrow explication and implementation of our democratic ideals and policy outcomes, rather the urgency of this quest derives from the fact that the absence of epistemic properties of deliberative discourse has made social solidarity a daunting task. What we urge in this paper, therefore, is the activation of a certain attitude in all social association characterized by the habit of change that requires the cooperative exercise of persuasion, upon an ability to convince and be convinced by reason.

As a rational procedure, we argue that this mode of reasoning will avoid the pitfalls of exclusion, dogmatism and authoritarianism associated with decision-making as we have it today. By this we mean we must reconstruct and rehabilitate existential realities. Our parliaments must cease to be centers of job creation alone; they must become centers of cooperative inquiry or curiosity in concrete terms. In addition, our families and homes must imbibe and exhibit the spirit of cooperative inquiry ingrain in democratic societies. Finally, each of us must make an effort to embrace the scientific method of inquiry in our lives, commitments, values, and received opinions. These, we have argued, will make social solidarity achievable and sustained.

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# THE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION RIDDLE AND FACTORS SHAPING THE PROCESS AND ITS OUTCOME

RAVINDRA M SINGH

**Keywords:** *Language acquisition, Chomskyaninnativism, Neuro-constructivism, Perceptual magnet effect*

## **The Riddle of Language Acquisition**

Chomsky's work has stirred controversies beyond mainstream linguistics and philosophy is no exception where his work has added fuel to fire to the age-old nature-nurture debate. Also, as has often been noted by scholars, there appears no area of research where nature-nurture debate plays out with greater aggression than the nature of language and its acquisition (Aslin, Saffran, & Newport, 1999). When it comes to the question of language acquisition, Chomsky and his followers (hereinafter referred to as Chomskyans) have been found to be undermining the role of experience with the native language input to which all humans are exposed as a matter of their day-to-day upbringing in any society (Scholz & Pullum, 2006, 60). The primary role of experience for Chomskyans is just to trigger one of the options from a pre-specified restricted list of possible values (Crain, 1991; Gibson & Wexler, 1994; Scholz & Pullum, 2006, 63). The experience for them only affects the "reduced residue of phenomena" (Chomsky, 2005, 7) and language acquisition is often talked in terms of growth of bodily organs rather than because of learning (Chomsky, 2005, 5; Chomsky, 1980; Chomsky, 1975).<sup>1</sup> The language acquisition for them thus primarily amounts to "a matter of selection among options made available by the format provided by UG ...allowing relatively few options" (Chomsky, 2005, 8) or "parameter setting" (Chomsky, 2005, 9; Chomsky, 1980, 38). The UG is thus the "the initial state" of the language learner.<sup>2</sup> Another reason

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<sup>1</sup> As has been forcefully argued by Chater & Christiansen (2012), this however leaves the question of how the principles of UG got embedded into the genetic make-up of the organism in the first place unaddressed.

<sup>2</sup> It however needs to be noted that in more recent pronouncements by Chomskyans a great deal of what was earlier considered to be part of the necessary baggage of UG has been surrendered and all that largely remains is recursion (see, Hauser et al., 2002; Chomsky, 2005, 2010; Boeckx, 2012).

for appeal to a genetically specified knowledge of language (Chomsky, 1965, 1968, 1980 & 1986; Piattelli-Palmarini, 1989; Anderson, 2012; Boeckx, 2012) has been because of Chomskyans' reliance on the poverty of stimulus arguments which in its essentiality means that the achievements of any typical language learner far exceed what their supposed 'limited' exposure and their equally limited cognitive capacities will permit.<sup>3</sup>

The trouble however is that Chomskyans have been found to be wanting in specifying the processes which their account would require for realization of the purported goal of mastery of one's native/ambient language. The only thing that they have ever offered in this regard has been in terms of their hypothesizing of existence of a dedicated Language Acquisition Device (LAD) that makes the learning of the language possible. That regular exposure to a language may permit any learner of a language to learn to utilize different cues from the linguistic input, learning strategies that they may adopt, cultural ethos that the individuals are exposed to is accorded no value. Any details about the neuronal processing mechanisms responsible for actualization of different linguistic cognitive tasks at hand across different developmental timescales as well as different biological constraints that may be at play at every stage and affecting the process of language acquisition are also hard to come by and such lacuna in their accounts is never adequately addressed. Also, the attributed 'ease' of acquisition of language is never provided any scientifically testable content. Similar is the case with Chomskyans' another vague claim that language acquisition happens "without the need for explicit instruction" (Anderson, 2012, 362). The amount of linguistic data that infants must be processing from their surroundings and the time that most humans take for mastering their native tongue can hardly be termed "effortless" (Boeckx, 2012, 493) without sounding ironic.

When we look at the process of language acquisition and empirical facts surrounding it, then we find that no satisfactory account appears possible without taking cognizance of the role of the linguistic input and mechanisms involved in processing it. For instance,

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<sup>3</sup> There is rich literature on the topic and the interested reader can look at (Laurence & Margolis, 2001; Pullum & Scholz 2002; Scholz & Pullum 2002; Scholz & Pullum 2006) to get a flavour of the equally acrimonious debate surrounding the poverty of the stimulus arguments between Chomsky, his followers and their opponents.

language acquisition requires rapid deployment and disengagement of attentional mechanisms by the infant. Hence, when we look at cases of atypical development characterized by diagnosis of different kinds of neuro-developmental disorders, like, Down syndrome, fragile X syndrome, Williams syndrome, etc., then we find that lack of control of attentional mechanisms in cases of infants diagnosed with developmental disorders is found to affect their mastery of language severely (D'Souza et al., 2017 & 2020; D'Souza & Karmiloff-Smith, 2016a; Dekker & Karmiloff-Smith, 2010; Thomas & Karmiloff-Smith, 2003). Let us look at some factors that seem to affect the process of language acquisition in very significant ways.

### **The Role of Linguistic Input and the Creation of Perceptual and Attentional Biases**

One of the prominent issues that figures in the controversy surrounding language acquisition is the nature and existence of different processing biases. The surprising thing about the discussion on the nature of perceptual mechanisms is that even researchers who otherwise do not subscribe to the Chomskyan doctrine tend to uncritically accept the nature of many of our perceptual abilities to be innate. One common reason that is often cited in most discussions on the topic for such uncritical acceptance is that existence of certain biases has to be accepted as given, among other things, for the successful meeting of the Quinean challenge (1960) concerning the under-determinacy of the word-to-world mappings. That the rationale for postulation of innate biases is to meet Quinean dilemmas appears to be quite unconvincing as language is never learned in a vacuum or a context insensitive situation for such dilemmas to arise in the first place. There are no word-to-world dilemmas if we do not overlook the obvious fact that language learning always takes place in real life situations suffused with multiple cues that guide the infant in limiting the search space. The questions of learning dilemmas faced by any language learning infant *a la* Gold's (1967) unbiased learner just do not seem to arise.<sup>4</sup> There is no problem of choosing the right rule from infinite set of possible rules because infants and children are biased learners in the sense

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<sup>4</sup> For a more recent rehearsal of power of stimulus arguments as they relate to language acquisition, see, Laurence & Margolis (2001), Pullum & Scholz (2002), Scholz & Pullum (2002 & 2006).



of sensitivity to information that they bring to the task of language learning. As Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff (1996) point out, language learners are not only biased in the sense of their sensitivity to linguistic input but they also utilize a coalition of cues, both linguistic and otherwise, in learning a language. In an important sense, the job of language acquisition researchers is “to determine what information in the language input infants and toddlers are sensitive to and how these sensitivities are reflected in the strategies that these children use to learn their native tongue” (Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff, 1996, 4).

In this context the work of Patricia Kuhl, Linda Smith and their co-workers<sup>5</sup> is most significant in directly addressing and contributing towards identification and explication of the issues surrounding creation of perceptual biases (Iverson & Kuhl, 1995; Kuhl, 1991, 2000 & 2004; Ramírez *et al.*, 2017; Smith, 1999 & 2001). Kuhl’s work on infants has for instance been noteworthy in trying to develop a perspective that shows how language input is not a mere trigger to kick start the inherited language template. Given the insistence by Chomskyans, Kuhl has specifically directed her efforts at demonstrating how linguistic input “goes beyond setting the parameters of prespecified options” (Kuhl, 2000, 101). For this, she has studied infants who are just hours old to document linguistic sensitivities that they are born with. This is done to identify capacities that are innate in nature. By studying infants raised in different linguistic environments, Kuhl has been able to ascertain how infants’ experiences with a specific language influence the very nature of their perceptual mechanisms that are required for processing language of their primary caregivers. This helps her map how infants’ perceptual abilities “begin to diverge as a function of experience with a particular language” (2000, 100). What is interesting about Kuhl’s results is the extent to which infants’ very early experiences are found to colour their perceptual abilities for life. Her findings are striking because they demonstrate how the nature of our perceptual abilities

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<sup>5</sup> Keeping in view the demands of the current task, I have discussed their work as well as that of others strictly to the extent to which it bears on the clarification of the problem of language acquisition in the context of issues raised by Chomsky and his followers. The scope of their work is undoubtedly much broader but falls beyond the focus of the present essay.

is an outcome that comes into being more as a result of developmental processes rather than being their cause. The main findings of Kuhl's work relevant for our immediate purpose are:

1. That initially all infants can discern differences between all the phonetic units used in the world's languages. Infants are endowed with such a capacity regardless of their linguistic environment.
2. The effect of different cultures starts showing up quite early as by the age of one-year infants lose their ability to distinguish different linguistic contrasts of foreign languages. That is, they lose their early capacity to distinguish foreign language contrasts as they move forward in mastering language of their primary care givers.
3. Once infants/children learn a language, they begin to become more and more like adults belonging to their culture as they start failing to distinguish or perceive sound differences not found in the language of their environment.<sup>6</sup> Similar transitions are found to be occurring in speech production where infants begin their life producing universal set of utterances and soon change over to producing speech patterns that are specific to the culture in which they are being raised. In speech perception as well as its production there is thus a remarkable transition from a universal pattern to a particular one.
4. It is infants' experience with a particular language that "alters the brain's processing of the signal, resulting in the creation of complex mental maps. The mapping 'warps' underlying dimensions, altering perception in a way that" is helpful in learning the target language (Kuhl, 2000, 102). That is, exposure to ambient language produces "mapping that alters perception" (102).

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<sup>6</sup> Following the work of Best, McRoberts, and Sithole, Werker *et al.* (1996) have argued that sensitivity to only those contrasts is lost that in some way share native language phonology. Because of this overlap, the reorganisation of the perceptual system results in the assimilation of such non-native contrasts to native phonology. Accordingly in cases where there is no such overlap, for example in the case of English and Zulu, the discrimination abilities for perceiving non-native contrasts are not lost.

Kuhl accounts for these changes in terms of a “perceptual magnet effect” and treats them to be a product of “phonetic prototypes” (Iverson & Kuhl, 1995; Kuhl, 1991 & 2000; Kuhl *et al.*, 1992). In this regard, she cites evidence from cross-linguistic studies to support her contention that perceptual magnet effect is the product of linguistic experience. Such a reading appears reasonable, as phonetic prototypes differ across languages. This means that long before infants learn or begin to produce their first words their perceptual and language producing mechanisms have been modified to conform to the requirements of their ambient language. That is, “language input sculpts the brain to create a perceptual system that highlights the contrasts used in the language, while deemphasizing those that do not” (Kuhl 2000, 103). Studies on monolingual American and Japanese listeners in fact show that both group of listeners fail to perceive the actual physical differences between the sounds that are not found in their language. Instead, what they perceive are similarities and contrasts that are in conformity with their ambient language. Undoubtedly, it is the experience with their respective languages that seems to alter perception of physical sounds of infants (Saffran *et al.*, 2006).

Given the extent of early linguistic exposure and the magnitude of resultant changes, it appears natural to suppose that these similarity/contrast islands should later function as highly tuned filters and direct the infant’s attentional mechanisms in the direction necessary for the mastery of ambient language. That is, they will help infants focus only on those aspects of acoustic signal that are relevant for the language being learnt. The postulated perceptual magnet effect thus seems to alter the initial acoustic space by reconfiguring it according to the requirements of the ambient language. Not only are the old boundaries erased by experience, but new ones are drawn to suit the actual demands of the language being learnt to result in increased sensitivity to native language contrasts (Kuhl *et al.*, 2006).

Kuhl and Meltzoff’s research (1997) on language specificity of categorical perception also demonstrates how innate perceptual boundaries are radically modified by exposure to ambient language and how exposure to a language comes to colour our perceptual abilities in significant ways. Moreover, the fact of variation in responses to categorical

perception of adults from different linguistic groups is explainable only in terms of language exposure and not differences in genetic endowment. This is all the more evident from the fact that categorical perception is also possible for non-speech signals (Aslin, Jusczyk&Pisoni, 1998). Moreover, humans are not the only species who can make such a discrimination as evidence for such an ability is available from the behaviour of other species (e.g., chinchilla, Japanese quail, etc.). Findings of Kuhl and her co-workers are significant because categorical perception for adults “occurs only for sounds in their native language” (Kuhl & Meltzoff, 1997, 9). This is in stark contrast to infants’ response that demonstrates categorical perception not only “for the sounds of their own native language but also for sounds from many foreign languages” (10-11). So, while adults appear to be “culture bound”, infants’ response demonstrates as if they are “citizens of the world” (11). What is remarkable about these findings is not merely the fact that there is evidence for categorical perception in infants to sounds of foreign languages early in life, but also that subsequent modification of this ability results in the supposed loss of this sensitivity.

The work of Linda Smith and her co-workers also further compliments the above conclusions (1999; 2001). In their studies they specifically aimed at investigating this aspect. Their findings reveal as if there is more of a reorganization of perceptual mechanisms than a loss of abilities to discriminate different speech signals. Consideration of factors that are capable of influencing the functioning of different perceptual mechanisms tends to bestow an important role for early linguistic input in language acquisition. It appears as if early linguistic input modifies perceptual systems by tuning them to the requirements of ambient language. Such an interpretation is further substantiated by several studies done by Aslin, Jusczyk, Saffran and their co-workers. Their studies demonstrate how sensitivity to discriminate foreign language contrasts can be retained by training (Aslin, Jusczyk, Pisoni, 1998). The point that researchers like Kuhl, Aslin, Jusczyk and others are trying to make through their studies is not that speech is not a special signal. But one of the important findings of their work is to show that speech is processed by mechanisms that are not specifically designed for processing

speech. Additionally, categorical perception is found to be not merely limited to speech signals nor is such a perception a uniquely human endowment. Linda Smith and her co-workers, for instance, have closely looked at the very basis of different attentional biases that infants extensively rely upon for different language learning tasks (1999 & 2001). The main findings of relevance of Smith's work are:

Firstly, it rigorously demonstrates that the attentional biases that language learning relies upon are not innate but learnt. Secondly, while it may be tempting for us to expect that language learning must also be making use of some attentional mechanisms that are specific to language, Smith's work reveals that this is actually not the case.<sup>7</sup> On the contrary, what Smith's work shows in the specific context of language learning is that the domain-specific knowledge of language "emerges from very general learning processes, processes that in and of themselves have no domain-specific content" (1999, 282). So, what come to be characterized later in life as domain-specific biases that are peculiar to language are not domain-specific to begin with. They have their origin in domain-general processes. As a matter of fact, Smith considers the "general processes of attentional learning" to be providing "an explanation of the origins and mechanisms of word learning biases" (1999, 281). That is, "domain-general processes when at work in particular learning contexts self-organize to form context-specific learning biases" (Smith, 2001, 102). This means that domain-specificity is not the cause but product of development, a product that shapes further development (128). Such an approach to language learning definitely raises several issues including those concerning the nature of different 'socially acquired' biases and forces guiding them.

In this regard, it is useful to note that contrary to Chomskyans' predisposition of taking recourse to innate factors for explaining such outcomes, Smith has successfully accounted for the existence of different biases in terms of what she terms as an "Attentional Learning Account" (1999, 281). The main guiding principle of this account

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<sup>7</sup> If this was to be true, then one possibility, following the domain-specificity arguments is that different languages may require different built-in attentional biases -- something which clearly appears beyond both the means and the time available with the evolutionary processes.

is that if a certain cue is regularly associated with or predicts existence of some other object, properties, events, or actions then, after certain repeated experiences, the occurrence of the first cue will automatically come to recruit attention on the regularly associated objects, properties, events, or actions. On the basis of this account Smith has proposed five hypotheses and has also confirmed each one of them in turn by specifically designed studies. In a nutshell these hypotheses and the results of studies to test them are:

1. “The shape bias hypothesis”: This hypothesis states that “Early nouns refer to categories of similarly shaped objects” (383). Smith accounts for such a shape bias on the basis of statistical regularities inherent in the names that children first learn. The support for this comes from a study of 45 children aged 19 to 30 months by Smith and her co-workers. The results of the study demonstrate that most of the count nouns known to children tested in the above sample named objects on the basis of their shape rather than the material or colour of the objects.
2. “The shape bias does not pre-exist word learning” (284): This means that the shape bias emerges as a consequence of word learning. That is, the shape bias is a “product of an associative link between naming and attending to shape” (286). To test this hypothesis Smith first tested infants around the age of 15 months, that is before they have learned words, and then tested them again once they had crossed the 50 words mark. Such an exercise serves two purposes. Firstly, it allows us to see how early word naming leads to shape bias. Secondly, it will demonstrate whether this shape bias, once it is in place, supports and helps rapid word learning or not. The actual data from the longitudinal study done by Smith are on expected lines and support the hypothesis.
3. “The shape bias is lexically specific when it first emerges” (286): This was tested and confirmed in a cross-sectional study of 64 children on naming and non-naming categorization tasks. The results show a definite “rise in shape choices as a function of vocabulary growth” (286).

4. “The shape bias can be taught” (287): This hypothesis was tested by designing studies that examine children who initially show no evidence for shape bias; make them learn names for shape-based categories; and test how such a group of subjects fares in comparison with controls. That is, the study tests whether “children who have not yet developed a shape bias will acquire one from learning names for shape-based categories” (287). Smith reports a study done on two groups of children, one trained on naming shape-based objects and another one constituting the controls, showed that children trained for seven weeks on naming shaped based objects generalized to other shape-based objects demonstrating facilitative role of emerging shape bias for word learning. The results of the study are very significant because while children trained for seven weeks showed a spurt of 166% in their vocabulary of count nouns, in the case of controls it was just 73%.
5. “Learning about other kinds of words creates other attentional biases” (292): This hypothesis in a way highlights how the facilitative role of contextual cues in creating attentional biases is not limited to just shape-specific input and applies equally well to other properties as well in so far as appropriate contextual cues are there to recruit attentional mechanisms. While the fact of count nouns to bias attention to shape of named objects was utilized by Smith to test other hypotheses, the fact that learning of adjectives does not show any such regularity was exploited to test this hypothesis. Smith’s study on 40 children from the 19-35 months age group shows that while initially children tended to generalize to novel tasks on the basis of shape, after learning about 50 adjectives children shifted their attention away from shape and utilized texture of objects as a new exemplar (294-5). The findings of this study are significant in the sense that they highlight how attentional biases change with age/development and grow stronger and specific with time (Smith, 2001).

The last two hypotheses and their confirmation are particularly significant because they demonstrate that shape-based bias is not merely correlational but “causally bidirectional” (295). Learning to attend to shape not only helps learn other count nouns but learning of words that do not require any such engagement of attention leads to utilization of other

contextual cues for the purpose. Therefore, what appears to be really noteworthy about Smith's work is the clear demonstration of the developmentalist thesis that "Development is the process of getting something new from the cascading effects over time of more general processes" (298). In a different but related context, strong positive correlations have also been reported between high frequency of light verbs in the language input, ease of their acquisition and frequency of their usage. Similar correlation is available for shorter form of high frequency verbs as well, a fact that further enhances their learning, accessibility, ease of production and comprehension. Goldberg (1999) also cites evidence from studies that show that high frequency of light verbs in the linguistic input results in early language learners' use of such verbs more often even in situations where some other verb fits the occasion better and the learner is aware of the use of such a verb. The important conclusion from these studies is that the "high frequency in the input begets high frequency in children's speech" (Goldberg, 1999, 203). Locke (1993) and Werker *et al.* (1996) also report changes in infants' perceptual abilities as a consequence of exposure to ambient language. It is also important to note that evidence for prenatal familiarization with linguistic stimulation and infants' preference for mother's voice as reported by Mehler and his co-workers (Mehler *et al.*, 1996; Mehler & Christophe, 2000) is likely to extend the beginning of the role of linguistic input even further back. Karmiloff & Karmiloff-Smith (2001) also recognize the fact that "the fetus is able to extract information about some of the invariant, abstract features of its mother's voice that transcend the muffling effect of the amniotic fluid...the characteristic of speech that will enable growing infants to become progressively sensitive to the phrase structure and word boundaries of their native tongue" (44-45).

### **Concluding Remarks:**

From the review of extensive research on language acquisition, it is clear that infants not only tend to lose their initial ability to discriminate foreign language contrasts with the passage of time but their exposure with a particular language also modifies their perceptual mechanisms in a very significant manner. The young children's ability to



retain such sensitivities through training as well as the language specificity of categorical perception is demonstrative of how innate perceptual boundaries can be radically altered and how exposure to a particular language comes to colour the very nature of different perceptual mechanisms. The literature on how different languages employ and shape different attentional resources further emphasise how domain specific knowledge of language could be emerging from mechanisms that are not domain specific to begin with. The studies aimed at investigating the role of different cues including communicative factors as well as the changing nature of the significance of these factors with time further highlight the facilitative nature of these aspects in language acquisition. Consideration of these facts tends to considerably strengthen the neuroconstructivist account as articulated by Karmiloff-Smith and others (Karmiloff-Smith, 1998; Karmiloff-Smith *et al.*, 2002; Quartz, 1993; Quartz & Sejnowski 1997) as a more plausible and satisfactory approach for understanding the process of language acquisition.

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# AN ANALYSIS OF THE ONTOLOGICAL ASPECT OF REALITY IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF ŚANKARA AND G.W.F. HEGEL.

REENA KANNOJIYA

**Key Words** – Coats, *Jīva*, consciousness, self, spirit.

## Introduction

The problem of reality always remains at the centre of Philosophical discussions with the different aspects of human exploration. The problem of reality presupposes the idea of consciousness in the philosophical exploration of existence. For philosophical purposes, the consciousness may be analysed at different levels - ontological, epistemological, psychological, ethical, and metaphysical. Here the paper will analyse the problem of reality at the ontological level only with the comparative analysis between Śankara and Hegel. Śankara was born in the village Kaladi in the central region of Kerala during 788-820 AD and was known as the commentator of Vedantic aphorisms. G.W.F. Hegel belongs to the era of 'German idealism' of western tradition thought. He was born in Stuttgart during 1770-1831 and spent his whole life in academic pursuit. The purpose of comparison lies in the approach of both the thinkers Śankara and Hegel. After putting it to reason it is identified that Śankara in the eastern tradition of thought and Hegel in the western tradition are the philosophers of one thought i.e., *Brahman (Ātman)* and *Geist* (Spirit) respectively. Hence the paper represents the philosophical understanding of both the tradition of thoughts to pass the argument from one tradition to another for the growth of knowledge in the context of historicity and culture. It is an effort to simulate the ontological arguments from both thinkers to analyse the philosophical understanding of concepts and phenomena that helps in establishing the idea of Ultimate reality.

## Comparison of ontological arguments of Śankara and Hegel

Śankara and Hegel both shares ontological arguments to approach the problem of reality. Śankara emphasizes the problem of reality at three levels viz., *Vyāvahārika* (Empirical), *Prātibhāsika* (Dreaming), and *Pārmārthika* (Absolute). Initially, Śankara did not believe in the reality of phenomenal or empirical existence because it appears to be true but in reality, he considers it as temporary due to its ever-changing character. Śankara tries to understand the idea of *Jīva* by emphasizing the ontological arguments. According to him, *Jīva* has an outfit of three coats i.e., the outer coat is the physical body and it is associated with the waking state of consciousness. Inside *Jīva* is the *Antahkarana* which is associated with the dream state and in more inner coat there is *avidyā* which is associated with it the state of dreamless sleep. The corresponding three states of *Jīva* are called the gross (*sthūla*), subtle (*sūkṣma*), and causal (*kāraṇa*)<sup>1</sup>. Ontologically, these three states of bodies are associated with the five sheaths (*kośas*) mentioned in the *Taittirīya Upanishad* with the three states of modified consciousness mentioned in the *Māndūkya Upanishad*. The five sheaths are the sheath of food (*annamayakośas*), the sheath of vital airs (*prāṇamayakośas*), the sheath of mind (*manomayakośas*), the sheath of self-consciousness (*viññānamayakośas*), and the sheath of bliss (*ānandamayakośas*)<sup>1</sup>. The sheath of food is related to the physical body, the sheath of vital air, the mind, and self-consciousness are related to the subtle body, and the sheath of bliss to the causal body. This association or relation of the body, states of consciousness, and five sheaths can be represented as follows:

S.no.	States of Consciousness given in <i>Māndūkya Upanishad</i> .	Forms of body	Sheaths ( <i>kośas</i> ) Mentioned in <i>Taittirīya Upanishad</i>
1.	Waking State	Physical Body	Sheath of Food ( <i>annamayakośas</i> )
2.	Dream-State	Subtle Body	Sheath of Vital-airs ( <i>prāṇamayakośas</i> ), the mind

			( <i>manomayakośas</i> ) and Self-consciousness ( <i>vijñānamayakośas</i> )
3.	Deep Sleep State	Causal Body	Sheath of bliss ( <i>ānandamayakośas</i> )

The above table indicates that *Jīva* is an envelope of five sheaths that undergoes various manifestations of Self. Śankara in *śruti* considers the five sheaths to reveal the nature of Brahman as an inward Self by eliminating the five sheaths, as rice is extracted from the grain by peeling the layers of husk.

Hence, the wise person knows the subtle effects of five sheaths corresponding to the five elements of existence viz., earth, water, fire, air, and ether. The five sheaths or *Panchakośas* are mentioned in *Taittirīya Upanishad* (2.1-5). Thus explained:

#### ***Annamayakośas***

The sheath of *Annamayakośas* is the physical body corresponding to the earth element and is the grossest sheath, which is nourished by food. The men living through this sheath of food identify themselves as humans - a mass of flesh and bones. Hence the physical body is the essence of food. Birth and death are the consequences of *Annamayakośas*. But in reality, the self identifies itself as its own self and distinct from the body.

#### ***Prānamayakośas***

It is the second layer of the sheath, which is composed of the element of vital air i.e., *prāna*. It is the principle that holds body and mind together to manifest the breath physically. The vital air in breathing coupled with the five organs of senses forms the sheath of *Prānamayakośas*. Life continues with this principle by the modification in the air that enters the body and comes out of it.

#### ***Manomayakośas***

It is the third layer of the sheath, which is constituted of the *mānas* (mind). It is related to the subtle body and manifested in the mind along with five sense organs. It is a reason for diversity in terms of 'I', 'me', and mine. The *Manomayakośas* is a sheath of mind or

manas that is truly associated with personhood than *Annamayakosās* and *Prānamayakośās*

### ***Vijñānamayakośās***

It is the fourth layer of the sheath, which is composed of *būddhi* or intellect or *Vijñāna*. It is also related to the subtle part of the body, which is a combination of intellect (*būddhi*) and the five senses. The sheath regulates the intellect to determine, and discriminate the things to identify the modifications that occur in perception and becomes the cause of transmigration. It is a sheath of knowledge that discern things and reflect in *cit*. its function is knowledge and identifies itself with the body.

### ***Ānandamayakośā***

It is the innermost and subtlest sheath. It is the sheath of bliss, as it is realized in deep sleep and related to the causal body. The state of *Ānandamayakośā* is attained when the mind and senses stop functioning and find themselves in between the world and self. It is a sheath of supreme bliss; it is perfectly realized in the deep sleep than a waking and dreaming state. The realization of *Ānanda* is the nature of *Ātman*, which is blissful and absolute truth. It is a formal manifestation of *Brahman*.

According to René Guénon, the sheath, namely, the *Ānandamayakośā* –the sheath made of beatitude- “is none other than the totality of possibilities of manifestation”<sup>2</sup> of the *Ātman*.

Śankara tries to explain physical existence concerning *Vyāvahārika* (Empirical) reality based on *Panchkośā* (Five Sheaths), which is relatively real but not real. On the other hand, comparatively, Hegel considered the world to be absolutely real by emphasizing the doctrine of spirit based on the triad of subjective, objective, and absolute truth. Hegel believes that subjectivity and objectivity are two independent entities, therefore, perceptually real. It is a production of sense-certainty hence it can't be considered fake or false. Consequently, it is deduced that logical knowledge is not easy to be falsified, as it is the knowledge obtained with the help of categories (perception and sense-certainty) with the realization of self-consciousness as an inward reality in terms of



consciousness. The subjectivity in form of self-consciousness is the nature that defines it as non-conflicting and non-contradicting with the outer world of perception and the inner world of passion, desire, thoughts, and emotions. Likewise, objectivity and subjectivity in spirit transcend to absolute spirit. Subsequently, according to Hegel, the absolute spirit can be realized in three forms i.e., art, religion, and philosophy. Art in form and beatitude is the mode of absolute in its immediacy. The form is considered in its immediacy as external in sense objects that manifested in absolute. Hence beauty is realized in two distinct forms: subjectivity (unity) and objectivity (plurality). Subjectivity follows the content and objectivity follows the form. Moreover, subjectivity is the internal consciousness, and objectivity is external to sense objects. The former provides spiritual experience and the latter provides the material experience concerning the subject itself to give it form. Likewise, both Śankara and Hegel did not negate the phenomenal world concerning knowledge and experience ontologically at the initial stage of the inquiry. It exposes the fact that both Śankara and Hegel valued subjective consciousness over the objective consciousness of the phenomenal world. It is the subjective consciousness or spirit that realizes the truth as the *Ātman* in *Brahman* by Śankara and the absolute spirit as *Geist* in Hegel. Hegel reiterates that the spirit is present in both subjective and objective forms, which transcends to absolute spirit. It validates the dialectical progression in a triad of Idea-Nature-Spirit. This progression of Hegel and Śankara's understanding of the nature of *Brahman* shows the distinction between the two thinkers in the approach. The Śankara tries to distinguish spirituality from rationality and negates rationality in realizing the *Brahman* and on the other hand Hegel identifies absolute in rationality that can only be realized in terms of phenomenology. It means the consummation of thought process in the absolute knowledge emerges in the spirit as rational knowledge is obtained successively in the preceded stages of knowledge. Hence the development of consciousness as absolute spirit in Hegelian philosophy is called absolute knowledge or philosophy, “as it is the reconciliation of Spirit in itself with Spirit for itself and the revelation of Spirit as the in and for itself.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore it can be analysed that consciousness in Śankara philosophy represents its divine or spiritual nature because

it is asserted by *śruti* that *Brahman* is ultimate, real, and bliss, on the other hand, Hegel's notion of spirit is fully rational and identifies the rationality as absolute spirit in practical purposes of art, religion, and philosophy.

These three stages are of different categories but it transcends into absolute in the terms of a perfect balance between content and form. The perfect balance can only be realized in the stage of philosophy. However, this is the state of self-knowing where the absolute spirit is infinite and realizing freedom. It exposes the fact that the mind is objective and subjective in form of a knower and known as an idea in itself. The gap between knower and known is transcended to absolute.

Successively, Śankara's concept of God is a religious aspiration of evolving humanity that there should be an idea of God in form of a 'personal god'. The concept of 'personal god' is the idea of empirical existence from the point of absolute it has no existence. Śankara resolves this problem by making the distinction between *Sagun Brahman* (qualified) and *Nirgun Brahman* (attribute less). The *Sagun Brahman* is called *Īśvara* (God). As a matter of difference between the two latter is the power of *Māyā* while the former is not. "The idea of a personal god is due to *Māyā*."<sup>4</sup> It can be depicted as, "*Īśvara* or the *saguna-Brahman* represents one reality, and that is a personal god who is supposed to be all-knowing, omnipresent, as well as the originator, destroyer and the sustainer of the world whereas the *nirguna Brahman* represents the ultimate reality, the absolute."<sup>5</sup> From an empirical point of view, the existence of reality is real in form of an idea of *Īśvara* (God). The dual nature that *Brahman* possesses is the object of knowledge or nescience and ignorance (*avidyā*). The world in scriptures is termed as *Māyā*, *Prakriti*, *Swabhava*, and *Ksetra*. *Prakriti* is not only inorganic matter but organic with life denoted in the intellectual, volitional, and emotional phenomenon of human life. Bhagwad Gītā, says, "the great elements *ahankara* (egoism), *būddhi* (willing), the *avyakta* (the principle connected with *būddhi*), ten senses, one mind, the five objects of sense; desire, hatred, pleasure, pain the aggregate, intelligence, firmness; this here described in brief, is the *ksetra* with its modifications."<sup>6</sup> It considered that the modifications in the world are the outer and inner consciousness present in gross matter, which is devoid of the life

principle, activity or intelligence in it. The body is just an object of the subject that acts like a means for the soul to work or function, it is nothing apart from it. At the inner level of consciousness, it is the soul in man and called *ksetragna*. The subject is the soul force or source of knowledge and intellectual activity. It is one, permanent, and unchangeable. If any of the subjects or objects get removed the world will get disappear. It proves the fact that the objective world has no existence apart subjective world. The appearance of the empirical world occurred due to *Prakriti* and the power of *Māyā*. The subject and object both are a mere manifestation of an absolute. *Māyā* and *Prakriti* are unreal existences even *Ātmanin* dependently has no existence apart from *Brahman*. Comparatively on the other hand, “Hegel equates absolute spirit with the god since it endowed with all the qualities of the absolute.”<sup>7</sup> It means the one absolute is realized in all individuals so that all individual selves get unified and transcendent ontologically in the consciousness of the absolute. Moreover, Hegel says, “God is God only so far as he knows himself.” This is the self-knowledge that God has man’s knowledge of God. However, it is the knowledge of man that construct the idea of God. Moreover, Hegel was influenced by Meister Eckhart’s thought of God and considered that the “eye with which God sees me is the eye with which I see him; my eye and his eye are the same...If God did not exist nor would I; if I did not exist nor would he.”<sup>8</sup> Hence Hegel believes that God is our construction of mind as a concept under the influence of a culture that is formed, structured, moulded, and created. It construes the concept that God is the construction of God is a phenomenon of self-knowledge or consciousness. Therefore, culture and religion design or presents the concept of God to exist absolutely in and for themselves.

Consequently, it can be considered comparatively that Śankara’s conception of God emanant to relate religion with the philosophy of life. In Advaita Vedanta, the idea of God remains real as long as the empirical world looks to be real. It begets the practice of morality as a value till it leads to the knowledge of ultimate reality. Therefore, Śankara’s conception of God followed as an instrumental value to regulate the moral order in the world. It is a temporary concept that remains until the empirical world has

existed. Finally, the revelation of Ultimate reality lies in realizing the real nature of *Ātman* as *Brahman*.

In comparison with Śankara, Hegel says in the Preface of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “The truth is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only in the end is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz., to be actual subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.”<sup>9</sup> It infers the fact that the development of the spirit as the whole is the absolute spirit, which is the essence of being a subject that realizes in itself as the truth. It suggests that when the self-knowing spirit or absolute spirit becomes a phenomenon of mind realizes the freedom in true sense. Hence absolute spirit is freedom, which is endless and self-determined. As Hegel tries to pass each notion of rationality through dialectics so he classifies religion as natural, spiritual, and absolute. It can be understood as, “The self of existent Spirit has, as a result, the form of complete immediacy; it is posited neither as something thought or imagined, nor as something produced, as is the case with the immediate self in natural religion and also in the religion of art; on the contrary, this god is sensuously and directly beheld as a self, as an actual individual man; only so is this god self-consciousness.”<sup>10</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The discussion of the ontological aspect of Śankara doctrine of *Ātman* and Hegel’s doctrine of spirit reveals a dramatic commonality between the thoughts of both thinkers with drastic contrast in the approach of realizing the concept of *Brahman* in Śankara philosophy and absolute of Hegel. As the approach of Śankara in realizing the problem of consciousness is spiritual and divine Hegel’s approach to consciousness is fully rational and dialectical. He tries to realize the absolute in the world of phenomena with the laws of dialectics. On the other side, Śankara rejected the external or empirical world to be real in the doctrine of *Māyā* so he discards and disregards the reality of the phenomenal world due to the power of *Māyā* by which superimposition of the subject on the object becomes possible. It is depicted as “an illusion, a dream, or a castle in the air.”<sup>11</sup> Resultantly the whole universe becomes illusory. It infers the thought that all

individual souls created their universe and the world is its imagination. However, the individual souls are part of the universal soul which merges with it through the practice of meditation by realizing the true nature of *Ātmanas Brahman*. This is non-dualism. Likewise, both Śankara and Hegel realize the internal consciousness either in the form of self-consciousness in Hegel or as an *Ātman* in Śankara. It follows that both give more impetus to subjectivity than objectivity because objectivity is temporary. Subjectivity is always trying to experience or realize the ultimate and this tendency comprehends everything and transcends everything to realize the absolute. Hence the problem of reality in view of consciousness arises in the thoughts of both Sankara and Hegel that culminates in realizing the reality as ultimate consciousness in subjectivity rather objectivity. Therefore, as both, the thinkers arise in different spaces and times with cultural lag then also their thoughts in believing reality as one is a growth in knowledge that proves the fact that whatever path we follow whether spiritual or rational leads to the same conclusion that reality may be linguistically termed differently but indicating towards the ontological reality that leads to the subjective experience of reality as one.

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## **EXISTENCE & MORALITY: A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE**

SOMDATTA BHATTACHARYYA

It is an eternal propensity of human to enquire about her or his identity and role in this world that assigns meaning in life. In the history of philosophy, both western and Indian, this search continues for time immemorial and branches out in various paths, some of which are more popular, some are less, while some relates our journey of life with it and accordingly writes a narrative which talks about my problem, your problem, our problem at the end of the day. Here marginal groups find an assertive voice and re-discover their self, and we are going to choose this discourse for documentation of the philosophical significance and related argumentation following that.

We are going to start our discussion by highlighting Jagger's concept on feminist ethics, as we shall refer this notion of feminist ethics here, being a central focus in this discussion. Feminist ethicists, in general, aim at the creation of a gendered ethics that aims to eliminate or at least ameliorate the oppression of any group of people, but most particularly women.<sup>1</sup> Carol Gilligan, in her "Remapping the Moral Domain: New Images of Self in Relationship"<sup>2</sup> focuses on the contrasting voices of justice and care that clarifies different ways in which women and men speak about relationships and lend different meanings to connection, dependence, autonomy, responsibility, loyalty, peer pressure, and violence which are issues actually related to 'existence and morality'. By examining the moral dilemmas and self-descriptions of children, high school students, urban youth, mothers and others, the author charts a new terrain – a mapping of the moral domain that includes the voices of women. In this new terrain, the author traces far-reaching implications of including women's voices for developmental psychology, for education, for women, and for men.

According to Carol Gilligan<sup>3</sup>, renowned feminist philosopher, Freud, father of psychoanalysis, is simply one of the many traditional thinkers who have viewed women

as morally inferior to men. She also singles out educational psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg for extended criticism. I would like to observe in this paper whether the need for a different voice of women receives recognition in today's society which can make their existence as something meaningful. Along with it is also to be observed that is it at all possible? To do so, we shall observe how existence is related with the sense of morality which is considered and discussed in feminist philosophy from a particular perspective. I would like to discuss this issue from the perspective of feminist ethics or as it has received recognition in the name of care ethics.

In the very beginning, we admit the limitation of care ethics as feminist philosopher Shefali Moitra clearly mentions in her *Naitikota o Naribad*<sup>4</sup> that care-based-ethics has not been yet recognized as a fully developed discipline. Despite this, my search in this paper is significant in the present scenario as we may still experience exclusion of different voice, where existence, in some way or other, is directed towards the understanding related to the reason-based male dominated paradigm. Even if certain areas can be located where female voice is recognized but in implementation it is still not receiving proper social acceptance.

In this discussion tracing back the path of history, I am reflecting upon the work of Carol Gilligan, frequently known as moral psychologist, who is an expert of education, ethics, and psychology and hence we can see the reflection of these field of studies in her work which is a combination of statistical analysis of empirical data and theoretical analysis. This approach comes under the study of developmental psychology, to be precise. In search of the principles on the moral development in women, which is later developed as 'care ethics', Gilligan started working with her colleague psychologist Lawrence Kohlberg. Carol Gilligan is a psychologist best known for her innovative views on the development of women's morality and sense of self. She detailed this in her book *In a Different Voice*<sup>5</sup> where she links feminine morality with an "ethic of care". Gilligan developed her ideas in response to the theory of moral development proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg, which she criticized for ignoring women's perspectives. Gilligan

proposed that women come to prioritize an "ethics of care" as their sense of morality evolves along with their sense of self while men prioritize an "ethics of justice."

In this context we may consider the fact that Moral Psychology has an approach to use different scales for analyzing the nature of moral reasoning, which is a central part of its study. In particular, it uses these scales to measure different stages of moral reasoning that helps to measure various aspects of morality. This approach is generally viewed as a reflection of the dominance of Lawrence Kohlberg's (1969, 1971) notion of 'morality as justice', and his ensuing debate with Carol Gilligan later on (1982) about her alternative idea of 'morality as care'. To mention, both the thinkers agree that morality is about how well or poorly individuals treat other individuals. Morality ultimately is all about goodness or badness associated with our life. Now, Kohlberg and later thinkers like Turiel based their boundary of the moral domain on the enlightened thinking taken from Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, John Rawls in which 'autonomy and/or welfare of the individual' are the starting point for ethical inquiry.

In our discussion, we shall take up Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development and then compare it with Gilligan's Theory, and then concentrate on how women develop their sense of self in the world. According to Kohlberg, moral development is a six-stage process. To be precise, Kohlberg's theory of moral development comprises three levels, each made up of two stages. At the lowest, the Preconventional Level, the needs of the self are focused and prioritized. From this the Conventional Level is evolved where attention is given to an understanding of how to be a moral member of society. Finally, at the highest level, Kohlberg retorts the individual adopts a universal idea of justice, and he calls this stage as the Postconventional Level.<sup>6</sup>

Gilligan's research on the abortion decision study led her to develop her own stage theory of moral development, which she expressed in a 1977 article and thereafter developed into her book *In a Different Voice*. Gilligan<sup>7</sup> also accepts the same basic three-level theory of moral development as Kohlberg does, along with two transitions between the levels. The levels are - Preconventional Morality, Conventional Morality and Postconventional Morality. Gilligan didn't identify specific ages when the levels of



moral development are supposed to be reached. According to the Preconventional Level, moral judgment is fully focused on the self and the need for survival. When a conflict arises between the needs of the self and the needs of others, a woman will choose to address her own needs at this level. Now Gilligan opines, during the first transition from the Preconventional to the Conventional Level, a woman realizes that she also has a responsibility to others. It is the first time that she can understand her previous moral perspective could be characterized as selfish. Next, at the Conventional Level, moral judgment starts concentrating on caring for others. The woman, in this stage, starts to see herself as a participant in society whose entitlement to the claim of being a good citizen counts on helping and protecting others. It is noteworthy that this concern for others overrides a woman's concern for herself that significantly leads to a morality dedicated to self-sacrifice. Gilligan emphasizes on the point that during the second transition from the Conventional to the Postconventional Level, a woman starts to experience a tension between the needs of others and the needs of the self. What Gilligan's research contributes at this juncture is unique, which could have been overlooked in the main-stream thinking. According to her, at the said level just mentioned a woman realizes that she better tries to strike a better balance between her needs and the needs of others. So, as an individual, we can understand following Gilligan, a woman also has a duty to herself and to deny it is a kind of ethical violation. This leads to a paradigm shift in the accepted notion regarding moral judgment that highlights the notion of 'truth' rather than 'goodness'. Here a woman starts to honestly assess her own desires, not just her responsibility to others which is very significantly related with human growth as per the observations made in philosophy of psychology. Further, at the Postconventional Level, Gilligan attempts to show that moral judgment is determined by the principle of nonviolence. A woman starts looking at herself as an individual along with the needs of others. She understands the needs of the self are just as important as the needs of others, and this causes the women to arrive at the ethic of care and concern. The focal point of the above notion is that following the obligation of

care while avoiding harm or exploitation to herself and others empower the women to accept responsibility for their choices.

After laying down Kohlberg and Gilligan's theory on moral development, we may put forward the assessment made by Gilligan on Kohlberg's view. Gilligan deems that Kohlberg's methodology is male-biased. Its tendency is to hear male, not female moral voice. Consequently, it fails to recognize the 'different voice' that Gilligan claims to have heard in her survey and analysis of twenty-nine women reflecting on their abortion decisions. This distinctive moral voice, opines Gilligan, speaks a language of care that stresses on relationships and responsibilities. It is noteworthy that this language is mostly unintelligible to Kohlbergian researchers who admit the dominant moral language of traditional ethics, namely, a language of justice that emphasizes rights and rules<sup>8</sup>.

In Kohlberg and Gilligan's survey the depth and maturity of a group of adolescent students (both girls and boys) have been evaluated. The evaluation established by Kohlberg on this survey made Gilligan very thoughtful. Gilligan's observation on this point is very thought-provoking and interesting. Gilligan explains that behind the apparently speaking consistent moral justification of boys which is mainly dependent on reason-based rules and principles, perhaps a male identity is playing a pivotal role, while the girls' emphasis is more on connectivity and dependency. She argues that women tend to privilege relationships, connectedness, and responsibility in the formation of moral judgement, rather than right based morality relying on abstract rules and laws<sup>9</sup>. Women's construction of the moral problem is a problem of care and responsibility in relationships rather than of rights and rules. Nona Plessner Lyons in her "Two Perspectives: On Self, Relationships, and Morality" mentions, "Gilligan listening to women's discussions of their own real life moral conflicts, recognized a conception of morality not presented in Kohlberg's work. To her, women's concerns centered on care and response to others. Noting too those women often felt caught between caring for them and caring for others and characterized their failures to care as failures to be "good" women, Gilligan suggested that conception of self and morality might be intricately linked..."<sup>10</sup>.

Looking at Gilligan and Lyon's analysis, we may observe that women's sense of morality is much more associated with their living experience where a kind of identity crisis may be identified. It may be asked whether such an identity crisis affects their existence. She finds in her lived experiences several conflicts, moral dilemmas existing in an overlapping manner. And these lead to confusions which influence or affect the decision-making process. Such conflicts and dilemmas, just mentioned, are unique, very different from that of men, due to commonly accepted societal norms. Women are victims of blaming and shaming game by the so-called guardian of society which the male folk rarely faces. Their existence is overshadowed, or more strictly speaking, denied in such a manner that she often feels helpless to communicate assertively in both private and public sphere. So, it is not justified to say that women thinking process itself is vague, ambiguous, and full of contradiction as it is conceived by many main-stream thinkers. It is not lack of logical reasoning power, it is their 'situation' or 'environment' or 'context' that leads to think them differently, consequently a different sense of morality emerges. Thus, their morality becomes so much connected with their existential crisis, this again seems to bring the two notions, namely, 'self' and 'morality' much closer, as Gilligan claims it to be.

At this juncture the feminist concept of self especially that which Gilligan considers in her theory needs to be presented. In fact, self, conceived as separate and bounded has got a long history in the western tradition and Gilligan puts forward two images of self, derived from two types of conceptual framework, namely, justice and care. As Gilligan puts it, these are the two moral voices of which the first one speaks of equality, reciprocity, justice and rights and the second one speaks of connection, not hurting and response. These two voices may appear in conjunction but the problem here is the tendency for one voice to predominate. In Gilligan's words, "The pattern of predominance, although not gender specific, was gender related, suggesting that the gender differences recurrently observed in moral reasoning signify differences in moral orientation, which in turn, are tied to different ways of imagining self in relationship"<sup>11</sup>. It is important to note that the solutions of the moral dilemmas cannot be investigated in

abstract a priori framework, since those are mainly connected with experiential, pragmatic relationships. Precisely speaking, women's lived experience is not conducive to abstraction; it demands concrete and situation specific deliberation.

Gilligan's self-construction, however, provides an entirely different form of moral maturity. Instead of moral rights, Gilligan propounds the morality of unconditional care. We may note that the social realities faced by women help them understand that individual existence in a society is essentially conditioned by relationality and connectivity. For this reason, women's development and sustenance also occur in connectivity. It is also very significant to note that the lived-experience of women induces a sense of responsibility in them which differs from that of main-stream model. The livedexperiences of women bring a sense of responsibility in them.

According to Gilligan, the moral sensitivity that arises from women's lived experience is a wider concern of care and co-feeling than a few rigid rules. Here we may note, introduction of a new concept, namely, 'co-feeling'. Gilligan develops a feminine morality, promoting a social and other-directed view of empathy. She calls the ability to share the other's feeling 'co-feelings'. In her famous *Reproduction of Mothering*, Nancy Chodorow asserts women develop a different sense of the self and its relation to the world than men. For Chodorow, "Girls emerge from this period (of formation of the self) with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not. Girls emerge with a stronger basis for experiencing another's needs or feelings as one's own".<sup>12</sup> For both Gilligan and Chodorow, the capacity to empathize is a basis for knowledge. Indeed, one learns about other people's experiences of the world by sharing their feelings. Feminist theorists think that perceiving the feelings and experiences of others is "an epistemological framework for 'knowing' the world"<sup>13</sup>. Women would tend to draw from this way of experiencing the world and epistemology, placing relationship, responsibility, and concern for the others at the center of knowledge. Inter-subjectivity and relationships replace objectivity and rules in the formation of a moral consciousness. The individualism of Hume's definition of sympathy is thus countered by feminists' view of empathy, co-feeling, and a connected

way of knowing the world. The feminist concept of empathy is far more cognitive than the one found in Hume's writing. While for Hume, sympathy is a natural, involuntary, mechanical emotion occurring almost by accident, for feminists it is rather a cognitive, social and interactive dynamic developing through relationships to create the social formation.

Nancy Hirschmann terms, "the sympathy that connected knowers engage in an ongoing interpersonal process that creates and constructs both the social information that individuals take part in, and the individuals that make up these social formations."<sup>14</sup> A contemporary use of the term 'sympathy' involves the sentiments one feels for another person's difficulty with motivation to help that person. Sympathy, for this reason, is closer to 'pity' but without its negative connotations. One may feel sympathy for another person, but through empathy (which is not an emotion on itself but a way of acquiring an emotion), one may feel the other person's fear, pain, sadness, etc. Thus, a clear distinction can be found notably between these two terms. However, it may be highlighted here that Hume's (1739) use of the term 'sympathy' in the eighteenth century is much closer to the contemporary definition of 'empathy'. Hume defines sympathy as a capacity with the help of which one can undergo the experiences of others, as impressions (for instance bodily sensations) of those others are transformed into ideas (for instance "suffering"), and ultimately into one's own impressions (whereby we feel the suffering of others)<sup>15</sup>.

In Carl Roger's client-centered therapy, we also find the notion of empathy which has a very important role to play in trying to build-up therapist-client relationship and also to explore the sufferings of the client's world.

Tove Patterson<sup>16</sup> in 2008, based on Gilligan's work, identifies three notions of care corresponding to three levels associated with an agent's moral development—selfish care, altruistic care and mature care. The selfish care, in which the caring agent focuses on self, especially to guard oneself from abuse and harm. Altruistic care is the next notion and involves the caring agent's ability to reach beyond oneself to another person in need and to meet that need, even at a cost to the agent. The final notion is mature care, the

culmination of the development process, in which the relationship between the caring agent as self and the other in need becomes the focus for ethical deliberation. Mature care is meant to conceptualize the ideal of care as relational, a central idea of feminist ethics, and not a detached and isolated activity. The key idea is not one-sidedness but reciprocity. Here, it should be mentioned that, according to feminists, 'co-feeling' is a significant factor which is required to get a better understanding of mature care and altruistic care. The concept of 'co-feeling', whether it is distinct from empathy or has a closer connection, is very slippery for which we need to pay attention on the deeper analysis of it.

Co-feeling, writes Patterson, "is the ability to participate in the feelings of others, through the act of 'affective imagination', without confusing self with others on the one hand, and the other, merely observing the other's feelings from a distance"<sup>17</sup>. Although Patterson acknowledges problems with the distinction between co-feeling and empathy but following Gilligan she takes empathy as identical with another's feeling in contrast to co-feeling which maintains the autonomy or integrity of caring agent, as well as the person cared for. Now, Michael Slote<sup>18</sup> in 2007, among others criticizes this distinction claiming that empathy, based on current psychological research, is a multifaced concept and that co-feeling is simply one species of empathy. Other than these thinkers in the realm of psychiatric or psychotherapeutic ethics too, it remains a question whether co-feeling can be treated as something different a concept than empathy or empathy is such a concept which encompasses co-feeling within it. In this discussion, our scope is limited to give a detailed analysis of this controversy.

We would like to put an end to this discussion by focusing the point that in the above discussion an attempt has been made to show that the intertwining of construction of self and moral behavior is being established through the discussion of alternative psychology that underlies ethic of care. We are leaving a trace of a precious ethical issue where Gilligan would like to propose the concept of 'voice-freedom' to show that how a relational self can also be autonomous. An interesting issue is here the silence-voice dichotomy and autonomy in care ethics become not silently exiting an uncomfortable

situation but finding a voice of protest and negotiation within a relationship which can make an individual's existence meaningful. Last but not the least, introducing the terms like empathy, sympathy and co-feeling can make it clear that explicit discussion on the relation between them would be a significant contribution to the study of feminist ethics and philosophy of psychology.

We would like to put an end note by contending that though Gilligan's ideas were groundbreaking, some feminist psychologists themselves have also criticized them. The main reason is quite obvious. According to this line, Gilligan treated women's voices as a single homogenous entity while ignoring the diversity of women based on age, class, race, and other factors. Some other feminists have manifested their concern over the idea that women emphasize care and connection more than men. They would like to argue that in that case it actually reinforces traditional ideas about femininity while potentially continuing to label women into typical caregiver roles which may not be a welcoming situation for feminists. Gilligan's observations have also been criticized as the outcome of societal expectations of men and women, not innate gender differences, which implies that men's and women's moral development would follow separate paths if society's expectations were different.

But it is quite significant that despite these criticisms, Gilligan's theory continues to be studied today at various levels. It has received wide acknowledgement that there are two moral orientations, one emphasizes on justice and the other emphasizes care, as proposed by Gilligan. To mention that though there is a line of criticism, still recent research has continued to back up such assertion that follow Gilligan's trajectory. Like, all genders develop both orientations, while studies have shown that men tend to emphasize an ethics of justice and women an ethics of care. For instance, a study may be found that men and women handled ethical dilemmas in business differently, a result that was attributed to Gilligan's theory. Similarly, research scrutinizing the way men and women thought about morality found that men used a detached, intellectual approach while women used a subjective approach. The point is, although all genders understood one

another's perspective, men and women were unable to comfortably adopt the other's approach, demonstrating a gender divide consistent with Gilligan's notions.

This research reveals that the moral development of men and women tends to follow different paths that emphasize different factors. The reason may be, women and girls of different age group even, often prioritize relationships and care over rules and principles, their approaches to moral dilemmas in their professional, academic, and personal lives are likely to have a contrast with that of men and boys of different age groups. Because it is quite unfortunate, but ground reality that the world still is inclined to prize men's perspectives over women's, this may leave women and girls feeling alienated or alone. However, we may opine that for women, girls, and those raising girls, it helps to keep in mind that Gilligan's theory shows that many women and girls are likely struggling in similar ways amid societal expectations. It is knowledge that may enable them to feel less isolated and make them realize that their moral values and sense of self are legitimate even if they differ from men's.

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# **BANKIMCHANDRA ON SOCIETY, EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EDUCATION**

SUJAY MONDAL

**Keywords:** Society, Individual, Equality, Women's education, Social Reform

Every artist creates his own world through his art. Whether that world is the 'world' of materialists is debatable. But, no one seems to deny the deep significance of the world created by the artist. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1893) has similarly created a world through his artwork—a world through which his vision is revealed. His passion for literature and philosophical outlook expressed another dimension of his world. To explain the philosophical thought underlying various novels of Bankimchandra, Sudipta Kaviraj writes:

Bankim's central philosophical concern could be described in two ways. Stories of his novels often turn around a conflict between two inevitabilities, two things that are equally necessary truths of human life. A social world required definitions, a kind of basic social map which defined permissions and prohibitions. At the same time, there are the elemental drives of human nature which these social constructs are meant to discipline into reasonably safe forms, but hardly can. The social and moral worlds in which men actually live are made-up of these two dissimilar and contradictory elements—the desires which make men and the controls which make society. Much of Bankim's fictional movement arises from this central conflict—between the inevitability of moral orders and the inevitability of their transgression (Kaviraj 1995: 2).

So, it appears that Bankimchandra's thinking has some key themes, society, human nature, morality and dharma. Bankim's literary pursuits were motivated, directly, by the nation, the motherland and his own society, and indirectly by the search for ideals of humanity and human beings' destiny. The dharma which Bankimchandra upheld is man's true nature i.e., self-regard, that seeks to be fruitful through every endeavor of life—the dharma which preserves the harmony between knowledge, devotion, love, action and the

means of attaining full humanity. There are many questions on which Bankimchandra deeply thought and expressed his view through his literary works, such as, what is the meaning of human life? Is it possible to understand the idea of truth? What is the ideal of philanthropy? What is 'dharma'? What is 'society'? How far is society necessary for the development of individuals? Is it at all possible to compromise social life with the individual's freedom?

Bankimchandra was also concerned about the conflict between the development of the individual and the development of society. But Bankim made it clear that the real progress of the individual lies in the progress of society. Mohitlal Majumdar while explaining Bankim's society and individual thought has expressed a similar opinion, "From the very beginning he (Bankimchandra) strongly believed that the liberation of society is the true liberation of the individual"(Majumdar 1356: 29). But it is also true that despite giving priority to the development or emancipation of society, Bankim never underestimated the development or emancipation of the individual. He understood that while the proper development of the individual is inherent in the development of society, the overall development of society is possible only when the individual is developed.

The value of things like morality, dharma, etc. is determined in terms of the idea of society, the idea of individuals and their mutual relations. Because according to Bankimchandra, the main function of morality and dharma is to help the all-round development of individuals and give way to the improvement of society. Both the concept of morality and dharma are relative, as their conceptual existence depends on the existence of individuals and societies. Without society and individuals, the concept of morality and dharma is empty. Therefore, understanding the true characteristics of individuals and the nature of society is absolutely necessary. Bankimchandra's attempt was to describe the nature of individuals, society and their inter-relation through his novels and the doctrine of culture (praxis).

### **Social Thought of Bankimchandra**

For Bankimchandra, society refers to a particular place and period of culture or ethno-culture of people, and also refers to as the foundation for the self-development of people as well as the interrelated life of individuals and groups. In other words, society refers to a limited group of people of a nation or a country. If each such society recognizes the right of individual self-development and the rights of its own and others, then, the greater welfare of society as well as human life will be achieved. In *Dharmatattva*, one of his most accomplished work, Bankimchandra had given a detailed account on this subject under the titles Jagat-Priti (love for living creatures) and Swajati-Priti (love for family). According to Durkheim, society does not mean only a group of people living within a certain geographical boundary, but society refers to a collection of ideas, beliefs, emotions, etc. of different people. But in such a concept of society the individual is given more priority than the society. Society is declared to be the product of interpersonal relationships and consciousness. As a result, the importance has been given on the individual freedom and the primacy of the individual rather than the society as such. But Bankimchandra did not consider the primacy of individual over society. As, for him, the welfare of a society cannot be achieved merely by the sum of the development of different individuals. Rather, the overall welfare of the society leads to the welfare of mankind, and society should not be considered only as a collection of individuals. The existence of society is not only dependent on the conscience of different individuals but he believed that society exists beyond the thoughts and beliefs of individuals. Therefore, geographical location and historical evolution are very important factors in Bankimchandra's idea of society.

Bankimchandra envisioned an ideal society where the welfare of both the individual and society is the same; the individual has no independent interest or right. Therefore, there is no question of equality. Though Bankimchandra did not admit equal rights of everyone in all respect but he talked about everyone's legitimate rights i.e., right to be human, in other words, the right to attain the true humanity. Society is the foundation of humanity and all human being are equal, it means, for Bankimchandra, that all human beings have the capacity to attain that true humanity. It is to be noted here that, Bankimchandra's

social thought expressed in *Samya* (On Equality), "Biral" (The Cat) etc. clearly proves that his social thought is anti-capitalist. Bankimchandra's opposition to capitalism is clear from Marger's statement in the essay "The Cat", "We have some right to the flesh of the fish of this world". (Bagal, 1361: 618)

According to Bankimchandra society should be worshiped or respected as society possesses all the qualities possessed by every human being. Society is the teacher, protector and rule maker of the individual. He wrote in *Dharmatattva*, "Worship the society. Remember that society has all the qualities of human being. Society is our teacher, judge, nurturer and protector. Society is the king; society is the teacher" (Chattopadhyay 1888: 619). For Bankimchandra, motherland and society are the same thing. However, he did not believe in modern universal humanism or internationalism. He wanted to establish internationalism on the basis of nationalism. That is why Bankimchandra says that sometimes patriotism is the greatest religion. In this case, Mohitlal Majumder's statement is worthy to be mentioned:

I have said earlier that Bankimchandra did not believe in the idea that has emerged in the modern times called *Vishwamanava* (universal human being). He agrees to understand 'nation' in the sense of society, and wants to build internationalism on top of nationalism. ...however universal the humanity of man may be in any sense—geographical nature, historical development, and differences of blood, in the combination of these three, differences from society to society are inevitable; the progress of creation towards the particular, not towards the universal (Majumdar 1356: 42).

But the important point is that Bankimchandra's love for the nation is not the same as modern nationalism. Not the same because there is no room for xenophobia in his idea of patriotism. On the contrary, according to him, in many cases the true dharma is to ensure the wellbeing of others (*parahit*) than the self-wellbeing (*ātmahit*). The main reason behind Bankimchandra's passion for this Swadesh Priti or love for the nation is to establish dharma in the society and to attain humanity. He believed that for self-identity the rescue of history, and for self-esteem the glorification of one's own culture,

are indispensable. Just as, it is impossible for a person without self-respect to attain true humanity, it is also impossible to instill morality in a society without a sense of national pride (Ibid, 42).

One may ask why it is necessary to protect the motherland. According to Bankimchandra, protection of the motherland, love for family, etc. are God-oriented actions. The reason is that through this, the benefit of the world is possible. If different societies waste time in attacking each other, then, dharma and progress or development will disappear from the society. So, everyone should protect the motherland for the benefit of all. Purification of the mind will not be possible if one cannot sacrifice her/his self for the sake of other human being. In his own words, "Apart from devotion towards God, patriotism is the great dharma" (Chattopadhyay 1888: 619). Bankimchandra's patriotism is an essential part of his doctrine of culture (*anushilanadharm*). It may be apprehended that Bankimchandra may be promoting xenophobia in the name of patriotism or *swadeshpriti*. But there is no place of xenophobia in Bankimchandra's idea of *swadeshpriti*. It only means the love for motherland (*swadesh*). He also said that *swadeshpriti* leads to *jagat-priti* and *Bhagavat-priti*. According to Bankimchandra, the foundational basis of society is not politics or economy, it is humanity. Explaining the importance of Bankimchandra's patriotism, Mohitlal Majumdar said, "...stake everything in pursuit of patriotism; Place that love below the love of God, worship that country as a god like your *Ishtadevata*; In that, both divine and earthly salvation will be gained." (Majumdar 1356: 200)

Hobbes and Rousseau among sociologists discussed the origin, structure of society and the nature of the interrelationship between society and individual. Bankimchandra did not discuss the origin of society. Rather, he has made a discussion about the structure of society and what should be the relationship of individuals with society. If we look at the Hindu society, it will be seen that the Hindu social system has some basic features. Bankimchandra's social thought is mainly centered on Hindu society. The Hindu social system is built on the concept of equality, theory of action, reincarnation, the concept of moksha as the ultimate goal of life, tolerance as a virtue of the individual, non-violence,

God and the concept of oneness of the embodied soul with the un-embodied soul. The concept of equality is problematic in Hinduism. Although Hinduism and Hindu society recognize the right of all individuals to attain salvation, the *varṇāśrama* system is not compatible with the principle of equality. The hierarchy in Hindu society is based on this *varṇāśrama* system. There are different explanations found in Indian philosophy regarding the origin of the caste system. In the *Gīta* as well as in the *Mahabharata*, the division of *varṇa* is based on action/profession (*karma*) and Quality/Character (*guṇa*). That is, in terms of *karmas* and *guṇas*, some are *Brahmins*, some are *Kshatriyas*, some are *Vaishyas*, and some are *Śūdras*. Bankimchandra also explains the caste system in this way and he thinks that ignorance about this caste system is one of the main reasons for the decline of India. In his words,

...Why should I worship the one who does not have the quality for which I should worship? Showing devotion (bhakti) to such person is amount to doing unrighteous act (adharmā). Not to understand this is a serious reason for India's decline. Brahmin was the object of devotion as they possessed some specific qualities, when those qualities are no longer present in them, then why did I start worshipping Brahmin? (Chattopadhyay 1888: 618)

According to Bankimchandra, *Varṇāśramadharmā* and casteism are completely separate issues. He argued that *varṇāśramadharmā* is based on social division. Caste discrimination may be inauspicious in its abuse, but *varṇāśramadharmā* arose out of social necessity and is good for society. Brahmins are at the apex of *varṇāśramadharmā*. If the Brahmin is a true follower of this *varṇāśramadharmā*, the Hindu society can be of great benefit. It was like that in ancient Hindu society. At that time, Brahmin was really social teacher, guru of society, deity and also objects of devotion. Then, social welfare was achieved through the devotion towards Brahmin. But the question is, should we have devotion towards a Brahmin who is celibate, selfish, and low-spirited? According to him, "Whoever has the qualities of a Brahmin, that is, one who is religious, learned, and chaste, a teacher of the people, I will worship him; I will not worship him, who is

not that. Instead, the *Śudras* who have the qualities of a Brahmin, i.e. one who is religious, learned, chaste, a teacher of the people, I will worship him". (Ibid, 618)

Such an interpretation of the caste system is acceptable for Bankimchandra, because the basis of practice and Bankimchandra's religious thought is devotion (*bhakti*). But Bankimchandra did not speak only of devotion towards God. He was of the opinion that who is virtuous is an object of devotion. And since, according to him, society contains all the qualities that every human being possesses, society is also an object of devotion.

### **Bankimchandra on Equality**

The extreme excellence of Bankimchandra's thinking power is revealed by his erudite thinking on various subjects. He discussed a very important topic of sociology, political science, and philosophy in the article called *Sāmya* (On Equality, published in 1879). The word 'Sāmya' is used in the Bengali as equivalent of the English word 'equality'. Equality basically means 'equal rights for all people'. It remains open that what are the issues about which the question of 'equal rights' can be raised. However, in order to understand what 'equality' is, the first thing we need to discuss is what exactly we mean by 'discrimination/inequality' and what kind of discrimination is the cause of individuals' social status and misery in life.

In this essay, Bankimchandra first mentioned two types of inequality—natural inequality and unnatural inequality. Among these, unnatural inequality is the root cause of human suffering. Discrimination or inequality among human beings is a hindrance to the all-round development of the individual and the progress and excellence of society and civilization. By 'natural inequality', Bankimchandra refers to those inequalities which are not caused by society or social artificial criteria. That is, the difference between people in terms of physical ability, intelligence, etc. belongs to this category. Inequality among people due to natural discrimination does not have a special negative effect on the social status, values, and interpersonal relationships of people. According to Bankimchandra, the root cause of inequality noticed in social status, value, interpersonal relations is unnatural inequality – the source of which is social artificial criteria.



In the first section of the essay, Bankimchandra mentioned various sources of unnatural inequality. Political power, acquired wealth or money, caste-system etc. are causes of unnatural discrimination. Bankimchandra believed that the social status of a person depends on all these factors. For him, by using all these factors, one person or group is proved inferior to another person or group and which exploits and oppresses them. As a result, a group of people maintain their power and live a luxurious life, while another group of people become poorer and poorer and become only a means of luxury for the first-class people. In this regard, we find similarities between Bankimchandra's thought and Marx's thought. According to Marxism, society is governed by class conflict. The bourgeoisie always oppresses and exploits the proletariat.

Bankimchandra cited Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ and Rousseau as pioneers of theory of equality. Buddha opposed the caste system of Brahmanism, and sought to uplift the *Śūdras*. Jesus Christ tried to relieve the suffering and leash of the slaves. Like Voltaire, Bankimchandra disliked Rousseau's economic egalitarianism, but he believed that Rousseau's thought had gained momentum after the French Revolution. He called Rousseau the father of equality and socialism. Bankimchandra's thought about equality changed later on and he did not republish the essay. However, in order to resolve the misconceptions about equality, he wrote,

We do not interpret equality to mean that all men must be equal. It can never happen. Where there are natural differences in intelligence, mental strength, education, physical strength, etc., there will of course be difference in condition - no one can save. However, equality of rights is necessary - if someone has capacity, he should not deviate himself from attaining liberation by considering that he does not have rights to liberation. Everyone wants to be free. (Chattopadhyay, 1879: 406)

### **Bankimchandra on Women's Education and Social Reform**

During the renaissance of Bengal, a new horizon gradually opened up in the social system. Certain variability can be observed in the thought process of English educated people. They began to feel that life cannot be made meaningful only through the preservation of traditional values. This requires a deep analysis of traditional values and

norms and reforming them if necessary. We know that Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1833), a rationalist, was the pioneer of social reform movement in Bengal's social system. He tried to find solutions to various problems of the society in various ways. In order to do that, he established Brahma Samaj and started spreading education across the society. A major example of his efforts is the abolition of *sati*-immolation. Along with Rammohan's social reform movement, other social reform movements took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bengal. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820-1891) is one of the pioneers of this progressive movement. He was mainly concerned with two particular issues of society – widow remarriage and polygamy. The primary basis of Vidyasagar's movement was compassion for the plight of women. But later he realized that if he was to succeed in solving the problem, he would have to fight against the anti-reform sentiments of conservative Hindus. As a result of Vidyasagar's social reform movement, the Widow Remarriage Act came into force in 1856.

When Bankimchandra came to Kolkata for his education, various social reform movements were taking place in the society of Bengal. In the two novels *Bishabriksha* (1873) and *Krishnakanter Will* (1878) published in *Bangadarsan* (1872-1901), a Bengali periodical edited by Bankimchandra himself, the imprint of the discussion on widow remarriage and polygamy can be seen. From this, we can understand how much Bankimchandra was influenced by the two social reform movements of the society. His sympathetic attitude towards the distressed women is seen in these two novels. In *Bishabriksha*, we find that Nagendranath married the widow Kundanandini. From this, one might think that Bankimchandra was in favor of widow remarriage. But eventually it is seen that this marriage brings misery in Nagendranath's life. Thus, one may conclude that he was indeed against widow remarriage. Not only this, one may also think that Bankimchandra was very bigoted and opposed everything that he believed to be a cause of disunity in society.

Bankimchandra, who was influenced by the utilitarianism of Mill (1806-1873) and the positivist humanism of Comte (1798-1857), was certainly not against widow remarriage. But he had objections to Vidyasagar's ideas and methods of widow remarriage

movement. Because, he realized that just as social life cannot be governed by scriptures alone, similarly, social life cannot be governed by laws alone, as, there are many lacunas both in scriptures and in laws. In fact, Bankimchandra's decision about the said social reform movements is based not on emotion, but on intellect. This aspect of Bankimchandra can be understood through the essay 'Sāmya'. Bankimchandra wrote,

Whether widow remarriage is good or bad is a separate matter. This is not the place of its consideration. But I can say that if someone asks us, whether women's education is good or bad? Whether all women should be educated or not, we will immediately answer, women's education is very good; all women should be educated; but if someone asks us such a question about widow marriage, we will not give such an answer. We will say, widow remarriage is neither good nor bad; it may not be good for all widows to marry, but it is good for widows to have the right to marry according to their will. ...But if a widow, whether a Hindu, or whatever, wishes to remarry after the demise of her husband, she is certainly entitled to it. (Chattopadhyay, 1873: 401)

Bankimchandra talked about the rights of the individual. According to him, every person has equal rights. If a man can marry after the death of his wife, so can a wife after the death of her husband. It goes without saying that such decisions are based on unbiased rationality. And, for that reason, he had a different opinion about the prevalence of widow remarriage in modern society. In this context he further wrote,

Therefore, the widow is entitled to marriage. But this moral theory is still not widely accepted in this country. Those who accept it as a result of English education, or at the request of Vidyasagar Mahasaya or Brahma Dharma, do not put it into practice. Those who accept widow marriage as the rightful one, even if do not dare to entertain the willingness of remarriage of their own widows. The reason is the fear of the society. ...But why this principle cannot instil into this society, ...the reason is probably the inviolability of morals in the society. (Ibid, 402)

We can see his dispassionate and clear view of the problem in *Bishabriksha*. When Suryamukhi came to know that Nagendranath was having a relationship with the widow Kundanandini, Suryamukhi was emotionally distressed and wrote a letter to Nanda, "... there is a great scholar in Calcutta named Vidyasagar, he has written a book on widow

remarriage. If he is a scholar who arranges a widow's marriage, then, who is a fool?" (Chattopadhyay 1360: 279) Apparently, it may seem that Bankimchandra attacked Vidyasagar with this statement. Some researchers are of the opinion that this statement is not the author's own. Suryamukhi said this because of her fear of being deprived of her husband's love, and the mental depression that has arisen due to it. This statement is strictly used to maintain the spontaneity of the story of the novel (Majumdar 2000: 68).

We have already seen that in 19th century there was a movement against polygamy along with the widow-remarriage movement. This problematic aspect of the Hindu society is also observed in Bankimchandra's novels *Bishabriksha* and *DeviChowdhurani* (1884). In the novel *DeviChowdhurani*, we see that Brajeshwar marries thrice. When Brajeshwar's father Haravallava refused to accept Prafulla, the heroine of the novel, as his daughter-in-law, Brajeshwar married to Nayan and Sagar. But it is noteworthy that Brajeshwar and his family did not face any family problems as a result of this polygamy. On the other hand, it can be seen in *Bishabriksha* that when Nagendranath married the widow Kundanandini, Suryamukhi and Nagendranath's marital life was in conflict. From this it appears that Bankimchandra has an implicit moral objection to polygamy. At least he has expressed such an opinion in the essay 'Sāmya'. But like the widow remarriage movement, Bankimchandra criticized Vidyasagar in this case, too. His criticism is procedural. His stake in this matter was very clear; he felt that social customs like polygamy could not be abolished by law. He believed that this social custom would soon disappear due to the impact of modern society. That will happen for two reasons, first, through the expansion of mass education and secondly, to prevent population growth due to economic distress. Bankimchandra's socio-materialist approach to the problem at hand reflects his modern outlook (Ibid, 69).

Bankimchandra did not directly participate in the social reform movement. He strongly disagreed with Derozio's (1809-1831) radical social thought and the view of the Young Bengal group. In fact, the conservative Hindus of the time wanted to uphold traditional values within the social order and their attitude towards women was that the purpose of the women's life was only to bring about the well-being of domestic life. For this reason,

public opinion did not develop against widow remarriage at that time. But special awareness and effort among the Bengalis at the higher level of society towards women's education can also be noticed at this time. A sense of 'individuality' gradually emerged among the English-educated Bengalis in the case of women. In this regard, we may recall Rammohan and Vidyasagar's policy of woman's education. Rajnarayan Basu wrote in his book *Sekalo Ekal* about this, "Look at the social reforms, women are being educated, they are getting married at an older age, people are getting divorced, widows are getting remarried, freedom is being given to women in terms of emigration" (Basu 1796: 30).

Bankimchandra wrote his novels in the backdrop of this societal 'change'. So, it is natural that these societal 'changes' had an impact on his thinking and creative outlook. For him, women's education is essential for the development of sense of freedom and individuality in women. Here we can refer to Taracharan's statement in the novel *Bishabriksha*, "You should give up the worship of bricks and mortars, rather arrange [re]marriages of [widow] aunties, give education to women, why do you keep them in cages? Get the women out" (Chattopadhyay 1873: 268). Here too, the indirect relationship of women's education with the emancipation of women from domestic bonds is acknowledged.

But Bankimchandra's positive and strong attitude towards the inextricable link between women's education and awareness of women's individuality and relationships is revealed in his novels *Anandamath* (1882), *Devi Chowdhurani* and *Sitaram* (1887). Through these novels, he had tried hard to highlight the issue of ideal femininity. As a result of such hard determination, we see characters like Shanti (*Anandamath*), Prafulla (*Devi Chowdhurani*) and Shree (*Sitaram*). Bankimchandra's concept of the ideal woman is embodied through the amazing bravery, fearlessness and confidence of Shanti's character. On the other hand, Prafulla's character is also a symbol of idealistic heroism and personality. Prafulla's character is based on Bankimchandra's concept of praxis. Through the character of Shree, he expressed the relationship between education and strong mental capacity of the women. In addition, his ideology about the freedom of women has been revealed through various female characters in other novels. But these three female characters mentioned above are particularly important. According to

Bankimchandra, the awareness of women's freedom will come from women's education. He wanted to highlight this feeling through various characters. About the need for women's education, he wrote in his essay 'Sāmya',

If people are well-educated—especially if women are well-educated, they can easily overcome the system of domestic secrecy. If there is education, women's ability to earn money will grow, and if these native women and men are well educated in all sciences, foreign trade, then, foreign industry or foreign merchants cannot steal their food. Education is the way to prevent all kinds of social evils (Chattopadhyay 1361: 405-406).

There was a conflict in Bankimchandra's mind between intellectualism, individual freedom and on the other hand the tradition and ancient values of Hindu scriptures. So, we see that although the main qualities of these characters are expressive of women's freedom and the individuality of the women, but as a matter of fact the attraction to family life and devotion to husbands dims the uniqueness of these women characters. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Bankimchandra was particularly concerned about the freedom and rights of women. Bankim's thoughts on women's rights and freedom are revealed in the words of Govindalal's wife Bhramar in the novel *Krishnakanter Will*. Bhramar writes in a letter to her husband that,

You know, my devotion to you is unwavering - my faith in you is eternal. I knew that too. But now I understand that it is not. As long as you are worthy of devotion, so long as I am devoted; As long as you are believable, I believe you. Now I have no devotion or faith in you. I do not feel happiness to see you (Chattopadhyay 1360: 572).

It may be noted that Bankimchandra could not separate the 'value of women in domestic life' from the concept of women's freedom and rights in the development of the women due to the narrow attitude and plight of the society at that time. At the end of almost all the novels, we see that the importance of women's domestic value prevails. However, it is undeniable that Bankim had a kind of progressive idea in the development of women. We can quote the following from the article 'Prachina and Navina',

...As society prospers in the advancement of men, similarly in the advancement of women; As women are half of society. An association of equal shares of men and women is called society; The progress of society depends on the equal progress of both. It is unethical to say that the improvement of one part is the main purpose of social reform, and the improvement of the other part is the secondary purpose (Chattopadhyay 1361: 250).

At the end, we may say that Bankimchandra's concept of social reform is an integrative concept. He never considered the problems of widow remarriage, polygamy, etc., which are against the progress of women, separately. Instead of their isolated solution, he thought that it will be much more effective to address all these issues through the overall development and reformation of society. As much as Bankimchandra's negative thoughts about these problematic issues are concerned, if we review them together with the overall idea of Bankimchandra's social thought, it will be seen that there is no conflict in Bankimchandra's social reform thoughts. Bankimchandra's idea regarding casteism is an echo of the view uphold by traditional and radical Hindus. Though he tried to prove that *varṇāśramadharama* can bring prosperity in the society but he failed to prove that how this *varṇa* system is compatible with the modern society and conducive to advancement of society as well as individual. To conclude, we can say that, Bankimchandra tried to develop a holistic system on the basis of rationality but could not fully succeeded due to conflict between rationality and tradition.

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# THE DIALECTICAL SYNTHESIS OF ACTION, KNOWLEDGE, AND DEVOTION (THE *BHAGAVAT GITĀ* PERSPECTIVE)

PRAMOD KUMAR DASH

**Keywords:** Dialectic, Synthesis, Action, Knowledge, Devotion, Transformation, Bondage, Liberation, Spiritual *Sādhana*, *Yoga*, Ethical Paradigm

## I

### Introduction

Dialectical synthesis can be interpreted as the synthesis of pairs of opposites which is never possible in the domain of logic and mathematics. Dialectical synthesis is also not possible by a scientific methodology that is based on the facts of experience. The dialectic of 'A and Not A' in logic is never synthesized without committing contradiction. Similarly, in the factual experience, it is impossible to synthesize the fact that two things can remain present physically at the same time. Science is possible on the phenomenological status of space and time. Science can never transcend space and time, and logic cannot overcome the deductive formal rules. But the dialectical synthesis is possible in the domain of psychological discipline and moral consciousness. The objective of this article is to highlight the possibility of attaining the highest transformation of human life by the synthesis of *Jñāna*, *Karma*, and *Bhakti*. This is well-discussed and explained in the *Bhagavat Gitā*. Man easily gets distracted by temporary emotions and feelings, which create an attachment to the things or the persons around him. Everyone has the empowerment to make anything possible but they are ignorant of their own inner power. They can manifest what they want. Our subconscious mind has the power of doing anything or making everything real, which is thought by us. We just need to train it in a proper way through meditation. We need to have control over our emotions and attachments by keeping our minds at peace. When *Arjuna* was reluctant to fight against his own brothers, Lord *Krishna* taught him the path of righteousness pertaining to the disciplines of *Jñāna*, *Karma* and *Bhakti*. This lesson not only inspired *Arjuna*, but also the whole of mankind. My objective in this paper is to submit how the

ethical consciousness and ethical disciplines guide us to walk on the path of righteousness in our life and become a foundational source of inspiration for man-making and the attainment of freedom.

## II

### **Action–Knowledge Interface**

Action and knowledge both are human possibilities and both are generally treated as independent ways of attaining liberation. But in our practical experience, we experience that action and knowledge are closely related to each other and each complements the other. The *Bhagavat Gitā* enumerates the ethical discipline necessary for the highest knowledge. The discipline consists in controlling the senses. If the senses are not restrained, they run after the pleasurable, and obsession with the pleasurable results in the malfunctioning of understanding. When the faculty of intellect (*buddhi*) is impaired one fails to distinguish between the desirable and the undesirable, the pleasurable and the preferable, and the relative and the absolute. Then ultimately one is ruined by delusion. It is said in the *Bhagavat Gitā*, “From anger comes delusion; from delusion loss of memory; from loss of memory to the destruction of discrimination; from the destruction of discrimination, he perishes.”<sup>1</sup>

*Arjuna's* grief was because of his memory, which was stored with experiences and habits. Every time, man confronts his own memory and stumbles on the path of action and knowledge. Personal memory demands the continuity of events, and out of this demand for continuity, habit is formed. Habit is the greatest defence mechanism that man and nature establish. It keeps out the incoming new impulses and influences from life. Habit insists on the continuity of experience, even if it is full of ignorance and indulgence. Thus, habit is a closed circle in which life moves, covering the same ground again and again. Man needs psychological security and survival and for this, he seeks a base of continuity and finally becomes entrenched in a defence mechanism. He clings to it as firmly as possible, leaving no trace of flexibility. Such a person cannot confront a new and challenging situation that is out of his box of habits and, at that moment, he

becomes completely unpredictable. He clings tenaciously to his pattern of habit because, in the firm holding on to habit, he finds the only way to security and survival. The strongest and the most powerful psychological defence is processed through our reactions. It is a reaction that prevents fresh life impulses and cannot confront a new situation.

Because of our ignorance of the spiritual experience we entertain in our intellect's unending desires. As the desires in us, so are our thoughts. As our thoughts, so are our actions. At every moment, the texture and quality of our thoughts are directly conditioned and controlled by our desires. Actions are nothing other than our thoughts projected and expressed in the world. Thus, in the chain of ignorance, constituted of desires, thoughts, and actions, each one of us is caught and bound. *Karma Yoga* facilitates us to transcend the karmic nexus through experience beyond ignorance. *Karma Yoga* does not mean the renunciation of action or running away from life. *Karma Yoga* teaches the skill of doing all actions (*Yogaḥ Karmasukauśalam*)<sup>2</sup>. Man is ever agitated under the influence of the triple tendencies of *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas* inherent in him. Even for a single moment, he cannot remain inactive. So long as we are under the influence of these mental tendencies (*Gunas*), we are helplessly prompted to act. Complete inaction is impossible. Similarly, to act in life without any expectation of results is also impossible. So, one must have an appropriate orientation of the results. The stanza "*Karmaṇyevādhikāraṣṭemāphaleṣu kadācana*"<sup>3</sup> should not be misinterpreted as that one must not expect any consequences of one's duties. Rather, it is to understand that one should renounce mental slavery for the consequences. One should have a proper orientation about the consequences, but one should not be disturbed by the wrong imaginations of the consequences.

Action is performed with the *dharma*-paradigm. But it is not as rigorous as a categorical imperative. Action should be performed according to both the paradigms of *Dharma* and *Svadharmā*. But this karma may be the cause of bondage even if it is done according to both the paradigms of *Dharma* and *Svadharmā* because the agent may have a sense of agency (*kartṛbhāva*). The agent of the action is necessary for doing an action

but the sense of agency (ego) in doing that action leads to bondage and suffering. Similarly, the consequences inevitably accrued to an action but the unnecessary nagging after and hanging over the consequences lead to bondage and suffering. So *Dharma-karma* or *Svadharmakarma* is not *Niskāmakarma* or *Akarma*. The *Dharma-karma* or the *Svadharmakarma* should be performed without the sense of agency and without the expectation of the consequences. This is called *Akarma* or inaction. *Akarma* or inaction is a state of mind or wisdom that motivates one to do *Niskāmakarma*. In the *Bhagavat Gītā* it is said that the wise person is he who sees inaction in action and action in inaction.<sup>4</sup> The *Bhagavat Gītā* has given all scope for human freedom through *Svadharmakarma*. At the same time, the *Bhagavat Gītā* has sanctioned ultimate freedom from all bondage through *Niskāmakarma*. The dynamics of karma such as *Dharma-karma*, *Svadharmakarma*, and *Niskāmakarma* are well explained in the *Bhagavat Gītā* without any logical oddity and absurdity. When one is established in the state of *Niskāmakarma*, it ultimately takes one to the state of *Niskarmya*.<sup>5</sup> *Niskāmakarma* is cognized as a qualified *karma* installed with five fundamental attributes. Firstly, *karma* should be free from the sense of agency (*kartrbhāva*). Secondly, *karma* should be free from attachment to the results or consequences, favourable or unfavourable. Thirdly, *karma* should be inclined toward collective well-being (*lokasaṅgraha*). Fourthly, *karma* should be executed by free will or rational will. And finally, *karma* should be guided by the principle of righteousness (*dharma*).

### III

#### **Knowledge – Devotion Interface**

As a dialectical synthesis of knowledge and action is attained through *Niskāmakarmain Karma Yoga* so the dialectical synthesis between knowledge and devotion is attained by the state of *Sthitaprajña* in *Jñāna Yoga*. Dialectical synthesis does not reject the dialectical opposites; rather, it culminates the higher scope in which the pairs of opposites are merged together. *Niskāmakarma* is not only a state of disinterested action, but also a higher state of wisdom. Similarly, *Sthitaprajña* is the culmination of both knowledge and devotion. The *BhagavatGītā* has defined

*Sthitaprajña* as "the steady wisdom which is attained by the 'evenness of mind' and subsequently the tranquillity of mental composure in facing all pairs of opposites is defined as Yoga"<sup>6</sup> [*Samatvam yoga ucyate*]. Not only it is sufficient that a true worker should act in the world being established in equipoise and equanimity, but also he should uphold this poise through renunciation of his attachment to the immediate fruits of his action. This is attainable by *Buddhi Yoga* which makes a sharp distinction between the function of mind and intellect. When the thought flow is in a state of flux and agitation, it is called the 'mind' when it is single-pointed, calm, and serene in its own determination, it is called the intellect. Thus, *Buddhi Yoga* means 'to be established in devotion to the intellect'. In *Buddhi Yoga*, we pursue our duties without ever losing our ultimate goal in life. We may interpret *Buddhi Yoga* as an individual's attempt to live and act from the zone of the intellect, which freely controls the function of the mind with the complete surrender of his ego. Self-realization is possible when the intellect is absorbed in the Self.<sup>7</sup> The *Bhagavat Gitā* states that "when a man completely casts off all the desires of the mind and is satisfied in the Self, then he is said to be the one of steady wisdom (*Sthitaprajña*)"<sup>8</sup>. In ignorance, when one conceives oneself as the ego, one has a burning desire for sense-objects, a binding attachment with emotions, and a jealous preference for one's preoccupied fond ideas. But when the ego is transcended, it melts away to become one with the Infinite. In the Self, the man of steady wisdom (*Sthitaparajña*) can no more entertain any desire, or have any appetite for the objects of the body, of the mind, or the intellect and he becomes the very source of all bliss. The *Bhagavat Gitā* describes the attribute of a *Sthitaparjña* having explained that "he whose mind is not shaken up by adversity, and who in prosperity does not hanker after pleasures, who is free from attachment, fear, and anger is called a Sage of Steady-wisdom".<sup>9</sup>

The real action is one which is permeated with devotion. An ideal action culminates in devotion (*bhakti*). Devotion is a state where all the cognitive, conative, and affective pursuits of the individual are directed to one end. It is in the state of *Bhakti* that the impersonal is made personal, and the individual finds everything as the manifestation of the Lord. Everything becomes sacred for him and his love for the

ultimate expresses itself in form of love for the whole creation. The sense of 'mine' and 'thine' disappears as a result of complete identification with the Lord and his manifold manifestations. For a devotee, every action becomes a sacrifice (*yajña*) and all actions become directed towards the upliftment of the whole (*lokasangraha*). A *bhakta* becomes a true *Niskāmakarmi* and it is he who knows the Self to be the essence of everything. *Bhakti* leads one to the state of unconditional surrender (*prapatti*). In the state of *Prapatti* one has the feeling of unworthiness (*akiñcanatva*) which makes one realize one's limitations and accept God as the ultimate agent of all actions. Devotion is not to be confused with sentimentalism. A true devotee is he who hates no single being, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, to whom pain and pleasure are equal, who is enduring, ever content and balanced in mind, self-controlled, and possessed of firm conviction, whose thought and reason are directed to the Lord.

***The Bhagavad-Gita observes:***

"Of one who is devoid of attachment, who is liberated, whose mind is established in knowledge, who acts for the sake of sacrifice, all his actions are dissolved"<sup>10</sup>

"He who has renounced actions by Yoga, whose doubts are rent asunder by Knowledge, who is self-possessed, actions do not bind him, O, *Dhananjaya*"<sup>11</sup>

"He who is devoted to the Path-of-action, whose mind is quite pure, who has conquered the self, who has subdued his senses, who realizes his Self as the Self in all beings, though acting is not tainted"<sup>12</sup>

The mind cannot contemplate on any theme that cannot be conditioned by the senses. The mind of a devotee cannot wander to any place where he is not reminded of the smile of the Lord. Every one of us, at any given moment, is the sum total of what we think and what we feel. If our minds are resting on the Lord and our intellects have dived into the very depths of the Infinite, our individualities end and we merge to become one with the infinite. The seeker has to fix his mind totally at the feet of the Lord and bring his intellect to play upon and rip open the significance of the Form-Divine. This double

act needs an extremely subtle intellect and single-pointedness of the mind. For this, the only practical method would be to pursue the *Yoga* of constant practice (*Abhyāsa Yoga*). The *Yogeswar (Krishna)* is only advising us not to get enticed away by the mind from our divine pursuit. One who has realised that the Spirit everywhere is the same, and that the Spirit in All alone is his own Self, cannot afford to hate anyone because, from his vision of understanding, there is no one who is other than the Self. The attitude of a true devotee to all living creatures will be friendly, and he is ever compassionate to all beings. Being ever content he discovers a flawless infinite joy in himself whether he obtains even the means of his bodily sustenance or not.

#### IV

#### Conclusion

#### The Synthesis:

Human consciousness is expressed through the act of knowing (cognition), willing (conation), and feeling (affection). The personality of an individual is determined by the preponderance of cognitive, conative or affective faculty. When cognitive ability is preponderant, one becomes prone to pursue the path of knowledge. For him, acquisition of knowledge remains the prime concern of life. Those in whom the conative aspect is predominant turn out to be men of action. For them, pursuing the 'path of truth' is more consequential than 'knowledge of truth'. An ounce of practice weighs more than a pound of wisdom. Similarly, when the affective faculty is preponderant one tends to follow the dictate of the heart than mind. One becomes empathetic, sensitive, and ready to share the weal and woe of others. When the promptings of the heart are directed unto the divine it takes the form of *bhakti*. Though everyone possesses the tendency and ability to pursue the path of knowledge (*jñāna*), action (*karma*), and devotion (*bhakti*) individuals stand distinct depending upon the dominance of one faculty to others. *Jñāna yoga*, *karma yoga*, and *bhakti yoga* have been prescribed as independent ways by which one can attain the state of unification of *jīvātmā* (unit consciousness) with *paramātmā* (cosmic consciousness). Of these three paths, *bhakti* is mooted as the easiest way to

Godhood. *Bhakti* does not demand suppression of the natural impulses but sublimation of them. The path of knowledge is arduous for it is as good as walking on the razor's edge. Cultivation of knowledge calls for exercising restraint over instinctive promptings and baser propensities which otherwise take one for a ride and stand in the way of knowledge of the highest truth. The disciple must be worthy himself and may stand in the way of knowledge of the highest truth. Scriptures are vocal about the limitations of the empirical mode of knowing because the dichotomy of the knower (*jñātā*) and the known (*jñeya*) cannot be done away with.

Knowledge finds its culmination in the state of devotion. *Jñānavādins* claim that *bhakti* is necessary so far as it facilitates the attainment of the highest knowledge. The path of *jñāna* is meant for a select few in whom the cognitive faculty is developed and one needs to have reasonable restraint and firm determination to walk on the path till the goal is reached. The path of *jñāna* is relatively difficult to be pursued, as it calls for unflinching resolve on the part of *jñānī* not to succumb to the temptations of the lower self. The path of *karma* is also fraught with difficulty. Action binds. Action also liberates. What is consequential for a moral agent is not that one acts but how one acts and the ideation [intention] behind the action. Action performed under the sway of ignorance binds the doer to the consequences of the action. As is the action so are the consequences. One cannot abstain from doing the action because the exigencies of life demand that one must act. Act one must and every action binds. Then liberation appears to be unattainable. *Nishkāmakarma* unfolds the secret of doing action without being bound to the consequences of the action. It is the sense of agency which makes the doer enter into the karmic nexus. The same action which brings bondage to the doer proves to be liberating when one gives up the sense of agency (*kartṛbhāva*). While suspending the sense of agency, one has to act by thinking that one is nothing but an instrument (*nimitta*). The Supreme subject (*paramapurūṣa*) is the agent of all actions. It is on account of ignorance that one wrongly appropriates the 'agency' to oneself. Action is crowned with success only when it aligns with the cosmic will. Thus, goes the cosmic decree that those who are wedded to the path of truth come out victorious in the long



run. The more one acts, the more one comes to realize that the results of action are dispensed by a plethora of extra human factors over which one has hardly any control. One comes to understand that man proposes God disposes. Thus, a man of action (*karmī*) transforms into a devotee (*bhakta*) par excellence. For a *nishkāmakarmī* every action (*karma*) becomes an instance of sacrifice (*yajna*) because it is undertaken to fulfil the will of the cosmic and consequences of action (*karmaphala*) are offered at the altar of the divine. Viewed from this perspective, *bhakta* is not a path along with *jñāna* and *karma* but is the very end. In other words, *jñāna* and *karma* find their consummation in *bhakti*.

The aim of *Karma Yoga* is *Karma Sanyāsa*. *Karma Yoga* explains the art of doing *Niškāmakarma* and *Karma Saṁnyāsa* teaches the art of renunciation of all attachments. Mind can be purified only by the process of treating it with the right action. One who is well established in the path of selfless activities soon develops the qualities of poise and single-mindedness. *Karma* fulfils itself in making the *Yogi* fit for continuous and fruitful meditation. The agent has to surrender all his sense of agency (*karṭṛbhāva*) in his actions to God and he has to remember this concept of Truth as often as he remembers his limited ego. Once our real nature is realized, the actions of the body, mind, and intellect can no more leave any impression on the Self. *Yogis*, having abandoned attachment, perform actions merely by the body, mind, intellect, and senses, for the purification of the self (ego). This is the secret of *Karma Yoga*. *Yogis*, who is able to withstand the impulse born out of desires is really a happy man. He who is happy within, who rejoices within, who is illuminated within, that *Yogi* attains Absolute Freedom or *Mokṣa*. To sum up, when an individual acts with a sense of instrumentality, with no desire for consequences, and surrenders all consequences to God, it becomes an instance of *Niškāmakarma* and for him everything is Brahman. Cultivation of devotion does not deny the role of free-will. It does not negate rational thinking. Rather, devotion is said to be the result of the righteous use of reason and will. Some observe how true knowledge leads to the right action, and the right action becomes an instance of devotion. Lord *Krishna* does not impose His will and His ways on *Arjuna* and, having explained everything, asked him

to decide by himself.<sup>13</sup> Knowledge gives direction to devotion because without knowledge, devotion may take the form of dogma. It is an action that gives content to devotion. Devotional sentiment must be expressed in and through action. The highest devotee is said to be a *Sthitaprajña*. The attainment of this state of equanimity is workable by the synthesis of knowledge, action, and devotion (*Jñāna, karma, bhakti samuccaya*).

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# ON THE POSSIBILITY OF ABSOLUTE FREEDOM

PURNIMA DAS

## I

Absolute freedom is possible in those places where an individual is ‘free to do any act’. In this context, the word ‘free’ means ‘without the bondage or any sense of responsibility, morality, obligation and particular narrower intention’ etc. Such a situation is not possible in this phenomenal world because, whenever we perform any work, some moral restrictions are there, if not others. We are not allowed to do any work as we wish due to having certain moral restrictions. Sometimes, the sense of responsibility or sense of obligation may stand as impediments in the way of expressing our freedom. An individual’s obsession with a particular object and his ignoring duties towards the members of his family and fellow-beings of the society, does not give rise to a harmonious state of being.

When an individual transcends nature, he becomes free from any empirical pressure, agent’s own inclination, passion etc.<sup>1</sup> It is the state of Absolute Freedom. If someone performs some action after keeping a purpose in view, he is not absolutely free; as desire goads him to do so. In most of the cases in the phenomenal level an individual is desirous of performing those types of action by which his purpose is served and hence, the end – in- view or *prayojana* inspires him to do some work and engages him in an activity.<sup>2</sup> A man’s desire is related to the result as pleasure or the absence of pain. The knowledge in the form- “The orange is good for health” is known as the knowledge of the conduciveness to the desired object. If the attainment of the good is desired, the perception of orange will give rise to the knowledge of the form: “This is conducive to its being desired” (*Idammadiṣṭasādhanam*). So, the knowledge of the conduciveness to the desired gives rise to the knowledge of acceptance from which the action *aspravṛtti* (inclination) follows. In the same way, the knowledge of its being conducive of what is

extremely unpleasant (*aniṣṭasādhanatājñāna*) causes aversion (*aniṣṭa*) which causes refraining (*nivṛtti*). That which does not seem to be conducive to the desired is rejection. Both *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* cannot be described as absolutely free as they are due to the empirical pressure and agent's own inclination and refraining.<sup>3</sup>

## II

One question may be raised in this connection. In most of Indian philosophical systems, the law of *karma* is accepted. If our actions are governed by our past actions, our freedom is restricted.

Radhakrisnan has tried to give a solution of the problem. To him, *karma* or connection with the past is consistent with creative freedom. Our freedom is determined by it. The *Law of Karma* asserts that our free actions are under the domain of this law.<sup>4</sup> These *karmas* make us associated with the active power which is in proportion to its sincerity and insistence. The *Law of Karma* declares one will get return according to energy invested in it. The Nature has some power of responding to the demands of self. For this, an individual has to employ his whole power. Freedom (restricted) is not caprice as it is connected with the past. Hence, an individual's freedom is not 'uncontrolled' rather controlled or restricted by past *karma*-s. Though the self is not free from determinism, it can bring the past to some extent and turn the past into a new future. An individual, though bound by *karma*-s, has the freedom of choice. He is not supposed to surrender himself to the past *karma*-s, but he has the choice to mould the future in his own instead of suffering the past. Life is not bound, but a growth which is described as "undetermined in a measure"<sup>5</sup>. Here, *karma*-s of the past life are taken as 'measure', and present growth or development is described as 'undetermined' since it is determined by an individual's choice. Such a situation has been highlighted by Dr. Radhakrishnan with the help of a metaphor of card-playing. He argues: "Life is like a game of bridge. The cards in the game are given to us. We do not select them. They are traced to the past *karma*, but we are free to make any call as we think fit and lead any suit. Only we are limited by the rules of the game. We are freer when we start the game than later on when the game has developed and our choices become restricted. But till the very end there is always a

choice. A good player will see the possibility which a bad does not. The more skilled a player, the more alternative does he perceive”<sup>6</sup>

From the above it may be decided that an individual always possesses freedom of choice or restricted freedom. An individual can involve himself in an action if he has some sort of restricted freedom without which no engagement is possible. Agency (*kartrtva*) is possible in an individual if there is restricted freedom. The fact is evidenced from the Pāṇini’s aphorism – ‘*Svatantrahkartā*’ (1.4.54). Radhakrishnan has brought the case of agency in grammar because an individual can be designated as an agent if there is freedom of choice. In fact, what an object is extremely wanted by an agent is called object (*‘karturīpsitatamam karma’-Pāṇinisūtra- 1.4.49*). This *karma* or object is possible if an agent extremely wants something. The suffix ‘*tama*’ is added to the term ‘*īpsīta*’ in order to show that something is extremely needed by an agent. If the agent is in the phenomenal stage, he might need numerous things which are of great use to him. If a human being is in the transcendental level, he hardly requires anything because of fulfillment of all desires. That is why; freedom means always a restricted one, which is showed by the term ‘*svatantra*’.

### III

Though the prohibitions and restrictions are hindrances of our freedom, they are very much essential, because freedom without restrictions is not possible and neither desirable. In our scriptures we get two types of things- injunction (*vidhi*) and prohibition (*niṣedha*) that are otherwise called affirmative (*sadarthaka*) and prohibitive (*pratiṣedhārthaka*) respectively. The importance of prohibition and restriction lies on the fact that it does not permit an individual to do anything whatever he likes (*svechhācāra*). As this restriction comes in the way of doing any action, it can make an individual balanced by resisting him from performing the unwanted action.

Just as the systematic stroke used in music or rhythm (*tāla*) and tempo or *laya* are essential for the emergence of melody, the prohibitive orders or restrictions in our life make us balanced. Time-measurement is highly important in Indian music because it

‘regulates’ the duration of musical sounds. It bears a regulative value, so that sounds may give rise to melody. The role of restriction may be emphasized if the role of the mother is taken into consideration in a child’s life. The mother is dealing with the nourishment of the child as she shows her affection by taking proper care of him without keeping limit. Hence, the child may be spoiled because of the ‘excessive’ affection shown by her. The father has been entrusted with seeing the all-round progress of the child, but simultaneously he will see that the child is not spoiled by the indulgences shown by the mother. Keeping this purpose in view, he lays down some rules or puts restrictions to the child so that his progress can be assured. In order to check the undisciplined character of the child, the father may apply some methods of guiding and directing principles to the activities of the child so that he can be made disciplined. The distinction between in disciplined and disciplined life can be compared to a wild forest and a decorated garden. A wild forest given by nature can be converted to a well-decorated beautiful garden with the help of some planning and care given to it. The functions of restriction are identical as they promote to the emergence of beautifully soothing experience. Sometimes the rhythmic sound of an engine or rhythmic sound of the waves of the sea may create a soothing sensation.<sup>7</sup>

If we want to have melodious lives, we have to go through such restrictions or prohibitions. If metrical language is required, some signs like pause, semicolon etc., should have to be put forward. Though all these seem to be impediments of language, their application makes the language metrical and melodious and thereby the language becomes pleasant to us. If, in the like manner, a life full of beauty is desirable, some restrictions would have to be put forth on our enjoyment. If enjoyment goes on for an endless period with no restriction or if suffering continues for a long time with no interval, it leads us to the state of mental disbalance. In the case of the absence of any restriction, a man cannot check himself from leaning towards an object or action, which leads him to the world of disbalance. On account of this, an individual loses himself wandering after endless happiness or miseries just as a man does the same following endless happiness or miseries. It is also important to note that discipline follows from

restriction. Without putting chain or restriction in action discipline does not come into being.

If some argue the excessive restrictions might counter our freedom, which is also not supportable, it can be said that both excessive restriction and excessive freedom are not desirable, as the situation cannot bring harmony. The excessive restriction might make our life standstill while excessive freedom makes us undisciplined. Hence, the restriction without freedom and freedom without restriction is not at all desirable. These prohibitive moral codes and restrictions have got a regulative value in our day-to-day life. Just as traffic signal or speed-breaker is highly essential for controlling or regulate the traffic, prohibition or restriction is required for regulating the vehicle of life. 'Regulation' (*niyama*) comes from restriction (*niyantraṇa*) just as regular physical exercise makes a man physically balanced after removing unwanted fatness and leanness. The prohibition or restriction makes us harmonized after removing unwanted growth or leaning.

In another way, it can be justified that absolute freedom is not possible. If every individual is desirous of attaining absolute freedom, the result would be disappointing, because our freedom is conditioned by freedom of others. Hence, the freedom which is restricted can alone give us our stability and progress. For the sake of others' well-being, an individual puts restriction on his own personal freedom in this world. When an individual, being attracted to the object of enjoyment, wants to have them in spite of knowing that it will be harmful to him, he belongs to the former type. Another person may have the same desire, but after thinking its bad consequences on his life he resists his temptation and imposes restriction on his own freedom. The person of this sort belongs to the latter type. The former becomes the slave of desire while the latter conquers the desire after putting restriction on him. The disciplined freedom is real as it is associated with our wellbeing. Imposing restriction on enjoyment may provide us with the inner strength through which an individual is associated with his well-being. What distinguishes a man from the beast is that he recognizes this universal interdependence and orders his life accordingly. He establishes conventions, mutual understanding laws

of conduct for the welfare of the society, imposing restrictions on himself for the benefit of the whole.

This importance of ‘restriction’ in our lives has also been admitted by Rabindranath Tagore.<sup>8</sup> The fundamental thing for performing high austerity in the entire world is to curb our desire and to curtail the desire of happiness, which is technically called *aparigraha* in Indian Ethics. We should go in such a way so that we do not lean towards a particular side in which there is too much burden or weight without adhering to harmony.<sup>9</sup> Nothing can be made beautiful if there is no limit and hence limit has a prominent role in beautification. Ugliness lies there where there is no limitation or restriction.

#### IV

The absolute freedom is possible if an individual transcends this mundane world. A man whose mind becomes purified through performing disinterested actions and who, after realizing the whole universe as his own self, becomes self-restrained, can perform work ‘freely’ for the welfare of the world or propitiation of humankind(*lokasamgraha*) and becomes unattached to it. Such types of action may be free actions. The *Summum bonum* of life is not merely the attainment of spirituality and *mukti* for oneself, but service to all *Jivas* so that they may also enjoy the bliss of divine life. A free man (*Jīvanmukta*) in his *vyavahārika* state works for the welfare of others and his chief characteristic is *jīvakāruṇya* which is the positive gain of freedom. An embodied liberated man performs all the activities like eating, sleeping etc. spontaneously out of his old habit but not intentionally or consciously.<sup>10</sup> Just as a man who knows the falsity on an object produced through magic cannot think that the presented magic- show is real, a *Jīvanmukta*, through enjoying something, cannot think them as real and hence, he does not own the self- credit of performing activities.<sup>11</sup> That is why, a *Jīvanmukta* is called as not having ear through he possesses it etc.<sup>12</sup> In these cases the absolute freedom is possible. Apart from this, all activities performed in the mundane level are restricted freedom, which is also not valueless in the true sense of the term.



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## WHAT DOES PHILOSOPHY DO?

R. SHARMILA

One of the impacts of ‘scientific revolution’<sup>1</sup> and the industrial revolution that followed is that the way humans seek, generate, evaluate and consume knowledge was reshaped. Scientific modernity thus generated a new ‘philosophy of knowledge’. The initial indications of the new trend were exhibited through a tendency to experiment<sup>2</sup>, by new insights into the limitations of human senses and by a stress on the need for consistency in explanations. The arrival of scientific modernity is marked by Copernicus (1473-1543) and Galileo Galilei (1564-1642). In course of time, equipments were made which revealed to us new worlds, both at the grand scale of the universe and at the micro level of existence. With the advent of technology, the work of epistemic exploration seems to have been taken over by Large Hydron Colliders, Artificial satellites and Electron microscopes thereby dethroning philosophy from its aristocratic armchair. The changing trend was very much visible in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century itself and Kant remarked in the introduction to *The Critique of Pure Reason* that ‘there was a time when Metaphysics held a royal place among all the sciences, and..... At present it is the fashion to despise Metaphysics’<sup>3</sup>.

The priorities of academic research also underwent a corresponding change. Technology has been placed at the most favored (or most funded) end followed by science and social science, with humanities at the opposite end. We live in a discourse where technology is construed to be factual, objective and practical whereas humanities is construed to be speculative, subjective and idealistic. While technology is understood to be the need of the hour, philosophical tradition is often showcased to remind ourselves about the past glory, like the portrait of a departed patriarch.

Though invariably associated with renaissance, science and technology is not the product of renaissance. If by science what we mean is the study of nature and untangling

its mysteries, it is surely pre-historic. Primitive technology existed prior to the origin of *homo sapiens*. Evidence is mounting, which indicates that *homo erectus* had control over fire and also used stone implements. Coming to recorded history, Thales predicted a solar eclipse in 585 BC and Eratosthenes measured the circumference of the earth with a minor error of 0.16% in 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. *Susruthasamhitha*, the ancient Indian text of medicine, definitely indicates surgical treatment. Musing on the wonders of nature can never be a 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon. Take for example the idea of Gravity. Gravity was observed by Aristotle who explained it as follows-

‘How can we account for the motion of light things and heavy things to their proper places? The reason for it is that they have a natural tendency towards a certain position; and this is what it is to be light or heavy, the former being determined by an upward, the latter by a downward, tendency’<sup>4</sup>.

Likewise, the structure of matter, classification of living things, internal organs of the body etc. were studied in the ancient period as well. Hence inquisitiveness in to principles of nature is not a feature of modernity. But then, in what way is renaissance associated with Science? The contribution of renaissance lay in altering the methodology of study and not in altering the subject of study. The method of studying natural phenomenon underwent a sea change with renaissance.

How did our ancestors, prior to scientific modernity, observe and study nature? Let us examine the study of matter. Democritus (460-370 BC) in Greece and Kanada (second century BC) in India speculated about atoms. In saying so, they were just speculating that anything could be divided till a point is reached where the thing becomes so small that further division becomes impossible. Any actual attempt at division might have been limited by the limits of human vision. They called this smallest possible thing an ‘atom’ or ‘anu’. Can such a speculation be called science, or is it philosophy? Interestingly, we find that till the days of scientific modernity, what we now call ‘science’ was called ‘natural philosophy’. The concept was so well imprinted among the elite psyche of the times that even Sir Issac Newton (1643-1727) titled his book ‘*Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica*’ i.e. ‘Mathematical Principles of Natural

Philosophy'. Students of the history of Philosophy as well as history of Science study the same thinkers while studying pre-renaissance developments. What this generally indicates is that the same method was used, whether it is the study of natural phenomenon, mathematics or metaphysics. With scientific modernity, this method was abandoned in favor of the scientific method. We have to have a glance of the difference in these methods. But prior to venturing into the methods of philosophy, let us track the origin, growth and separation of modern science from the clutches of philosophy.

The transition to scientific modernity was not a smooth and bloodless event. There were two major hurdles which scientific modernity had to overcome. One was the orthodoxy of religion. Second one was the epistemic dominance of Aristotle and his deductive method. In 'The Structure of Scientific Revolutions', Thomas Kuhn examines whether Copernican heliocentric model of universe would have been possible in the days of Aristarchus (BC 310-230) had the Greek science been less deductive and dogmatic<sup>5</sup>. Both Aristotle and religion upheld the same model of knowledge, i.e. deduction, which argues that 'truths' had to be deduced from larger truths or pre-existing truths. For religion, the 'pre existing truth' was the axiomatic holy text. Further, the deductive model of reasoning had already established itself in mathematics, the queen of sciences.

But science could not work that way. Kant knew this when he talked of the limitations of Pure Reason. Methodology of Science does not confine to deduction. Prior to reaching a conclusion, science has to collect independent titbits of facts and study them scientifically. But conclusions so reached by scientific modernity often went against religious dogma and Aristotelian world view. This was not taken lightly as a simple epistemic challenge, but was viewed as a challenge against socio-political authority. Science naturally had its martyrs.

Scientific method has many ingredients and is subject to change depending on the objective. The method involves collection of data either from nature or from pre-established theories, analysis and construction of preliminary hypothesis. Predictions are made based on such hypothesis and it is verified whether the predictions work. Take for

example the existence of different species of animals with their similarities and differences which was noticed by many including Aristotle<sup>6</sup> who had written in length about it. However, Aristotle attributed the differences to design. But the topic was handled differently in the hands of modern science. From this observation of similarity, a hypothesis was formed that such differences are the result of evolution. The idea of evolution was very much in the air prior to Darwin but how exactly evolution took place was unknown. Jean Lamarck came up with the idea that evolution was caused by passing on the characters developed by a living organism during its lifetime to the next generation. But Darwin, in 1858, with Alfred Russell Wallace postulated that evolution is the result of 'natural selection'. In 1864, Herbert Spencer, in tune with his socio-economic view of *laissez-faire*, added the concept of 'survival of the fittest' which later provided ideological support for German Fascism and social Darwinism.

A hypothesis is strengthened by evidence and supporting facts and is weakened by lack of them. Further, it might be subjected to correction on the basis of new evidence gathered. Darwin's idea received support from studies in paleontology and genetics. Finding a fossil in the wrong strata, such as a human fossil in the Mesozoic era, would raise serious questions on the evolution hypothesis and the entire story would have to be retold. With regard to some other types of scientific conclusions, they should be reproducible in a laboratory. Hence broadly speaking, observation, formation of hypothesis, predictions based on hypothesis, verification of results, measurement, gathering of evidence, criticism, testing, modification, consistency of results etc. are at the base of scientific method. In case of inconsistency, the hypothesis is rejected or modified. This is how science progresses as a body of knowledge. It is opposed to acceptance without criticism (belief/faith) and principles laid down by authority as incontrovertibly true (dogma). What makes science attractive is its methodology which carries a semblance of democratic decision making process. It is not static and totalitarian, but is dynamic and open to scrutiny. It can be subjected to verification, debate, challenge, criticism, approval, rejection and correction.

The methods of science can be applied to the study of social phenomenon as well. Consider various topics under Sociology, Anthropology, Criminology, Archaeology, Education, Economics, Psychology, Political science etc which fall under the popular heading of 'Social Science'. They make hypothesis about human behavior at micro levels and macro levels, make predictions, test the hypothesis, makes use of scientific tools such as survey, sampling, statistical analysis, graphs and charts etc and make socio-economic and political predictions. They also correct the hypothesis based on new developments. However, unlike natural science, the focus of Social science is on improvement of the conditions of human existence. The topics classified under Social Science are akin to humanities but the method employed in the study and research of the Social sciences is scientific or quasi scientific.

Traditionally, philosophy is neither a science nor social science but is classed under the broad heading of Humanities. Like Philosophy, Humanities too lacks a universally accepted definition. Some define Humanities as the study of human conditions, some as the study of human culture and some define it as the way in which human experiences are processed and documented. Literature, Philosophy, History, Art etc are classed under humanities. There are certain aspects which demarcate Humanities from Social Science. They are

1. Social sciences employ the methodology of science where as such methods have little role to play in humanities.
2. Social Science is empirical and experimental but humanities is imaginative and creative.
3. Social Science focus on causes and quantitative explanation of the world but Humanities focus on analysis and exchange of ideas.
4. Social Science provides us with axioms, theorems and conclusions but Humanities provide us with concepts, ideas, speculations, arguments and stories.

5. Humanities connect the present to past, decides the priorities in day today life and connects us to the world around us. But social science is the study of social phenomenon.

Having considered science, let us come back to the question ‘what does philosophy do’. Philosophy, like science, studies the general and fundamental nature of reality. But in doing so, scientists, both natural and social scientists, makes use of the methodology of science. They collect data, analyze them, make predictions, do experiments and come up with answers. But philosophy does it differently. The focus of philosophy will not be on collection of data or experiment, but will be on analysis on the strength of imagination and creative ideas. We have learned the methods used by science to augment its knowledge base. But what were the methods traditionally used by philosophy and humanities? On examination of the history of philosophy, many methods can be discerned, some of which are detailed below.

Logical methods- Logic helps to differentiate a correct argument from an incorrect one. Logical methods like *reductio ad absurdum* and method of contradiction were often used to bring out the inconsistencies in philosophical arguments and in mathematics as well. Sankara and Nagarjuna are two Indian thinkers who made use of logic to win arguments and establish their philosophical positions.

Deduction – This is a technique ascribed to Aristotle. Deductive logic consists in deducting conclusions from a set of premises which are already accepted as true. An argument is accepted to be valid if the structure of the argument is valid without going into the material contents of the arguments. This is akin to the method of mathematics.

Dialectical Method- The method of dialectics is associated with many thinkers including Zeno, Socrates, Aristotle, Kant, Hegel and Karl Marx. However, dialectics does not mean the same thing for all. Socratic dialectic lies in examining a concept using opposing ideas. Socrates would pretend ignorance and put questions such as ‘what is virtue’ to his disciples. Through the opposing points of view that emerge, the concept of virtue is made clear to the disciples. This is Socratic dialectic which is also called

Socratic irony. Dialectics is basically the progress of arguments (in Socrates), ideas (in Hegel) or society (in Marx) through the inter play of opposites whereby cruder ones give way to refined ones.

Intuition- Intuition is accepted as a method by many schools of philosophy. French philosopher Henri Bergson was of the view that absolute knowledge of a thing is possible only through intuition and that analysis brings only relative knowledge. Rene Descartes, in his book *Meditations on first philosophy*, refers to an intuition as a preexisting knowledge gained through rational reasoning or discovering truth of a thing through thinking about it. Intuitive perception (Yogaja) is accepted as a pramana by many Indian schools as well.

Speculation- Speculation is forming a theory without firm evidence. The theory of atoms by Democritus and Kanada is a classic example of speculation. The method of speculation is based on reason but without proper evidence. It may be noted that all great scientific ideas had a speculative phase before they were 'proved'. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles Darwin speculated on evolution. However, it could not then be called a scientific theory without subjecting it to the process of scientific analysis.

Method of Doubt- This is ascribed to Rene Descartes. Descartes wanted to place Philosophy and the ideas of God, World and Soul at par with mathematics. Mathematics begins with self evident axioms and proceeds to deduct conclusions from such axioms. In similar manner, Descartes wanted to begin with self evident axioms of Philosophy. To accomplish such 'certainty' Descartes used the method of doubt. He found that anything and everything could be doubted except the fact that 'I am doubting'. Hence, using this method, he came to the first self evident truth or axiom of his philosophy, i.e. *cogito ergo sum* which means 'I think therefore I exist'. This is a very significant development in the history of epistemology since it permitted 'doubting' even those dogmas which were uncritically accepted prior to modernity.

Skepticism- Skepticism is questioning self evident principles which are taken for granted. In this sense skepticism is a scientific method as well. The empiricism of David



Hume stands as the classic example of skepticism. Take the idea of 'Self' or the existence of 'ourselves' which everyone takes for granted. Hume argues that when we introspect, we stumble at one idea or the other but can never catch the 'Self'. For empiricism, all knowledge comes from experience and since we have no experience of 'Self', it is not proved. He used the same method to refute the existence of 'substance' and 'causality' as well.

Critical Method- Critical method is nothing but critical analysis, i.e. examining the possibilities and limitations of an aspect under consideration. In philosophy, this method is most associated with Immanuel Kant. However, this is a scientific method as well. The modern method of putting forward a hypothesis and critically examining the same to validate it or to reject it is also called critical method.

The above list is neither exhaustive nor the only way to interpret the methodology of philosophy. Structuralism and post structuralism have contributed immensely to social criticism and literary criticism and are modern methods of philosophical analysis. Even in traditional methodology, some include pragmatic theory, logical positivism etc as methods. But how relevant are they as study tools in the days of 'science'. Is philosophy still relevant as a tool to study reality? Does philosophy still study atoms; does it still look into pineal gland to find out where the mind interacts with the body or does it attempt to explain the process of understanding as done by Kant? No. The task has been taken over by Physics, Chemistry, Neuroscience, Psychology etc. There was a paradigm shift in epistemology and the function of explaining natural phenomenon is no more with philosophy. Science has replaced philosophy in this aspect. It is in this sense that Stephan Hawking declared that 'philosophy is dead'<sup>7</sup>. But how far is this criticism true?

As mentioned earlier, the debacle of traditional philosophy began with renaissance (14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> Century). The method of doubt upheld by Descartes (1556-1650) stated that anything could be doubted and even God need to be proved with the help of 'Reason'. This had a clear scientific tone. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Kant hinted that it is futile to investigate metaphysical problems like the world, soul and God since they

cannot be subjected to scientific study in the absence of sense perceptions. Hence science branched out as a special area to be investigated using special methods. But it was the Vienna circle which openly accepted the paradigm shift and assigned a new role to Philosophy. The circle stated that '*task of philosophy lies in the clarification—through the method of logical analysis—of problems and assertions*'. The circle further declared that the problems of metaphysics are pseudo problems, a position which is latent in the ideas of Kant. With the Vienna circle, the study of natural phenomenon *per se* went out of the purview of philosophy. Analysis and clarification became its new role. This is exactly what the philosophers of the current era are engaged in. Philosophy is any act of intellectual interference on the strength of logic, creative ideas and intelligent speculations aimed at clarification of problems and assertions. No area of human life, including science and technology, can be free from such creative entanglements, analysis and clarification.

Let us, for example, take the case of science itself. The term 'Philosophy of Science' might sound like an oxymoron to the ardent advocates of scientism. But philosophy has a say on the criterion, foundations, methods and implications of science. Let us come to the criterion of science. Consider two statements with the same structure-

1. 'Life on earth depends on Sun'.
2. 'Life on earth depends on God'.

Science will investigate the first proposition, but the second one is obviously outside the domain of science. But what is the criterion for such a distinction? A criterion offered by Karl Popper, known as 'falsifiability', has gained wide acceptance in philosophic and scientific circles. A falsifiable statement is one that offers an inherent possibility to be proved wrong. Statements that are not falsifiable are outside the domain of science. Consider the above statements. The first one can be experimented. Entire light and heat of sun can be removed from a controlled system and its impact on life can be verified. If life is still possible, as in hydrothermal vents, the first statement is proved false. But, if god exists, it is humanly impossible to insulate a system from the influence

of god. Hence the second statement does not provide a possibility to be proved false. Thus according to Poppers criterion, the first one is a scientific proposition but the second one is outside the domain of science.

Now consider the status of scientific truths. Are they infallible and eternal? Thomas Kuhn explains that the progress of science is somewhat similar to social progress. The existing models are challenged by anomalies and counter instances which ultimately lead to revolutions and overthrow of old paradigms whereby a paradigm shift is brought forth.

‘One aspect of the parallelism must already be apparent. Political revolutions are inaugurated by a growing sense, often restricted to a segment of the political community, that existing institutions have ceased adequately to meet the problems posed by an environment that they have in part created. In much the same way, scientific revolutions are inaugurated by a growing sense, again often restricted to a narrow subdivision of the scientific community, that an existing paradigm has ceased to function adequately in the exploration of an aspect of nature to which that paradigm itself had previously led the way. In both political and scientific development, the sense of malfunction that can lead to crisis is prerequisite to revolution’<sup>8</sup>.

‘Scientific truths’ such as Aether, Phlogiston, Caloric etc. are examples of postulates that have failed to survive. These were used to explain natural phenomenon such as propagation of light, phenomenon of burning and conduction of heat. In their days, they were as true as the structure of atoms learned by high school students of today. But they were later found obsolete in the light of new models of explanation. The obsolescence of erstwhile scientific truths raises fundamental philosophical questions on the relation between science and ‘truth’. Science does not provide absolute truths. Science is provisional. Even the structure of atoms studied in schools as final facts are just postulates of the current paradigm.

Accepting the existence of scientific paradigms leads to further questions on the truth of scientific statements. When can a scientific proposition be accepted as ‘true’? Is it when such a proposition jells perfectly well with the accepted truths or is it when it

works? All new scientific ideas that lacked coherence with the dominant paradigm of the times were initially rubbed off as fraud by scientists themselves. When Rontgen first explained X-ray, Lord Kelvin considered it as an elaborate Hoax<sup>9</sup>. This is not a singled out example but exhibits the inherent nature of paradigms to resist its debacle, just as how societies resist change. The philosophical disputes on theories of truths equally apply to scientific truths. Pragmatic theory, utilitarian theory, coherence theory, consensus theory, correspondence theory etc. have their say in scientific matters as well.

The question of the pitfalls posed by the limits of knowledge is also relevant to truth of scientific propositions. It is quite possible for the conclusions of a scientific proceeding to go off the mark in the context of unknown facts. There is a classic case, an experiment believed to have been conducted by none other than Galileo. In order to measure the velocity of light, he covered and uncovered a lantern and measured the time by which its reflection came from a mirror in a nearby hill. Since the reflection was ‘instantaneous’ Galileo concluded that propagation of light was instantaneous. Now it is known that light is not instantaneous, but travels at a limited velocity. In an era with no idea of things operating at nano-meters and micro-seconds, this experiment was bound to fail in spite of the fact that the method used was scientific. Any scientific model is built on known facts. It is impossible to consider the role of unknown principles in determining the result of an experiment. ‘Scientific truths’ are relative and contingent on available information.

Now let us investigate the claim regarding objectivity of science and its methods. While analyzing the development of scientific theories and observational bias, Kuhn clearly states how scientific theories and scientific observations are limited by the historical context and the dominant epistemology<sup>10</sup>. Examining the context of scientific ideas, Kuhn stated that-

‘Examining the record of past research from the vantage of contemporary historiography, the historian of science may be tempted to exclaim that when paradigms change, the world itself changes with them. Led by a new paradigm, scientists adopt new instruments and look in new places. Even more important, during revolutions

scientists see new and different things when looking with familiar instruments in places they have looked before. It is rather as if the professional community had been suddenly transported to another planet where familiar objects are seen in a different light and are joined by unfamiliar ones as well<sup>11</sup>.

Thus, like humanities, science is also limited by its epoch. Now let us have a look at the purpose of science. Since science happens in the human world, Philosophy raises basic questions on the purpose of science as well. Take for example the ethics of scientific developments. How ethical is human cloning, how ethical is it to spend on searching for extra terrestrial life when a large portion of the population is still starving and how ethical is it to develop microbes that could potentially annihilate our species, if let out of test tubes. Hence philosophical analysis finds a place at every stage of scientific development, at the level of postulation, evaluation, objectivity, methodology and also on the normative aspect.

The philosophy of symbolic logic and philosophy of Mathematics are still in infancy. Let us have a look at the objectivity of Logic and Mathematics. Take for example the infallible method of deduction. The classic example of logical deduction is often epitomized in the below argument.

All men are Mortal  
Socrates is a man  
Therefore, Socrates is Mortal.

The logic of the above argument is that ‘conclusion’ follows most logically and certainly from the first two propositions called the ‘premises’. If the premises are true, then conclusion is invariably true. But it fails to show from where the premises have drawn their validity. So even in a deductive argument, the starting point is an inductive proposition (or an axiom, in the case of mathematics). Hence in the field of knowledge, there is nothing that can be called a pure deduction. This criticism is apart from new theories which track the social origins of scientific and mathematical principles. The political alignment of mathematical ideas<sup>12</sup>, which touch at the heart of objectivity and deductive purity, has begun to be discussed.

Like deduction, induction too has its limits. The limitation is that it is not so good at providing conclusive proofs. One may count every swan in the world and come to a conclusion that 'all swans are white'. But the birth of a black swan the next day might topple the conclusion. The earlier statement will then have to be corrected as 'all swans are white except for one black swan'. However, when it comes to disproving, there is no tool to match induction. The statement that 'all swans are white' is easily disproved by inductively pointing at a black swan. The sharpness of induction lies not in proving but in disproving. This character of induction applies to scientific methods as well. Science often fails to 'prove' conclusively. Scientific explanations are not perfect explanations but should be considered as the 'best possible explanation' in the given situation. But Scientific method is an excellent tool to bring out counter instances and anomalies. Hence science does not progress by offering proofs. It progresses by postulating and negating, a sort of dialectical progress.

The question of definitions, which is central to philosophy of language, has a bearing on science as well. Take for example gravity. The features of Gravity were observed by many thinkers including Aristotle, Newton and Einstein. The former described it as a natural tendency of heavier objects to go into the earth (i.e. to the centre of the universe as it stood then). Newton described it as a property of mass. In Einstein, gravity is the curving of space-time continuum near massive objects (whatever that is!). Here, as it is clear, gravity is defined through its properties. Gravity does not get defined but it is the attributes of gravity that is being explained. Gravity still remains obscure without an ostensive definition. It is not even known whether gravity is a principle that can be subjected to ostensive definition. This is the very same problem of language which Yajnavalkya faced when asked by Ushasta to explain Brahman as 'that is immediately present and directly perceived'<sup>13</sup>. Like Brahman, Gravity and quantum scale particles defy ostensive definition. Here, scientific or metaphysical clarity rather becomes a problem of language than a problem in the domain of science proper.

Apart from Science, such philosophical insights also apply to branches of knowledge such as Logic, Epistemology, Ethics and Morality, Aesthetics, Language,

research methodology, Education, Politics, Economics, Sociology etc. Whenever science or any branch of knowledge comes up with questions relating to purpose, norms, methodology, aims or interpretations, parameters outside the field are brought to help. Take for example the philosophical problems of education. What is to be taught, how to be taught, whether it is right to teach science dogmatically as religion was taught in the past, the aim of education etc are topics of philosophic discussion. So philosophy has attached itself to all domains of knowledge. Without philosophy, i.e., the intervention of creative human ideas, speculation, insight, evaluation and criticism, any branch of knowledge could end up as finished example of learned error. Thus philosophy is engaged in clarification of the obscure. This is perhaps why Bertrand Russell said that ‘Science is what you know. Philosophy is what you don't know’. With its critical, creative and speculative insights, philosophy throws light into grey areas of knowledge.

1. Age of Scientific revolution corresponds with the age of enlightenment, i.e. the days of renaissance. One major event that marks the beginning of scientific revolution is the publication of ‘On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres’ by Copernicus in 1543.
2. Galilean experiment at tower of Pisa is a classic example.
3. Preface- Critique of Pure Reason. Translation F Maxmuller- Mc Millan Company.
4. Physics: Book VIII- Aristotle Complete works- Edited by WD Ross- pp-814 (PDF Version).
5. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition-1970)- Thomas S Kuhn. Ch VII. Crisis and the Emergence of Scientific Theories. (But Kuhn concludes that there were other historical reasons which would have prevented such a discovery by Aristarchus).
6. Collected works of Aristotle has five lengthy chapters on Animals including history, parts, movements, progression and generation of animals.
7. Speaking to Google’s Zeitgeist Conference in Hertfordshire- May-2011.
8. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions- Thomas S Kuhn. pp 92.
9. Silvanus P. Thompson, The Life of Sir William Thomson Baron Kelvin of Largs (London, 1910), II, 1125.
10. Thomas S Kuhn, *ibid*2- Ch VII and IX.
11. *Ibid*- pp 111
12. ‘Are Science and mathematics socially constructed? A mathematician encounters post modern interpretations of Science’- Richard C Brown- World Scientific Publishing Co. 2009- Ch 10.
13. Brihadaranyaka Upanishad III-4-1&2

***WHAT JUSTICE IS? : AN INQUIRY INTO NAGARJUNA'S  
CONTEMPLATION ON 'HAPPINESS' AND  
'LIBERATION' IN RATNĀVALI.***

DAVID KHOMDRAM

**Keywords:** justice, transcendence, dualism, happiness, liberation, uncompromising

The very idea of Justice is deeply rooted in Rawls's opening sentence of *A Theory of Justice* – "Justice is the first virtue of social institution, as truth is of systems of thought." But on the other hand, Rawls insisted that it should transcend the calculus of social interest and political bargaining. He further claims that the implementation of an erroneous theory of justice marks the lack of a better one, or the inability to transcend the calculus or bargaining implies the incompetency of the existing theories. Thus he writes, "Being first virtues of human activities, truth and justice are uncompromising" (Rawls, 1999, p. 4)

According to Rawls, justice, being a virtue of social institutions and its related human activities, should not compromise. This uncompromising character of justice, like that of the truth, is what fascinates us. This fascination is not the metaphysical or mystical one but purely a philosophical one. Even Mill observed, "...it is one thing to believe that we have natural feelings of justice, and another to acknowledge them as an ultimate criterion of conduct." (J.S.Mill, 1987) Rawls and others of course tried to demystify in their own ways, and we are not judging their proposals in and out. Our attempt is to understand the fascinating character of 'uncompromising' in its fullest sense. This includes relieving ourselves from demystifying it. We intend to explore a whole lot of things that is inhaled by the very notion - 'uncompromising'. More precisely, our inquiry is thoroughly upon the statement – "Justice is uncompromising". This is the point where we defect from the popular postulation of the idea of justice, where most – including Rawls – attempted not to fall short of such qualification; the qualification of being



uncompromising. But the very existential character of the statement - "Justice is uncompromising" – paves the way to some other direction; "justice" as "uncompromising". Before any kind of metaphysical speculation of the meaning arises in terms of its foundational values, and before any kind of nihilistic blindness befell, let us indulge in something which is worldly and at the same time purely philosophical.

Therefore, among all the possible indications of "uncompromising", we intend to explore within the domain of Buddhist intention of qualifying the term. Honestly, we could have started straight with the notion of 'justice', but we are also aware of the fact that 'justice', as we know it, is a consequence. This is evident in the history of its explication across time. On the other hand, we are also convinced that the ontological absence of the idea of justice leads us to identify with its means as its cause. For instance, in "justice as fairness" and "justice as dharma", both fairness and dharma caused justice, but they were used synonymously. But, if they bring their argument up to the sense that "fairness" itself is 'justice' or "dharma" itself is 'justice', then our argument here in this paper will represent one of their arguments.

Thus, deferring the idea 'justice' and focusing on the predicate – 'is uncompromising' – in our discourse, pulls us back more towards the identity statement, predication, an assertion like, "the so-and-so is the so-and-so", making us more philosophical. But to our astonishment, ironically, unearthing the predicate also redefined the binarity within the domain of popular logocentric philosophy, defying all its fundamental tenets.

Now, these two predicaments also provide the evidence that somewhere, in something, we embrace the dualism and at the same time transcend it. Buddha calls this "wholesome". 'Compromising' in Rawlsian context, implies the flexibility in terms of integrity and the associated values, and the opposite means stiffness, as rigid as anything could be, an impenetrable perimeter, etc. 'Compromising' also implies the immaturity of the theory, principles, or policy that should usually cause justice.

Now according to Buddhist philosophy, wherever there is cause and effect, the principle of impermanence binds them – *pratityasamudpāda* – rooting out the logocentric core. Thus, ".....Perfect Buddha, the best of teacher ..... taught that whatever is dependently arisen is unceasing, unborn, unannihilated, not permanent, not coming, not going, without distinction, without identity, and free from conceptual construction." (Nagarjuna, *Mulamadhyamakakarika*; The fundamental wisdom of the middle way, 1995, pp. -2) The principle of impermanence or momentariness itself invites imperfection, changeability, randomness, etc. This condition settles the bewilderment of making justice as a consequence in the pure sense of the term; with the very framework of binarity or dualism. The settlement provides the status of the 'idea' [the idea of justice] to transcend beyond the level of dualism towards something supramundane. [When we use the term 'supramundane', it does not represent the 'supramundane seat', as an extraterrestrial domain above this mundane world, rather it only testifies the inevitable 'transcendence'.] Therefore, when we accord ourselves to the statement – "justice" as "uncompromising", the elaboration of 'uncompromising' in terms of a detour, we intend to prove that justice itself is "uncompromising" rather than "justice should not be compromised" where it works as a transitive verb.

The paper delves into the works of Nagarjuna, the founder of Madhyamaka school of Buddhism. Following Rawls's assertion of justice as related to man vis-à-vis society; individual and groups or masses, the paper focus exclusively on Nagarjuna's work "*Ratnāvali*" translated as 'The Precious Garland', which he composed as an advice to the king. But David S. Ruegg maintains, "It is observed that the precepts taught in the *Ratnāvali* are useful not only to a king but to all beings." (Ruegg, 1981, p. 26)

In *Ratnāvali*, Nāgārjuna was expounding the art of actions, liberation, and decision making, or rather 'an enlightened decision' or 'a liberated decision'. This notion of 'enlightened/liberated decision' motivates the paper to unearth the picture of justice implicit within the verses.

In the world of academic philosophy, Nāgārjuna needs no introduction because his works and reputation precede him. The popular theory of emptiness (*shunyavāda*)

runs deep in all his utterances which he founded on the basis of *pratityasamudpāda* through *catuskoti*;

*"Everything is real and is not real,*

*Both real and not real,*

*Neither real nor not real,*

*This is Lord Buddha's teaching."* (Nagarjuna, *Mulamadhyamakakarika*; The fundamental wisdom of the middle way, 1995, pp. XVIII, 8)

The deconstructive nature of *sunyatā* is also the building block of all the work [Including the works related to ethics and politics.]. It is the same blood that runs in the veins of the Madhyamaka School of philosophy. Therefore, we are not surprised to discover the scent of it in his advises, which is supposed to be a guiding principle to rule, to manage, to govern or administer.

The Great Buddha once uttered; "That deed which I am desirous of doing with the body is a deed of my body that would conduce neither to the harm of self, not to the harm of others, nor to the harm of both, this deed of body is wholesome, productive of happiness, results in happiness, - a deed of body like this, Rāhula, may be done by you." (Buddha, 1995, pp. -1.414-1.420) This is how Buddha advises his son Rāhula on his conduct or deeds as a way of exhorting him on his terrestrial journey. This somehow transcends the popular sense of altruism. The wholesomeness of the deed here is strongly anticipated in what Rawls called 'uncompromising' [but not in his main theory of justice], because the question of injustice never arises in such un-manipulating deeds. This "uncompromising wholesomeness" is neither the dividend which can further be disintegrated into constituent parts, nor it is the absolute without parts. What is prominent, and what runs deep in Nāgārjuna's thinking is the logic of 'neither-nor' which is directed to the two extremes of dualism. What lies ahead, for the sake of our endeavor, is to examine if this logic of 'neither-nor' could satisfy the notion of 'uncompromising'.

To begin with, Nāgārjuna dwells on three cardinal prerequisites in the preparatory stage towards understanding and delivering justice: faith, wisdom, and action.<sup>1</sup>

Here action is universal and at the same time dependent on the former two. Now these prerequisites, according to Nāgārjuna, are instrumental in attaining happiness and liberation. The state of happiness, he called it 'high status' and the state of liberation as 'definite goodness'. (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, pp. -4) We believe he anointed these titles for some implicit reasons. High Status, which he means happiness or at least represented by it, is very specific. The meaning of happiness is not bound by the classical interpretation of fulfilling or regulating one's desire, though it is one of the expressions or state of the being. The very title he anointed for it – 'high status' – entails the raising, an upliftment, transcendence, going beyond the popular conception. This higher state transcends the very hierarchy born out of linearity; beyond 'p' and 'not-p'.

In the same way, 'definite goodness' for liberation is nothing less than the case of happiness. This is the promised goodness; the uncompromising goodness, which he deemed to be perfectly matched with the Buddhist conception of liberation. We all are familiar with Buddhist's multifarious conception of nirvana, but Nāgārjuna's dealing is more convincing for the sake of this paper. Literally, it is easy to comprehend the meaning of liberation, and it obviously implies transcendence but, still qualifying liberation or transcendence as 'definite goodness' remains to be interrogated further.

According to Nāgārjuna, practicing 'high status', opens up the way toward 'definite goodness'.

*"In one who first practices high status,  
Definite goodness arises later,  
For having attained high status,  
One comes gradually to definite goodness.*

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<sup>1</sup> This is highlighted in the first chapter of Ratnāvali (Nagarjuna, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998)

*High status is considered to be happiness,*

*Definite goodness is liberation*

*The quintessence of their means*

*Is briefly 'faith and wisdom'." (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, pp. 3-4)*

### **High Status:**

For Nāgārjuna, happiness is gained on the level of high status. And on the other hand, high status is a consistent practice; an unrelenting endeavor over a series of virtues which he summarizes as:

*"Desire, hatred, ignorance, and*

*The actions they generate are non-virtues*

*Non-desire, non-hatred, non-ignorance,*

*And the actions they generate are virtues". (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 20)*

*"From non-virtues come all sufferings*

*And likewise all bad transmigrations*

*From virtues, all happy transmigrations*

*And the pleasures of all lives." (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 21)*

*"Desisting from all non-virtues*

*And always engaging in virtues*

*With body, speech, and mind –*

*These are called the three forms of practice." (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 22)*

Therefore Nāgārjuna's eudaimonism is the constant practice to desist from all non-virtues and always engaging in virtues.<sup>2</sup> Now, always engaging in virtues while, at the same time, desisting from all non-virtues, is also a complete state of turmoil; a constant war upon a series of dilemmas, confusion, undecidables, etc. In other words, it

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<sup>2</sup> This is found in the Verses-22 of Ratnāvali

is a perfect depiction of a 'conflict'. But, this conflict is also a solution or a resolution to the dualism between virtues and non-virtues. This state, which is the constant state of practice, is not allowed to take sides because the 'virtue' for Nāgārjuna is the state of transcendence. The hanging state of practice/conflict resolves the dualism by transcending them while the 'state' itself never rests onto some other platform. Nāgārjuna again writes;

*"Through the concentrations, immeasurable, and formlessness*

*One experiences the bliss of Brahmā and so forth*

*Thus in brief are the practices*

*For high status and their fruits". (Nagarjuna, 1998, p. 24)*

Simply avoiding non-virtue and embracing virtue is purely a mechanical choice; a choice between 'p' and 'not-p'. This means, a mere choice of 'p' over 'not-p', though may be very difficult, is already decided, and this contradicts the very notion of immeasurable and formlessness. Such notions – immeasurable and formlessness – are treated in the domain of undecidables and undeterminables.

Now, what really justifies the notion of immeasurable and formlessness, and what really belongs to the domain, is the 'conflict' or the 'practice'. This 'conflict' is the constant practice, expanding itself without a definite perimeter in time and space. Briefly, this infinitude exactly belongs to the domain of undecidables and undeterminables. These practices, according to Nāgārjuna freed one from becoming vicious creatures/beings – which are also symbols of injustice – and making them godly. (Nagarjuna, 1998, pp. 23-24)

That being said, if this 'conflict' delivers, or assumed to deliver, justice, then it should also retain the status of 'uncompromising' because compromising the 'conflict' is to corrupt the 'practice' itself, which would further corrupt man and all humans. Thus, one is just in this state of 'conflict' or in the 'high status'. Cicero writes, "...justice, in which virtue displays itself with the most distinguished luster, and from which men are termed good...." (Cicero, 1902, pp. 15-16)

### **Definite Goodness:**

Before we repeatedly use the word 'just' or 'justice', let us illuminate ourselves with the 'definite goodness'. Nāgārjuna writes; "One who sees how cause and effect are produced and destroyed, does not regard the world as really existent or really non-existent." (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 38) The *shunyavāda* of Nāgārjuna kept on insisting to extinguish both the self and the aggregates.

*"If the self were the aggregates,*

*It would have arising and ceasing*

*If it were different from the aggregates*

*It would not have the characteristics of the aggregates."* (Nagarjuna, 1995, pp. XVIII-1)

The five aggregates or skandhas; natural form/body (*rupa*), feeling (*vedana*), perceptions (*saññā*), predisposition from past impressions (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*vijñāna*), these are considered to be the properties of the self. But they are mutually dependent [mutually dependent between self and aggregates]. "Just as it is said that an image of one's face is seen depending on a mirror, but does not really exist [as face], so the conception of I exists dependent on the aggregates. But like the image of one's face, the 'I' does not at all really exist." (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, pp. 31-32) He continues, "Just as without depending on a mirror, the image of one's face is not seen, so too the conception of I does not exist without depending on the aggregates" (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 33).

Now the mutual dependence of the self and the aggregates, while confirming the impermanence of neither of them independently, let us abstain from grasping onto the "I" and "mine"; that is the self and the aggregates essentially.

*"Having seen thus that the aggregates as untrue*

*The conception of I is abandoned*

*And due to abandoning the conception of I*

*The aggregates arise no more."* (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 30)

Nāgārjuna further observed;

*"Whatever comes into being dependent on another*

*Is not identical to that thing*

*Nor is it different from it*

*Therefore, it is neither non-existent in time nor permanent".* (Nagarjuna, 1995, pp. XVIII-10)

This explains why Nāgārjuna redefined the nature of cause and effect as something extinguishable. [This also opens a whole new dialogue in the world of philosophy, but for space and time, we must defer the dialogue in some near future]. This very conviction also paves the way for the middle path whose perspective transcends the dualism of existent and non-existent. This transcending from the dualism is the principle and immortal truth preached by the enlightened ones, whom he addresses as "patrons of the world". The characteristic of this transcending goes without identity, without distinction. He writes;

*"By the buddhas, patrons of the world*

*This immortal truth is taught*

*Without identity, without distinctions*

*Not non-existent in time, not permanent."* (Nagarjuna, Mulamadhyamakakarika; The fundamental wisdom of the middle way, 1995, pp. XVIII-11)

Therefore, he writes, "In liberation, there is no self and so are no aggregates." (Nagarjuna, 1998, p. 41) And so, "The extinction of the misconception of things and non-things is called nirvana." (Nagarjuna, 1998, p. 42) Nāgārjuna further writes, "Because existence and non-existence are extinguished by wisdom, there is a passage beyond meritorious [virtue] and ill deeds[non-virtue]...." (Nagarjuna, 1998, p. 45) and, ".....Thereby one not relying on duality is liberated." (Nagarjuna, 1998, p. 51)

### **The Uncompromising Conflict:**

That being said, resuming to our argument, and since, according to Nāgārjuna 'high status' is followed by 'definite goodness', the happiness at high status is recognized, at least by us, in the form of a constant turmoil or conflict in the domain of undecidables,



generate the specific idea of liberation which is inherent in the very practice but deferred to be realized later when the very idea of liberation is elaborated as transcending the dualism.

Now, where is the place of 'justice' within this discourse? Nāgārjuna constantly refers to the buddhas or the enlightened ones as 'patrons of the world'. (Nagarjuna, 1995, pp. XVIII-11) This could readily mean the protector or guardian. Any leader or a monarch ought to consider himself a protector or guardian of the humanity at large. Therefore, Nāgārjuna is showing the necessity of the leader or any other human beings to get themselves enlightened, to become the true patrons of the world. The concept of the 'patrons of the world' also incorporates the idea of justice as an essence inevitably inherent throughout. Without justice, the concept of guardianship or protector loses its sense in whole. Nothing remains to be affirmed out of them in the absence of justice. According to David Hume, "General peace and order are the attendants of justice or general abstinence from the possessions of others...." (Hume, 1975, pp. APPENDIX-III)

Again, justice being the first virtue of social institution (according to Rawls), and considering the world as a social institution, the guardianship of it – both the king and the subject – should be groomed by the idea of the 'justice' inside-out.

Nāgārjuna writes;

*"The practices are the best policy*

*It is through them that the world is pleased*

*Neither here nor in the future*

*Is one cheated by a world that has been pleased."* (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 128)

*"The world is displeased*

*By the policies of non-practice*

*Due to the displeasure of the world*

*One is not pleased here or in the future."* (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 129)

Now, for the King, as Lord of the Earth, and as a source of justice; as the originator of the policies, buddhahood is the essential qualification. This enlightenment or buddhahood is nothing short of a godly task. The slightest deviation committed by a misfit could turn the tide the other way around. For this reason, Nāgārjuna prescribed the prerequisites; that is faith and wisdom ['Faith' for Nāgārjuna is the right determination to continue with the practices (Nagarjuna, 1998, pp. -5-6)]. From the very outset of the paper, and from our intellectual journey, we are constantly reminded of virtues and, so justice(s), being the first virtue for social institutions, as reminded by Rawls, has been dominating this paper and others. No doubt, we set out to establish the very 'idea' but Nāgārjuna seems to be carrying it in a different way. For him, even the conception of virtuous and non-virtuous action is the work of an ignorant one. That being said, we seemed to realize that justice cannot simply be a virtue because, the opposite that should arise would create a dualism, and that situation will drag us down to the level of ignorance.

*"If the doctrine (sunyatā) is not understood thoroughly*

*The conception of an I prevails*

*Hence come virtuous and non-virtuous actions*

*Which give rise to good and bad rebirths."* (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 124)

Therefore, incessant observance of the 'practice' driven by 'faith' and 'wisdom', and not relying on dualism will make one a Universal Monarch. (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, pp. 175,76,77) This Universal Monarch, for us, is the source of justice. On the other hand, the Monarch should make justice uncompromising. If one has to deliver justice – an uncompromising one – one must proclaim oneself as being guided by faith and wisdom. Once this has been uttered, it is taken to be granted, in Nāgārjuna's context, that one has transcended the level of dualism through constant practice.

For the sake of our argument, this level where one is transcended is the only condition that could be understood or conceived as 'uncompromising'. Anything short of

this level would deem itself to be a level where zero justice prevails because the shortage would surely invalidate the 'un' out of 'uncompromising' and thus 'compromising'. Again, the transcendence, revealed by Nāgārjuna, is not a promised paradise with a certain degree of ontological existence, but rather realized as a state of constant turmoil/conflict – Nāgārjuna called it 'practice' – a drifting leaf on the realm of undecidables and undeterminables. The seriousness of this claim lies in the fact that, once the practice is stopped, the duality arises, and once the duality is in play, we let loose the dialectics, and hence the necessity of the notion of "uncompromising" is dropped down.

### **The Conclusion:**

Therefore, for Nāgārjuna, delivering justice as consequence is secondary to the understanding of its true form. We are trying to depict 'justice' in its wholesomeness, in the form of a picture painted by Nāgārjuna. Maybe we might expect justice after liberation, as consequence, as a follow-up from a perfect antecedent. This is the practical part which is open for observation. Now, knowing "justice" as "uncompromising" is the most necessary and challenging part, and this, for Nāgārjuna, is indebted in Lord Buddha's teaching. If 'justice' is 'uncompromising', then 'uncompromising' is attained when liberated, or 'liberation' itself is always uncompromised. And liberation here is to transcend the binarity or dualism. But, transcendence is possible only on the level of 'high status' or 'conflict' or 'practice'. Therefore, "justice" as "uncompromising" is the constant practice that is in the form of a conflict in the domain of undecidables.

*"Thereby know that the ambrosia*

*Of the Buddha's teaching is called profound*

*An exclusive doctrine passing*

*Far beyond 'is' and 'is not'." (Nagarjuna, RATNAVALI, Nagarjuna's Precious Garland, 1998, p. 62)*

### **Conflict of Interest Statement:**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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# A PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW: ON MODERN TECHNOLOGY AS THE FUTURE MODE OF EDUCATION

BISHNUPRIYA SAHA

**Keywords-** Technology, Virtual Classroom, Education, Authority, Institution.

Thinkers around the different corners of the world are now claiming that the impact of technology upon the life and society of human beings is immense. Possibly technological revolution exceeds the horizon of earlier Industrial revolution. Unlike the Industrial revolution, it not only brings change into the human outer world but also into the inner psychical world. Yuval Noah Harari in his book, *21 Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, writes “Even more importantly twin revolution in info-tech and bio-tech could restructure not just economics and societies but our very bodies and minds.”<sup>1</sup> Alvin Toffler provides us a very comprehensive narrative about the impacts of technology on human life. He writes in his book *‘Future Shock’* thus: “It is vital to understand, moreover, that technological innovation does not merely combine and re-combine machine and techniques. Important new machines do more that suggest or control changes in other machines- they suggest novel solutions to social, philosophical, even personal problems. They alter man’s intellectual environment the way he thinks and look at the world”<sup>2</sup>

Modern technology now claims to have a universal authority over every single aspect of human activity; weather it is social or private. It also claims to have a better ability than human beings in doing an action. In contemporary times, ‘a claim of modern technology’, of whatever nature, turns the focus of many intellectual people across the globe. Now it claims that it can provide a better scope of quality education to the students than the traditional mode of teaching. It offers people to learn what they want in a better way by sitting in any corner of the world. In present days, technology offers us a unique and innovative type of classroom known as virtual classroom which is quite different from our traditional conception of classroom. Immanuel Vinikas, a techno industry

writer provides a very illusive definition of virtual classroom. He writes “A virtual classroom is a video conferencing tool where instructors and participants engage with each-other and with the learning material. A virtual classroom platform helps to make the learning experience interactive and engaging while providing a controlled environment...participants can connect to virtual classroom platforms from any device that can connect to the internet. This type of flexibility enables participants to consume content, regardless of their location across the globe.”<sup>3</sup> The virtual classroom contains many features and facilities like charts, diagram, digital board, emoji, etc. Many teachers claim that such features and facilities make the teaching-learning process more interesting, interactive and dynamic. It seems that modern technology brings education to their door steps.

Now different techno-companies run different campaigns in different platforms to circulate among the people about the superiority, benefits modern technology in the fields of education. One sees how the techno-companies tries to inject superiority of technology based education system through different advertisement. Often they try to gain people’s trust by influencing their minds by casting a T.V star for their advertisement. They are trying to showcase that how learning most complicated things just by simply sitting before our computers or smartphones at our home is possible. It seems that the classrooms certainly come into home more precisely the classroom comes into our computer/smartphones itself. Simply we can feel a change or transformation in the field of teaching, into the mode of teaching. It is no doubt that technology brings much advancement into the field of education. It helps many ways to circulate message of education from one place to another at a glance. During the pandemic we realised the importance and benefits of modern technology in the field of education. It helps to run the education system when the doors of different academic institutions remain closed due to the novel corona virus. It seems that it helps to continue the rotation of the earth. Many people are calling that situation a new-normal situation. For them this is going to be future mode of exchanging knowledge. Thus, according to them modern technology is going to change, replace the age old traditional mode of education. However, such

changing aspects/dimensions in the domain of education are likely to create certain space for new controversies concerning the future mode of education. Can a virtual class room fulfil purpose of education? Does a virtual classroom have the potential/ability to take the place of on-going/traditional institutional education system? This article tries to find a possible solution to such question.

In order to have a possible solution of such question we need to know first the purpose of education in human life. Generally, by education we try to mean gathering information. But education does not only mean to provide mere 'collection of information' to the learners. The goal and purpose of education is greater than that. If we try to look back into the primitive societies then we can see that primitive mind tried to know/explore the meaning of different natural phenomena in order to make their life more stable in the uncanny situation. The growing knowledge about the environment into the minds of human beings makes them interpret meaning of different natural phenomena which ultimately helps them to sustain their lives into the uncanny environment. When people find themselves in a stable situation, they possibly feel a different sort of crisis into their inner/psychic world. People somehow feel at certain growing stage of human consciousness that the external conditions are not sufficient to live a good life. They feel the need of something more. The growing crisis of human consciousness forced human mind to concentrate upon his/her inner world in order to realise it. Thus human's quest for knowledge can be defined as a spontaneous activity of human mind to make to encounter inner and outer crisis in order to make their life a stable one, perfect one. The growing human consciousness feels the importance to gather such experiences and secure it for the next generation in the form of knowledge. The education system is the unique system of human civilisation which passes this knowledge from generation to generation. Every human society across the globe realises the importance of education in forming the life of their civilians. An ideal type of education process helps human beings to encounter their different growing spontaneous quests concerning life and reality to make their more perfect. Thus knowledge cannot be defined only as mere gathering information about the external world. Knowledge is more

than that. P. Gisbert in his book *Fundamentals of sociology* tries to provide a comprehensive summary about the purpose and goal of education. He writes, “Education (from *educare*) means the bringing up or developing in the pupil those habits and attitudes with which he may successfully face the future, though it does not exclude the idea of leading the student in the acquisition of knowledge and experience in accordance with the values cherished in a society. Education in one way or another is a necessary and universal feature of society by which every generation transmits to the next its social heritage. It is basically an agency of social control both in conservative and in its innovating aspects. It is itself one of the most faithful expressions of the ideals and ends of society”<sup>4</sup>. According to Radhakrishnan, “The purpose of education, it is admitted by thinkers of East and West, to provide a coherent picture of the universe and an integrated way of life , and this cannot be a collection of distribution but should be a harmony of pattern”<sup>5</sup>

From the above discussion we can draw an understanding about the role/purpose of knowledge and education. Now let try to us concentrate upon the central question of the article.

The busy schedule of our life gives us reason to choose an online education system for sharing knowledge from one person to another. In today’s world, the life of the human beings is moving too fast. People hardly get any chance to spend their time in creative thinking. Today individuals want to achieve many things at a single point of time. As for example, they want to study or learn something by taking rest in their easy chair. The modern technology gives us the space and power to use our time and energy in attaining various things at a single point of time. Such overwhelming power and potentiality of modern technology inspires the minds of many learned persons to see online/virtual mode of education system as the future ideal system of sharing knowledge. For them modern technology provides certain helping tools to clear many critical and logical concepts to a person who is living in a far place from his/her institution. Earlier often it happened that a student had to go to miles away to attend the class. And sometimes it becomes very difficult for a student to attend their class in time. The modern technology



now can bring education at the door of the student. In that sense modern technology can be seen as beneficial. The claims of modern technology seem very pertinent if consider the on-going life and social structure as an obvious and normal one. But if question this on-going fast structure of life and society then the situation could be otherwise. Thinkers from different corner of the world find certain flaws in online teaching methods. Certain draw backs of the on-line mode of education can be easily be realised if we consider the wider aspect/role of education in human life. As we have mentioned in the earlier section of this article is that the role of education is not to provide only information about matters. The role of education is much more than that. If we look back in to the past then we can realise that how each and every civilisation preferred to provide the knowledge of the culture, heritage, language, etc., through their educational institutions. The academic institutions have always been considered as an apparatus by the human civilisation to inject the social values into minds of the students, which help to guide the moral, social, political behaviour of a person in order to make a develop civilisation. In present days, the goal of every civilisation is more or less the same. The only difference tobe seen in today's world is that education becomes a commodity, which is alarming. The growing capitalist companies are now investing the money in education sectors with an intention to earnmore profit. The intention of profit often makes a barrier in the teaching-learning process. The growing sense of more profit often provides the idea to the investors in education sector to promote online education system because the online education system seems to be profitable than running an academic institution. In online education mode the authority has to provide a very less amount of money to develop the academic institutions in order to provide a sound academic environment. And if an authority wishes then they can circulate the same information of a virtual classroom to the maximum number of people across the globe. It is not only the investing agencies but also this virtual mode of education system that is a profitable one. At an initial stage it seems very sound to have such virtual classrooms because it saves our time as well as money. But we never question the effectiveness of such teaching method. We also hardly try to understand the greater goal of education in human life and society. We are only

concentrating upon the initial benefits/monetary benefits and not the long term benefits/inner- psychic benefits. Often we fail to understand the ineffectiveness of online teaching methods. The sort of effective communication we can have in in-person class is hardly present in online class/virtual class rooms. The effective communication is very important to make our teaching-learning process a successful one. The effective communication in academic environment can only be possible by direct interactions between the teacher and students. In a direct interaction/communication a teacher and student not only share their words but also their emotions. The emotional conversations/non-linguistic conversation leaves a great impact upon the conscious of both the teacher and students. It helps to build a strong emotional attachment between the teacher and student. That short of emotional/non-linguistic elements can hardly be found in online/virtual communications. It is true that modern technology provides many suitable elements in education sector which change the dimension of education. But still many things left behind the radar of modern technology.

One of the major functions of an academic institution is to provide value system to the students. The institution makes this process possible by providing students a sound and just academic environment. The ambience of the institutions itself inject the idea of just and equal society in the minds to students on the one hand. The students, on the other hand, gradually adopt certain values and ideas, not always consciously. They simply learn those things only by living into that environment. It is difficult to learn such things only by sitting in an isolated place or in a virtual space by turning our face in to the screen of our laptop. The virtual reality can successfully pass the information to the learner but such information seems very lifeless without human expression and emotions. When we converse with others in our ordinary life we are not only exchanging the words. We also exchange emotions, gesture, expressions with those words. And often it happens that the emotions and expression of a person speaks more than the word. Similarly, in a classroom a teacher not only share the information but also shares his/her emotions related to that information. The emotions, gestures often touch the heart and mind of the students which remain untouched the preview of words. Often the silence in

a class room speaks many things to both the teachers and students. Often the innocent smile of a student tells us the story of his/her hardship. The silent smile of a learner often tells us the challenges that she/he faced in the way of his/her education. It not only speaks so; it also reveals the socio-economic structure of our society. Thus a physical academic environment gives us the space to make ourselves aware about so many aspects of life and society apart from the information about the world; which can hardly be attaining in a virtual classroom. It seems that the online mode of education is designed only to provide the information to the learners through certain verbal communications. But the non-verbal traits which a learner learns through the expression, body language, gesture, etc., of a teacher in in-person classes are hardly present in the virtual classrooms. Thus many thinkers think that the virtual classrooms can never provide the essence of education.

Thus it can be said at the end of this article that in a physical classroom, a student not only gathers the information about (subject) matters, but also learns so many life governing primary factors by sharing the classroom with their class mates. There is a peer learning possibility with the domain of physical classroom. The concept of sharing is one of the fundamental elements in human life which helps to build sound character of a student. This sense of sharing helps to develop a sense of unity into the conscious of the students which is one of the most essential conditions to build harmonious society. Such sense of sharing, unity, etc., students acquire just by participating and sharing the classroom experiences or just by playing in the institution's playground.

Moreover, if we analyse the structure of technology laded education system carefully then it would not be so difficult for us to realise that how many capitalist techno companies' and many educational state bodies tries to make education a manufacturing content, marketable product through their advertisements. Even the teacher-student duo is getting compelled under the hegemonic state control that envisages education a saleable product. A profound content is being manufactured through changes in education policy and by barrage of constant advisement to that end. By way of doing

that it subjugates the accessibility to buy that product for students healing from lower economic strata and emphasizing upon an elitist as well as expensive mode of education.

<sup>1</sup> *Lessons for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*, Yuval NohaHarrie, Vintage, London, page,15

<sup>2</sup> Future Shock, Alvin Toffler, Bantam Books, New York,1971, page,29

<sup>3</sup> ‘*Virtual Classroom: What it is and How it Works*’, Immanuel Vinikas, <https://corp.kaltura.com/blog/what-is-a-virtual-classroom/> visited at 1.16 on 3.04.2022.

<sup>4</sup> *Fundamentals of Sociology*, P. Gisbert, Orient BlackshawPvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2010. p.33.

<sup>5</sup> Government of India, *The Report of the University Education Commision (December 1948-August 1949)*, Vol.I, p.34.

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# JOHN DORIS' CRITIQUE ON ARISTOTLE'S CHARACTER FORMATION

MANIK KONCH

**Keywords:** situationism, global character, habit formation, Aristotle, Moral Psychology, neurophysiological function, personality.

## Introduction

Aristotle's notion of habit and its role in the formation of moral character is very popularly known in the history of virtue ethics. The habitual action is not only undertaken on a regular basis but is also personalized, which has moral significance when we evaluate action and personality. For Aristotle, a moral character could be developed by inculcating virtues through habitual action. There are two ways to interpret this Aristotelian theoretical position; namely the naturalistic or behaviouristic perspective and the non-naturalistic perspective. The naturalistic thesis maintains that habit and character formation are inherently present in the form of disposition in human beings and could be causally related to the neuro-physiological function of the brain process. On the other hand, the non-naturalistic thesis upholds a teleological account of the formation of moral character, which is grounded on the power of will. John Doris, on the other hand, vehemently rejected Aristotle's notion of moral character formation. Doris claims that there is inconsistency in the exhibition of moral character, and that is nothing but an evidence of *lack character*. This paper aims to explicate and examine the John Doris notion of moral character, juxtaposed with the situationists' conception of moral character, rather than explain the Aristotelian notion of character formation. Further, the Aristotelian notion of moral character is juxtaposed with the situationist conception of moral character. This juxtaposition shows that situationists' notion of moral character fails to explain the moral significance of character, particularly Doris' notion of local traits in contrast to traditional global traits. The paper is divided into four

major sections excluding introduction and conclusion. The first section, implicitly illustrates the Aristotelian notion of character formation through habitual action and his teleological act of willpower, which is also known as non-naturalistic thesis of character formation (2018). The second section discusses the naturalistic interpretation is explicated with reference to the notion of instinct and other behaviouristic viewpoints on the explanation of habitual behavior. This behaviouristic account though scientific in its enterprise, seems to provide a narrow conception of habits; especially pertaining to the relationship between habit and moral character. In the third section, the paper explicitly discusses Doris' critical account of the Aristotelian notion of global character traits and its responses where Doris' vehemently rejects Aristotle's non-naturalistic notions of moral character formation and claims that there is inconsistency in the exhibition of moral character, and that is nothing but an evidence of *lack character*. Fourth section of the paper, Julia Annas (2011) defends the Aristotelian notion of moral character is juxtaposed with the situationists' conception of moral character, which shows that situationists' notion of moral character fails to explain the moral significance of character, particularly Doris' notion of local traits in contrast to traditional global traits. In the conclusion, I will discuss the relationship between virtues and moral habits that form a moral character from an Aristotelian perspective and suggest how act of willpower can be of help to inculcate good character which is wrongly overlooked in the behaviorist theorists.

## I

Understanding the usefulness of habit with reference to the neuro-physiological functions of the brain processes though is a scientific account still it provides a *narrow* description of habit. The epistemic concern of scientific explanation results in making an objective claim about the nature of habits. Nevertheless, this epistemology of habit does not involve the intentional, reflective attitude of the agency that could intervene in the very process of performing a habitual action and also the teleological articulation of the virtue of inculcating moral habits in human life. This unfolds a *wider* meaning of the notion of habit. For example, in cricket, some batsman holds the bat in their left hand

and some use their right hand. In this case, no conscious choice is made; it might be a spontaneous act to hold the bat in right hand, rather than in the left hand, depending on how only is aptly conducting the act. That is, one is naturally disposed to act in a particular way. And, gradually one becomes habituated to hold the bat perfectly while batting. This is due to the kind of habituation that the person has undergone. Corresponding to this, there is a psychophysical correlation which not only shows the neurological simulation but also is defined in terms of habitual memory. Henri Bergson took this as the model when he described habit as somatic (Malikail 2003). To describe a habitual action as spontaneous action diminishes the force of the *voluntary action*. It gives an impression that such an expression of habitual action is just an instinctive. The instinctive reactions are *unconscious* (Knight 1922:88) and in that sense mechanical action. To do something *mechanically* implies an absence of reference to the *freedom of will* and the *purpose* of performing. The notion of *will* and *purpose* are intrinsically associated with the notion of agency. They help in explaining the moral attitude of the agent.

As we mentioned about the notion of *holding*, the normative teleological dimension of the habit of holding could be further illustrated with reference to a batsman's holding of the bat while playing cricket. For instance, a batsman in cricket does hold the bat in a particular way where the holding position is very important. Little change in the manner of holding would affect his ways of playing the desirable stroke. The habit of holding bat cannot be merely spontaneous or *unconscious act*. Had it been always so, a batsman could have retained his form on a regular basis. Seeing the frequent change in their form of batting it is noticed that many times the batsman fails to retain the habitual action. As it is desirable to maintain the form, there is a scope for freedom of exercising the *will* to improve upon habitual action. In this connection, the batsman should reflectively cultivate the habit of holding the bat in the right position as it is one of the key determinants of the loss and gain in the *form* of batting. Thus, holding the bat during the practice sessions are to be reflectively carried out so that while playing the real matches the purposive character of habit is exhibited. Such is not a mechanical

expression of batting. Rather, a cricketer inculcates the habit *consciously* or willfully in order to improve upon his skill of batting. Thus, the notion of habitual action is not merely about the bodily processes but also has to do with choice and effort. This form of developing habit thus involves normative and teleological elements which are reflected in the behaviour of the agent. The agential control, in the case of a batsman, over performing and regulating his stroke shows the capacity of direct intervention. By ‘act of will one can intervene and can stop oneself from exercising a given habit’ (Pollard 2006:59). On the contrary, suppose that one has the habit of drinking shows how one is addicted to alcohol. To refrain from this habit or at least put some sincere effort to bring to an end of regular drinking is an indication of the act of *will*. As an agent, one has the responsibility to overcome the addictive attitude by rationalizing and understanding this fact that such habit is not *good* for health as *wellbeing* is essential for life. Aristotle construes this attitude is the attitude of will that exhibits courage – moral strength in performing an action that brings *wellbeing*. It is in this connection, “virtuous deeds are a determination of good will. So far as the development of moral character is concerned this strength is derived from the virtue of willpower”(Roberts 1998:228).

The lack of intervention and control over one’s own habitual action may lead to unhappiness situation. Particularly, when someone is a victim of addiction or certain compulsion he/she loses moral willpower or authority. The power of will shows ‘the possibility of doing otherwise where one retains one individuality or authority. The agent is an author of his/her actions which are intended, planned, and deliberated which shows the intellectual ability. Many times, the agent is inclined to do something, but that may not have a good consequence to ones’ life. In this regard, habitual actions *ought to* be connected with the *telos* of life. One must act consistently in order to realize this that his actions are adding up to fulfil the purpose. In this regard, Aristotle emphasizes on a teleological account of understanding the habitual action. It is because the purpose of performing any activities on a regular basis as a habitual action must have moral significance. And the manner in which good habits are pursued shows the way of constituting moral character.



## II

The naturalistic account of habits provides a scientific explanation of the source of habits and how habits are causally related to life. In recent times, this is one of the dominant versions of habits delved in neuroscience conceives habits as a routine, very similar to the releasing mechanism that ethnologists employ to analyze instinct (Bernacer and Murillo 2014:4). The main difference between the instinct and habit is that habits are not innate but acquired<sup>1</sup>. Habits refer to certain tendencies which one learns in order to react in a particular way. The reactive pattern of habit similar to the reactive pattern of the instinct, but instinct is basically about the reactive patterns which are mainly about native or inherited tendencies. The manifestation of definite reaction is conditioned by disposition of the structure of nervous system of an organism. The dispositional ability of an organism shows various behavioural patterns. One such ability is about the modification of reaction tendencies that comes through form of learning or acquired. After acquisition, the organism behaves similarly as in the case of instincts: inflexible, automatically and unconsciously. The reaction pattern of instinct is end-directed as a result it appears to be teleological. Here the *telos* of behaviour is construed without taking any ‘conscious purpose’ into consideration (Kinght 1922:85).

Habits in “contemporary research in psychology show that it is actually people’s unthinking routines – or habits – that form the bedrock of everyday life. Without habits, people would be doomed to plan, consciously guide, and monitor every action, from making the first cup of coffee in the morning to sequencing the finger movements in a Chopin piano concerto” (Neal, Wood, and Quinn 2006:198). Most of our daily behaviours are basically habitual actions whether it is about coffee making or using chopstick during eating, as habits, they are developed over a period of daily practice. It

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<sup>1</sup>Aristotle mentioned in *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book II, (1103b20) that none of the moral virtues arises in us by nature; for nothing that exists by nature can form a habit contrary to its nature, - i.e., the stone which by nature moves downwards cannot be habituated to move upwards, not even if one tries to train it by throwing it up ten thousand times; nor can fire be habituated to move downwards, nor can anything else that by nature behaves in one way be trained to behave in another. Neither by nature, then, nor contrary to nature do the virtues arise in us; rather we are adapted by nature to receive them and are made perfect by habit. See, Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, W. D. Ross (trans.). Kitchener: Batoche Book, 1999.

is like *rule-following*; once you learn the rules of addition; one goes on adding all kinds of numbers. Rules become part of life and thus work like bedrock (Wittgenstein 1958). Similarly, habitual actions in that sense are bedrock actions which are unconsciously performed. In other words, habitual actions are performed spontaneously in a situation without any deliberation. The reactions *appear* instinctive. Though it is different, still conceiving the identity relation, Knight Dunlap writes, “All reactions are instinctive: All are acquired. If we consider instinct, we find it to be form and the method of habit formation: If we consider habit, we find it to be the way in which instinct exhibits itself” (Knight 1922:94). In the analysis of habit and instinct relation, Dunlap’s interpretation shows that habitual reactions seem to be instinctive reactions only in terms of its manner. That is, instinctive reactions are unconscious and non-deliberative in nature. On the other hand, habitual reactions are acquired and transformative in nature. Thus, habit is an acquired tendency or pattern of behaviour that is often repeated and is formed by one’s own experience or by one’s own learning, whereas instinct tends to be similar in nature to habit, but it is acquired naturally without any formal training, instruction or personal experience.

However, it is known to all that human behaviour is a mixture of emotions, patterns, habits and instincts. Many of us must be familiar with habits, but when we are asked to distinguish between habits and instincts, then it becomes little difficult to express the differences. They both are integral parts of behaviour. Humans as well as animals, both tend to possess habits and instincts (Cosmides and Tooby, 1997:3). Habit as generally defined ‘a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.’ Thus, in simple words, any practice or activity can be termed as habit if it is often repeated. Let us understand with an example stated highlighting the psychological viewpoint. Supposing that *X* visited a Café to have a cup of coffee, for the first time which was located nearby her house, and she liked the coffee very much. Eventually, after her office work, *X* becomes a frequent visitor to that café. This has been part of her routine. Can we call it a habit of sipping the same coffee at the same café? Yes, it is about habit. Now just imagine, one day her (*X*) friend *Y* meets her and tells her to have

a coffee with her in some other café, but *X* is reluctant to go to this other café. Now, you can observe the tendency of a habit; a habit is usually hard to give up. As the old saying goes, 'old habits die hard' which basically means that if the habit was developed a long time back then it is difficult to get over that particular habit and it can change one's behaviours.

Again when we look into instinct, it defines an innate quality of an individual, typically fixed pattern of behaviour in animals in response to certain stimuli' (Mark Hancock, *et al.* 1948). Instinct is a fixed type of behaviour that appears naturally and has not learned by anyone's instructions or previous experiences. For instance, Honeybee comb is a very important source of honey. Honey bees are a perfect example to define the term instinct. Honey bees are neither trained to produce honey, nor do they learn watching the other bees producing honey. Still, they exhibit this complex pattern of behaviour about manufacturing honeycomb, collecting honey and safely storing it. Each of them is a manifestation of various complex dispositions inherited by this species (Cosmides and Tooby, 1997). The tendencies of the bees are instinctive. They do it naturally having their own means of protection and technique to maintain the optimum temperature inside the comb.

Habit and instinct are similar in nature, but the only difference between them is that both differ in their origin. A habit exhibits the learned type of behaviour, one that has been acquired after undergoing through repetitive encounters of various phases of learning experiences, whereas instinct is related to the naturally inherited type of behaviour. Another important difference between them is that a habit is not innate, i.e., something inborn or inherited from previous generations, whereas instinct is based on the evolving behaviour patterns of the previous generations. A habit can differ from one individual to the other. For example, *X* and *Y* are two brothers; *X* has the habit of rubbing his hands, whereas *Y* has the habit of rubbing his eyes. On the other hand, same instincts tend to be acquired by similar animals. For example, every deer is scared of a tiger and runs to escape from the tiger.

Many psychologists maintain that the habit formation is physical in nature. The basis of this characterization is related to our cognition and emotion which play a greater role in performing cognitive activities, rather than repetition of mere physical acts. The psychological explanation of habit formation is connected with the function of neurons in the brain. Jeanette Kennett is of the opinion that ‘moral cognition is causally related to cognitive and affective processes of the brain. Experiments have shown that patients with damage to the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and orbito frontal cortex are *adversely* affected by the effective process of learning to develop moral attitude (Kennett& Gerrans 2010). In general terms, on the basis of experimental research in neuroscience, a habit is being defined as a motor or cognitive routine. That is, ‘repeated neural representations are built up in basal ganglia during the acquisition of habits. And, with the damage in the different parts of the brain due to neuro-degenerative disorder, it affects not only the procedural memory that helps in developing habits and skill but also the episodic memory’ (Jog, et al. 1995:1745). The analysis of habits in terms of neural representation or brain processes are triggered on certain condition which acts like the stimulus and the process is being carried out without conscious supervision (Bernacer and Murillo 2014:1). It shows that as if the entire process is characterized by “unconscious,” “rigid,” “automatic” and, more importantly, “non-teleological” factors. In other words, developing habits oppose to the goal-directed behaviour(Bernacer and Murillo 2014:1). However, the original and most elegant description of habits, which goes back to Aristotle, defines them as acquired dispositions that improve the agent’s performance, making him/her more successful in the quest to achieve a goal and that goal is called happiness or *eudaimonia*.

### III

On the contrary to Aristotle’s non-naturalistic notion of habit and moral character formation, situationists like John Doris and others<sup>2</sup>, who vehemently rejects and critique

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<sup>2</sup> See the books and articles by different situationists and their writings on Aristotle’s moral character who has rejected the Aristotelian notion of global or *global character traits* in alternatively they adopted the *local traits*. Philosopher like, Doris, M. John, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.,Marrit, M. Marriar & Harman, Gilbert, “Character”,

his notion of moral character formation. For many technical reasons, we evaluate someone's character or personality. This evaluative process usually assumes that particular behaviour is being necessarily brought about by the agent of which he/she is held responsible. The relationship between agent and his action thus holds a substantial relation. A virtuous person, as we have discussed in this chapter, is habituated to perform a good action. The performance of action reveals the character trait of the agent. A virtuous person attracts the attention of others by performing good deeds, while a vicious person repels the attention of good people, but may not fail to attract the attention of some vicious persons. The character is emitted through action that relates the person to the world. However, the character is divided as in character and out of character on the basis of the agent's action performed in different situations. The agent possesses certain natural traits by birth and also by upbringing through the proper inculcation of habits which refers to the notion of in character. For example, honesty could be someone's in character trait. An honest person might develop this trait through the proper inculcation of virtuous action over a period of his/her upbringing. Honesty is a virtue. On the other hand, if the action is performed by the agent on the basis of the situation, rather than traits that he/she possesses. Here, the mode in which action is brought out by the agent shows that it is out of his character. For example, caring parents sometimes are forced to act dishonestly or compelled to tell a white lie when their children demand to undertake some vicious action. The parents in this situation are forced to neglect their own moral character for the well-being of their children. In a societal setup, often such changes in the character traits are found. Considering this Aristotle had introduced the evaluation of character with regard to their performance of the habitual action and more importantly how the character traits are developed by integrating with the unity of virtue.

According to Aristotle, behavioural reliability of agents with respect to their performance of virtuous action strongly forms the character traits. This conception of a

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*Handbook of Moral Psychology* (edit) John M. Doris, New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 355-401, 2010. , Marmodoro, Anna , "Moral Character versus Situations: an Aristotelian contribution to the Debate", *Journal of Ancient Philosophy* Vol. V, No. 2, 2011., Wielenberg, Erik J., "Saving Character," *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 461-491, 2006.

traits understood as settled and integrated dispositional feature of the agent in order to have appropriate judgment and appropriate feelings with response to a given situation.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, he writes:

It is not possible to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor to be practically wise without moral virtue. But in this way we may also refute the dialectical argument whereby it might be contended that the virtues exist in separation from each other; the same man, it might be said, is not best equipped by nature for all the virtues, so that he will have already acquired one when he has not yet acquired another. This is possible in respect of the natural virtues, but not in respect of those in respect of which a man is called without qualification good; for with the presence of the one quality, practical wisdom, will be given all the virtues. (1999: 1144b32-1145a2).

A virtuous person is treated as morally wise because s/he performs an action that is morally desirable. And, this performance as we have discussed in the last chapter refers to the notion of practical wisdom. But, moral virtues are necessary for strengthening practical wisdom as well as the moral will of the person. Character of the agent much depends upon these two elements; practical wisdom and moral virtues. A practically wise person tries to integrate virtues while performing an action which exhibits agent's robust character. This is also termed as global character traits. 'This character speaks about moral virtue and its relationship with choice that the agent makes or considers as something desirable to undertake. The agent's decision here is product of contemplative thinking. Thus, intellectually the agent tries to comprehend the truth in agreement with the desirable action' (Aristotle 1999: 1139-a20-30).

This above realistic conception of Aristotle's moral virtue and character has been criticised by the situationists. The situationists' examine the relevance of agent's physical and psychological well-being taking into account the ethical behaviour. John Doris is one of the well-known situationists<sup>3</sup> along with Marrit M. Marriar and Gilbert

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<sup>3</sup> Situationists referred by John M. Doris in his book *Lack of Character* (2002) such as Walter Michael-Stanford Prison-role, Stanley Milligram-Authority of Obedience, Ross and Nisbett who holds that behavioral differences are due less to individual dispositional differences than to situational ones; that "to a surprising extent," people behave similarly in similar situations; that people "typically" behave without

Harman who argue against the Aristotelian idea of character formation. Doris claims in his book *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (2002) that character-based ethical theories manifest greater ‘psychological realism’ than their competitors in the context of their discussion of moral psychology maintained by virtue ethicists like Anscombe (1958: 1-15) and Williams (1985:206). Contrary to virtue ethics, Doris and other situationists claim that current character based philosophical approach is skeptical and empirically inadequate (Doris: 2002: 4). This goes against Aristotle’s realistic conception of moral character traits – global character traits (globalism) on the basis of various psychological experiments such as Stanford Prison-role playing(1973), Stanley Miligram-authority (obedience) (1974), Methews and Cannon (1975), etc. Doris writes: Four related observations tell against globalism ... (1) Low consistency correlations suggest that behaviour is not typically ordered by robust traits. (2) The determinative impact of unobtrusive situational factors undermines attribution of robust traits. (3) The tenuous relationship found between personality measures and overt behaviour leaves globalist accounts of human functioning empirically under supported. (4) Biographical information often reveals remarkable personal disintegration. Individually, each type of evidence is perhaps only suggestive, butthe collective import is unquestionably awkward for globalism (2002:65).

Firstly, the global character traits reflect consistency between the character of moral agent and his/her behaviours. For Doris, the correlation that gives the impression of such consistency is found to be low. Hence, the global character traits lack a sound ground in order to maintain a robust character trait. Secondly, the robust character trait is also weakened by some of the moral agents who failed to exhibit virtuous character in certain situations. In this connection, Doris is of the opinion that it is difficult to hold a deterministic relationship between moral character and its response to the situational demands. Thirdly, there is lack of empirical support to map the agent’s personality. Every person has a private or first-person account of the experience of their own thoughts and feelings which is connected with their character. In this regard, the source of decision

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the consistency required for trait attributions; that evaluatively inconsistent dispositions may co-habit in a single personality. *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

and choice is empirically difficult to measure. The first person account of character is often expressed in autobiography or sometimes reported by the biographers where there is evidence of deviation in character traits. An honest person, for example, at the end of his professional career, is found taking bribe which presents a case of personal disintegration. Sometimes this episode may not be known to the public, but the agent is found to confess them in their own biography. All these points taken together act against the globalism of character trait.

Doris brought up the criticism on the basis of the various experiment that social psychology has conducted taking into account of people's and their responses to certain respective situations. Although the situations demand for performance of virtuous action still ultimately the agents have shown lack of moral character. In this connection, he says, if we accept Aristotle's globalist or prudential character traits, then the experiments result must be in support of Aristotle's proposed thesis on moral character. In other words, if behaviour is typically ordered by global character traits; systematic observation will reveal behavioural consistency (2002: 385). On the contrary, Doris finds that systematic experiment does not reveal the behavioural consistency. And, inconsistency in the exhibition of moral character is nothing but an evidence of lack character.

Doris draws a distinction between character traits into two types, such as global character and local character. Character traits that are developed and shown stable, consistent and integrated character is called global character. This character traits are constitutive of certain traits that are reliably manifested in pertinent cases, "over iterated traits of similar trait-relevant eliciting conditions," but also "across a diversity of trait-relevant eliciting conditions, that may vary widely in their conduciveness to the manifestation of the trait in question" (Doris: 2002: 66). This statement of Doris reflects that a temperament person will act temperately on varying situations: with his/her friends, colleagues or any strangers. On the other hand, local character traits are indexed to the specific kinds of situation in which the agents exhibit trait relevant behaviours such as closed-friend-honesty and good-mood-compassion. Doris writes, "Local traits are likely to be extremely fine-grained; a person might be repeatedly helpful in iterated



trials of the same situation and repeatedly unhelpful in iterated trials of another, surprisingly similar situation.” (2002: 65). There is no integral connection between an agent and character traits because we don’t have empirical evidence for it; thus, all there is to character aggregation of local traits. That means character traits are not integrated with each other. Therefore, his overall conclusion is that “people typically lack character” (2002: 2).

The central argument on people typically lacks character is based on three dominate conception of global character traits – globalism such as consistency, stability and evaluative integration through which Doris interprets personality as an integrated evaluative association of robust traits. Let’s define the following three theses:

- i) **Consistency:** The consistency thesis claims that character and personality traits are reliably manifested in trait-relevant behaviour across a diversity of trait-eliciting conditions that may vary widely in their conduciveness to the manifestation of the trait in question (2002:18-20).
- ii) **Stability:** The stability thesis claims that character and personality traits are reliably manifested in trait relevant behaviours over iterated trials of similar trait-relevant eliciting conditions (2002: 22).
- iii) **Evaluative integration:** The evaluative integration thesis upholds that a given character or personality where the occurrence of a trait with a particular evaluative valence is probabilistically related to the occurrence of other traits with similar valences. (2002: 22)

Doris’ argument is primarily against thesis (i) and (iii). The first two claims are about the nature of moral character traits, while the third is a claim about the relationship among traits within a particular individual. Thesis (i) implies that a compassionate person, for instance, will reliably help others in a variety of situations. A compassionate person is one who values the well-being of others, and this virtue will express itself across a variety of morally challenging situations. A person with this kind of virtue will

extend help to others when she has plenty of time and is in a good mood. The same person might not extend help when she is rushed or in a bad mood. Thus, it shows the person lacks consistency in her behaviour. In this regard, Doris claims that lack of consistency would affect the global personality traits as it has been upholding by the consistency thesis. Inconsistent behaviour, for Doris, affects the natural dispositional character trait. Similarly, thesis (iii) suggests a weak version of the unity of the virtue which was endorsed by Socrates and Aristotle. According to Doris, though some virtues are naturally clubbed together, but in their application, these virtues may not be united at all. For instance, compassion and mercy are unified, but it is often also noticed that honest person lack compassion. Hence, it is practically difficult to hold the thesis of integrated character trait on the basis of the unity of virtue.

However, Doris' argument against global character trait, though supported by some empirical experiments, still his concern takes a shift from experimental to ethical inquiry. He argues that global traits of character are not empirically adequate, as most of the Western people possess only local traits of character (2002:67). Conducting a large group of psychological experiment, he advances the idea that most of western human beings are not compassionate. Thus he argues against global traits and says, "if the experimental subjects are globally compassionate, they would have demonstrated helping behavior across a broad range of normal situations, including the normal situation of the experimental setting, in which subjects were not asked to watch the first confederate's belongings" (2009:182 ). Doris may be only concerned with people belonging to the western civilization, but he accepts local character traits as the means of ethical theorization. In order to strengthen the inquiry of local character traits, he illustrates three central features of character traits held by traditional account of character,<sup>4</sup> such as mentally grounded, dynamic and global. Mentally grounded features

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<sup>4</sup> We are referring here three features of traditional account of character which are adopted by Plato and Aristotle from Socrates, and explain in their different writings which is founded in Plato's *Laches* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* book VI and IX. "Its development and preservation require (a) friendships in which individuals desire the good of others for others' own sakes and (b) political and economic arrangements that promote the conditions under which self-love and friendship flourish". Both Plato and Aristotle believes that excellent moral character involves more than a Socratic understanding of the good.

refer to a character trait where one must possess stable mental features which ought to be grounded on those traits. For instance, a brave person must possess a certain range of beliefs, desire, reasons, willpower, attitudes, and emotions, patterns of deliberation, dispositions, and perceptual sensitivities. Dynamics features of character traits refer to certain features which are appropriate for certain behavioural and attitudinal output. The dynamism is due to character traits that typically enable to possess, flourish, live valuable life in order to live ultimately happy life. Performance of right action is essential as it supports the notion of flourishing life which is articulated through our dynamic engagement with the world. A moral person grows by encountering various challenging situations of life and hence their behaviour has to be dynamic (Upton 2009: 176). Finally, the global feature of character trait holds that certain character traits are global because these kinds of character traits must issue behaviour across the broad range of normal situations. However, the traditional features of character traits are permanently fixed. And the philosophical debate that occurs within this context of the fixed core concerns is due to a variety of distinct and normatively rooted factors. But Doris has initiated additional features over the traditional account of character traits that are about local traits. Local character traits are empirically proven and therefore help in understanding motives of the moral agent. Doris does undermine the significance of global character trait maintained by virtue ethics. The rejection of global character trait thesis has an impact on the notion of unification of virtue as it has been advocated by Aristotle. Thus Doris upholds the thesis of local traits only which is endorsed by social psychological experiment.

In this connection, Candace Upton has provided two supporting arguments in favour of Doris' experimental account on local character traits. According to Upton, local character traits deserve to have more substantial argument in order to support the idea of moral character. Upton has given two arguments in support of local traits. "First,

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They think that virtue requires a harmony between cognitive and affective elements of the person. Aristotle tries to explain what this harmony consists in by exploring the psychological foundations of moral character. He thinks that the virtuous person is characterized by a no stereotypical self-love that he understands as a love of the exercise of fully realized rational activity. For that we need self-love.

local traits are necessary for us accurately to morally appraise ourselves and other and, second, local traits are necessary for the concept of justice to retain its normative integrity” (2009: 183). It is necessary for all moral agents to self-knowledge. Unless they know or believe what they can do, it would be difficult to judge their character traits. If a moral agent often aimlessly behaves, then there wouldn’t be possible to conceptualize the agent local character traits. The moral agent ought to have integrity in order to perform a just act. The notion of justice demands personal integrity. Individual character traits must be reasonable and independent of empirical situations. And, this is necessary in order to maintain normative stability in moral behaviour.

Doris account of local traits is inadequate to evaluate moral character; this is particularly with reference to the nature and justification of local traits. Virtue ethicists like Candace Upton and Julia Annas have raised criticism against Doris’ social psychological approach of local traits. According to Upton, globally courageous agent behaves courageously across a broad range of normal situations. Whereas, Doris believes that someone who is only mountain-climbing-courageous (2009:183) would behave courageously only in that kind of situation; therefore, being courageous is only an evidence of a local exhibition of the courageous trait.

An agent who fails to behave courageously (in the case of mountain-climbing-courage) across a boarder range of kind situations is either the mountaineer is not in right frame of mind or s/he might have been in adverse mental conditions. A close examination of these situations is necessary in order to talk about the nature of global trait which is radically different from Doris thesis on local character trait. As Upton writes, “Doris provides no reason why we should think of mountain-climbing-courage as a normatively-valence character trait at all, rather than merely a disposition to behave, unrelated in any relevant way to the traditionally understood traits of courage. If local traits are not character traits, there is no reason for the virtue ethics to displace or for the virtue ethicist to supplant or their traditional account of character traits” (Upton 2009: 183).

According to Upton, even, Doris does not give any reason to virtue ethicists why does he endorse local character traits. The psychological condition of the agent is not only important to behave morally, but also it helps the agent to deliberate and reason out the action. For example, suppose that S protects herself from her fear of the intimacy of close relationships by lying to friends and family, while she is consistently honest with strangers and acquaintances' (2009:183). In this case, S's fear represents her psychological state; where she is not truthful because she believes that by being truthful to her parents and friends she might lose her intimacy with the partners. The fear is the cause of S's dishonesty. On the other hand, S has been consistent in her honest attitudes with strangers and acquaintances. This ambivalence in character trait is grounded in the psychological state of S. Virtue does not govern the character trait. To be honest, one must be truthful primarily to his/her with friends and family members. Doris while claiming the thesis on local traits has not considered this aspect of the virtuous life of the agent.

Can empirical adequacy threaten the normative function of virtue ethics? According to Doris, the answer is affirmative, because it describes some of the general facts about the normative condition of human life. For Doris, traits are the normative status of the common individuals. The change in the empirical situation need not necessarily affect the normative status of a person. Therefore, Upton claims that Doris' notion of local traits would be empirically and normatively outdated. If the empirical situation prevents normativity, then it would also prevent the notion of the local trait. Hence, Doris seems to Upton only a fair-weather-friend of local traits (2009: 184).

#### IV

Julia Annas, an exponent of virtue ethics, has been critical of Doris' rejection of global character trait that is maintained by the virtue ethics. But, Annas is not critical of the social psychological approach which Doris carries out to evaluate the moral character traits. Rather, by over emphasizing his position on local character traits "Doris makes heavy use of the situationists' tradition in the social psychology but I think that there is a real issue here about the virtues whether we are relying on current social psychological

or not” (Annas2005:636). Virtue ethics has a larger theoretical framework to speak about global character trait; the situationists have misread the central claim of virtue ethics. The lack of virtue could be due to lack of integrity. Aristotle’s virtue ethics in this regard reflects upon a erratic person who morally deviates in their conduct. But that does not seriously affect the theoretical stance of virtue ethics, because “virtue is considered as a disposition to act on reason.” (2005: 637) Unless the agent undertakes decision rationally or deliberates before making a choice, it would be difficult to propose the idea of consistent character trait. Moral character develops by a systematic practice of virtue in habitual action. Rational actions are normatively guided by virtue in order to develop moral habits and also to strengthen the will power of the person, as we have discussed in details in the next chapter. However, Annas points out that virtuous life and rational thinking must mutually reinforce each other for the development of moral character. She writes, “The more you develop a virtue, the less important to you is a mere habit, and the more complex and flexible your ability to reason about new and innovative kind of situation you may be faced with. Hence, the more virtuous you are, the more complex and dynamic your character.” (2005: 637) The character of a moral person has to be dynamic and complex as it is nurtured through various unexpected situations of life.

A moral person ought to judge a situation and act accordingly. One might fail in some occasion, but thereby he/she does not cease to be moral. The situational challenges are also not rejected, rather counted in favour of nurturing the moral character of a person that adds to character dynamism. The intelligent decision can make to develop a skill which is important to practical reason. A virtuous person can strengthen their character without paying much attention to the situation, rather by an emphasizing on firmness in intelligent deliberation. A morally weak person can commit blunder whereas a morally strong person is not only intelligent but also exhibit firmness. If in certain situation the agent fails to show that he lacks firmness in character, this is because the agent might have deliberated and considered the action not worth undertaking. This is because, commitment to act in a particular way is not merely an obligation, rather it is an action

to be considered cognitively worth undertaking –Annas calls these “actions are sort of cognitive duty” (2005: 638).

Annas is of the opinion that situationists like Doris underestimates the moral authority of a virtuous person. This only happens when one fails to see that virtues act as a unified normative principle of life. A person exhibits virtues by taking right decision at the right hour. And, there is no superficiality involved in while undertaking a virtuous action. To be virtuous is to perform a virtuous action and live a virtuous life. While undertaking the action he/she realizes the value of action. Practical wisdom or phronesis is logically associated with living a virtuous life. A morally wise person is prepared to take up a good decision about unseen situation. The preparedness is given importance in virtue ethics as it helps the person to be morally fit and take up challenges in future situations. In this regard, Anna emphasizes that “personality trait has to be evaluatively integrated” (2005: 639).

Moreover, Annas says, “the book contains no arguments against virtue ethics in the actual Aristotelian tradition; it sets up as opponent only a radically unintellectual version of virtue” (2005:639). Virtue ethics are not insensitive to situational demand; rather they put more emphasis on evaluation of the situation and appreciate responsible judgment from the side of the moral agent. There may be moral failures; it might happen that one fails to respond reasonably well in some situations. But that need not be counted as a total deviation for the integral approach that global character upholds. The agent must be given opportunity to recovery from the moral loss and to undertake this approach integration of virtues is necessary. That is to say, failing in one situation need not imply that all other possibilities of morally correcting oneself are closed. Reformative paths of learning virtue and their implementation in daily life should always be kept open to all individuals of the society. Thus virtue ethics sound enough as a moral theory to discuss the moral failure and success by undertaking some of the psychological experiments from the everyday life. But, it is also important that we need to reflect deeply the inner potential of virtue ethics that maintains the significance of global character traits thesis.

In this connection, virtue ethics emphasizes upon willpower and moral strength to integrate all virtues or prudential capacities.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I proposed to discuss two aspects: whether Aristotle's notions of habits are naturalistic or non-naturalistic, and can good habit help to form a moral character. Along with these two views, John Doris' contrasting notion of local character traits against Aristotle's global character traits was also discussed to understand and revival of Aristotle's notion of character formation. In finale I found that the naturalistic construal of habit has been behaviouristic by associating habit with innate, instinctive nature of life. The development of moral character goes beyond the naturalistic construal of habit in the form of physical skill. Rather the non-naturalistic perspective shows how Aristotle's notion of virtue and its inculcation in everyday life that results in developing moral character is grounded on the normative power of freedom of will. That is to say; the moral character is developed by strengthening the power of will. To behave morally, there is need to follow virtue in everyday life. The process of habituation refines the skill of performing good action. To regulate the habits and formation of right judgment in the right situation, Aristotle brings in the notion of practical wisdom defined in terms of rational ability to deliberate and exercise the power of will to realize eudemonia. The Aristotelian conceptualization of moral agency is grounded in rational ability to inculcate virtue in everyday life. Virtue as guiding principles of moral action is construed delving into the teleological explanation of life. The non-naturalistic interpretation, in this regard, provides a teleological account of the role of virtue and its intrinsic relation in building moral character – that is, “a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to the human good” (1999:1140b20-25).

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## **B. R. AMBEDKAR: SOCIAL JUSTICE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AFFIRMATIVE-ACTION**

**BIKASH MONDAL**

**Keywords:** Affirmative-action. Preferential Treatment. Reverse Discrimination. Reservation

The idea of the reservation, nowadays, seems to be considered the most complicated issue as it prefers preferential treatment that apparently violates the principle of equality because like affirmative-action, the reservation policy of India used to take positive endeavour giving preferences to the downtrodden people and this preference divides society and creates social tension amongst the citizen of India. The reservation conflict is based on the idea of discrimination. A group of thinkers believe that discrimination will be obliterated if we implement a reservation policy; on the other hand, others argue that the preferences in terms of reservation, given to the discriminated against people at present, may make a new kind of discrimination that is called reverse discrimination. In addition to the above argument, some thinkers argue that the preferential treatment is also compromising merit, and it also encounters the problem of infinite regress because the further preferential programme needs to be arranged for the compensation of the present victim; the cycle of the preferential programme will never be stopped.

In this article, I would like to defend preferential treatment given to the depressed class of India through the reservation by arguing that this treatment might not create reverse discrimination at all. So, the issue of infinite regress will also be invalid because this issue is keenly attached to the idea of reverse discrimination. I would also like to highlight that the principle of meritocracy presupposes many pre-conditions and argue that without fulfilling those conditions the judging of the meritocracy of individuals might not be feasible.

### **The meaning of Affirmative-action**

Affirmative-action seems to be considered as a positive outlook toward those who are discriminated against in the past, and this action tries to promote some special advantages, which are called preferential treatments, to affected individuals and groups. These preferences are mainly being given on the bases of race, gender and ethnicity. Now, a question might be raised that why this sort of treatment is required. I would say that the society is stratified, and this stratification seems to be considered hierarchical. In a hierarchical society, some people generally occupied the top-power position employing superiority of caste, race, gender, and religion, and the people who belong to lower grades are often treated as inferior. Generally, the stratified society used to treat majority people as superior and minority people as inferior, e.g., in American society, the White people would consider Black people as inferior because they were a minority and Black as well. White people then tried to argue that Blacks had not the same intellectual calibre and psychological disposition as the members of the preferred groups (Mappes & Zembaty, 1977). This is a form of discrimination that is called *positive discrimination* (Mappes & Zembaty, 1977). So, the affirmative-action seems to be pondered as a positive endeavour eradicating positive discrimination. Positive discrimination always tends to support unequal treatment that might not be justified on the bases of race and sex etc. This cannot be deemed as the just criterion of denying the same rights as preferred groups used to have; the people who were to be discriminated against on the bases of race and sex, etc., in the past must be compensated for their unjust deprivation. Mappes and Zembaty (1977) argue that the "Principle of compensatory justice" states that whenever an injustice has been committed, just compensation or reparation must be made to the injured parties" (p.187). They believe that this sort of compensation produces good consequences following *the principle of utility*. Mappes and Zembaty (1987) again say, "Which states that action or practice is morally correct that on balance will tend to produce better consequences than any alternative when the interests of everyone affected are given equal weight" (p.187). Consequentially, I would like to say that the affirmative-action seems to be closely attached to the view of

preferential treatment ensuring equal opportunity for the deprived section of people because, without preferential treatment, they cannot fulfil their interests; these preferences are firmly given to the minority people who were discriminated against in the past on the bases of race, sex and gender.

### **B. R. Ambedkar on the philosophy of reservation**

We all know that Ambedkar was the chief framer of the Indian constitution, and he raised his voice against discrimination as well as exploitation that occurred towards most of the people of India. To outlaw discrimination and exploitation, he fought against the Hindu-social order for the implementation of a true democratic ambience in India, which is based on the principles of *liberty, equality* and *fraternity*. This was an ideal society for him, but the Indian society based on caste structure seems to be unable to follow the trinity principles needed for an ideal society. As he says, “What is your ideal society if you do not want Caste is a question that is bound to be (*sic*) asked. If you ask me, my ideal would be a society based on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity” (Ambedkar,2009, p.64). If those principles were strictly followed, the problems like caste discrimination, religious discrimination and economic discrimination would be vanquished from the purview of Indian society because the said principles would have created such an ambience that could only satisfy *the principle of equality*. This principle is directly contrary to the principle of discrimination. To obliterate different sorts of discrimination in Indian society, many measures had been taken. Indian Marxist-socialists tried to remove economic discrimination as well as exploitation in their manner. They emphasize economic dialectic eradicating only economic discrimination, but Ambedkar blamed them for overlooking the caste dialectics. He believed that we cannot reach the goal of an egalitarian society without considering caste dialectics in the context of Indian society. He asked the Indian Socialists, "Can you have economic reform without first bringing about a reform of the social order"? (Ambedkar, 2009, p.44). He answered this question, “The socialists of India do not seem to have considered this question” (Ambedkar, 2009, p.44). However, he felt the necessity to eradicate caste practices to reform Indian society. If it were possible, conflicts regarding preferential treatment

related to the reservation policy of India would not occur because the casteless society did not require any caste-based reservation. Although Ambedkar did not initially believe in the reservation policy for the downtrodden people of India, he was compelled to take an initiative for a reservation to secure their rights of them. Prakash Ambedkar, the grandson of B. R. Ambedkar, in an interview with Manu Joseph, asserted that Ambedkar did not believe in the reservation policy. As Prakash Ambedkar says, “Legislation doesn’t change people. That’s why B. R. Ambedkar did not believe that reservation of constituencies or jobs for Dalits would change the way Indian society looked at its lower castes. He reluctantly agreed to the reservation in the belief that it would be discontinued 10 years after the adoption of the constitution. But half a century later, reservation remains an issue in India” (Ambedkar, 2004). This statement clearly shows that Ambedkar did not believe in the reservation of the downtrodden people of India. He initially sought to eradicate the caste system from the Indian society to reach his ideal society—true democracy that is based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. To attain this ideal society, Ambedkar wanted to eradicate the caste phenomenon from the Indians because the practices of caste cannot follow the principles of the ideal society: liberty, equality and fraternity. For the constant opposition from the orthodox Hindu leaders, he did not succeed. He believed that caste-based-Indian society is a bar to reaching any kind of progress in Indian society. As he says,

There is no doubt, in my opinion, that unless you change your social order you can achieve little by way of progress. You cannot mobilize the community either of defence or for offence. You cannot build anything on the foundations of caste. You cannot build up a nation, you cannot build up morality. Anything that you will build on the foundations of caste will crack and will never be a whole. (Ambedkar, 1990, pp.80-81)

From the above statement, it is clear that Ambedkar believes in the notion of inclusion and wants to obliterate the prejudices of caste for the coherence of Indian society. Without solidarity among the different castes of India, India could never show its integrity. Ambedkar properly realized that, for the integrity of Indian society, the notion of caste must be annihilated. He wanted the same equal respect and dignity as the Caste-

Hindu people of India. This is the most practical reason why he fought against the Hindu *Chaturvarna* system for the inclusion of Untouchables in the Hindu fold. This may be considered the first stance of Ambedkar toward the emancipation of the *depressed class*. As he (1930) says, “Our program is first to break down the barriers against intermarriage and inter-dining between caste and non caste . . . . “I have organized in Bombay the social Equality League for the purpose of dining together monthly, alternating between the homes of ‘Untouchables’ and caste Hindus”. (Ambedkar, 1930). Social intercourse is one of the primary concerns of Ambedkar which is the reason why he took different social-integral programmes that seem to be keenly associated with the idea of *social democracy*<sup>1</sup>. It satisfies the notion of inclusion that might be considered the most fundamental principle of democracy. The social inclusion of the Untouchable people then was not feasible because they were socially segregated due to their community identity. The community identity cannot be considered as the morally relevant criteria for depriving an individual or group of individuals. As a Dalit and marginalized person, he had to take different socio-political stances to come out from different miserable conditions imposed by social injunctions. This is the reason why he felt the necessity of social inclusion as well as political safeguards that can only change the deplorable conditions of the marginalized people. Consequently, he appealed to the British government to make provision of political safeguards in forthcoming “*Swaraj constitution*”<sup>2</sup> in favour of depressed classes. As he says,

The depressed Classes form a group by themselves, which is distinct and separate from the Mahammedans, and although they are included among the Hindus, they in no sense form an integral part of that community. . . . We feel that nobody can remove our grievances as well as we can, and we cannot remove them unless we get political power in our own hands. No share of this political power can evidently come to us so long as the British government remains as it is. It is only *Swaraj constitution* that we stand any chance

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<sup>1</sup>. Social democracy, advocated by Ambedkar, is a concept that is based on the notion of kinship. Ambedkar believed that without the establishment of social democracy, *Economic and Political democracy* cannot be established.

<sup>2</sup>. It had been written before having the independence of India for which a constitution is required was called *Swaraj constitution*.

of getting the political power into our own hands, without which we cannot bring salvation to our people. (Ambedkar, [at the Round Table Conference] 1930)

So far, I have discussed the major historical facts that the Indian Society had to face to implement the so-called reservation system as an affirmative policy to safeguard the Untouchables as well as caste-discriminated people of India. From the philosophical point of view, Ambedkar tried to secure the socio-political rights of those, who belonged to a marginalized community, guaranteed in the constitution of India by making the provision adequate representatives in the constituencies and government jobs as well. This is undoubtedly a form of preferential treatment. This is the reason why the reservation system, in India, must be considered an affirmative programme because through which the majority of people had got special advantages or preferential treatment, and this preferential treatment has been given on the bases of caste and class. This is an initial step of preferential treatment in India implemented by making some provisions in our constitution. Before the advent of Ambedkar in the socio-political scenario of India, the depressed classes had no access to the policy-making body. So, the interests of the depressed classes were not being fulfilled due to the lack of representation. Consequentially, they had to carry out the same discrimination as they used to face before and after the coming of the British to India.

The fundamental difference between affirmative-action and reservation policy in India is that the affirmative-action in America was made for the well-being of minority people on the bases of race, colour and gender, while the preferential treatment in terms of the reservation in India is required for the well-being of majority people of India based on caste. They are considered as aboriginal people of India. Here, one may raise a question as to whether preferential treatment based on caste is justifiable. Caste, in the context of India, is an inevitable social phenomenon which is based on a hierarchical structure. In this structure, dominating castes used to have the top-social position is also considered a higher grade just like a pyramid. In addition to that, the ancient-social structure was firmly graded, and people, those who belong to lower grades, were socially, economically, politically and above all educationally subjugated. That is the



reason why they were unable to live their lives as human beings due to the said subjugations. Thus, I may say that the caste structure of India is based on the principle of inequality. We cannot justify the social structure that promotes the principle of inequality by yielding the principle of equality because the principle of equality can never bridge the gap among the individuals who face the issue of the gradation based on caste. The preferential treatment, therefore, seems to be required to bridge the gap or remove inequalities among individuals who belong to the caste structure. This may be considered the best possible measure to promote social justice for those who were mainly discriminated against, in the past due to their Untouchability and caste identity.

The notion of the reservation seems to be considered as an idea that presupposes the notion of equality because it seeks to remove the prevailing inequalities existing in a hierarchical society. Thus, the idea of the reservation in India is firmly associated with *the principle of equal opportunity* because the idea of the reservation is based on the principle of equal distribution of social goods. The idea of Reservation as to such often appears as opposed to the idea of equal opportunities because it favours special treatment towards the people of deprived sections. This special treatment, in this context, may promote unequal distribution to the advantaged groups. Due to this special advantage given to the disadvantaged group, the advantaged groups may lose some social and political advantages. This is the reason why the opponents of preferential treatment offer some objections against preferential treatment. I have found three major objections: the argument of reverse discrimination, the argument of infinite regress, and the argument of violation of the principle of meritocracy.

### **The argument for reverse discrimination**

The opponents of preferential treatment used to argue that the practices of preferential treatment would create reverse discrimination that appears to be morally wrong (Mappes and Zembaty, 1977). This is one of the major objections to preferential treatment. Orife (2016) defines reverse discrimination, as “The term, reverse discrimination . . . which is different from the term discrimination. But it may be considered retaliatory or payback. If one person discriminates against another person, when the victim of the initial

discrimination returns the favour, it may be considered discrimination in reverse, or reverse discrimination (p.46). This statement clearly shows that the victims of the past pay back the same discrimination as they had to receive from the dominated-social group to the present members of the same society, the present treatment will be called reverse discrimination. One pertinent question might be raised here, are the victims of the past creating such discrimination? Are they able to take any initiatives to discriminate against dominating-social groups? The entire system is perhaps controlled by dominating-social groups. The dominated-social groups are being confronted with discrimination that seems to be considered as mere speculation because those who are having the same special advantages are not capable of discriminating against the dominated-social groups in that they are readily not in such a position. In the context of both America and India, the prevailing dominated-social groups determine the socio-economical and political affairs. The preferential treatment, therefore, might not create any form of discrimination toward dominated-social groups. This is the reason why the argument of reverse discrimination may not be considered a valid argument; rather, in the context of India, the idea of the reservation seems to be regarded as an equity programme whereby the so-called lower caste people are getting equal opportunity in the democratic process. If they had not got special preferences, they would not have fulfilled the interests of their community. The higher-caste hegemony deliberately sets them apart from the political power; the dominated-social group seems to adopt the principle of nepotism retaining that power. Jaskiewicz, P., Uhlenbruck, K., Balkin, D.B., & Reay, T. (2013) define that “Nepotism is defined as hiring based on family ties and it discriminates against nonfamily members. However, even within the family member pool, nepotism decisions may favour particular family members while ignoring others (p. 123). The concept of nepotism is based on the notion of favouritism that is not morally acceptable because it deliberately discriminates against others in favour of relatives, friends and communities. When a community is based upon the members who carry the community identity, it may be considered a form of nepotism that may be coined “community-based nepotism” because the dominated castes often try to transfer the authority as well as domination to

the members of the same community. The idea of the reservation is an antithetic view of “community-based nepotism”. Additionally, for the nepotic, the nepotism also compromises merit that may not be highlighted because of higher-caste hegemony.

### **The argument of violation of the principle of meritocracy**

Another objection to preferential treatment is that it violates the principle of meritocracy. The principle of meritocracy, it is claimed, is violated for the sake of this preference given to the discriminated against people. In this context, the idea of merit and preference are diametrically opposite in that the idea of merit does not allow any form of preference; rather, it may be considered as the sole criterion determining each and everything. The opponents of preferential treatment follow this line of argumentation based on the principle of meritocracy. “The rhetoric of meritocratic society argues that the social and occupational positions individuals occupy and the rewards they secure in terms of status, wealth and power are dependent upon their talents and how hard they work” (Crawford, 2010:3). The above statement implies that meritocracy is a combined force of ability and of effort made for achieving something else. So, the notion of meritocracy does not appear contrary to the view of equability; it, rather, opens the doors of equal opportunities. Thus, the principle of meritocracy seems to be theoretically plausible because it denies any kind of advantage and inherited status in terms of religion, race, gender and caste, but the society is always confronting inequalities based on the differences among individuals. Some people have more ability to learn or to do something better than others; that is why, more desirable people used to achieve more in terms of power, status and wealth in a meritocratic society. Crawford is not afraid of the functioning of existing societies but is afraid of the problem of exclusion from social and civic contexts. As he says, “Rather, a meritocracy does the opposite in providing contexts within which social exclusion and denial of full social and civic engagement can prosper” (Crawford, 2010:4). Again, Crawford (2010) mentions that "Young<sup>3</sup> describes

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<sup>3</sup> .Michael Young is an eminent sociologist, who wrote the book entitled *The Rise of meritocracy 1870-2033: An essay on education and society*. This book tried to show how to gradually develop a meritocratic system from 1958 onwards, which had emerged in Great Britain.

a highly stratified society dominated by “The Meritocracy”, an elitist, exclusive and discriminatory class that exercises a powerful hegemony. . . . This elite zealously protects the power and resources necessary to support and reproduce its domination (p.4); this leads us to those societies that have bifurcated into two forms: elite and subjugated classes. The elite used to manipulate the theory of meritocracy; the criteria through which we try to grasp the true meaning of meritocracy would be determined by them. Crawford (2010) mentions, "*The Rise of meritocracy* illustrates not that the ability and hard work do not matter—they are important—but that the criteria by which they are judged are fundamentally distorted by a dominant and elite group in support of core, hegemonic, values that sooner or later lead to a dysfunctional and inequitable society” (p.5). In an inequitable society, we cannot promote equal treatment for all the parties who belong to a particular society. So, we may not justify that the preferential treatment is morally, socially and politically wrong because people who are getting preferential treatment were excluded from the social construction of merit. According to Crawford, a meritocratic society does not seem considered a natural phenomenon; rather, the idea of a meritocratic society is constructed. As he says, “It is a mistake to continue to support notions of what is and is not, worthy of merit divorced from contemporary values, hopes, experiences and anxieties” (Crawford, 2010:5). If marginalized people had got an equal opportunity in making their merit, we would blame them for lack of merit. The marginalized people had no opportunities to become meritorious; rather, they were denied nurturing their merit. This is the reason why they should have to have some special advantages now because they encounter discrimination in the past. “As society changes so much the construction of merit; if merit is social construction that has been ‘made’ then it follows that it can be ‘unmade’ and ‘remade’” (Crawford, 2010:5). So, preferential treatment is perhaps the best possible alternative by which discriminated people could make their merit. As mentioned above, the ability and effort as a combined force are considered intelligent, so all irrespective of race, caste, gender and religion of a particular society should have the opportunities to show ability and make an effort to make their merits. If a particular society does not allow this rule, we will not consider

that society is a meritocratic society, and this society must have failed to be recognized as an egalitarian. Furthermore, the equal-educational opportunities for deprived-section people might not guarantee such a society that is egalitarian because the educational opportunities of the marginalized people are perhaps not the same as the elite; even if we try to provide the same qualitative education as the elite used to get; yet they will not reach the desired goal because of the lack of equality in social position, of equality in economic condition, of equality in political advantages. The socio-economical condition and political advantages of the marginalized people are not the same as the conditions of the dominated-social group. All these aspects of human life directly or indirectly influence the idea of the ability and effort made by individuals. So, we cannot easily define that meritocracy is such a concept that only encompasses the idea of ability and effort. Moreover, the socio-economic and political conditions can only significantly determine who is meritorious and who is not meritorious because the socio-political-economical conditions of individuals make individuals different from others making their effort and showing their ability.

### **The argument of infinite regress**

One more objection is generally raised as to the preferential treatment is the problem of infinite regress. This problem is closely attached to the problem of reverse discrimination. However, some thinkers argue that the compensatory or preferential approach must encounter the problem of infinite regress because of the preferential treatment given, for compensation, to those who were discriminated against in the past. The present preferential treatment creates some provision for further discrimination for which society has to arrange another preferential programme. The cycle of promoting preferential programmes will be an ongoing process. This argument of infinite regress applies to the idea of the reservation. An attempt has been made to answer the questions raised against preferential treatment. The preferential treatment may not be prescribed for a flattened society; rather, it does implement in such a society that is firmly graded: White people, in American society, are considered superior, and Black people are regarded as inferior. This sort of societal behaviour is fully contrary to the principle of equality because the

basis, by which Blacks are graded as inferior, may not be morally justified. The principle of equality will be infringed if we treat equal people unequally. In American society, Black people were deprived based on race, while in Indian society; depressed classes have been deprived based on caste since the hoary past. This might not be morally justified because it undermines the dignity of human beings. The preferential programme needs to be developed to promote equal ambience for the downtrodden people. A pertinent question might be raised here are White males and dominated-social groups of India losing as much as Blacks and deprived class? The preferential programme needed to be developed to promote equal ambience for the downtrodden peoples. I have already mentioned that the socio-economic and political conditions of the beneficiaries are not the same as the dominated-social group. This dominated-social group used to receive the same treatment from the society as before, but they are losing some economical advantages for the sake of an egalitarian society that presupposes the principle of equality. The preferential treatment in a graded society opens the ground for an equal opportunity for those who were discriminated against in the past. In this situation, the common-social goods will be shared by all the parties of a particular society. The sharing of common-social goods disadvantages Dominated-White people and Caste-Hindus. Now, they will get equal advantages. This is the problem why opponents of the practices of preferential treatment try to justify preferential treatment as morally wrong action, and they used to argue that the preferential treatment would create a new sort of discrimination that is more often than not deemed as reverse discrimination which welcomes infinite regress. If preferential treatment creates such discrimination at all, the problem of infinite regress will be raised. Lisa H. Newton in her article entitled, "Bakke and Davis: Justice, American Style" argues in favour of the abolition of the quota system. She claims that "It (quota system) diminishes the opportunities of some candidates for a social purpose that has nothing to do with them, to make "reparation" for acts they never committed. And "they" are no homogeneous "majority" . . . . (Newton, 1978:205). She attacks preferential treatment from an individualistic point of view because she is merely concerned about the injustice of the White people at present but does not concern about

the injustice of black people who have been facing discrimination since time immemorial. What is the way through which justice is to be provided to those who were discriminated against in the past was not clear to her. She denies the past and concentrates on the present that is why she pleads in favour of a fair competition based on the merit system that is also corrupted as I mentioned before. Fair competition opens the ground for free-equal opportunities that might be seized for some ethnic groups; the culprit of this uneven distribution is nothing but nepotism. How do we remove nepotism for promoting justice for all? In an integrated society, we may promote strict justice<sup>4</sup> where there is no discrimination in terms of caste, race and creed, but it is very unfortunate that such type of society practically does not exist. Moreover, the present members of dominating castes of India as well as the White male of America are holding advantageous socio-political positions, while the depressed classes, as well as the Blacks, do have not such advantageous positions in the present socio-political milieu. In addition to that, the White males are a homogeneous community because they used to get the same advantages just because of their white-colour identity and carry the same attitudes and principles towards the marginalized people.

Her argument seems to be true in an egalitarian society but not in a hierarchical or graded society. Moreover, this argument seems also to be true if the project of preferential treatment is everlasting. The American society where the Affirmative-action initially introduced must not be freed from the blame of being a graded society. There is mainly a two-tier gradation system in the American society where Blacks used to have unequal treatment from the Dominating-White people. Thus, some questions, in this regard, may be raised here that the opponents of preferential treatment have to face, 1. Why is preferential treatment required now? 2. Is it the basis of positive discrimination? 3. Is it a flat society where positive, as well as reserve discrimination, occurred? The opponents of preferential treatment may not provide any positive answers to raised

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<sup>4</sup>. According to Lisa H. Newton, justice can only be provided by fair competition that is based on the meritocratic system. This system does not allow any form of preferential treatment for the sake of an egalitarian society, merit is considered the only criterion to judge individuals.

questions. I, therefore, may say that the preferential treatment in an initial stage needs to be provided with the assurance of making a just and non-hierarchical society, which will be based on the principle of equality that will not create any form of discrimination as well as of exploitation. If this sort of hypothetical situation is possible, the question of reverse discrimination as well as infinite regress will be invalid.

### **Concluding remark**

The reservation policy of India is undoubtedly an affirmative-action because it gives special advantages to those people who were discriminated against based on caste, but this special advantage given to the marginalized people might not create any further discrimination in terms of reverse discrimination. Rather, this sort of special advantage given to them makes the proper ambience to promote equal opportunities as well as equal treatment to all the members of the same community. Additionally, this treatment may outlaw past discrimination and present exploitation in terms of nepotism. The idea of nepotism satisfies the principle of exclusion. We can fight against the principle of exclusion with the help of the principle of inclusion, and the idea of the reservation might guarantee us such an environment. The preferential treatment in terms of reservation can only obliterate the hegemony of the higher caste. Therefore, without proper implementation of reservation policy, we cannot fight against community-based nepotism. The dominated-caste hegemony is not ready to accept marginalized people as their counterparts.

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# JUSTIFICATION IN KNOWLEDGE FIRST EPISTEMOLOGY STYLE: A REJOINDER TO SOME CRITICISMS

SREEJITH K. K.

**Key Words:** Knowledge first epistemology, Justification, Williamson, Kelp, Gettier, Sociology of knowledge, Feminist epistemology

## 0. Introduction

This paper presents some of the important intuitions of knowledge first epistemology which is one of the most interesting and promising developments in the contemporary epistemology<sup>1</sup>. It presents one of the interesting claims of Knowledge First Epistemology that justification is a species of knowledge: the view that one cannot have justification unless one has knowledge. Then it presents some criticisms that are raised by Christoph Kelp against such a view. Then this paper argues that there are difficulties with the arguments of Kelp. It argues that intuitions from the sociology of knowledge position and the central convictions of feminist epistemology would suggest that the argument of Kelp is fraught with serious difficulties.

Section 1 briefly discusses the project of traditional epistemology. Section 2 presents some of the important strands in contemporary epistemology and the status of knowledge first epistemology in it. Section 3 presents the central intuitions of *knowledge first epistemology*. Section 4 explores the notion of justification in the *knowledge first epistemology*. It also presents the difficulties preset in the knowledge first account of justification. It shows that if one were to hold justification as depended on knowledge, one cannot hold Gettier cases as cases where the agent is justified. Thus Gettier cases would be a counter example to the knowledge first account of justification. Section 5 presents some of the attempted solutions for the difficulties which the Gettier problem poses to the conception of justification in the *knowledge first* style. It also discusses the criticisms of Christoph Kelp against such responses. In section 6, the paper argues that

Kelp's criticisms are fraught with serious difficulties in the light of intuitions from sociology of knowledge and feminist epistemology. The paper closes with a few concluding remarks in section 7.

### **1. The project of traditional epistemology**

The central project of epistemology is to provide individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge (propositional knowledge). The conviction that belief, justification, and truth or something akin to these are the individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge survived in the history of western philosophy for a surprisingly long period of time. One can trace this idea to Plato's dialogue *Meno* where he suggests that knowledge is a true belief with an account. However, this definition of knowledge got thoroughly shaken by the counter-examples presented by Edmund Gettier<sup>2</sup>. Gettier's cases demonstrate that justification, truth, and belief are not jointly sufficient conditions for knowledge. Several similar examples are provided by many philosophers to argue for the same point. All these cases which are structurally similar to the examples of Gettier are referred to as *Gettier cases* or *Gettier kind of cases*.

The literature of epistemology is flooded with attempts to solve the predicament that Gettier cases pose: The Gettier problem. As a result of these attempts, the definitions of knowledge became increasingly complex and less intuitive. These accounts are far removed from the intuitions of common people. Such definitions are not one of those which will be readily recognised by an ordinary person and say "oh, yes! This is exactly what we mean by knowledge".

Linda Zagzebski<sup>3</sup> argues that Gettier problem cannot be solved. Zagzebski points out that the Gettier cases have a mutually canceling bad luck - good luck structure. She maintains that following this structure, one can come up with a recipe for preparing Gettier cases. And such cases, Zagzebski maintains, are not solvable.

One might feel that the non-solvability of Gettier cases and increasingly complex accounts of knowledge perhaps indicate that there is something deeply erroneous about

the very project of traditional epistemology. This is precisely what Timothy Williamson<sup>4</sup> and many other proponents of knowledge first epistemology<sup>5</sup> and other contemporary epistemologists argue.

## **2. Locating Knowledge First Epistemology in Contemporary Epistemology**

Contemporary epistemology constitutes an ensemble of approaches and themes. Many of them significantly depart from the traditional approaches and/or themes. Contemporary epistemology witnesses a renewed attention on ethics of belief. The notion of practical reason – an important notion in Aristotle’s philosophy – also has gained a lot of interest in the contemporary epistemology. Discussions on knowledge from testimony were relatively less in western epistemology. However, currently there are plenty of discussions happening on the social dimension of knowledge in general and testimonial knowledge in particular. Epistemic dysfunctions such as epistemic injustice in general and testimonial injustice in particular – topics which became popular due to Miranda Fricker<sup>6</sup> - are also discussed widely in the contemporary epistemology. The epistemology of disagreement is another important topic of discussion in current time.

Naturalism in epistemology – of which Quine is a prominent proponent – has caused dubiety regarding the project of conceptual analysis of knowledge and its cognates. Virtue epistemology is another promising approach in contemporary epistemology. It is an attempt to characterise knowledge primarily in terms of the intellectual virtues of the agent. Like the naturalist project, virtue epistemology also does not attempt to provide a conceptual analysis of knowledge. However, unlike naturalism, virtue epistemology considers knowledge as a normative notion. Traditional epistemology considers belief as the locus of epistemic evaluation. By making a significant departure from this assumption, virtue epistemology takes the epistemic agent as the locus of epistemic normativity.

Some of the virtue epistemologists - such as Linda Zagzebski<sup>7</sup> – hold that the entire project of the conceptual analysis of knowledge and the attempt to resolve the Gettier problem made epistemology impoverished. She holds that as epistemologists

were busy solving the Gettier problem, important epistemic notions such as wisdom, understanding etc. got largely neglected. One of the recent developments in epistemology namely ‘Knowledge first epistemology’ - which is advocated by Timothy Williamson and others- holds that it is inevitable that the project of conceptual analysis of knowledge, which traditional epistemology is keen on, fails. This is because, unlike it is usually maintained, knowledge has no parts. Knowledge is a basic notion. Only a non-basic notion (which has parts) can be subjected to conceptual analysis (by splitting it into simpler parts).

The major role of knowledge first epistemology in contemporary epistemology is that it vehemently opposes the project of conceptual analysis which is lurking behind many of the contemporary epistemological approaches as well. It attempts to radically alter the epistemological landscape by maintaining that knowledge is an unanalysable term. The suggestion that the direction of the analysis involved in the traditional epistemology should be reversed and notions such as justification, belief etc. should be understood as species of knowledge is quite a radical one. So, in general, knowledge first epistemology raises serious suspicion about the some of the most fundamental assumptions of epistemology.

### **3. Knowledge First Epistemology**

Timothy Williamson maintains that Knowledge is a basic notion. Hence, one cannot provide an analysis of knowledge. So, there are no necessary and sufficient conditions for knowledge to be unearthed. As we know, according to traditional epistemology, belief is conceptually prior to knowledge. However, in Williamson’s view, knowledge is conceptually prior to belief. Therefore, Williamson’s and many others who defend similar positions are called *knowledge-first epistemology*. In retrospect, the traditional epistemological account is often called *belief-first epistemology*.

Williamson rightly notes that all standard analysis of the notion of *knowledge* equates it with a combination of concepts such as *justification, truth, belief etc.*<sup>8</sup>. All such analyses, he adds, of *knows* is “incorrect as a claim of concept identity, for the

analysing concept is distinct from the concept to be analysed’<sup>9</sup>.

According to Williamson, knowledge is the most general factive state. Williamson says that “knowing is the most general factive stative attitude, that which one has to a proposition if one has any factive stative attitude to it at all”<sup>10</sup>

Williamson considers knowledge to be a mental state. Truth is an important part of knowledge. However, it is not a mental concept. As truth is one of the conjuncts in almost all analyses of knowledge, and it is a non-mental concept, Williamson observes that there is a tension in the analyses of knowledge that are available thus far.

Many might feel that we have approximate definitions of knowledge that could be refined to achieve an optimal analysis. However, Williamson holds that “[T]he possibility of approximating knowledge in terms of belief and other concepts is not good evidence for the conceptual priority of belief over knowledge”<sup>11</sup>

From the inside, the mental state of belief and knowledge are the same (or minimally feel the same). Knowledge has an external component that belief can lack, namely factivity: knowledge stands or falls with facts. Williamson maintains that content externalism suggests that beliefs also have an external component. “Belief as attributed in ordinary language is a genuine mental state constitutively dependent on the external world”<sup>12</sup>. Thus, meaning is fixed by external components. According to this view, knowledge and beliefs are similar as both have a world connection. Thus, Williamson argues that maintaining that knowledge has a factivity component need not preclude it from being a mental state.

#### **4. Justification and Knowledge: The Reversal of the Direction of Analysis**

According to *Knowledge First epistemology*, rather than analysing knowledge in terms of justified belief, justified belief is analysed in terms of knowledge. Here, the direction of the analysis is reversed. According to this understanding, one can have justification only if one has knowledge. Here, justification is understood in terms of knowledge. Knowledge is a prerequisite for justification. Thus, justification is parasitic upon knowledge. This is a reversal of the direction of the traditional analyses of knowledge.

However, there are criticisms to this view of justification. For instance, Christoph Kelp<sup>13</sup> points out that this view of justification of *knowledge first epistemology* faces difficulties in addressing the intuitions of Gettier cases.

#### **4.1 Justification and the Gettier Cases: Some Difficulties in the Knowledge First Approach**

Christoph Kelp<sup>14</sup> notes that the Knowledge First Epistemologie's attempt to characterise justification as parasitic on knowledge faces difficulties. Consider the following example which Christoph Kelp adapts from Alvin Goldman<sup>15</sup>.

**Fake barn case:** You are driving through the countryside and take a look out of the window of your car. You see what appears to be a barn in the field and form a perceptual belief that you are looking at a barn. Unbeknownst to you, you are looking at one of the few real barns in an area peppered with barn facades that are so cleverly constructed as to be indistinguishable from real barns from your position on the road<sup>16</sup>.

Kelp notes that, as we know, the important point which Gettier cases make is that the agents in these cases do not have knowledge. In the example given above, the agent does not know. He does not know that he is looking at a barn. However, the beliefs of the agents in the Gettier cases are justified. It is important to be so. Otherwise these cases would not be counter examples to the account of knowledge as justified true belief.

According to *Knowledge First Epistemology*, justified belief entails knowledge. This is so since, in this view, one can have justified belief only if they have knowledge. Kelp notes that for proponents of *Knowledge First Epistemology* to accept that the agents in Gettier cases lack knowledge, they will have to accept the counter-intuitive result that the beliefs of the agents in the Gettier cases are not justified. It flies in the face of the common-sensical understanding of what justification supposed to mean.

The same would be true even if the agent in the example mentioned above is not looking at a real barn (the 'Gettier counterpart cases' as Kelp calls it). For example, if

he had looked out of the window a couple of minutes earlier, he would have looked at a fake barn and would have held the belief that he is looking at a barn. Though the belief in this case is false, it is justified. Again, it would show that one can have justification without having knowledge. Thus, Christoph Kelp argues that the claim of *knowledge first epistemology* that justification is dependent on knowledge is controversial, to say the least.

### 5. Response of Knowledge First Epistemology and Its Difficulties

The proponents of Knowledge first epistemology maintain that the agents in Gettier and Counterpart cases do not have justified beliefs. According to them, our intuitions that the agents in the Gettier cases are justified should not be trusted. This point is explained by making a distinction between ‘being justified’ and ‘being blameless’. They hold that the agent in Gettier cases is blameless in forming the belief they did. It is not appropriate for blaming them for holding such beliefs. However, according to *Knowledge first epistemology*, the agents in the Gettier kind of cases are not epistemically justified in holding those beliefs<sup>17</sup>.

It has been argued that this response given by the knowledge first epistemology fails to effectively address the criticism<sup>18</sup>. Christoph Kelp holds that the response fails mainly due to the reason that the distinction between ‘justification’ and ‘blamelessness’ made in the way explained above conflates a significant normative difference that is required to be made in epistemology.

To see this point, consider the following two cases:

***Insanity.*** You have gone insane. As a result, you form your beliefs in all sorts of crazy manners. When hearing the wind blow you think your long lost love is speaking to you, when the sky is red at sunset, you think that doom is impending, and so on<sup>19</sup>.

***Benighted Isolation.*** You are part of an isolated and benighted community the members of which share a common belief that thunderstorms indicate that their twenty-eared deity is about to



scratch its largest left ear. Just now you are witnessing a thunderstorm and come to believe that the deity is about to scratch an ear<sup>20</sup>.

The agent forms a blameless belief in the cases mentioned above. The following two principles for blamelessness can bolster this intuition.

**P1:** One is blameless for  $\phi$  ing if it is out of one's control that one  $\phi$  s;

**P2:** One is blameless for  $\phi$  ing if one  $\phi$  s in the light of good reason to believe that  $\phi$  ing is permissible<sup>21</sup>

The case *Insanity* mentioned above is an example of P1. Here, the belief of the agent is beyond her control. She is out of her mind. Therefore, the agent should not be blamed for the kind of beliefs she hold. The case of *Benighted Isolation* mentioned above is an instance of P2. In this case, the agent's belief is formed in the light of good reason to believe that it is permissible. Kelp rightly notes these point as follows:

“After all, you reasonably believe that thunderstorms indicate ear-scratching and that a thunderstorm has occurred. If so you have good reason to believe that it is permissible for you believe as you do”<sup>22</sup>.

However, Kelp argues<sup>23</sup> that there is a significant dissimilarity between agents in Gettier cases and the Counterpart cases on the one hand, and agents in cases like *Insanity* and *Benighted Isolation* on the other. Kelp rightly notes that the agents in the Gettier and the counterpart cases form their beliefs in epistemically fine ways. Those are the usual ways in which people acquire knowledge. That is, people reliably acquire knowledge through such means. On the contrary, Kelp argues, the agents in the examples *Insanity* and *Benighted Isolation* form their beliefs in epistemically unusual ways that are not reliable. Kelp contends that one is unlikely to end up with a true belief if one forms beliefs in the way depicted in these examples. Therefore, in Kelp's view, “...agents in the former cases are in a much stronger epistemic position than agents in the latter cases”<sup>24</sup>.

One can understand this point of Kelp if one considers the Gettier kind of case *Fake barn case* which we referred to in section 3.2. In this case, the agent is deprived of

knowledge only because of a very unfortunate epistemic circumstance. The agent is not likely to come across such scenario very often. So, there is no serious behavioural changes that are required on the part of the agent as far as knowledge acquisition is concerned. On the other hand, Kelp argues, the agents in the examples *Insanity* and *Benighted Isolation*, the agents are in completely unfavourable epistemic situations. They are in completely wrong epistemic directions. They need serious changes in the way they form their beliefs.

To see this, compare, for example *Fake Barns* and *Benighted Isolation*. In *Fake Barns*, you are simply unlucky not to acquire knowledge on this occasion, whereas, in *Benighted Isolation* you fail to acquire knowledge because you are part of a community that is on the wrong epistemic track entirely. There is no serious epistemic readjustment that is required of the agents. They are on the right epistemic track. Thus, Kelp argues that the beliefs of the agents in the Gettier cases should be evaluated positively and the beliefs of the agents in the example *Insanity* and *Benighted Isolation* should be evaluated negatively. Kelp maintains that this distinction is a significant normative distinction in epistemology. Kelp eloquently put the significance of this distinction in the following manner.

“To see that it makes sense to evaluate the beliefs of agents in Gettier and Counterpart cases positively, note that so doing will reinforce their ways of proceeding as epistemic agents, which is a good thing because agents will start to reap epistemic goods again as soon as they are back in epistemically more hospitable territories. In contrast, it makes sense to evaluate the beliefs of agents in cases like *Insanity* and *Benighted Isolation* negatively because so doing will discourage agents from continuing in their ways of proceeding as epistemic agents, which is also good thing given that no epistemic goods are to be gained by their way of proceeding”<sup>25</sup>

Thus, Kelp argues that the position of the proponents of the knowledge first epistemology - that the agents in the Gettier cases are though blameless are not justified

- cannot be maintained.

## **6. Difficulties with Kelp's Position**

Kelp's example *Benighted Isolation*, maintain that the entire community mentioned in this example are in an epistemically wrong direction. He maintains that it fails as a community from an epistemic point of view. However, one might argue that this judgment is not as simple as it appears in the example of Kelp.

Those advocate the view that knowledge has to be understood as a sociological phenomenon<sup>26</sup> will raise objection to the verdict of Kelp. They would maintain that every society will have its own norms for knowledge production. Assessing the epistemic standards of another society by using the epistemic standards of one's own society is not fair. One should not simply presume that all other societies which follow epistemic norms that are different from one's own society are irrational. That is a very uncharitable position to hold. It might amount to epistemic naivety or epistemic arrogance as well.

The rebuttal of other's point of view, however strange it might appear to one, without argument is a result of biased thinking. Feminist epistemologists<sup>27</sup> would point out that this exactly the way in which epistemology has operated with andocentric assumptions. The "strange" and "feminine intuitions" are not taken seriously into consideration. The results from experimental philosophy<sup>28</sup> also suggest that how different the notion of knowledge is across various cultures. Diversities such as that of gender, races etc. are observed in these results. All these suggest that to claim that the agents in the case mentioned do not have knowledge, and to prejudicially call the society as a benighted one can be unacceptable.

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper presented the central intuitions of Knowledge first epistemology. In particular, it discussed the notion of justification in knowledge first style: the view that justification is parasitic upon knowledge. Some of the difficulties of this position with respect to Gettier cases are presented. A knowledge first epistemology response to this predicament and Christoph Kelp's criticisms of it are presented. This paper responds to

the criticism of Kelp. The paper argues that there are difficulties with the arguments of Kelp that Gettier cases are a stumbling block for the knowledge first conception of justification. It argues that the intuitions of the proponents of sociology of knowledge and feminist epistemologists significantly undermine the arguments of Kelp.

## Notes and References

- <sup>1</sup> A previous version of this paper was presented at the Department of Philosophy, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. I thank the participants of the seminar for their valuable comments.
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- <sup>5</sup> Jonathan Sutton, Allan Miller, Little John etc.
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- <sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.34
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid, p4
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid 6.
- <sup>13</sup> Kelp, Christoph. "Justified belief: Knowledge first-style." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 93, no. 1 (2016): 79-100.
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- <sup>15</sup> Goldman, Alvin I. "Discrimination and perceptual knowledge." *Causal Theories of Mind* (1976): 174.
- <sup>16</sup> Kelp, Christoph. "Justified belief: Knowledge first-style." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 93, no. 1 (2016): p.4.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid, p.5
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid, p.5
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid p.5
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid p.5
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.5
- <sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.6
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid p.7.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid p.6.

<sup>26</sup> E.g. David Bloor, "The strengths of the strong programme." *Scientific rationality: The sociological turn* (Springer Netherlands, 1984) pp. 75-94.; Barnes, Bary *Scientific Knowledge and Sociological Theory*, London; Boston: Routledge and K. Paul, 1974.

<sup>27</sup> Sandra Harding, Elving Foxkeller, Helen Longino, Dona Harraway etc.

<sup>28</sup> Due to Stephen Stich etc.

## DHVANI: BEYOND THE BOUND OF LITERAL MEANING

KAVITA CHAUHAN

**Keywords:** abhidhā, lakṣaṇā, vyañjanā, dhvani, sahr̥daya, rasa

Dhvani is one of the most enduring concepts in Indian aesthetics. In particular, the definition of poetry revolves around this concept. The central idea that defines dhvani is suggestion. It is about the use of linguistic expressions to suggest and trigger imaginations in the mind of the reader. The suggestive function of language is not limited to poetry; it is used in ordinary communication as well. For instance, the recorded message in the train which says “The train stops here” is to suggest to the commuters to alight. The information is meant to prompt specific action from the commuters. Consider another example: “The sun has set in this city” is a suggestive expression. In an appropriate context, it is used suggestively to inform the death of a renowned personality in a city. Although the above examples are suggestive expressions, they are not poetic expressions for reasons we will explicate in the present work. For one thing, expressions in ordinary language are usually confined to grammatical rules while poetic expressions have meanings beyond the grammatical functions or rules.

In contrast, the use of suggestion in the context of poetry is not intended either towards performing specific action or towards conveying some information. Rather, it is to trigger the imaginative mind with hope to arouse certain feelings. For example, in the verse given below, Kalidas is suggesting the painful and pleasurable emotions, two human natures intertwined in life, through the imagery movements of the moon and the sun. He is not *literally* describing the movements of the moon and the sun.

यात्येकतऽस्तशखरं पतिरोषधीनामाविष्कृतारुणपुरःसर एकतोऽर्कः ।

तेजोद्वयस्य युगपद्वयसनोदयाभ्यां लोको नियम्यत इवात्मदशान्तरेषु ॥

[Trans.: “On one side the lord of the flora (the moon) is going to the peak of the western (lit. the setting) mountain, and on the other is the sun having Aruna

as his precursor. By the simultaneous rising and setting of the two luminaries this world seems to be governed in its transitions.”]

Some important features that characterise poetry can be noted in the given verse: *alamkāras* (metaphors), *guṇas* (poetic qualities), *chandas* (rhymes), and *bhāvas* (emotions). However, what is relished by a reader is its suggested meaning, the overall content of the verse. It is certainly not about the movements of the sun and the moon; it has little to do with either description or explanation of natural phenomena. Here, the poet creates a world of words of his own with his unique poetic genius. This world of the poet is unrestrained from the conventions of language and so the meanings of expressions have a life beyond the literal meanings of the expressions. This world created by the poet is enjoyed by persons of taste or connoisseur (*sahridaya*). The obvious question is this: How do meanings of poetic expressions transcend literal meanings of ordinary language? Much of the subsequent discussions is directed towards addressing this question and consequently, towards characterising literal meaning and suggested meaning.

### **Delineating literal and suggested meanings**

Indian aestheticians of various schools have tried to pin down what exactly is the main element that makes a combination of ordinary words into a poem. Some have postulated that *alamkāras* are the most essential element in poetry while others have stressed on the importance of *vakrokti*, *guṇa*, *rīti*, or *aucitya* etc.<sup>1</sup> It would be right to concur with the proponents of dhvani theory that although all these elements are essential in the creation of a poem, dhvani is the most important feature of poetry. The notion of “suggested meaning” is associated with different terms like *dhvani*, (suggesting), *vyañjanā* (hinting), *pratiyāmāna* (implication), and *avagamana* (giving to understand) etc. As a literary category, dhvani is also familiar among the Grammarians. For instance,

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<sup>1</sup> In the history of Indian poetics, beginning from the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE there have been many attempts to define poetry. Bhāmaha in his text *Kāvyaalamkāra* has enumerated *alamkāras*, Dandin in his celebrated work *Kāvyaadarśa* talks of *mārga*, Vāmana in *Kāvyaalamkārasūtra* established *rīti*, Ksemendra in *Aucitya-vicāra- carcā* maintained that the central element is *aucitya* and Kuntaka in his seminal work on poetics *Vakroktijīvitam* endorsed *vakrokti*.

Patanjali makes a distinction between sphota and dhvani. Sphota is the meaning associated with symbols and dhvani, the articulated audible sounds.

It was Ānandavardhana, who systematically conceptualized dhvani in his treatise Dhvanyāloka in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. It may be pointed out that though the concept of dhvani was known to his predecessors<sup>2</sup>, until he formulated it and gave it a new dimension of interpretation, it was a matter of controversy among scholars. Following Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta delved deeper into the concept in his commentary Dhvanyāloka-Lochana and established a view known as *therasa-dhvani*. He argues that *rasa-dhvani* is the essence of poetry (*kāvya-vyāpārāgocaro rasa dhvaniriti*) which is appreciated by the critics and enjoyed by the *sahridayas*.

The question of meaning was the crucial factor that differentiated literary expression into prosaic and poetic genres in ancient India. Conventionally, the two theoretical concepts, namely *śāstra* and *kāvya*, were employed with effect to answer and classify whether a given text was of ordinary expression or poetry.<sup>3</sup> On the one side was ordinary expression or matter-of-fact expression named *śāstrokti*, and on the other was poetic expression called *kāvyyokti*. *Śāstrokti* was defined in terms of primary meaning of a word or *abhidhā*, while *kāvyyokti* was characterised by the secondary meaning of a word or *lakṣaṇā*. For long poetry was defined in terms of *lakṣaṇā* or secondary meaning till the end of ninth century when Ānandavardhana's intervention marked significant turn with the introduction of new meaning called *vyañjanā*. Both *vyañjanā* and dhvani are used in the same sense, that is, suggestion. *Vyañjanā* is the general potency of a word

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<sup>2</sup> काव्यस्यात्मा ध्वनिरिति बुधैर्यः समाम्नातपूर्वस्तस्याभावं जगदुरपरे भाक्तमाहुस्तमन्ये ।

केचिद्वाचां स्थितमविषये तत्त्वमूचुस्तदीयं तेन ब्रूमः सहृदयमनःप्रीतये तत्स्वरूपम् ॥ (Dhvanyāloka 1.1)

“Though the learned men of yore have declared time and again that the soul of poetry is suggestion, some would aver its non-existence, some would regard it as something (logically) implied and some others would speak of its essence as lying beyond the scope of words. We propose, therefore, to explain its nature and bring delight to the hearts of perceptive critics.”

The three view points mentioned by Ānandavardhana were prevalent about dhvani among the learned thinkers on poetry. Among them *abhāvavādina*-s denied the very existence of dhvani, *bhāktavādina*-s included dhvani into *lakṣaṇā*; while *anirvacanīyatā-vādina*-s maintained that dhvani is indescribable.

<sup>3</sup> Bhāmaha was the first who attempted to define poetry (*śabdārthausāhitaukāvyam*) in terms of *alamkāras*. He made a distinction between *śāstra* and *kāvya* and the basis for this distinction was *alamkāra*-s and this position was later endorsed by almost everyone who attempted to define poetry.



while dhvani is confined only to poetry.

*Abhidhā* is the verbal power to convey the literal or conventional meaning of an expression. “That which denotes the direct conventional meaning (*sākṣātsāṅketitam*) is the expressive word.”<sup>4</sup> It is also called the primary function of a word<sup>5</sup>. According to this view, a word or an expression corresponds to something, a fact or an object, in the world. In this sense, meaning of an expression has a denotation. However, when an expression fails to convey conventional or denotational meaning or is incompatible with the primary function of a word and some other meaning is imposed, it is called *lakṣanā* (indication)<sup>6</sup>. In other word, a secondary meaning, *lakṣanā*, is imposed on an expression when its primary meaning fails to make sense. Put it differently, indicative (or indicated) meaning arises only when the denotative meaning of an expression is incompatible or incomprehensible (*mukhyārthabādha*). For instance, the phrase ‘the hamlet on the river *gangā*’ (*gangāyāṁghoṣaḥ*), becomes problematic when read literally because a house cannot be (situated) on a river. Therefore, the meaning of the phrase ‘on the river Ganges’ is understood only through its indicative meaning – that is, the house is located near the bank of river. It is to be noted that though the indicated meaning is different from its literal meaning, yet it is dependent or based on denotative meaning (*abhidhā*) in a given context.

To ask a related question above, “When do we assign *lakṣyārtha* (indicated meaning) to an ordinary expression?” For this, three conditions have been proposed:

1. The first condition is that the primary meaning should be inadequate to convey the real or intended sense.
2. Secondly, there should be a close connection between primary and secondary meaning.

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<sup>4</sup> *Kāvyaṅprakāśa* of Mammata, Ganganatha Jha, Bhartiya Vidya Prakashan, Varanasi, India, 1967, Verse, 2.7

<sup>5</sup> Different translation of *abhidhā* is used such as, denoted, literal, primary, and direct meaning.

<sup>6</sup> *Lakṣanā* is translated as Indication by Ganganatha Jha in *Kāvyaṅprakāśa*. It is also called secondary meaning as *abhidhā* is called primary meaning and some scholars translate *lakṣanā* as metaphorical usage.

3. Thirdly, there should be a particular purpose (*prayojana*) or some linguistic usage (*rūḍhi*) to resort to the secondary meaning.

The above conditions can be elucidated as follows: consider a term “*karmāṇikuśalaḥ*” which means “an expert in one’s work”. However, the primary or literal meaning of the term “*kuśalaḥ*” is “grass-chopper” but this literal meaning is inapplicable if we use it to describe someone in another context, say, archery or music. Thus, from the primary meaning (*kuśalaḥ*), we have derived its indicated meaning: “a person who is generally efficient in his/her work”. Next, with regard to the second condition of *lakṣanā*, we can observe the existence of some definite relation between the primary and secondary meaning. Grass-chopping is an exercise which is accomplished by an expert in cutting a special kind of grass known as ‘*kuśa*’. The notion of expert or expertise or efficient which is there in the term ‘*kuśalaḥ*’ has become the basis of the indicative meaning. Finally, the third condition is also satisfied in that the term ‘*kuśalaḥ*’ is used to denote or describe expertise in doing something; that is, a context or purpose of using this term is available.

In any culture or linguistic community, the notions of primary and secondary meanings exist in one form or the other. However, it is debatable if the secondary (indicated) meaning is sufficient to account for poetic expressions. Traditionally, Mīmāṃsakas and Nyāyīyikas were convinced that poetry can be explained in terms of *lakṣanā*, the indicated meaning. Against this received traditional stance of the duo, Ānandavardhana advanced his theory of *vyanjanā* (suggestion) as meaning for poetic expression. Nonetheless, he too agreed with the standard view that *abhidhā* is the basis for *vyanjanā* as much as it is for *lakṣanā*. Ānandavardhana was inspired by Bhartṛhari’s concept of *sphoṭa* (potentiality of meaning) and extended it to poetry. He is of the view that the potentiality of a word or expression cannot be limited to just primary (denotative) and secondary (indicative) meanings. Accordingly, he directed his focus to what may be termed as the third potency of a word namely *vyāñjanā* (suggestion).

For Ānandavardhana, the understanding of primary meaning is essential to unravel the meaning of a text but reading poetry is more than unravelling the ‘meanings

of words'; it affects the emotions of the readers. Neither the primary meaning nor the secondary meaning has the potential of delineating *rasa* (aesthetic emotions) which is essential to the 'life of poetry'. He realized that poetry is not just about understanding the 'meaning' of a poem but about beauty as much; it is about delighting the readers. In short, poetry has to be seen from a holistic perspective. "This includes everything other than the literal meaning (the primary and the metaphorical sense). And under the term 'meaning' is included not only the information conveyed, but also the emotion induced; this naturally necessitates the assumption of suggestive power for language" (Kunjani Raja 1977: 281). Accordingly, Ānandavardhana established *vyañjanā*, the third potency of word, as a doctrine of aesthetic theory and named it *dhvani*.

"That kind of poetry, wherein the (conventional) meaning renders itself secondary or the (conventional) word renders its meaning secondary and suggests the intended or implied meaning, is designated by the learned as *dhvani* or suggestive poetry" (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.13).

Now the question arises as to how *dhvani*, the suggested meaning, is attributed to poetic words and expressions. Ānandavardhana postulates that it is the special gift of the poet (*pratibhā*) to create the suggestive sense. "The speech of first-rate poets streaming forth that sweet content reveals clearly their extraordinary genius which is as unearthly as it is ever bright" (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.6). This "suggested sense" is like the sweet aroma coming out from the pot of a skillful or gifted cook – the suggested sense is like the sweet aroma which cannot be seen but which can be smelt.<sup>7</sup> The experience of the sweet aroma is what distinguishes poetry from prose and other ordinary expressions.

In other words, the suggestive sense of poetic expressions cannot be grasped by merely learning grammar or through analysis of words. Otherwise, anybody who has the knowledge of grammar could easily grasp the meaning of a poem. But this is not the

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<sup>7</sup> Since meaning is conventionally defined as denotation, it can be shown in that there is a corresponding picture for a word or expression. But the suggested sense cannot be shown; it can only be felt through the creative imagination of the mind (reader). More on this point will be discussed in the following sections.

case. The suggested sense can be comprehended only by those who have *pratibhā*. Dhvani in a poem comes to life only when both the poet and the reader have *pratibhā* or poetic creativity. “It is not understood by a mere learning in grammar and in dictionary. It is understood only by those who have an insight into the true significance of poetry” (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.7).

### **Essentializing dhvani**

Digging deeper into the concept of dhvani, Ānandavardhana stresses that poetry possesses two levels of meaning, viz., one is literal (*vācya*)<sup>8</sup> and the other is implied (*pratīyamāna*). The former reveal itself instantly whereas the latter is hidden in layers to be retrieved by a *rasika*. “The meaning which wins the admiration of refined critics is decided to be the soul of poetry. The ‘explicit’ and the ‘implicit’ are regarded as its two aspects” (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.2). He holds that the direct or literal meaning is the foundation of suggested meaning. The poet makes use of the literal meaning purposively so that the suggested sense is achieved. Just as a man who wants to see an object in the dark holds a lamp, as a lamp is the means to achieve the object, in the same way, a poet makes use of literal meaning to achieve the suggested sense. That is the reason the knowledge of primary meaning is important in order to understand the suggested meaning. However, the primary meaning does not remain important once the suggestion is grasped by the connoisseur of poetry. The primary meaning is suppressed and suggested meaning appears like a flash of light to the *rasikas* (connoisseurs).

Since the implicit meaning (*pratīyamānārtha*) is that which is experienced by the appreciative reader or *sahridaya*, Ānandavardhana compares it with the encounter of a beautiful woman. Just as a woman’s beauty is distinct from the beauty of the individual parts of the body, in the same way while the suggested meaning is present in various elements of poetry, it nevertheless is different from them. The entire experience is totally

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<sup>8</sup> The translation of the term *vācya* as literal, here, is not *abhidhā* or denotation but it is explicit aspect of dhvani which is gross and can be grasped through *alamkāras*, *gṇna* etc. Ānandavardhana himself clarifies the meaning of *vācya*, in the next *Karika*, “...explicit is commonly known and it has been already set forth in many ways through figures of speech such as the simile...” (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.3)

different. The charm in a woman is something which is different from the beauty of particular parts of the body and yet it is revealed by the configuration of the different parts of the body. Beauty is more than the sum of the beautiful body parts and so also the implied meaning is more than the sum of its parts. It is grasped wholly.

Abhinavagupta explains dhvani in a more subtle way. He says that it is with the imagination of an appreciative reader that the meaning of the word emerges. In this sense, it transcends or supersedes the other powers of *abhidhā*, *tātparya* and *lakṣaṇā*. It is something even more than the sum total of these three. Abhinavagupta elaborates:

“The suggestive power is the power to suggest, a power which has its origin in one’s understanding of objects revealed by the first three powers, and which is then assisted by the imagination of the listener which has been prepared by these revelations. This suggestive power, this suggestive operation, overshadows the three operations which proceed it and is the very soul of poetry” (*Locana* on *Dhvanyāloka* 1.4: 88).

Abhinavagupta holds this suggested sense is revealed in the various shades of meaning which is similar to the resonance of a bell. He further says that this fourth kind of meaning is known as dhvani.

### **Objection to dhvani theory and counter-response**

The dhvani theory of meaning did not go unopposed. Mahimabhaṭṭa in his treatise *Vyaktiviveka* criticizes the doctrine of dhvani. He argues that there is no need to accept a new potency of word (i.e. *vyañjanā*) because the suggested sense or *vyañjanā* can be expressed through the process of inference (*anumāna*). For instance, in the following verse the suggested meaning can be understood through inference as well:

भ्रम धार्मिक विस्रब्धः स शुनकोऽद्य मारितस्तेन ।

गोदावरीनदीकूललतागहनवासिना द्रुप्तसिंहेन ॥

[*Trans.*: “Ramble freely, pious man! That dog to-day is killed by the fierce lion that dwells in Godāvarīriver.”]

In the above lines, when the girl says that the lion had killed the dog, she is suggesting (with covert intent) to the pious man that it is now safe for him to wander about in the river. It is assumed that prior to the killing of the dog, the pious man was afraid of the dog which used to trouble him. But there is more to this story: the wondering of the pious man at the river bank, which also happens to be the meeting place of the girl with her lover, is not welcome by the girl. Given this background context, these seemingly assuring words by the girl made him infer the true significance of the words: there is a greater danger – the lion – that awaits him in the river bank. The suggested meaning is obtained as follows from the inference: As the ‘roaming of a fearful person’ is invariably concomitant (*vyāpti*) with the certainty of ‘the absence of all sources of fear’ but since the source of fear (lion) is present on the bank of the Godavari river, therefore, the fearful person should not wander.

In the example *pakṣa* (minor term) is the bank of the Godavari river, *hetu* (middle term) is the lion, and *sādhya* (major term) is prohibition to wander. Hence, the purpose of the girl, i.e., ‘to prohibit that man from wandering from their meeting place’ is arrived at from the process of inference. Therefore, *dhvani* is not needed to explain indirect communication or suggested meaning.

The supporters of the *dhvani* counter the argument of Anumānavādins by pointing out that the logical inference is not appropriate in the above example because a fearful person may still go to the place of danger with anticipation of encountering the lion if, for instances, ordered by his employer or teacher, or if he is challenged by his beloved to do so. In such cases, the indirect communication (with suggested meaning) to thwart the pious man from wondering at the river bank will fail. Further analysis of the argument would expose the fallacious nature of this argument. In the above example, it is wrongly presumed that ‘a fearful person wanders only in the places where there is the absence of all sources of fear’. As such, the reason or *hetu* is not fixed in one place but several, and so it commits the fallacy of *savyabhicārahetu* or discrepant reason, which literally means that *hetu* which creates confusion in the concomitance of the textual example of *linga* (smoke) and the *sādhya* (fire). The *linga* coexists with the

*sādhya* for example ‘smoke’ coexists with ‘fire’. The fallacy occurs when the *hetu* coexists sometimes with the *sādhya* and sometimes with the absence of the *sādhya*. In addition, another fallacy or contradiction (*viruddha*) may result with regard to reason (*hetu*): There is possibility that a person who is brave may not like dogs or does not see any valour in killing a dog, but may still wander about in spite of the presence of the lion because he likes to encounter danger. So this does not prove that a person who is scared of dogs would certainly be scared of lions too. In such a case, *hetu* is contradictory.<sup>9</sup>

Finally, another important component of a valid argument is ignored by the above example which results in committing the fallacy of *asiddhahetu* or unproved reason. In argument, one of the essential tasks is to determine *pakṣadharmatā*, the presence or identification of *hetu* on *pakṣa*. The *hetu* must be present in the subject (*pakṣa*) for establishing *sādhya*. For example, to infer that there is fire on the hill, the *linga (hetu)*, namely, smoke, must be known to be actually present on the hill. If not, the inference would not be possible. It should be noted that smoke alone is considered to be *pakṣadharmatā* although there may be many other things on the mountain such as trees and stones etc. Just as all things on the mountain are not *pakṣadharmatā*, in the same way, all smoke in the world is not *pakṣadharmatā*. Only that particular smoke on the mountain is *pakṣadharmatā* because the knowledge of that alone is capable of giving an inference of fire on the mountain. In short, unless the smoke is seen on the hill, we cannot have the knowledge of the fire. All our previous knowledge about the invariable concomitance of smoke and fire will be of no use if we do not perceive smoke on the mountain. That is why consideration of not only *hetu* but also *parāmarśa* is a must to define the knowledge of *pakṣadharmatā*. The process of inference is possible only when smoke is cognized as a dharma of the *pakṣa*. In view of this important principle of reasoning, a doubt or objection can be raised – it is not certain if there is a lion on the bank of the

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<sup>9</sup> *Viruddhais* defined as that which is pervaded by the negation of the thing proved; a classic example is this: “Sound is eternal because it is created”. Here, ‘*creativity*’, instead of proving the eternity of sound, proves the negation of eternity. (*Tarka-saṁgraha* 1988: 302)

river as informed by a girl to the pious man. Accordingly, this inference commits the fallacy of *asiddhahetu*.

In keeping with the detection of multiple fallacies that can occur in inference, it has been argued by the supporters of dhvani theory that inference is not a substitute for dhvani. Put it differently, inference is not adequate as a semantic tool to establish a connection between the primary meaning and the suggested meaning of a poetic expression.

### **The experiential component of dhvani theory**

Abhinavagupta provides a more convincing and substantial reason for rejecting inferential account of dhvani. He maintains that word and its meaning are not two different entities and hence, they cannot have a similar relationship that exists between *linga* and *lingī* or *hetu* and *sādhya*. When we say that the suggested sense (*vyañjanā*) is the subject of verbal operation (*śabdavyāpāraviṣayatvam*), we mean to say that the verbal operation does not exist as two different processes, a sequential operation of, first, a word and then its apprehension secondly. The operation of a word and its apprehension is one and the same thing. Therefore, it cannot be a matter of inference. The visualization of dhvani is not like *anumāna*. Rather, it is more like a perceptual experience. It is technically termed as *lokottara* (extraordinary). Suggestion or suggested sense is the outcome of an artistic process. *Lokottara* is understood as that kind of pleasure which is not ordinary, like the birth of a son (*putrastejātaḥ*), but extraordinary which is a detached experience.

As pointed out above, a poetic expression can have meanings at two levels, namely, the expressed sense (*vāc्यārtha*) and the suggested sense (*pratīyamānārtha*). This suggested sense or *pratīyamānārtha* is further divided into two types. One is *laukika* (ordinary) and other is poetic (*kāvyaavyāpāragocara*). The ordinary meaning is represented either through its subject matter or through *alamkāras* which are called *vastu* and *alamkāradhvani*. However, the other suggested sense is embedded in *rasa* experience. When *rasa* becomes the predominant element (*angin*) in poetry, it is called *rasa-dhvani*. This *rasa-dhvani* is found in the writings of all the great poets. A poet with his creative



imagination or *pratibhā* creates poetry in which *rasa* becomes the predominant element. It is *rasa* that gives life to poetry and delights its readers. It is the soul of poetry. Krishnamoorthy has aptly articulated, “*Dhvani*’ is the quintessence of poetry; and ‘*rasa*’ is the quintessence of ‘*dhvani*’” (*Dhvanyāloka*, Introduction p. xxxi). *Rasa* experience is not created by merely mentioning that this poem is based in that a particular *rasa*. It is rather the enactment of the emotions of various characters that should be enough to generate *rasa*.

Just by sticking the label *śṛṅgāra rasa*, a poem does not generate *śṛṅgāra rasa*. As a matter of fact, to explicitly name specific emotions in poetic expressions would suppress the creative imagination of the reader; it would block the possibility of *rasa experience* because aesthetic experience is heightened through *vibhāvas* and other related concepts. “...*rasadhvani* is *par excellence* the intense relish occasioned by the audience’s (*pratipattuh*) tasting of the basic emotional element when their understanding of this basic emotion has arisen from the combination of the *vibhāva-s*, *anubhāva-s*, and *vyabhicāribhāva-s*” (*Locana* on *Dhvanyāloka* 2.4: 218). For example:

यद्विश्रम्य विलोकितेषु बहुशो निःस्थेमनी लोचने

यद्गत्राणिदरिद्रति प्रतिदिनं लूनाब्जिनीनालवत् ।

दूर्वाकाण्डविडम्बककश्च निबिडो यत्पाण्डिमा गण्डयोः

कृष्णे यूनि सयौवनासु वनितास्वेषैव वेषस्थितिः ॥

**Trans.:** “A tremulousness of the eyes, hesitating in mid-glance;  
Limbs daily growing thinner, like severed lotus stems  
And cheeks so pale they seemed, to imitate white durva grass:  
Such was the costume put on by the gopis, as they and Krishna  
came of age.”

In the given verse above, Krishna is at the peak of his youth and so are the *gopis*. The *gopis* look at the young Krishna not *directly*, but catch glimpses of him. Just as a lotus which has been cut off, becomes dry, the *gopis* too have become skinny and lifeless

without Krishna's love. Their lips have become so dry and yellow that even dry and pale grass appears to be more colorful. Throughout the verse, various emotions have been expressed without naming them: *abhilāṣa* (desire), *cintā* (worry), *atsukya* (eagerness), *nidrā* (sleep), *adhṛti* (frailty), *glāni* (drooping), *ālasya* (languor), *śrama* (weariness), *smṛti* (remembrance), *vitarka* (speculation), etc. Suggestion, not denotation or explicit reference, triggers the imaginative mind of the reader not only to make aesthetic experience possible but also to heighten it in other words. The kind of poetry that gives a very high degree of sublime aesthetic pleasure with or without the aid of *alamkāras* etc. is *uttamakāvya*. This is the highest form of poetry according to Abhinavagupta. While experiencing this kind of poetry the reader or the spectator forgets herself and gets totally engrossed in the poetic creation.<sup>10</sup>

A poem without *rasa* is like a dish prepared by an inefficient cook. Abhinavagupta writes that one will not get any taste (*rasa*) in a meat dish concocted by a cook ignorant of the culinary art. Here it might be pointed out that there are certain expressions that have a beauty of their own, and their beauty does not depend on the skill of the poet. Just as the dish called *śikhariṇī* would taste sweet whether or not the cook is skillful. (*Śikhariṇī* is a preparation of curdled milk and sugar). The aptness of the simile is that the skill of the cook is important in cooking of a meat dish, as the meat in its natural state is not tasty; but a *śikhariṇī*, since its ingredients are naturally tasty and sweet, cannot easily be spoiled. Therefore, a reader can be amused with the inherent capacity of the literal sense, but there is no skill of a poet.

It is *rasa-dhvani* which is desired by the *rasikas*. To quote Krishnamoorthy, "Rasa indeed is the corner-stone of the arch of *dhvani*" (*Dhvanyāloka*, Introduction: xxx). We have discussed how Ānandavardhana points out that only a *sahṛdaya* or man of taste who possesses an aesthetic attitude can relish *rasa*. *Rasa* is that which is never used in day-

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<sup>10</sup> For the first time, Abhinavagupta evaluates poetry based on the degree of the prominence of *dhvani*: *citrakāvya*, *guṇībhūtavyaṅgyakāvya* and *uttamakāvya*. A poem which is devoid of the suggested sense is *citrakāvya*. When the suggested sense does not go beyond the expressed sense, it is called middle type, *madhyamākāvya* or *guṇībhūtavyaṅgyakāvya*. When the suggested sense is more prominent in a poem than the expressed sense, it is called *uttamakāvya*.

to-day discourse and is never expressed directly in words. Rather, it can be relished only. Or one could say that it gives rise to aesthetic bliss or enjoyment. M. Hiriyana has put it distinctly "...emotions are not communicated at all by the poet; he only suggests them and thereby helps their waking to life in the mind of a competent person, when they will necessarily be inwardly experienced by him" (Hiriyana, M. 1997: 77).

### **Some comments and perspectives**

#### *i. The world as the measure of meaning*

In general, primary meaning, with various synonyms such as direct meaning, literal meaning, ordinary meaning, conventional meaning, etc., is associated with denotation. It tells us either what the world is like or how to behave in the world. In short, primary meaning essentially serves informative and directive functions of language. When the primary meaning of a linguistic expression is communicated and understood, we get some idea or picture of the world out there. In other words, primary meaning is about the world out there, the world with structures and objects. Accordingly, the primary meaning of an expression can be defined or fixed one way or the other. It is not subject to unlimited interpretations. For instance, the sentence "The moon keeps changing its shape" is not subject to various interpretations. In some sense, its primary meaning can be spoken of as being objective as well.

In contrast, the meaning of a poetic expression cannot be defined or fixed even by the greatest poet even if we could identify one. Further, a poet herself cannot claim to provide the best interpretation of her work; she cannot exhaust the possible interpretations of her work either. In this sense, the meaning of a poetic expression is open to unlimited interpretations; it cannot be defined conclusively or objectively. For one thing, a poetic expression is not about the world out there. Its primary function is not to give a true or accurate representation of the world though it 'uses' pictures or imageries of the world. These pictorial expressions, for instance, are used to suggest a reality beyond the expressed words. They are directed towards the world of emotions

(bhāvas)– something for which words have no corresponding denotation but which is aroused through the connotative power of words.

*ii. Beyond the bound of meaning*

The meaning of an ordinary expression is defined in terms of the function of its parts conventionally. There is a way to analyze the meaning of an ordinary expression. However, the meaning of a poetic expression is essentially not a matter of analysis; its meaning is not obtained through analysis. It is grasped spontaneously, instantly and wholly. Its meaning is grasped like a “flash of light” (pratibhā) as maintained by Ānadavardhana. And this flash of light cannot be explained in terms of the function of its parts. The flash of light is something more than what is communicated or expressed in language. The flash of light is the result of creative interpretation on the part of the reader. Metaphorically speaking, the flash of light is the arousal of emotion. However, the emotion that is evoked by a poetic expression is not anything like the world out there. And so, it is impossible to fix the limit of the meaning of a poetic expression. It is in this sense that we can agree with the fundamental position of *dhvanivādins* that a poetic expression can only suggest. We can talk about the suggestion as being either pleasurable or agreeable but not in terms of having this or that fixed meaning. In the light of the above, it is really doubtful if we can use *anumāna* to explain away dhvani since *anumāna* is a special tool to “fix” the relation of concepts and sentences by analyzing the internal structures of sentences. One of its main functions is to limit or minimize multiple interpretations or meanings and this works contrary to the very nature of poetic expressions. If this perspective of dhvani is accepted, then even refutation of *anumāna* by pointing out the fallacious nature of *anumāna* is not necessary at all.

Given the above line of reasoning, it is not sure if we can meaningfully talk about the “meaning” of a poetic expression. Meaning is conventionally associated with either the sound of a linguistic expression or its symbols. Moreover, primary meaning of an ordinary expression, being denotative in nature, refers to something in the world out there. However, in the present context, dhvani is associated with the experience of a certain sort – arousal of pleasurable emotion for instance. It is something which comes

about as a result of communication (sound or symbols) and not with the communication *per se*. Perhaps, the dilemma can be looked at from two angles. First, we can understand “suggested meaning” somewhat like this: a suggestion that is conveyed through the meaning of ordinary expression. It is like a coded language. Its meaning is hidden in the ordinary expression. What is suggested goes beyond the meaning of an ordinary expression. Alternatively, we can drop the word “meaning” altogether and speak of poetic expression as having “suggested sense”<sup>11</sup>. This suggested sense is more like a feeling, a feeling which is aroused through our encounters with life, say, an encounter with something beautiful or terrible. This feeling can never be fully expressed or defined. Our attempts to express or define it in language will forever remain suggestive in nature. They can only point to something but not at ‘this’ or ‘that’ something.

### **Conclusion:**

What is ‘suggested’ in a poetic expression is distinct from what is ‘shown’ through the expressed words and while primary meaning is associated with the latter, *dhvani* is associated with the former. The locus of the suggested sense is not out there in the world but somewhere in the world of emotions. It is an inherent feature of a poem that it suggests more than it expresses and the suggested sense is what makes it beautiful and captivating. A reader who relishes a poem does so because of the *rasa* that is aroused by the suggestive power of words which is not possible by the primary and other functions of words. Ānandvardhan succinctly puts it: उक्तयन्तरेणाशक्यं यत्तच्चारुत्वं प्रकाशयन् । शब्दो वयञ्जकतां विभ्रद्ध्वन्युक्तेर्विषयी भवेत् ॥ [*Trans.*: “Only that word, which conveys a charm, incapable of communication by any other expression and which is pregnant with suggestive force, becomes a fit instance for the title of “Suggestive” (*Dhvanyāloka* 1.15)].

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<sup>11</sup> Among the modern writers on *dhvani/vyañjanā*, the earlier philosophers like K. Krishnamoorthy and K. Kunjuanni Raja translated the term *dhvani/vyañjanā* as suggestion. They largely retained the original term and whenever they translated it, they employed the term suggestion with a degree of caution. Later writers disregarded this aspect and stuck to the translation of *dhvani/vyañjanā* as suggested meaning or sometimes suggested sense.

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# ATHEIST SEARCH FOR MORALITY IN 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

MALABIKA CHAKRABARTI

**Key Words:** 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin, Morality, Ethics, Atheist

## 1. The Conflict

Theist emotion prioritizes God in every aspects of life. They develop some images based on that emotion and furnish God as the lord of this world who produce and protect life on this earth. They think that someone has to obtain the ingredients of life from him and even the peace of life can be obtained through his merciful flair. But such thinking basically paves the way of escape from anyone's guilt by involving God in that act. As ethics can judge the merit or quality of only the human acts and actions, if we accept God as the master of all who prompts us to do our deeds, how can one judge the ethical values of those acts? Where human are the puppets of omnipotent God, they can have hardly any responsibility of any of their actions and therefore nothing can be judged for ethical standards. They opined that the level of real existence is there where human beings entangle with the almighty in a close bondage and real Christians fall in love of God beyond rationality. But skeptics never left any stones unturned in such acceptance of God particularly in the domain of ethics or morality.

Human life is made up with different values. Among them moral values are one of the fundamentals which make human realizing the acceptance or rejection of human actions in any circumstances and in life also. We appreciate that any kind of livelihood can never be acknowledged. There may be many options in life like good or bad, honest and dishonest, true or false, loyal or disloyal and so on, but morality teaches us to accept the first options for each of them. Moral values are those which train us to restrain our actions, prevent us to act falsely or treacherously. Thus, to an intelligent man, life is not only for living but to build properly, to act rationally, to contribute rightly for others and

for the betterment of future. In contrast, theists impose objection here. According to them God leads human beings in the path of advancement with his own judgment.

In any moral decision the role of decision maker is essential. At the same time, the decision maker must be someone with enough knowledge, rational mind and judgmental capacity. If we release the responsibility of judgment by accepting the almighty and do the sin acts there will be no use of morals or ethics. Instead of it, if we consider the conscience as judge then only we can proceed for ethical interpretation or moral judgment for a situation or act, because conscience is such a quality of human mind which possess the spontaneous ability to analyze the moral values. If so, then person will be the fulcrum or decider of his own act. Contrary to the so called popular believes of entanglement of theism and ethics, if we deeply analyze the ancient Indian and modern Western philosophical thoughts it can be understood that basically theism and ethics are not synonymous.

Morality and ethics has emerged from logical judgment. It is true that we may not explain everything around us always with proper logic, nor even in this age of modern scientific advancement. That's why the life is mysterious and beautiful, it is not predictable. But the progress of human civilization depends on logical development of scientific knowledge and we have to proceed rationally to meet every problem. If rationality fails for a moment in any situation we should not submit before that, rather our effort must continue in search of rationality or to make logical explanation. Human existence can be proved neither in acceptance of defeat nor in believing anything beyond logic, but to establish logic to cross the barriers and discarding illogical submission.

Actually the concept of ethics or morality is complex. So it can be discussed from various perspectives. Ethics changes its dimension from point to point, situation to situation. It may differ its stand for an anthropologist to a sociologist, again for a psychologist to a Marxist or even to a Darwinian evolutionist. The subject is flexible as per the analyst's perspective; decisions may change accordingly. Hence, no single and specific definition or decision may be possible for the ethical and moral values. This fluidity or dynamicity of morality depending on the situation or need and the person's analytical exercise make



ethics a challenging subject. So it is something immature to introduce someone supreme to impose morality. Our act is our doing and there is no point to pray to someone to inoculate someone's morality. Rather human act in any moral ground according to his or her own virtue, emotion, situation and mental ability. To accept this view, we need to establish the fact with the proper logical contexts and from different philosophical backgrounds.

In the present discussion we will consider how the perspective to morality evolved from individual to collective or social dimension; and how the prominent contemporary philosophical thoughts of 19<sup>th</sup> Century tried to address the issue of morality. In this process, we will look upon the approach of Fredric Nietzsche, who was one of the strongest flag bearers of atheist existentialism from the nineteenth century. While Nietzsche emphasized on individual empowerment to counter the social enigma, Karl Marx argued for social revolution by introducing the class concept and his perception of morality came from collective or social status. In contrast to both, Charles Darwin came with his theory from a completely different sector where observation on natural world instigate him to develop his theory which is now actively practiced in explaining different phenomena of life forms and now extended as 'evolutionary psychology' to explain human behavior. All these three philosophical schools originated in 19<sup>th</sup> Century and refuted God to explain their thoughts. These three philosophers had their interest to others theory, but were considerably differed from others in their thoughts and approaches.

## **2. Nietzsche: Attempt to Disprove Theism in Ethics**

The philosophers who vehemently disapproved God have tried to established morality in different ways. The forerunner among such philosophers was Nietzsche. Philosophers like Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Sartre were familiar as Existentialist, because they proposed that existence is the fundamental of any philosophical discussion. This 'existence' of them was actually meant for human existence. So the famous quote of Sartre was 'Existence precedes essence' (1) and all three of them denied the existence

of God. As per Nietzsche, the rituals of churches are only some external engagements which have no use in human existence, life and values. As per his version the 'God is dead', and with the acceptance of this Christianity with its external ornamentation will be finished. With this disprove the avenue for freeing the human existence will be achieved, a new year will bear with a new realization of moral standard. But the obvious question arises that when there is no God to judge the morality whom to answer, or in other word, to whom human will be liable for his ethical or unethical act. Will there be any urge or obligation to be moral? We will discuss this issue keeping this dilemma in mind and try to find how theists established their views overcoming this.

Nihilism is one of the fundamental problems in Nietzsche's philosophy and he tried to cross such problem in his thoughts and deliberations. It includes also ethical nihilism. Actually with the death of God a void has been created and to get rid of it Nietzsche tried to establish morality on a behavioral foundation. As Nietzsche's morality is analytical and he analyzed it from the perspective of act or doing, his morality bears a pragmatic essence. As per his opinion pragmatic approach can bring the truth in human life and it can explain the morality. In the book 'Genealogy of Morals' Nietzsche introduced two types of morality, namely, the moralities of Master and Slave. According to him these two moralities express differently, but both of them are intended to achieve power (2). The philosophers who are reverend of power, Nietzsche was most prominent among them. He even believed that war is the means through which a world can emerge with superior values with courage, devotion, greatness and like values.

But critiques said that Nietzsche tried to deny God only depending on internal passion which was less logical at its base. It also is critically thought that our society is divisible into neither only master and slave as told by Nietzsche nor divisible into 'have' and 'have not' as designated by Marx. Our society is multi-layered and stratified. As Nietzsche was a strong opposition of Christian believes and rituals of Churches, his strong anti-establishment emotion mostly appeared to deny the existence of God. In contrast his denial to omnipotent God basically created a diverse and diffused idea of super human imaginary in the explanations of different issues by him, which is none

other than a different form of the idea of God as depicted in different writings of him. Basically Nietzsche had an alternative thought about God, who was 'Dionysus' and who amazed Nietzsche by his prompt existence (3). He thought that this was the actual truth of life which was not considered in Christianity. When Nietzsche declared that 'God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him' (4), then it expressed the anger, anguish, and may also be the hatred towards the system related to Christianity and Church. That intensity of negative expression might have achieved from the convictions of the then Christian societal conducts, sacraments with political systems in amalgamation of Nietzsche's personal antipathy. The normal virtues of human life like kindness, forgiveness, peacefulness, manners etc which are usually practiced to relate with God, had been blacklisted by Nietzsche and designated as inferior qualities which express weaknesses of human being. He introduced the concept of 'Superman', through a strong desire of this superman to become the contender of God and to uproot Him from his divine thorn had been expressed (5).

Nietzsche remained merely silent about the source of morality of his superman fantasy who by his immense power will do 'good' for this universe. If the ground of morality of this superman had not been established properly, this colossal power may turn to be good or bad both and thus may indulge evil at its own whims. It is to be explained properly that where Nietzsche's superpower be different from traditional God? Only because of his human nature as said by Nietzsche or somewhere else is not clear accurately. Nietzsche's version somehow seemed similar with the philosophy of enlightened monarchy or autocracy at the juncture of mediaeval and modern Europe which was formally named as the enlightened despotism where Kings exercised their political power for the benefit of people as 'Everything for the people, nothing by the people' (6)<sup>1</sup>. His superman characteristics sometimes resembled with the characters of Frederick the Great of Prussia, King Charles III of Spain and others in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Nietzsche probably could not imagine and extended his thoughts beyond his age. Later in the history of mankind we found such characters with political power again and again. If we look at Robespierre in French revolution and in post-revolutionary time

culminating into Guillotine rule, Hitler's strong ruling for the German superiority and dominance crushing into the extreme sacrifice of humanity or the autocracies of Ceaușescu in Romania, they all appeared as immensely powerful mass-leaders but fell down pathetically as the heated villains of the state, society and humanity. So these names with superman like power and activities who were believed to be the rescuers or relievers of some nations or states or sectors could never meet the ethical standard and ended their life with wretched consequences. We should remember that Nietzsche never prioritized the societal or state values and acts in execution of power by his superman like imaginary character, but freed him with his immense will force which is actually that conducive milieu where autocracy arise.

Basically from the discussion of Nietzsche's ethics it is clear that he was vehemently opposed Christianity. As per him, Christianity follows the 'morality of slaves'. In contrary, Nietzsche imagined such a powerful human being who never succumb to that morality of slaves, rather be a worshipper of 'morality of master'. Nietzsche told the love in Christianity is nothing but the expression of fear. Man being frightful about his neighbor in the thought that he might damage him, offers his fellow citizen the gesture of love to ensure his own safety. Nietzsche never thought that anyone spontaneously think about fraternity and love. That's why he expressed his opinion that, if he could become more strong and powerful, he could express his hatred about neighbors more openly. So his superman is without sympathy, he is cruel, cleaver, tricky and intoxicated with his power. Nietzsche never thought that his superman can be a cause of fear to common people. He admired such human power who achieved their greatness in demolishing other human entities who are not acceptable and this is the greatest demolition of ethical values. Thus Nietzsche's philosophy of morals avoiding the concept of God is basically indulging the darker sides of human values and cannot establish a solid moral basis to act upon.

However, at one point we can validate Nietzsche. When the world struck into the prejudices of past, the false external rituals become the face of religion and God, at that point someone is needed to appear who possess the power and will to build everything

in a newer form and have the ability to bring life in dead or wrecked remnants of mankind. So he might have some exuberant warrior attitude and may need some destruction to bring fresh life. Nietzsche dreamt to have an all new life and livelihood. As per him conservative past never accepts new or mankind always prefers limited entry of new things along with the older things, but dare to conceive all afresh and anew. Nietzsche tried to hurt that fear and for that he expressed his excess anger and harsh satire towards old. He tried to bring new in full form and for this he was never hesitant to face the extreme conflict and involve in full-fledged battle with the predecessors. Basically this warrior attitude was the actual theme of Nietzsche's moral (5, 7).

### **3. A Comparison of Nietzsche's Moral with Indian Thoughts**

In the Indian epic Mahabharata it was observed that when traditional practices indulge or coddle the sinful or evil forces, the demolition of such wicked become essential with the destruction of such traditions. Sometimes situation arises when such violence can neither be avoided nor be denied, because the destruction of one or few brings the good for the thousands or a big mass of people; truth has been established by wiping out the false. But in that case the sinfulness and malicious acts has to reach to an unbearable level and when all peaceful means fail to rectify the system or hold it within a bearable level, the force of destruction can come into act and, the words of Lord Krishna can be uttered as, whenever religion and righteous world got into extreme trouble, He appeared in the rescue of integrity by obliterating dishonest and diabolic sects to establish a good, lawful society again (ShrīmadbhagavadGītā, Verse No. 4/8) (8)<sup>2</sup>. When we need surgical interception to dissect out some body parts or tumors it cannot be an act of violence but essential for life, likewise who causes the wound of colossal evil and swamping corruption in the society they need to be exiled where use of arms can never be considered as violence. Therefore, in Indian epics, Lord Rama or Lord Krishna became those imaginary characters who pronounced the victory of truth defeating the extreme dishonesty and malicious, sinful societal state through the great wars to establish the religious, ethical state.

Nietzsche's imaginative ruler, whom we discussed earlier, had similarity with the Carvaka's concept of king. The similarity was external, rather in depth comparison showed very significant differences between the two. The king of Carvaka was the powerful executer and well-wisher of his people, and more importantly, he had to follow specific rules set by the society. He had the liability to become accepted by his creeds and society. In this case, as soon as specific rules came into play, the king became restricted from being willful on his own desire and whims. Though that king possessed the power of execution but the outline of that was well defined. Normally to introduce such rules or acts a conglomeration of wise people representing that society or state who were also well aware of the traditional and contemporary knowledge of that time took the charge. Therefore, on the basis of such outlines drawn by the prudent section of the state, the king who can catalyze the social prosperity and state's supremacy with advancement and happiness, he will be the most acceptable and powerful king as 'LokasiddhaRājāParameswera' (BārhaspatyaSūtra. 85) (9)<sup>3</sup>. We may remember such rulers like King Solomon of United Kingdom of Israel during 9<sup>th</sup> Century BC or Chandragupta the Second or Vikramaditya of the Gupta Empire in northern India during 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD, or like the legends of King Arthur during the mediaeval England; or Akbar the Great of 16<sup>th</sup> Century who not only established a great Mughal dynasty through a vast region of Indian subcontinent extended up to Afghanistan but also showed his responsible and responsive ruling accepted by the majority of the people of his kingdom. Here society and king developed a relationship of conflict and adjustment to mitigate the interest of both king and general people of his kingdom which was essentially depicted in Carvaka's hedonistic theory where such a comparable conflict comes in between one's own interest and collective interest of the group. The extract of such conflict is the education to distinguish between one's need and greed. We can remember the famous statement of Mahatma Gandhi that there is enough on this planet for everyone's need, but not for anyone's greed. Be a king or a common people, if someone become educated to draw the margin for greed and restrict him within his need, then the alliance or agreement may be possible between the interest of one and many

that will lead the path towards future sustenance and happiness devoid of glamour possessing moral values at its core.

#### **4. Western Philosophy after Nietzsche: The Dilemma for One to Many and Marx**

The conflict between one and many or individual versus group of people in the issues of morality became also prominent in the writings of Sartre in 20<sup>th</sup> Century. But, in the way of developing and defining the human existence, Sartre emphasized less on ethical background. However, an idea about Sartre's moral or ethical perspective can be extracted from his writings. One of the most prominent existentialist philosophers Sartre also cultured basically on individualistic human existence, but he introduced an idea of undesirable impact of individual liberalism on the group living or society. He added restriction or restrain within the explanation of individual freedom and liberalism. This is the binding for someone's own duty, the duty for his own self and for others, for the sum, for the society (10)<sup>4</sup>. Sartre's individualism is bound to own-self as well as humanity, it is inevitably entangled with the mandate to mature and fulfill others' freedom. His existentialism is humanitarian who rely on the idea of equality of freedom for him and for all. Therefore, here individual is very important who always holds the duty of selecting his own act and be responsible for the consequences. So, he has to be sensible and has to think that his act, by no means, can harm other person's liberty and comfort, not even it can scare the humanity. Thus individual decision should always be taken here caring for the society and sum. If any such decision be taken by the Monarch or learned assembly, according to Sartre's philosophy they should take care of every individual's liberty and well-being with the full attention to the requirement of society and state. Therefore, it requires the acceptance of both individual interest and collective interest. Overall, ethics will be created in amalgamation of individual and society, and any ethical verdict one can only accept on the basis of surrounding and circumstances.

In this way, ethics or moral emerges as a balance between individual and society. In this balance, when existentialists emphasize more on individual existence and interest, the

ethics evolved from materialistic dialectics introduced by Marx and Engels stands just in the opposite pole. Marx stated in his 'Thesis on Feuerbach' that, '*... the human essence is no abstraction inherent in each single individual.... [but] is the ensemble of the social relations*' (11). Marx actually opposed the idea of individualistic ethical standards, as did Engels. Engels stated that human happiness is not essentially dependent on personal ethics. Rather the materialistic status, particularly, the monetary affluence and the quality time derived from such affluence for enjoying arts and music, spending time with peers and opposite sexes and other activities of personal desire play the main role to achieve individual pleasure. According to them the basic difference between materialistic and ethical ideas is, for the first one, individual's monetary standard and desire collectively express his personality and morals. But for the second one, through some undefined and abstract imagination some psychological pleasure has been achieved and thus created some personal stratification. And therefore, Marx from his extremist standpoint stated to clear out other ideas and told that nothing will be meaningful without considering the conditions between the classes, that is, among bourgeois and proletariat (12)<sup>5</sup>.

As Marx assimilated individual existence within the socio-economic classes therefore ethics got less importance in respect to the totality of this system. Therefore, in every occasion when Marx tried to explain any social or historical events in the light of dialectic materialism, he tried to establish the ethics in favor of his proposed path of social evolution. The act which was capable of maintaining the path of his ideology had become acceptable and ethical, whether it had been the explanation of French revolution or the discussion of the history of India. Simultaneously, when Marx accepted a process of gradual increment of knowledge of mankind as an obvious process of his 'ism', the increase of moral values of mankind should also be accepted. But he never accepted such things parallel. In contrary he tried to explain morality or ethics as a comparative account on the basis of self-pleasure and class-stratifying index. Analyzing all these Howard Selsam stated '*... the ethics of the Manifesto is simply an expression of the needs, hopes and desires of the modern working class .... That it alone conforms to the necessary and desirable direction of social evolution.*' (13). Therefore, emphasizing on socio-economic



class system and their interplay this approach tried to ignore other generally accepted concepts of ethics and put forward a newer dimension of ethics on socio-economic perspective in an inadequate manner. Inadequate because that ethics was predetermined and biased to a specific sect of society and was less logically evolved, rather emotionally supportive to that sect. The concept of ethics, which was deployed from only economic stratification of society, was difficult to achieve the acceptable moral standard in general or through the looking glass of perception. It is comparable like those ethical believes where ethics is completely prejudiced with theism. Here only the ethical values were only prejudiced with proletariats and for their benefits.

### **5. Contrasting Philosophy of Nietzsche and Marx to Morality**

Marx and Engels discarded the existence of God based on perceptual evidences. Thereby, they wanted to make human free from all awe, superstition and binding to something beyond perception. They challenged all such ongoing ideas and rituals and inspired people to come out from such believe. Thus they wanted to extend the courage to the socio-economically downtrodden people, basically the large number of farmers and workers, to commit the great revolution. Here both Nietzsche and Marx-Engels discarded God very feverishly, but their way and purpose were different. The first one is to gain individual power or supremacy; whereas the second is for a particular social sect who they believe are the majority and they should be the maximum beneficiary in the societal system and thereby will make the society progressive in proper sense. In contrast, it should be taken into account that if all ethical or moral burdens will be absorbed for the sake of revolution or any unethical act become admissible with an excuse as the need of revolution for the betterment of backwardly socio-economic class, then how would be the consequences? How would be the shape of morals? Isn't it a vicious environment where the unethical acts of a person or group is being legislated in a hide of terms like 'revolution', 'social need' or more frequently used 'class struggle'? It appears to be another version of Sartre's 'bad-faith' where people search for a hide to avoid the responsibility of their 'karma' or acts and also adopt false values under an external circumstantial milieu (14). Therefore, we cannot support Stalin, cannot admit

the incidence in Tiananmen Square of China or the blood bath in the corners of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh of India due to Naxalite insurgencies.

In contrast, Marx in his 'First International' wrote about all people or groups that they all '*.... acknowledge truth, justice and morality as the basis of their conduct towards each other and towards all men without regard to colour, creed or nationality.*' (15) But the contradiction remained. As revolution ideally destroyed the older system including classes, casts, faiths, existing moralities and values, rule of laws, then how and where from the new 'truth, justice and morality' will come? How would be the structure of such new morality? The shape of ethics and morality of that class less society is not clear and no such in depth discussion was found about such new morality. It is now very clear that Marx had to reintroduce the morality in his new system, where during the phase of antithesis of older system or more directly speaking, during destruction of older system Marx avoided or diluted the moral issue. But he required morality during the synthesis phase of his desired society, hence cannot deny the morality in society. Therefore, in the development of society, for its existence, distribution and progression morality is essential, both individually and collectively.

Thus in the discussion of morality or ethics from whatever philosophical outlook, be it Nietzsche or Sartre or Marx-Engels, it has become clear that none of them cared for God. From this it has also been clear that ethics or moral has an individual perspective and a collective perspective. In some cases, needs from both standpoints may be same, but also for many instances they are different. There comes the conflict. This conflict is between individual and group. So to establish moral for both individual and society, where personal interest and societal interest differs, there needs some balance. More technically speaking, a 'tread-off' is needed between these two opposing forces. There are many examples of such trade-offs in different fields which are analogous to the moral verdict or decision in real life. Also we can conclude with several examples that God believe dose not bring morality neither in person, nor in society or state. So, like Nietzsche if we cannot say that 'God is dead', at least can utter that 'God is removed' from moral. If believe in God and his worship fetch moral standard then we do not need so many jails

and police forces, no homicide squad or human bomb gunmen roam around the world in the name of Allah or Christ or Rama or else, no terror attack in Mumbai, Karachi, Colombo or Auckland took lives of thousands, no Crusade would be there in history, no Shia-Sunni blood-shades would be there and so on.

But if we try to establish moral without God, the fundamental question that we face is about its origin or arrival. In the earlier sections we discussed how Nietzsche's philosophy tried to establish individualistic morals but shortfall in several aspects. One of the major point of criticizing Nietzsche's theory is his emphasize on superman or overman like image in morality which is similar to the concept of messiah of Judeo-Christianity (16)<sup>6</sup>. Also, if Nietzsche's thought has to accept, there will be conflict between one's desires of moral supremacy versus collective interest of upgraded moral. As inherent nature of Nietzsche's moral upgrading is dominative, so any evolution or upgrading of such moral in mass will obviously increase the conflicts among each other. In contrast, an effort was made in Marxian philosophy to show how collective social morals can be promoted but remained clueless about its advent amidst the social wreckage after a class conflict. If the violent proletariat mass uproots the exploiting bourgeois class how that violence automatically succumb to a peaceful society was not clear. Such incidence was found in the post-revolutionary days in 1790s in France or in between February to October, 1917 in Russia, and continued up to 1922 when a new state with strict law and order were imposed on the territory. So the practical situations and evidences neither show promises for Nietzsche nor for Marx. Even neither of them could properly address the issue of morality in one and many. So we have to search for a suitable explanation about the origin of morality and to find an answer about whether it may spawn as inherent nature or generate spontaneously. In other word '*.... Mankind may only hope to attain a knowledge of ethics unconsciously, or as a consciousness other than itself. Perhaps the time has come to stop searching for this other consciousness and return to the study of humanity and its ethics.*' (17). Also with the thinking that how morality can be threaded between one and many

we are going to discuss that whether believing in God is at all important for developing such morals, and if not, then how such morals come into existence.

## **6. Then Where Should We Search Our Source of Morality**

In modern ear the ethical values emerged mainly centering the man. The actual need of human with social requirement and consciousness gradually became the center of gravity of the emergence of modern value system. Denial of the values emerged from religious emotions and metaphysical entities and insemination of humanitarian thoughts first gave birth of 'Secular' and democratic approaches in our society. 'Secular' literally means earthly and rejecting any metaphysical existence. The concept of secular state developed with the idea that where the state affairs including social, economic, political and cultural lives will be independent of any religious interference. This is the basis of the development of religiously independent democratic and humanitarian social state. Karl Marx extended this view and showed that such humanity with detachment of personal wealth evolve into communism. With the ethical development and gaining of its gradually organized shapes showed some resemblance with the evolutionary theory of Darwin. Once Marx wrote a letter to Engels after reading Darwin's 'Origin of Species', where he wrote, '*...this is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our view*' (18). The famous evolutionary philosopher Ernst Mayr of twentieth century was one of the strongest supporter and elaborator of Darwinian Theory. He showed many reasons about why Marx was so enthusiastic about this theory. One of the main reasons was about the variation issue. At the core of Darwin's evolutionary concept was the presence of variations within population and that is the basic ingredient on which evolutionary mechanisms act. Here Marx found support of his dialectic materialism. But Mayr made it clear that the basis of this for Darwin is variations among each individual of every species including human where their genetic, morphological and behavioral variety counts; and such will be counted for morality also (19). Another Darwinian as well as Marxian philosopher J.B.S. Haldane explained that the genetic individuality and variety of each individual in a natural sense and providing social equity are two different issues (20).

Darwinian evolutionary thought accepted such individual variations at its core as natural phenomena and then tries to explain the collective moral fiber in evolutionary mechanisms by perceptible and logical approach. In contrary, Marxian thoughts and practices mostly showed an intention to impose equity and even asset allocation to establish socialism rather accepting and allowing variations to evolve, thus tends to achieve a state of lesser variance culminating into communism. So neither of these two philosophies basically mixes and proceeds for further development to explain morality. In contrast, Nietzsche criticized Darwin as he felt that Darwinian concept of survival is similar to that of the ‘will to life’ described by German philosopher Sopenhauer (21)<sup>7</sup>. Nietzsche opined that ‘will’ might be the elementary principle, but not the ‘will to life’ or in other word the willingness of survival. As Darwin’s major saying was ‘struggle for existence’ where organisms have to cope with the environment which has been described as adaptation (22)<sup>8</sup>, Nietzsche showed it as the submission of individual to the exterior and/or situations. But it can be said that he had not realized and interpreted Darwin’s theory properly. We will discuss and explain our standing on this point in the following sections.

### **7. Darwin: Design without Designer – Moral without Creator for Self and Society**

William Paley, one of the prominent philosophers of 18<sup>th</sup> century argued for the creator or intelligent designer to substantiate our origin and existence in his world through his ‘teleological argument’ (23). Paley’s argument of ‘Natural Theology’ elaborated that the complex features, structures and organs of specific functions in animal has been designed by an intelligent designer. He argued that such complex structure and precise functions which are be fitting perfectly with the requirement of the organism can never be spontaneously generated. Paley put the example of our eye or the eye of an eagle which are highly specific and complex organs for precise function. He made an analogy of existence of such structure with finding a watch on the pebbles in a field and argued that as that watch must obviously be crafted there, for our eye also there will be a craftsman or intelligent creator. According to Paley’s argument, there cannot be design

without designer and all the biological and anatomical sophistications are made by the creator. Therefore, all the attributes of human must be designed by the craftsman who is none other than God, and understandably our moral is also the gift of God. But the next century philosophy revolved around denying the God's grace and upholding the truth of human existence and society.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, after Marx, another predecessor of Nietzsche was Charles Darwin. Darwin developed this epoch breaking theory of evolution based on evidences from natural history. In contrary to the fixity of nature as was put forwarded by natural theological view, Darwin showed that the natural world and living things change over time. In establishing his evolutionary theory Darwin introduced the process of natural selection and argued that how this process works in the natural world and acts as the modifying force on the living forms in course of time. Darwin was influenced by the work of Charles Lyell, a Scottish geologist of that century who showed how earth surface forms and structures change over time due to natural events and forces (24). Influenced by his book 'Principles of Geology' Darwin realized that like the continued changeability of earth's crust which is perceivable with a reasonable time interval, animals are also changing through a long course of time. Collected specimens and fossil evidences in his five years long voyage in HMS Beagle (1831-1836) confirmed Darwin that animals and their morphological and anatomical designs are not fixed. He also deduces that animal changes in some specific patterns and trajectories which is designated as evolution. In finding the working force or reason behind such changes, Darwin had taken the idea from Malthusian theory of population and described how nature restricts the number of surviving individuals among many to fit the population size within the limit of available resources (25). Darwin, upon evidential proofs, established that animals evolve by 'natural selection' and develop complex structures in an incremental fashion over a long time without any designer and explained the 'Origin of Species' (26). Therefore, 'survival of the fittest' is actually a trade-off between options and resources by the nature where requirement for survival provide the impetus to move on through the evolutionary trajectory.

In this similar approach of argument, we may think that when complex design of life is possible without designer, then the moral of human as a living entity may be explained without God's influence. Ethics is the moral principle of human being which governs the behavior. Such ethics, i.e. doing right or wrong or appropriate act can be considered as situational reflex or cognitive output and to be judged by others. Any act can be judged for ethical values where there will be others to evaluate. So ethics is something which is applicable in a societal format or in an assembly of individuals.

Darwinian evolutionary thinking remained highly active in 20<sup>th</sup> Century and spread over other fields and faculties. O.E Wilson, the American evolutionary biologist, studied the ants and their behavior as a group of working individuals and extended his observations and interpretations for other animals. From him and other workers it was shown clearly that animals too remained in social form well before the human origin and remained associated with conflicts and cooperation and sharing. Wilson's classic work "Sociobiology: The New Synthesis" defined society as 'A group of individuals belonging to the same species and organized in a cooperative manner' and extended further that 'The diagnostic criterion (of a society) is reciprocal communication of a cooperative nature, extending beyond mere sexual activity (from the biological perspective)' (27). Therefore, the moral principle or ethical act is biologically possible without sophisticated cognitive function and evolution shows that biologically moral principles exist from an ancient time when no human were there in this planet. Also, this approach showed the promise to resolve the conflict between individual and society, and produced logical explanation of one's interest for own offspring or next generation as well as society.

Now if we look at the moral perspective of survival and struggle for existence we found that Darwin in his 'Descent of Man' mentioned and tried to explain the origin and evolution of human psychology and morals (28). His writing on human psyche was also extended and established on his biological evolutionary theory. This is known as 'evolutionary psychology' by which he explained the origin and development of human cultural and ethical progression from the dawn of the advent of human species. He and

his followers even related this origin of moral thoughts with proto-humans or in other species close to modern humans as Darwinian evolutionary thoughts believe that origin of our species was the outcome of a continuous evolutionary process running in whole living world. This modern approach of evolutionary interpretation of morals, searching its origin and gradual modification in human species has now gained a significant and interesting position. Now we can try to search the reason behind our morality which is spontaneous discarding God from the business.

## **8. Conclusion**

In 19<sup>th</sup> Century, we found the strong ensemble of philosophical thoughts to establish the fact that moral act and sense of ethics was not dependent on God and being ethical from individual to social level was unprompted. The philosophers like Nietzsche, Marx and Darwin showed that the urge to be moral or immoral, to be cooperative or conflictive had their own proximate and ultimate agendas or causes. All three philosophers tried to establish morality without god in their own way and were aware about others work. Initially, Nietzsche criticized the Darwinian Theory with a thought that the theory could not be enough to disprove God (21). However, it was later observed that followers of Darwin developed a different way of argument to disprove God and establish morality in life which provide stronger logical background than that of Nietzsche's constant denial of God. On the other hand, Marx was initially interested on Darwin but was unable to successfully amalgamate its essence to his doctrine and social theory. All the theories exhibited potential to establish the principle of morality from different perspectives. Decent explanatory ideas came to resolve the conflict of one and many; comparisons and arguments within existentialist, socialist and evolutionary schools are continuously shaping such ideas of ethics. To mitigate the elusiveness of origin of morality these philosophers and their followers are relentlessly inspiring and intriguing present thinkers and fueling the school of atheist ethics. These studies are enriching our knowledge to explain human psyche and becoming instrumental to approach individual and social psychic disorders more logically than ever.



## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> [The creed of enlightened despotism was best summed up in the motto of [the] reforming monarch Charles III of Spain (1759-1788): ‘*Everything for the people, nothing by the people.*’ The enlightened despots represented a stage in the transformation of the personal monarchy of the old dynastic states to the impersonal rule of modern bureaucracies. (7)]

<sup>2</sup> [Shrīmadbhagavad (or Bhagavad) Gītā has been considered as one of the most famous and basic reference of Indian and Hindu Philosophy with 700 verses in Sanskrit that thought to be written by sage Vyasa and a part of the epic Mahabharata which had been thought to be written between two to five hundred BCE. In those verses the meaning of life, philosophy and duties of life had been described as the saying of lord Krishna to the epic hero Arjuna just before the great battle of Mahabharata at Kurukshetra. Several commentaries on these verses had been developed from different perspectives of Indian philosophy throughout the following centuries and remains as one of the backbones of Indian cultural heritage of thousands of years. The mentioned verse (originally in Sanskrit) and its translation has been adapted from the mentioned edited volume (8).]

<sup>3</sup> [CārvākDarśan or Lokāyata is one of the strongest ancient atheist philosophical school of India or probably the oldest Indian materialism developed around five to six hundred BCE or before by the priest Bṛhaspati, who may be more than one person. The primary text of such materialism and atheism had been lost, might be due to the rival philosophical schools of the regions but recovered from secondary literatures of later Indian śāstras, sūtras, purāṇas, epics, Buddhist and Jain literatures.]

<sup>4</sup> [‘..... as soon as there is a commitment, I am obliged to will the liberty of others as the same time as mine.’ (10)]

<sup>5</sup> [Marx’s view about pleasure experience of human has been expressed as ‘*The connection between the pleasure experiences of individuals .... could not be discovered until the conditions of production and communication of the traditional world had been criticized, and the opposition between the bourgeois view of life and the proletarian socialists and communist point of view created. There with all morality – whether it be the morality of asceticism or that of the philosophy of pleasure – was proved to be bankrupt*’ (12)]

<sup>6</sup> [‘*Atfirstglance, Nietzsche..... fought courageously to bestowuponhumanitythestrengthof will and intellectnecessarytoacquirea knowledgeofitsownemotions.ButNietzsche'sprojectfellshort,notbecausethe searchforknowledgecessarilyendsinmadnessbutbecausehewasunabletofreehimselffromhis esentfuldesiretoimitateJudeo-Christianity.Inhisimperativetoover-comemankind,Nietzscheduplicatesthesameideaofhumanina dequacyandweaknessheldbyhisrival.Nietzsche'scallforanovermanandthe Judeo-Christianbeliefinamesiahobeythesameimpulse,theimpulsetobringinaconscienceotherthanhum antoprovideethicswithanintelligentfoundation. Girard'sdivinerevelationofdesireandviolencealsoappearsatmomentstorelyonthetragiclaborofh uman intelligence, but it risks concluding, as does Nietzsche'swork,atthe pointwheretheselfsuccumbstoitsown scandalous nature.NietzscheanphilosophyandJudeo-Christianityarefinallyinadequateforanun-derstandingof*

*ethics, although they may be necessary to it, because they place ethical models beyond the scope of the human community and its representations.*' (16)]

<sup>7</sup>[As per Schopenhauer 'The will to live', forms the inmost core of every living being. Not only that he opined that will exhibits most conspicuously in the higher animals like man, in other term within the cleverer ones. In contrast in lower animals this will is less active, so observed less evidently. In the higher order of animals (in man) reason enters and with reason comes discretion, followed by the capacity of dissimulation, which can veil the operations of the will.]

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# NEO HUMANISM: REFRAMING HUMANISM FOR TRANSCENDING THE SCOPE OF MIND

SUNANDITA BHOWMIK

## I

Humanism is very deep and intricate philosophy since last few centuries. The attempt was to enunciate human's ability to unfold the mystery of this universe. Human beings are goaded by their instinctual urges. The fabric of human society is distorted by violence, ecological degradation, terrorism and other heinous crimes. Intellect is the precious asset that is being achieved as a result of physical and psychic clash. The social unrest that we experience across the world causes when human intellect is distorted. This misleading intellect results in defective action. It is intellect that guides human towards animality or divinity. The two social ailments pervade the whole society. One is self-pleasure and the other is sentiment. Too much emphasis on self-pleasure or *AtmaSukhaTttva* leads people to capture more physical wealth at the expense of depriving others. This mentality provokes them to do whatever they like regardless of consequences and considerations of right and wrong. Sentiments prevent people to come closer to each other. People when goaded by sentiment supports anything blindly the consequences of which are violence and hatred; poverty and pollution; disparity and ignorance, superstitions and dogma. The world of inequalities, materialist culture, and a constant fear of collapsing civilisation necessitate shift from unsustainability to a new paradigm. Modern vision of human is to become self-actualising individual where one utilises the knowledge and skills to overcome the obstacles and finds meaning in being busy and useful in search of material pleasure. The indicators of success are material security, self-esteem and autonomy (Bussey,2016). This model acknowledges competition, consumption and authority. Human in this model emphasises more on action rather than reflection. Society necessitates a new human with new wave of

consciousness where one can consider his/her as relational and rational being. Consciousness grows into the feeling of interconnectedness. All the creatures in this earth are the manifestation of the Supreme Consciousness. The first step to be rational is to liberate intellect from all dogma and narrow sentiments.

In order to sustain the superiority of intellectuals in the society, a group of people actively tried to paralyse the mass through imposing rituals, superstitions, irrational faiths and beliefs<sup>2</sup>. Human intellect is covered with narrow geo sentiment, socio-sentiment and pseudo humanistic sentiment. Human intellect should move along the right path. Human intellect must be free from dogma and superstitions. In Vedas, it is said that '*Sano buddhyashubhayasamyunaktu*'.- the prayer to God 'let my intellect (*buddhi*) be always attached to blessedness (*shubha*).' Dogma is detrimental to human society and human progress (Sarkar, 1987). Human life becomes meaningful through expanding the radius of love for all creation and a growing desire to serve creation. Human in this model maintains a balance between action, reflection and introspection.

Intelligence is the function of brain. According to Neohumanistic discourse, brain is governed by mind. Hence, the causes of social conflicts lie deep into human psyche. Unlike Western psychology, Neohumanism explains mind as the powerful factor that binds and liberates. How to reform the strength of mind for the collective welfare is the prime question. The animal instinct resides in dormant form in every human mind. It is conscience that will decide whether mind will exhibit crude expression like animal or it will express the subtle feeling of ultimate goodness. (Itself as '*satyam, ShivamSundaram*' the subtler entity). Elizabeth Phillips and John in 1781 established a school on the principles of *Knowledge* and *Goodness*. In their views, Goodness without knowledge is feeble and weak, yet knowledge without goodness is dangerous. In Aristotelian approaches, the goodness is inherent. Neohumanist education is wisdom centred without compromising the present trend in material progress.

## II

Present day, people's significant intellectual progress cannot be ignored. In parallel, the society experiences the disastrous consequences of human activity. In the name of human advancement, human beings constantly rearrange and simplify nature to suit their immediate needs ((Mitra, 1987) regardless of their future consequences. The way one utilises knowledge makes it good or bad, knowledge itself is neither good nor bad. What is essential to establish some higher criteria that guide our intellect towards collective progress and happiness. People often manipulate knowledge either for their self-interest or for dominating over others. Our society needs a philosophy blended with Idealism, Realism and Pragmatism. Philosophy guides people in all the strata of life –the physical strength of all, the mental peace of all and the spiritual elevation of all (Sarkar, 1982).. The philosophical basis of Idealism will empower children mentally and elevate spiritually. The pragmatic outlook of education will lay emphasis on practice and gaining direct experience. The realism will focus on what works in a real situation. In order to maintain an adjustment between internal and external rhythms, a well-integrated philosophy is essential that guides an individual to maintain balance in both the world. Our society lacks such holistic philosophy. Many theories have established which focussed partly on different aspects of human life. Some of them have given the guidelines for physical world but failed to face the hard realities of the objective world. Some theories have shown concern for the psychic world but could not maintain balance between inner and outer world. Some theories focussed on spiritual development but could not exist due to lack of rationality. Thus we experienced many theories people rejected because they had no connection with the practicalities of the earth. The philosophy is essentially practical oriented which leads to three basic components of human life- '*life, lived and to be lived in this cosmos*' (Bhat, 2019). This paper examines the scope of neo-philosophy that establishes harmony between the external objective world and the internal subjective world. According to Sarkar, proper philosophy is like a protective fence that protects '*the inner assets of human beings from the onslaughts of materialism.*' (Sarkar, 1982).

## **Ordinary Humanism: Barrier to Universal Harmony**

Greek philosopher Protagoras in 5<sup>th</sup> Century BCE defined humanism as *humans are the measure of all things*. The historical movement of Renaissance Humanism began in Italy in Fourteenth century primarily as the intellectual movement. The movement pervaded the entire Europe in Sixteenth century. Reconstructing human ability to unfold the mystery of universe was the main thrust of this movement. The movement brought about a reform in Church because of emerging scientific mind. Reformation in education system with presupposed conditions (Kristeller, 1978, pp586) took place. Humanism came into existence to attack the doctrinaire faith of Church. The egalitarian ethics and human sentiment were likely to be the core elements of humanism for sustaining interconnectedness among all humans. But had this human sentiment crossed all limits? If we go back to the history of humanism we can see in ancient Greek, it did not extend to women or slaves, rather it united the elites with the narrow sentiment of Christianity. In 18<sup>th</sup> Century England experienced the same kind of exclusion where humanity did not embrace slaves or colonies. So, humanism failed to achieve its ultimate goal. Concept of Humanism is inadequate at least in two respects, first, only humans are considered as the measure of all things and the existence of other creatures (plants and animals) are ignored. Second, the vision of human future remains to be vague if there is humanity has only past as a reference (Towsey, 2010). Ordinary Humanism is actually the *socio-sentiments maximitis* (Sarkar, 1982) that embraces all people within one fold regardless of their caste, community and nationality. However, it disturbs the social balance for two reasons. In Humanism, people completely ignore the existence of non-human creatures. Consequently, people can easily destroy the animals and plants kingdom for their own interest. This destruction thwarts the ecological balance which in turn results in global ecological crisis. Secondly, it leads to intra-humanistic clash or inter-group clash. Motivating with human sentiment when people help the poor or other deprived ones, sometimes the thinking may come back to their mind that as these people are obligated to them so those people can be utilized for their benefit. Human mind is the reservoir of goodness and evil. When the mind follows the path of rationality it is called conscience.

It can discriminate between proper and improper; just and unjust and good or bad. The philosophical vision of humanism is although good but it lacks any direction for expansion of mind, neither has it looked upon the development of conscience from where the true spirit of humanity will come out. Thus the ordinary humanistic approach is unstable and imperfect. Sarkar defined this adulterated humanism as *pseudo-humanism*. This ordinary or general humanism acts as the barrier to social harmony (Vedaprajinananda, 2007).

Both ethics and sentiment lie at the core of Humanism. Ethics is sense of equality for all human. The sentiment is extending love and respect for all human. Human sentiment is a feeling of connectedness with those who come within the embrace of humanity. The history of Humanism told another story of human sentiment. Kristeller (1978) argued how the elite class with knowledge in Latin literature came into existence as a result of the Humanist movement. The presupposed conditions of Humanism emphasised Latin as a means of gaining knowledge. In Italian education system, Humanism movement started as a vernacular term.

The term 'renaissance' or 'revival' was used by the humanists for their time and work in a very specific sense, as a revival of arts and of letters, of eloquence and of learning. It led to a new and intensified study of ancient literature and history...

Kristeller investigated the origin and effect of Humanism and found a deep connection between Humanism and Scholasticism. Realizing the necessity of education, some people started educating the educationally backward group. But through this *literacy drive* a group of people tried to inject the ideas into their minds which in turn paralyse them in one hand and in other way, a group of elites evolved in the society. Kristeller argued that humanistic movement propagated Latin and Greek in schools with the aim to produce elite class. In the words of Kristeller (1978),

It led to a new and intensified study of ancient literature and history, and to an imitation of antiquity in poetry and prose, in history and philosophy and in many other pursuits..... This whole literary and scholarly activity demanded



as its basis a secondary and even primary education which had for its core the study of Latin and Greek language and literature.

He also emphasized how the terms *humanism* and *humanist* are applied for certain human or moral values with strong appeal to sentiments. This is the way how certain kind of satellite groups have evolved and how the true spirit of humanism had distorted.

### **Reframing Humanism**

In Nineteenth century, many new ideas and beliefs attached to humanism to make it free from authority and dogmatic constituents. Several attempts have been made to restructure humanism. Manabendra Nath Roy's (1887-1954) idea was one of them. In order to convert the humanistic movement from a mere intellectual movement to a concrete and integrated humanistic spirit, M.N Roy had redefined humanism. He realized that the humanistic movement that started in Fourteenth century is not sufficient to solve the social and political crisis at this modern time. He enunciated Radical Humanism or New Humanism for social reconstruction. Man must be sovereign and there should not be any dogmatic authority over man's life and thought. There is only one sentiment in this world and that was human sentiment. Thus Roy wanted to refashion this world as the abode of human beings. There is nothing higher than man in this world. New Humanism as social philosophy reorganised social life with extreme freedom of individual development (Kataria, 2005).

The fundamental principles of Roy's New Humanism were freedom of man and sovereignty of man. Roy considered human as a biological organism. He asserted that man evolved in this earth due to biological evolution. He denied the presence of any extraneous factor within the existence of human being. His concept of morality is vague as he argued the conscience or moral sense as the mechanistic biological function. It is innate nature of man to be rational and moral. Moral sense is deep rooted in man's instinct and intuition. As rationality is the innate nature of human so it is desirable to act morally that guarantees the live in peace and harmony. This is the new social order of

Roy's universal harmony. Roy believed in non-transcendental knowledge that revealed the truth of this physical world. There is nothing beyond that. Scientific knowledge gained through question and enquiry is considered as true knowledge. He ignored the power of mind and like western materialistic philosophy, he emphasised brain as the main instrument of thinking. Human consciousness that move towards Infinite or Cosmic Entity is ignored in Roy's philosophy. This may be one of the limitations of Radical Humanism. Huxley on the other hand explained Humanism where the concept of religion is reflected. Huxley tried to blend religion and science together and named it as the '*evolutionary humanism*' (Hans, 1963) which would embrace the mankind as a whole. Several attempts were made to reframe humanism eliminating its application in narrow sense. Christian-classical humanism reshaped and thus transformed into scientific humanism. Sebastien Castellio (1515-1563) added a new approach to Humanism in arguing that human mind can reason well, but it cannot determine the absolute truth. Thus we find there is constant effort to advance intellectually and physically in the external world, but inner psychic progress remained stultified. The external physical rhythm does not conform to the inner psychic rhythm. It affects mental equipoise of society. A clash is inevitable the impact of which is felt more in psychic realm than in the physical sphere (Anderson & Coyle, 2000). Traditionally, Humanism emphasized the relation of man to man and it focussed on human value as the highest. This is an instrumental viewpoint in sustaining social justice throughout world. Rather, it would be more justified if think that all human beings are bound together within the infinite network of relationships that span physical, intellectual and spiritual realities (Bussey, 2010). As discussed earlier, humanism is a kind of socio-sentiment that leads to groupism, where a particular group thinks only of its own socio-economic and political interests. It results in group conflicts.

Humanism has been criticised for two reasons (Sarkar, 1982). Firstly, the love and affection are restricted to human beings only. Then what will be the fate of other living and non-living entities in the society to which human existence are directly linked

with? It includes only the human sentiment with in its scope. Secondly, the Cosmic Consciousness that leads to ideation of Great has no place in Humanism.

Human progress depends on mental constitution. The greatest treasure human possesses is logical mind. With the development of the logical mind the scope of sentimentality wanes and contracts. The spirit of humanism when linked with logical thinking people are no longer motivated by narrow sentiments. The path of rationality or conscience guides people to judge everything in the light of truth. Conscience and devotional sentiments are the two means through which the imperfect humanism can be made perfect. *Power of Reasoning* is a valuable gift for human beings but how and for what purpose this power is to be used primarily depend on *sa'dhana* (Bhat, 2019). This argument strengthens the link between cognition and spirituality.

Thus the very concept of humanism can be reframed and extended to all its possible dimensions. Humans are not isolated rather all humans in this universe are connected with all animate and inanimate beings through an infinite network of relationship. The spirit of humanism must not be confined within human sentiment. The feelings, love and sentiments should be extended to everything, animate and inanimate in this universe. This is the sentiment of Neo-humanism which elevates humanism to universalism. Expansion of the radius of Humanity to reach universalism is Neo-humanism. Humanism is a physico-social philosophy, whereas, Neo-humanism is a physico-psycho- spiritual philosophy.

### **Theoretical Framework of Neo-humanism**

Neo-humanism literally stands for '*practice of love for all creation including plants, animals and the inanimate world*' as propounded by the sheer Indian Philosopher P. R. Sarkar (1921-1990). Neo-humanism is the combination of intellectual analysis, direct practical experience, universal outlooks and spiritually based intuition. These are the solid basis for developing any good theory. It is based on the understanding that our nature is three- fold and that all three aspects of our nature should be developed: our

physical health and well-being, our mental knowledge and power and our spiritual awareness and understanding.

Neohumanism is a visionary and optimistic approach to life that promotes a sense of possibilities. The holistic philosophy addressing three dimensions of human existence is not a new concept. Many of our oriental philosophy have mentioned the development of life at three levels namely physical, mental and spiritual. But to know philosophical discourses and understand it is not same. How to take all wonderful knowing into the world are the most challenging tasks. When we gather some information through our sense organs it indicates we know the object. But when the basic nature of this object is fully subjectivized through experience then we understand it. *'Real education leads to a pervasive sense of real love and compassion for all creation'* (Sarkar, 1982)

Neohumanism integrates physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, psychosocial and environmental perspectives. Thus the approach of Neohumanism is physico-psycho-spiritual. The four pillars of this philosophy are: humanity, rationality, morality and spirituality. It gives a clear direction in physical world to maintain a harmony with all animate and inanimate around us and at the same time it awakens our relationship with Cosmic Consciousness. Thus it is the blending of inner subjective world and the outer objective world what Shambhushivanand (2014) defined as inner ecology and outer ecology.

Most of our existing philosophies ignore the status of inanimate world. But in Neohumanism, the inanimate things occupy a significant place. Neohumanism brings the subtler atom and even the sub-atoms within its scope. Sarkar (1983) argued that fundamentally there is no difference between animate and inanimate worlds. The basic characteristics that differentiate animate from inanimate are movement and presence of unit mind. But according to Sarkar, there is a characteristic of movement in both inanimate and animate. Within the atom and minute objects there are still smaller particles that maintain their structural unity. In every object the mind exists in the dormant state. Thus Neohumanism goes deep into smallest and subtlest assembling structures of inanimate objects.

What inspires one to serve people and other creations? It is the feeling of interconnectedness with the Supreme Consciousness that growing connection leads one to inculcate the spirit of service. The spirit of morality promotes harmony and sense of spirituality awakens conscience. Human beings should realise the supreme truth that the entire humanity in this universe is bound together by common ties of fraternity.

### **Sentiments and Psycho-physical Imbalance**

During our analysis of humanism from different humanists' perspectives, we see that humanism is a kind of sentiment. Wherever sentiment is predominant, the scope of rationality wanes and contracts (Sarkar, 1982). Sentiment is one of the expression of mind. When it is restricted for certain geographical area or community or used for any narrow sense hinders the inner growth of human beings. Sentiment is mainly expressed in two forms: geo-sentiment or socio-sentiment. Geo-sentiment refers to the expression of love and concerns for a particular geographical territory. People when are goaded by this geo-sentiment support anything blindly. They show interest for their own locality at the expense of other localities. Geo-sentiment expresses many other geocentric sentiments as geo-politics, geo-patriotism, geo-economics and geo-religion. This geo sentiment blocks human mind to flow beyond his or her own indigenous soil.

When people show interest and concern for a particular group then it is socio sentiment. It is better than geo-sentiment but not the perfect. It undermines the growth of other groups. Thus inter group clash caused bloodshed in the past. The socio sentiment leads to ethnic conflicts, communal dissensions, economic exploitation and discriminatory religious dogma.

Humanism is also a kind of socio-sentiment with broad circumference. It is so because, in humanism people show love and concerns only for human and ignore the non-human creatures. If this human sentiment is extended to include all creatures in this universe, then only it would be the perfect humanism. The humanistic sentiment unless enunciated as true humanistic inspiration from within, is likely to degenerate into Pseudo-humanism (Mohanty, 1996).

Thus we see the sentiment of any form ceases the free flowing spirit of humanity. It has a disastrous effect on society. Sentiment when utilized for narrow sense (geo or socio) lead to a psychic disorder. At this technology oriented society, people made considerable intellectual progress. They awakened intellectually but inwardly they remain incomplete, stultified and dogmatic. Consequently, People cannot maintain the balance in the speeds of the inner and outer world. The difference in rhythm of inner subjective world and outer objective world leads to psycho- physical imbalance.

This manifested universe is the expression of the Omnipotent (Vishnu). All the creatures originate from single naval point and will merge unto that point one day. This is the highest sentiment and this sentiment when attached to humanity will vibrate in all the directions. This concept is articulated in *Vishnupurana*:

*VistarahsarvabhutasyaVisnorvishvamidamjagat;*

*Drastavyamatvatmavattasmadabhadanavicaksanaeh(Vishnupurana)*

All animate and inanimate creatures in this universe are the expressions of the Supreme Consciousness. This devotional sentiment can elevate humanism to universalism and then only then it can be called Neo-humanism. The radius of circle of love for all creatures needs to be expanded to such an extent that the underlying spirit of humanism is extended to everything in this universe. Human existence can be made glorious by rising above all sorts of narrow sentiments.

The task of philosophy is not only to raise question neither it makes a heap of problems before us. Finding out solution is also the primary work of philosophy. Hence, we will examine here an alternative philosophy that can counteract all those narrow sentiments. In Neohumanism, Sarkar pointed out two distinct ways to thwart these sentiments that undermine the true spirit of humanity. The first is developing rationalistic mentality through study and secondly, developing proto-spiritualistic mentality. Human beings are more psychic than physical, whereas, animals are primarily physical. If we hurt anybody with our words or actions and then offer him or her food, the person will simply reject to have this food even if he or she is hungry. But after beating a dog if we

call it for food, it will not hesitate to take it. This is because, in animal mind remains in dormant state. But human mind controls all activities through brain. Human mind must be motivated by rationality that no animal can do. Rationality is the treasure of humanity. Rationalistic mentality can be developed through study of various subjects and the study of spiritual subjects. On the other hand, development of *proto-spiritualistic mentality* is the only way to eliminate socio-sentiment. The base of proto-spiritualistic mentality stands on the principle of social equality. It is the psychic orientation of human towards spiritual expansion. When human mind is goaded by dogma their intellect is said to be filled in blind faith and superstition. It is degenerated form of human psyche. Their intellect needs to be liberated from *quagmire of superstitions* (Sarkar, 1982). *Proto-spirituality* is an attempt to channelize the mind towards Supreme Consciousness. When this internal devotion is translated into the external sphere, the principle of social equality or *SamaSamajTattva* is established. The principle of social equality refers to the collective march of all in unison and this is the basis of *Dharma* or righteousness. Thus there exists a linear relationship in unit mind, Supreme Consciousness and external world or society.

### **Neohumanist Consciousness**

Spirituality acts as a fine linking thread in the sense of belonging in relationship. The spirit essentially reminded us our relationship with others and which is counterpoint to fear and insecurity is 'longing for the Great' (Sarkar, 1982). This feeling of connectionism lifts us from paralysis to power and from individualism to collectivism. Instead of awakening conscience, the existing moral philosophy supports adherence to a sets of rule, norm or obligation.

### **Ecological Perspective of Neohumanism**

Neohumanism emphasizes the value of animals, plants and inanimate things. Thus it is ecologically centred philosophy. All living beings have two types of values; utility value and existential value. An animal or plant is said to have utility value considering the extent to which it is useful to human being or it serves the interest of

human being. The other is existential value. A thing is said to have existential value even if it is not immediately useful to human being or if it has negative value; does not entitle human the right to exploit them or destroy them. By virtue of its existence in this universe a *thing* or *being* contributes to the universal harmony. It is true from metaphysical point of view that '*the world of diversities is the metamorphosed form of the Supreme Consciousness*'. Understanding this deep sense value is possible only when we link everything in this universe with the expression of Cosmic Consciousness.

Human beings have to create a congenial environment to preserve all the species of animals and plants. The existence of plants and animals is indispensable for the existence of human and for promotion of human welfare. People usually preserve those species which are immediately useful to them. They only concern of their own interest and comfort. Every creature even if it does not have immediate utility value has the right to exist. Here two types of mentality are predominant underlying this action of destruction; one is the tendency of persecution and the other is causing harm to other creatures for gratification of pleasure. Both are detrimental to the society. When we say peaceful coexistence, non-human creatures also come under it, so we cannot destroy non-human creatures brutally which we have been doing. What kind of humanity is it? It is nothing but pseudo-humanistic strategy, not even humanistic strategy (Sarkar, 1982). The kind of torturing may lead to the tyranny that may be perpetrated by one social group against another in future. These defected mentality needs to be corrected through practice of well-balanced philosophy. The Supreme Consciousness manifests itself in every living and non- living creature. *Human beings must restructure their thoughts, plans and activities in accordance with the dictates of ecology* (Sarkar, 1978).

### **Humanism to Universalism**

In Neo-humanism, P. R. Sarkar (1921-1990) integrates physical, moral, spiritual, psycho-social and environmental perspectives. Now, the question is-how does the sense of universalism grow? Neo-humanism suggests mainly two ways: firstly, the development of rational and logical mind, that means, people will judge everything in the light of truth. People will be capable of consciously planning and guiding their



actions towards self-actualization in one hand and in other hand for the welfare of the society. Secondly, exploring the inner spiritual potentialities, people should realize the interconnectedness, that all beings are intimately linked with the fabric of the universe. Sarkar said, it will be possible through inculcating the idea of Cosmic Consciousness. *'We have to work hard not only for suffering humanity but also for the suffering living world'*- this is the true spirit of universalism underlying Neohumanism. Neohumanism clearly defines three common factors in every individual, and these are- expanded idea of mind that means human's mind tends to expand, limited dimensions of body means human body has limited capacity and finally, hidden spiritual potentialities means every individual has huge spiritual potentialities in dormant form. Keeping in view all these three dimensions, Neohumanist Education incorporates the subjective inner ecology and objective outer ecology. As the most intelligent and thoughtful beings in this universe, human has to accept the responsibility of entire universe.

Universalism requires a new set of tools: knowledge for service, participatory and inclusive social culture, relational and rational outlook,

### **Elements of Expression of Neohumanism**

Neohumanism is expressed mainly through three elements: Layers of mind, love of creation and service (Bussey, 2016). Neohumanism connects body-mind-spirit in way for developing 'self'.... It includes love and service within its scope that it is the gift to our society and to future. The principles of Austanga Yoga are based on Neohumanistic philosophy. It is the process of subjectivization through which mind enters into the relationship with self and others.

Expanding the circle of love of human heart to embrace all living and non-living things in this universe. This is the way Sarkar re-interpreted Humanism extending its circumference from '*minimity*' to '*maximity*'. Thus Neohumanism is the extension of Humanism. Sarkar said, Neohumanism as universal humanism.

In order to internalise the values of Neohumanism concrete engagement and personal experience are required. Knowledge is acquired through introspective practice

where people realize the essential link of the self with the higher Self. Understanding the relationship and interconnectedness of one thing to other is the fundamental reality of Neohumanist practice. Neohumanism when is applied in practical field move towards morally and spiritually oriented society.

### **Expanded Idea of Mind in Neohumanism**

Generally, Western models of psychology admit brain as the location of mental activities. Cognitive development, in case of Western psychology is only to enhance the capacity of brain. But Neohumanism, the Indian philosophy explains mind as the more powerful factor in cognitive psychology. In Neohumanism, Sarkar (1982) stated that cognitive development means enhancing the power of mind. Every individual possesses the unit mind which is the transmuted form of pure consciousness. Mind is evolved from matter through clash and cohesion. There are three functional chambers of mind namely, Citta, Aham and Mahat primarily co-exist and work in relation with external world. Citta is the objectivated mind. It takes the form of whatever it comes in contact with (Rama & Brim, 2010). Aham is the directive principle of mind that drives mind either towards crude material world or to the subtle spiritual world. When Citta is bigger than the Aham, then the psychic faculty is called crude mind stuff. But when citta is suppressed by aham then the enlarged psychic faculty is called intellect. And finally the state of intuition arrives when mahat becomes larger than aham. The attainment of intuition depends on rationality and conscience which deliberately drive psychic power towards pure consciousness. Pure consciousness is spiritual. Thus we see how mind can be expanded from crude physicality to the state of pure consciousness. The approach is from physico-psychic to psycho-spiritual and from psycho-spiritual to the spiritual.

Now, the mind composed of citta, aham and mahat has five layers with varying functions.

*Addressing Different layers of mind*

Layers of mind have long been recognised in Yogic and Buddhist philosophy. This is the practical approach of Neohumanism translated into reality through experience. P. R Sarkar (1956) redefined the human development model in his book *AnandaSutram* as:

*PaincakosatmikaJaeviisattaKadaliipuspat (AnandaSutram)*

The essence of life is adorned like banana flower where the six petals play as the layers of mind.

Mind is the fundamental cause of all human actions. Therefore, it is mind that binds and liberates. Mind can express in three ways; Instinct, Sentiments and Rationality (Mohanty, 1996). Instinct is the crude expression of mind that an individual inherits during birth. Instinct is similar to Id of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. It works at physical level and always seeks pleasure. Sentiment is more psychic than physical. In developed animal's sentiment exceeds instinct. Sentiment is the psychic movement that refers to allowing the mind run after something what it likes without considering just or unjust. Rationality is the highest treasure of human mind. When the mind follows the path of rationality, the sentiment wanes. Those who follow the path of morality and spirituality rationality is the automatic outcome for them. Layers of mind (*kosa* in Sanskrit) start from crude to subtle. The inner subtlest layer can be understood only after removing its outer crude layers. Practice of Neohumanism gradually opens up the layers of mind and expands itself to reach the innermost subtle layer called causal layer. The first layer is called *Kamamayakosa* or *conscious mind* which is the crude mind and it deals with the senses and five fundamental factors. Hence, the mind at this layer is engaged in all physical body related activities. *Citta* remains dominant in this layer. The next to *Kamamayakosa* is *Manomayakosa* that refers to the subtle layer or *sub-conscious mind*. As *Ahamis* dominated here hence, this layer of mind is engaged in all sorts of intellectual activities like thinking and remembering. Development of brain as information processing centre is influenced by expression of this layer. The last three layers or *kosas*, that is, *Atimanasa*, *Vijinamaya* and *Hiiranmaya* are collectively called the causal mind (Sarkar, 1962). Imagination, creativity, aesthetics and other subtle thinking are the activities of *atimanasakosa* or *first causal layer mind*. Intuition starts to

express itself in this layer. (Brim, 2010). Here, *Mahat* becomes dominant over *aham*. This layer is activated through meditation. The second causal layer mind is called *vijinamayakosa* which is the centre of intuition, non-attachment and discrimination as to what is relative and what is absolute (Rama & Brim, 2010). Expression of mind at this layer is psycho-spiritual which is supported by feeling of interconnectedness with the Supreme Consciousness. This layer is developed through meditation and spiritual practice. The last causal layer that Sarkar (1962) defined as the *hikiranmayakosa* is the layer of spiritual effulgence. One can experience universal love and spiritual longing. It is the extreme blissful state. When this layer is activated the spirit of '*Neohumanism overflows in all directions, making all things sweet and blissful, unifying individual life with collective life and transforming this earth into a blissful heaven.*' (Sarkar, 1982). Until and unless the crude and sub-conscious layers of mind are not removed, the causal layers cannot be observed or understood. Neohumanist spirit is at the core to serve the humanity.

### **Neohumanist Spirituality**

Universal spirit is at the core of our existence. The defect in human intellect leads to disparities, violence, superstitions and many other social ailments. This defective intellect limits expansion of heart. To remove the dichotomy between 'me' and 'them' one can realise the inner essence. The process of connecting the deepest 'one-self' with the universal 'cosmic-self' is spirituality. Spirituality is at the core of Neohumanism.

Humanism ignored the existence of Absolute truth. Humanism is nothing to do with absolute authority, absolute morality and absolute perfection. Julian Huxley, the famous humanist in her book, *Evolution in Action* (1953), argued the religion values as not the divine revelation but as the function of human nature.

As mentioned earlier, Neohumanism is a physico-psycho-spiritual philosophy. Spirituality is at the core of this philosophy. Spiritual philosophy is not a dogmatic or mythical affirmation, nor is it an intellectually explained theoretical extravaganza (Raghunath, 1995). It is scientific and practical regular practice of which promotes

intuitional vision among individual. Sarkar said that '*daily nourishment of our Spiritual Being is as important as the nourishment of our physical body*'. Sarkar (1982) illustrated three dimensions of spirituality; *spirituality as cult*, *spirituality in essence* and *spirituality as the mission*.

The *Bhagabat Dharma* of human being is to follow the path of spirituality. Once a human being gets human like physical structure, he or she enters the Cosmic Circle. It is natural and equally applicable for all human being of this universe. Those who are not following this path even after having human structure, they are going against nature and simply they are following the life of animals. The universe is the expression of Macro-psyche which is again controlled by Macro-spirit. All the micro-psyche entities reside within the Macro-psyche entity. This is the ultimate reality. Neohumanism guides people to follow the psycho-spiritual practice. This spiritual practice, according to Sarkar is '*spirituality as a cult*'. It is physic-psycho-spiritual in nature. Through this practice, one can easily remove the defects of physical world and the defects of psychic world.

The second stage is *spirituality in essence*. It mainly works in psychic and spiritual realm. When people start spiritual practice, a collective wave will vibrate in all around. This new wave of consciousness will strengthen the humanity's collective spirit. Under this collective positive force, no pseudo-humanistic strategy will work.

Finally, *spirituality as a mission*. It is the highest realization in the path of spirituality. The feeling that all individual has a direct link with the Cosmological Hub, everything is springing from *Cosmic Existential Nucleus* (Nadabindu Yoga in Tantra). When human will attain this extreme point of unison with the Supreme Nucleus, then Neohumanism will be permanently established.

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# MAHĀBHĀRATA: A WAR FOR WHOSE THRONE?

ANMOLPREET KAUR

**Key words:** Mahābhārata (Mbh), Nīyoga, Throne, Levirate.

## Introduction

The world has witnessed conflicts over ownership of kingdoms over the ages. There have been numerous battles in the human history over a throne. The thirst for power and being the suzerain makes humans perpetrate evil deeds. In the Mahābhārata<sup>1</sup> (Mbh), one of the central arcs that push the narrative forward is a feverish rush for the rights to the throne of the Hāstinapura. Broadly, the Mbh contains a plethora of legends, *ākhyānas*, and *upākhyānas* teaching moral lessons. It is a political, moral, and a philosophical discourse. Amidst this, the family feud is the nucleus of the story.

This paper aims to explore who was the rightful successor of the throne of Hāstinapura. Scholars like Irawati Karve (1990) believe that Duryodhana could not claim the kingdom. B. K. Matilal (2002) contested the opinion and believed that Duryodhana had a natural right to the throne. Romila Thapar (2009) and Kevin McGrath (2018) stress that only Bhīṣma was the last *Puru* member, and thus he alone was the rightful heir to the kingdom. Opposed to them, Bibek Debroy (2015) holds that even though born by proxy, both Yudhiṣṭhira and Duryodhana were the legitimate successors of the throne. The paper discusses the existing debate, and then attempts to reach a position regarding the throne rights in the Mbh.

The paper is divided into three sections to fulfill the above-stated objective. The first section discusses the concept of *nīyoga*, which is central while analyzing the various positions of the scholars. The second section describes the story of the Mbh. The section aims to describe the line of events in the epic. The third section is devoted to analyzing

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<sup>1</sup> All references are from The Devanāgrī Edition of the Mahābhārata (Calcutta), translated by M.N. Dutt unless otherwise mentioned.

the debate over rights to the kingdom. Based upon these sections, we will reach a suitable conclusion.

### I. The Custom of *Nīyoga*

*Nīyoga*<sup>2</sup> was the practice of obtaining progeny, primarily a son. English rendering of *nīyoga* is levirate which the Jews followed<sup>3</sup> as well, whereby the dead husband's brother cohabits or marries the widow. A.L. Basham (2004) acknowledges that the practice was prevalent in ancient India, especially among *kṣatriyas*. Literally, *Nīyoga* implies 'appointment'. Banerji explains that it implies "...the appointment of a man to beget a son on the wife or widow of a sonless man" (1998: 114). According to T.S. Rukmani, "*Nīyoga* was an accepted social custom and was part of the *kṣatriyadharmā* from ancient times" (1989: 26). She stresses that *nīyoga* was accepted and allowed for *kṣatriyas* by Indian law-makers such as Gautama, Bauddhāyana, Viṣṇu, and Vasiṣṭha. Yajñavalkya also acknowledges *nīyoga*. Kauṭilya permitted even the Brahmanas to practice *nīyoga*. However, Āpastamba condemns the practice (ibid). The central law-maker, Manu, is ambiguous in the sense that he both endorses and disapproves of *nīyoga*. Mbh consents *nīyoga* as we find instances of the practice of this custom in the epic. However, according to Ravi Khangai (2015), in the Mbh, the custom of *nīyoga* is not merely a union of male and female for obtaining a son; *Nīyoga* in Mbh involves politics. This we shall explore in the coming pages.

Olivelle explains Manu's position regarding the condition of *nīyoga*, according to which the custom must be practiced "If the line is about to die out" (2004: 159). *Nīyoga* is centered around the argument of the 'need of a son' for the continuity of race or family. So, the custom is practiced to obtain a son. Sometimes, it is practiced when the husband dies, leaving no progeny (case of Ambikā and Ambālikā), and sometimes it is practiced because the husband is sterile or unable (impotent) to beget a child on his wife. In such

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<sup>2</sup> Derived from *ni+* root *yuj*, 'appoint to, appoint as, or order to'.

<sup>3</sup> See Khangai 2015. Levirate (Latin *-levir-* a husband's brother; akin, Greek *daer*). See *New Webster's Dictionary of the English Language*, Delhi, pp. 861. 1979



a situation, the woman can approach the “brother-in-law or a relative from the husband's ancestry” (ibid).

Following Manu (IX.59), as interpreted by Kullūka, Banerji explains that if the husband is dead, then the woman must take due permission from the elders in the family before engaging in *nīyoga*. And if the husband is alive (as in the case of Kuntī), the woman must take his permission before practicing *nīyoga*. It is also to be noted that although we see that Manu abode the ritual, in IX.64-68, Manu prohibits the practice, saying “...good people denounce anyone who is senseless enough to appoint a woman to have children after her husband dies” (Olivelle 2004: 159).

Also, specific rules must be followed for the practice of *nīyoga*, and the woman must fulfill the ordinances of the practice. One such ordinance is that the woman must practice the ritual to obtain 'only one son' (Banerji 1998: 115): the ritual can be practiced “only once”<sup>4</sup>. Further, the woman and the begetter must observe the relationship of 'father and daughter-in-law' for the rest of their lives after performing the ritual (Olivelle 2004: 159). This implies that there should be no lust in the relationship post *nīyoga*. In the Mbh, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu, and the five sons of Pāṇḍu were born employing the ritual of *nīyoga*. For Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu, Satyavatī (mother of Vicitravīrya) made the arrangements, and Vyāsa begot the children on the widows of Vicitravīrya. The five sons of Pāṇḍu were born through *nīyoga* with Pāṇḍu's permission.

With this understanding of the concept of *nīyoga*, let us look at the story of the Mbh. The third section will discuss the question of throne succession with respect to *nīyoga*.

## II. Storyline

Mbh is the story of the lunar dynasty. For the present paper, let us begin the story with the son of Bhārata- Śāntanu. King Pratipa installed Śāntanu as the next king and

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<sup>4</sup> When Manu says that the woman must seek union with her brother-in-law several times, it might seem confusing. However, the complete saying is that “...he should have sex with her once every time she is in season until she bears a child” (Olivelle 2004: 160). It clearly says that the union must be sought several times until a woman bears a child. Once she bears a child, they should not have any union and should maintain the relationship of father and daughter-in-law.

retired into the forest (Sambhava parvan 97.24: 293). Śāntanu developed a liking for hunting, and while roaming and hunting around the river Gaṅgā, he met a beautiful lady- the goddess Gaṅgā herself. Śāntanu desired to make Gaṅgā his wife. When he approached Gaṅgā for the same, Gaṅgā promised to marry Śāntanu only if he would never question her for any of her actions. If he did question her ever, she would leave him forever (ibid, 98.3-4: 294). Śāntanu was mesmerized with Gaṅgā's beauty, and so accepted all of Gaṅgā's conditions. Having promised to fulfill Gaṅgā's every conditions, Śāntanu married Gaṅgā and brought her to his kingdom.

Post-wedding, Gaṅgā gave birth to a son but soon drowned the infant in the river. Years passed, and Gaṅgā, one by one, drowned five more sons of Śāntanu in the waters. Śāntanu could never muster the courage to ask Gaṅgā the reason for her drowning the sons in the river. He feared losing Gaṅgā because if he questioned her, she would leave him as per her condition of marriage. However, after giving birth to the eighth son, when Gaṅgā was heading towards the river to drown the seventh son of Śāntanu, the latter stopped Gaṅgā and asked her the reason for drowning his sons. To this, Gaṅgā narrates the story of eight Vāsus whom ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha cursed for stealing ṛṣi's cow Nandini (ibid, 99: 295-98). The ṛṣi had cursed the eight Vāsus to be born on earth. The eight Vāsus requested goddess Gaṅgā to bear them in her womb and, once born, drown them in a river and free them from the painful earthly existence. The eighth Vāsu, the main culprit in stealing the cow, was born as Devavrata and was made to live life on earth. Śāntanu did not let Gaṅgā drown Devavrata in water. So, Devavrata (Bhīṣma) survived and had to suffer the pain of earthly existence. Gaṅgā then departed and took Devavrata with herself with a commitment to bring Devavrata back to Śāntanu at the age of sixteen.

Gaṅgā kept her promise and brought Devavrata back to Śāntanu at the stipulated time- when Devavrata turned sixteen. Away from Śāntanu, Gaṅgā made the arrangements for making Devavrata a great warrior skilled in the use of weapons. The young Devavrata was taught by ṛṣi Vasiṣṭha and was versed in the Vedas with their *Angas* (ibid, 100: 297-300). Fulfilling her duties towards her son, she leaves Devavrata with Śāntanu.

Śāntanu was joyous to have his son Devavrata with him. Witnessing the skills and sharpness of the mind of Devavrata, Śāntanu had made up his mind to announce Devavrata to be the next king of the Hāstinapura. However, destiny had other plans. Before Śāntanu could announce Devavrata to be the next king, Śāntanu fell in love with a fisherwoman-Satyavatī. She was a beautiful woman endowed with sharp features. Śāntanu aspired to marry her, and he met Satyavatī's father for the same. The fisherman agreed to bestow his daughter on king Śāntanu only on the pre-condition that the son born to Satyavatī shall alone be the heir to the throne (ibid, 100.56: 302). Śāntanu could not give the skilled Devavrata a backseat. However, Śāntanu was sorrowful for being unable to marry Satyavatī.

Soon, Devavrata noticed his father's melancholy and was informed of the reason for Śāntanu's sorrow. Learning about the matter, Devavrata went to the fisherman and pledged to relinquish all his rights to the throne. The fisherman posed another pre-condition for the wedding, speculating if the children of Devavrata contest with the children of Satyavatī's sons for the succession of the throne. Devavrata took another pledge and vowed to remain a celibate all his life to remove this doubt of the fisherman. Hearing such pledges being taken by Devavrata, the people and the gods witnessing the event uttered "Bhīṣma - Bhīṣma," which implies 'terrible' (ibid, 100.75-103: 304-6). From then onwards, Devavrata came to be known as Bhīṣma. It is for these pledges that Śāntanu gave Bhīṣma the boon to die at will as a reward. It is noteworthy that the fisherman gave weightage to the kingdom and unknowingly laid the foundation for future conflicts regarding the throne.

Satyavatī married Śāntanu and gave birth to two sons - Vicitravīrya and Citrāṅgadā (ibid, 101.1-3: 306). When Śāntanu died, the sons born from Satyavatī were young to rule the kingdom, so the eldest son of Śāntanu - that is, Bhīṣma acted as the caretaker of the kingdom. Later, Citrāṅgadā became the king of Hāstinapura. Soon Citrāṅgadā died on the battlefield, and the throne passed to Vicitravīrya (ibid, 101: 306-7). Bhīṣma made the arrangements to get his younger stepbrother married off and thus abducted the three princesses (Ambā, Ambikā, and Ambālikā) of the king of Kāśī (ibid,

102.3-4: 307). Bringing the three princesses of Kāśī to Hāstinapura by practicing the *rākṣasa* form of marriage<sup>5</sup> (suited and typical for the kṣatriya caste)<sup>6</sup>, Bhīṣma informed his stepmother Satyavatī to make arrangements for the marriage of Vicitravīrya. One of the princesses-Ambā, expressed her desire to marry king Śālva. Discussing the matter, Bhīṣma and Satyavatī decided to let Ambā go to Śālva. The other two princesses were married to Vicitravīrya. Soon after the wedding, Vicitravīrya died of disease, leaving behind two childless young queens who could bear a child (ibid, 102.56-69: 311-2).

The death of Vicitravīrya led to the crisis as he died leaving behind no progeny. So the kingdom was in danger. Contemplating the issue, Satyavatī requested Bhīṣma to bestow progeny on the widows of Vicitravīrya for obtaining an heir to the throne, invoking the injunction of *nīyoga* (levirate). However, Bhīṣma refused to make the bid of his mother by reminding her of the vows which Bhīṣma had taken before the fisherman for the wedding of his father with Satyavatī (ibid, 103: 312-314). Bhīṣma gives an alternative and suggests calling a Brāhmaṇa for obtaining the progeny (ibid, 105.1-2: 317). Kantawala (1989) must be credited for highlighting that when Bhīṣma suggested inviting a Brāhmaṇa to procreate, he was referring to the Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra (15.3), whereby a Brāhmaṇa is added to the "list of appointees."<sup>7</sup> This activity, where a Brāhmaṇa is appointed for procreating, is referred to by Kantawala as "the process of dharmasāstra-ization at work" (ibid).

Dismayed, Satyavatī then decides to disclose about a son born to her before her wedlock to Śāntanu. Before Satyavatī married Śāntanu, she had an encounter with Ṛṣi Parāśaraḥ. From the copulation of the two, a son was born named Vyāsa. Satyavatī tells

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<sup>5</sup> In *rākṣasa* marriage, the warrior abducts the bride and carries her away in his chariot.

<sup>6</sup> In Indian tradition, marriage is one of the essential *samskaras*, which help people attain salvation/mokṣa. In the Dharmasāstra, eight types of marriages are described, which hold validity in the Indian tradition. The marriages described in the Manusmṛti (III.21) are *Brāhma*, *Daiva*, *Ārṣa*, *Prājāpatya*, *Āsura*, *Gāndharva*, *Rākṣasa*, and *Paiśāca*. Some forms are lawful for certain castes only. Manu says that the last four are lawful for a kṣatriya. Also, see Sambhava parvan (102.8-12: 308). See McGrath (2009: II,3 and IV,1). See Jamison (1996: 218-35).

<sup>7</sup> Manu counts relatives and brother-in-law from her husband's ancestry as the appointees; he omits the Brāhmaṇas into the list.

Bhīṣma about her son Vyāsa, and they conjointly decided to call him for the purpose (Sambhava parvan 105.3-54: 317-21).

Vyāsa bestowed Dhṛtarāṣṭra on Ambikā and Pāṇḍu on Ambālikā. As Ambikā did not like the ṛṣi, she closed her eyes, so her son was born blind. Ambālikā could not bear the odor of the ṛṣi and turned pale, and so the son born to her was pale. Being requested by his mother, Vyāsa once again enters the room of Ambikā to bestow one more child, but Ambikā replaces herself with the maid. Vyāsa was impressed with the manners of the maid and bestowed a son on her, who was named Vidura (ibid, 106: 321-3).

Here, it can be said that the rules of levirate were not followed by Satyavatī as she requested Vyāsa twice to beget son on Ambikā (ibid, 106.23: 322). Ambikā probably did not desire to meet Vyāsa, and thus she replaced herself with her maidservant from whom Vidura was born (ibid, 106.24: 322). Substituting herself with the maidservant reflects that either she "did not like the practice" or "disliked the appointee" (Kantawala 1989: 93). The episode also shows the absence of a woman's consent.

Regarding this episode, Kantawala (1989) claims that "all the necessary conditions to allow *nīyoga* are not fulfilled in these cases" (ibid, 93). Kantawala quotes Manu (9.57), according to which an elder brother must never approach the wife of his younger brother. The elder brother must treat his younger brother's wife as his 'daughter-in-law'. According to this, the rule was violated by inviting the elder brother to beget children on widows. He also claims that due to loopholes in its practice, levirate "...came to be prohibited later with the changes in moral views governing the post-wedlock life" (ibid, 91). Banerji (1998) and Basham (2004) also explain that the practice was later shunned and was included among *kalivarjyas* in the kali age.

On the other hand, Banerji's assertion of the practice of appointing the elder brother is grounded in the Gautamadharmasūtra (18.4-8). According to Gautamadharmasūtra (18.4-8), "a woman whose husband is dead and who desires offspring may secure a son from her brother-in-law with the permission of elders, and in addition to him, the other Dharmaśāstra texts add a *sapinda* and a *sagotra* of the

husband" (1989: 92). Basham also highlights that for procreation, the 'close relative, usually the brother' or holy men, were appointed (2004: 176). However, both Gautamadharmasūtra and Basham did not specify whether the 'elder' brother was allowed to procreate or not. Banerji attempts to clarify the doubt by quoting Manu (IX.59) and explaining that the term *devara* in Sanskrit may stand for both – the elder brother and the husband's younger brother. And thereby answers the objection raised by Kantawala<sup>8</sup>.

Thus, it can be argued that Satyavatī did not violate any rule by inviting the elder brother to bestow progeny on the widows of her son. However, the ordinance stating that the ritual must be practiced once stands in question as Satyavatī requested Vyāsa to beget another son on Ambikā. However, the charge of practicing the ritual twice is invalid because Ambikā replaced herself with the maid and thus practiced the ritual once. Therefore, we conclude that the *nīyoga* was practiced by Satyavatī, Ambikā, Ambālikā, and Vyāsa with adherence to the ordinances laid, and there was no violation of the rules while performing the ritual.

Khangai highlights the politics at play in the practice of *nīyoga*. As per him, if the objective was to obtain an heir to the throne, then custom could have been practiced only once and on only one queen of Vicitravīrya. He argues that either of the widows could have been appointed for the ritual to obtain progeny. This objection can be addressed from the Mbh, where Śāntanu tells Bhīṣma that one son is equivalent to no son (Sambhava parvan 100.67-8: 303). Keeping this in mind, Satyavatī could have asked Vyāsa to beget a child on both the queens and thus justifies the practice of the custom on both the queens<sup>9</sup>. So, the birth of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu is according to the norms of *nīyoga* and thus holds validity.

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<sup>8</sup> Kantawala (1989: 93) highlight that Satyavatī described Vyāsa as *devara* (cr. Ed. 1.100.2). *Devara* in Sanskrit stand for the elder and younger brother of the husband (Apte 1968: 260). But in Gujarati *diyara* stands for the younger brother of husband. However, Vyāsa was elder to Vicitravīrya. So, Kantawala says that "It is interesting to note the semantic change coupled with phonetic change in Gujarati of the vocable *devara*" (1989: 93).

<sup>9</sup> There are other questions regarding the practice of *nīyoga* raised by Khangai. They are about the candidates for *nīyoga*. He argues why the son of Vāhlika (Somdatta) was not considered the candidate to

Having discussed the birth of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu and the validity of their rights to the throne, let us move further in the story. After the birth of the sons, Bhīṣma married Dhṛtarāṣṭra to the princess of Gāndhāra- Gāndhārī at a suitable age (Sambhava parvan, 110: 327-9). After the marriage of Gāndhārī and Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Gāndhārī's brother Śakuni started living in Hāstinapura. Pāṇḍu was married to the daughter of king Kuntībhoja- Kuntī (Pṛthā) (ibid, 112: 331-2). Later, Bhīṣma married Pāṇḍu to Mādrī. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the eldest, but since he was blind, he could not rule the kingdom and so his younger brother (Pāṇḍu) succeeded him (ibid, 109.25: 327). From here, the struggle to own the throne started. Pāṇḍu ruled the kingdom, but one day he killed a ṛṣi who had acquired the form of a deer. The ṛṣi Kindama (ibid, 118.29: 343) cursed Pāṇḍu that Pāṇḍu shall never be able to have progeny. Being cursed, Pāṇḍu decided to enter the woods with his two wives leaving Dhṛtarāṣṭra to rule the kingdom (ibid, 114.6: 335).

While living in the forest, Kuntī decides to share with her husband the secret *mantra* that she received from ṛṣi Durvasa as a reward for her services (ibid, 122.33-7: 355). Using the *mantra* with the consent of Pāṇḍu, Kuntī obtained three sons from three deities (Yudhiṣṭhira from Dharma, Bhīma from Vāyu, and Arjuna from Indra) (ibid, 123.1-53: 356-9). Pāṇḍu then tells Kuntī to share the *mantra* with co-wife Mādrī, and Mādrī obtained twins by calling Aśvins (ibid, 124: 361-3). The five brothers together came to be known as the Pāṇḍavas. At the same time, in Hāstinapura, Gāndhārī also conceived and delivered a ball of flesh, which turned into a hundred sons and a daughter. The hundred sons of Gāndhārī and Dhṛtarāṣṭra came to be known as Kauravas (ibid, 115: 336-40).

The children were young when Pāṇḍu died due to the curse, and Mādrī followed him on his funeral pyre (ibid, 125: 363-5). Now the three sons of Kuntī and two sons of Mādrī were Kuntī's responsibility. Kuntī then decided to go to the kingdom and get her sons their due share in the kingdom. Living in the kingdom, Śakuni poisoned the mind

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procreate on the widows of Vicitravīrya. Although the debate spotlights the political aspects, it is not relevant for the present paper because the primary concern of the paper is to prove the validity of the birth of Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu for claiming the throne. For details, see Khangai 2015.

of young Duryodhana for his cousins (Pāṇḍavas), saying that if Duryodhana desired to rule without an enemy, he must get rid of the Pāṇḍavas. Consequently, Duryodhana developed a strong dislike for his cousins and made several attempts to kill the Pāṇḍavas (ibid, 127-139: 368-77 and Jatugriha parvan, 145-150: 425-35). As if the fate willed it so, the Pāṇḍavas always escaped the death traps of Duryodhana. Finally, Dhṛtarāṣṭra divided the kingdom and gave a barren portion of *Khāṇḍava prastha* to the Pāṇḍavas (ViduragamanaRajyalambha parvan, 207.24: 565). However, the Pāṇḍavas rose to glory and constructed a beautiful kingdom Indraprastha out of barren land with hard work (Digvijaya parvan, 25-32: 701-17).

*Rājasūyayajña* was organized to celebrate Yudhiṣṭhira as the suzerain (Rājasūyaparvan, 33-5: 717-23). The four brothers conquered the world and made their eldest brother Yudhiṣṭhira the suzerain. Seeing the glory and prosperity of Pāṇḍavas, Duryodhana became envious and made plans to snatch away the fame and prosperity of his cousins. He persuaded Dhṛtarāṣṭra to make arrangements for the dice match whereby Duryodhana robbed Pāṇḍavas of their entire kingdom and wealth (Dyūta parvan, 47-55: 748-69). Pāṇḍavas had to enter the forest for twelve years and remain incognito for the thirteenth year (Anudyūta parvan, 76: 816-818). After completing the period of exile, Duryodhana refused to return Pāṇḍavas their share of the kingdom. This led to the deadly war among the cousins for the kingdom (Udyoga parvan).

The war was fought for eighteen days resulting in the death of the hundred Kauravas, the sons of Pāṇḍavas, guru Droṇa, *pitāmah* Bhīṣma, and various other kings, relatives, and friends from both the sides. The battle was fought for the kingdom- for the throne. Here, a question can be raised who the rightful heir to the throne is? Is it Duryodhana or Yudhiṣṭhira? Whose kingdom was it? Now, let us address this question in the next section.

### **III. Debate: The Throne rights**

To know the rightful successor of the throne, let us analyze the positions of various scholars. When Matilal says that Duryodhana had a "natural right to the throne"



(2002: 110), he is partially correct. Matilal (2002) points out that Yudhiṣṭhira was born using the custom of *nīyoga*. With the permission of Pāṇḍu, Kuntī called the god Dharma, and with their copulation, Yudhiṣṭhira was born; therefore, Yudhiṣṭhira's biological father was the deity Dharma. Contrary to this, Duryodhana was born to Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī naturally: Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the biological father of Duryodhana. Even though Yudhiṣṭhira was elder to Duryodhana, since Yudhiṣṭhira was born by proxy, Duryodhana's right to the throne became more natural. This explanation given by Matilal sounds legitimate. However, there is more to this discussion, as highlighted by Romila Thapar (2009), McGrath (2018), and Bibek Debroy (2015).

The first question to be addressed concerns the title 'Kaurava'. Since both Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas are born in the Kuru family, they both belong to the Kuru dynasty (lunar dynasty); thus, Debroy (2015) says that the title 'Kauravas' applies to both Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas. He argues that the Pāṇḍavas are also Kauravas as, indirectly, Pāṇḍavas were born in the family of Kuru. Contesting Debroy, McGrath (2018) says that neither Pāṇḍavas nor the Dhṛtarāṣṭras are Kauravas except only Bhīṣma because they do not "...have any lineal connection with the eponymous Kuru" (2018: 12). McGrath (2018) raises the issue over the title 'Kaurava' and points out that Bhīṣma was the only 'genetically accurate Kaurava' and others are only 'nominally' Kauravas. According to McGrath (2018: 18), the Dhṛtarāṣṭras are from the nominal Kuru patriline, and the Pāṇḍavas are not Kauravas until they regain the kingdom and Throne of Hāstinapura, and also until all the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra are dead. Till here, Debroy's position sounds more feasible than that of McGrath's. However, McGrath argues that the title 'Kaurava' is not for any 'genetic descent from king *kuru*': The title applies to the ruler of the northern region of India. We can say that Yudhiṣṭhira is *kururāja* only because he defeated Duryodhana. That is, 'Kauravas' is not a kinship term but a toponym for McGrath. Apart from this, Yudhiṣṭhira cannot have any lineal connection with Kuru. Against this background, McGrath (2016) claims that the contention is not between 'cousins.' Instead, the battle was fought between the two lineages, between two different kinds of beings; the battle was a clash between Dravidian (Pāṇḍavas) and Indo-Āryan

(sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra)<sup>10</sup>. Thus, none of the moieties are Kauravas. Now the question to be addressed is about the right to the throne.

Regarding the succession of the throne, Thapar argues that the only rightful successor of the throne was Bhīṣma; after him, there was no legitimate successor. Her point is in line with McGrath's that Bhīṣma was the only Kaurava. Thapar explains that the *Puru* clan continued till Bhīṣma only. After him, the children were born by proxy, having nominal affiliation only, no blood connection with the lineage as Vyāsa fathered them- outside the *kuru* family. So, neither Kauravas nor Pāṇḍavas were the legitimate successors of the throne according to the lineage rules. Thapar argues that Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu were not qualified for the candidature of kingship as both had physical disabilities (Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born blind, and Pāṇḍu was born pale and impotent). So, the succession to the throne was contested, and the contest of rightful authorities of kingship passed to the next generation, that is, between Kauravas (sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra) and Pāṇḍavas (sons of Pāṇḍu). However, neither of them is technically from the Kuru bloodline and had no right to kingship.

If we accept Matilal's explanation, then the argument of Thapar and McGrath holds validity because both the sons of Vicitravīrya were born by *nīyoga*, Vyāsa was the biological father of both the sons of Vicitravīrya (Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Pāṇḍu). Therefore, just like Yudhiṣṭhira, neither Dhṛtarāṣṭra nor Pāṇḍu was the natural successor of the throne. With Thapar's argument, Duryodhana's natural right to the throne diminishes. Duryodhana could not claim the entire kingdom since his father was born by proxy, and if a father does not have the right to the kingdom, how can his son (natural or by proxy) claim it? If Duryodhana believed that the kingdom was his because of being born naturally to Dhṛtarāṣṭra, then Yudhiṣṭhira too would have the equal right since Yudhiṣṭhira's case is similar to Duryodhana's father. Thus, Thapar and McGrath's claim that neither Kauravas nor Pāṇḍavas were the legitimate successors of the throne seems

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<sup>10</sup> See Trautmann (1981) for details.

more plausible here than Matilal's view that Duryodhana had a natural right and Yudhiṣṭhira did not.

According to Irawati Karve (1990), Duryodhana could not claim the kingdom. She says that Mbh follows a trend regarding inheritance of the kingdom, according to which the eldest son of the king succeeded the crown: succession and inheritance thus moved linearly in the Mbh. She points out that Pāṇḍu was the crowned king, although Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the eldest son. Among the three brothers, since Dhṛtarāṣṭra was born blind and Vidura was a *dāsīpūtra*, the throne passed onto Pāṇḍu. Karve says, "though he [Duryodhana] was the eldest son of the eldest of the previous king [Vicitravīrya], he [Duryodhana] could not claim the kingdom because it had already passed into the hands of the younger son (Pāṇḍu) before he (Duryodhana) was born, and so it must continue in that line" (1990: 39). She points out that once the crown passes into a 'line,' it stays there. Therefore, Yudhiṣṭhira had the right to the kingdom as he was the eldest son of Pāṇḍu, the previous king (Pāṇḍu). However, Karve's position is contradictory because although the crown passed from elder Dhṛtarāṣṭra to younger Pāṇḍu, it came eventually went back to the elder Dhṛtarāṣṭra. When Pāṇḍu left for the forest, Dhṛtarāṣṭra became the king and ruled the kingdom. Therefore, Duryodhana (the eldest son of the previous king) had more right to claim the kingdom than Yudhiṣṭhira.

Even if we accept Karve's position, one must note that the eldest son of Pāṇḍu was Karṇa. Kuntī, before the beginning of the battle, acknowledges Karṇa as her eldest son born to her from deity Surya before her wedlock to Pāṇḍu. As per Karve's argument, it is not Yudhiṣṭhira but Karṇa who should become the rightful successor of the throne.

From the perspective of *nīyoga*, the custom of *nīyoga* was legally accepted as it was prescribed in the legal tradition (Manusmṛti). Brahmavaivartapurāṇa can support it, according to which Pāṇḍavas can be described as *Kṣetraja*, i.e., the "sons by order of the husband (4.115.110 ff.)" (Kantawala 2017: 65). Thus, a son born with the husband's permission cannot be rejected for candidature to the throne. The argument can be supported by Karve (1990) and Banerji's (1998) understanding of seed and the field: *bīja-kṣetra*. Banerji explains that "The son, begotten by a man on the wife of another, is

called *kṣetraja*; the woman being termed *kṣetra*, her husband *kṣetrin* or *kṣetrika* and the begetter is *bījin*. In such a case, the son belongs to the *kṣetrin*” (1998: 115). According to this analogy, the woman is the field owned by a farmer- her husband. The farmer sow seeds (beget children). The husband (farmer) can allow his wife to invoke *nīyoga* and bear a child. Just as anything that grows on a farmer's farm belongs to him, even if others plant the seeds, the child born from one's wife belongs to him. Therefore, the child born by *nīyoga* must also be a legitimate candidate for the throne. This explanation supports Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pāṇḍu, and Yudhiṣṭhira’s candidature as legitimate.

### **Conclusion**

The broader philosophical problem that the above discussion touches upon is regarding identity vis-à-vis succession and inheritance. What kind of identity is considered legitimate in Mbh? Generally, it seen that relations determined by biological factors are given priority over relations based upon other factors, for example, friendship or acquaintance. However, within the framework of Mbh, it seen that the problem of identity is primarily seen in relation to ownership, succession, and inheritance of kingdom. When such is the case, that is, what is at stake is kingdom, inheritance, distribution of resources, biological factors are not given any ontological priority in comparison to other factors. We saw that to continue lineage and succession of throne, one of the possibilities that was considered legitimate was the practice of *nīyoga*.

We see from the above discussion that Matilal, Thapar, Debroy, Karve, and McGrath have seen the issue of kingship in isolation. We conclude that both Duryodhana and Yudhiṣṭhira had an equal right to the kingdom. Duryodhana was naturally born to Dhṛtarāṣṭra; Yudhiṣṭhira, although born by proxy, was the son of Pāṇḍu. This line of explanation also suggests that, in the Mbh, no ontological distinction is maintained between a child born from natural process or from *nīyoga* on the issue of succession to the throne: the rights of the child in both the cases are deemed identical.

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# AN ATTEMPT TO RESPOND TO *NĀGĀRJUNA'S* OBJECTIONS AGAINST *HETVĀBHĀSA*

ARKA PRATIM MUKHOTY

Key Words: *Hetvābhāsa*, *pakṣa*, *pratijñā*, *kālātīta*.

## INTRODUCTION:

The sixteen categories of *Nyāya* philosophy attempts to describe all the aspects of a right sort of theoretical enquiry. Put differently, *Nyāya* philosophy provides us with a methodology by which we can form right theses or doctrines about any field of study. Again, the *Naiyāyika-s* understand a right thesis as the one which corresponds to reality. Because *Nyāya* provides a methodology of enquiry about reality which has been employed by scholars of myriad fields to arrive at their theses, *Vātsyāyana* states that *Nyāya* is the lamp light to all studies. On contrary to *Nyāya* view, *Mādhyamika* thinkers believe that no right doctrine or thesis can be formed about ultimate reality. *Nāgārjuna* says that ‘*Nāsti cha mama pratijñā*’ which means I commit to no doctrine.<sup>1</sup> When *Nāgārjuna* asserts that I have no thesis, he means that he has no thesis about the ultimate reality. *Nāgārjuna* justifies worldly affairs, moral codes, four noble truths and the like from the perspective of conventional reality. Most traditional schools of academics in India have been dependent upon the method of investigation propounded by *Nyāya* philosophers. Therefore, *Nāgārjuna* attacks the *Nyāya* position that provides a methodology by which academicians forms views about reality. *Nāgārjuna's* position is that no doctrine about reality can be formed, that is why he attacks the methodology by which such doctrines are constructed. *Nāgārjuna* writes a book called *Vaidalyaprakaraṇa* where he attempts to refute all the sixteen categories propounded by *Naiyāyika-s*.<sup>2</sup>

In this paper we will focus on a part of *Vaidalya-sūtra* concerning refutation of *hetvābhāsa* or faulty reason. *Nāgārjuna's* refutation of faulty reason carries special

importance because it pulls down the whole enterprise of inference. To explain, any enterprise of inference is bound to provide criterion for distinguishing right inferences from the wrong ones. *Hetvābhāsa* is that *padārtha* by which wrong inferences are identified, and the rest of the inferences are regarded as the right ones. Thus *Nāgārjuna*'s attack on *hetvābhāsa* should be seen as an attack on the whole enterprise of inference. It would not be an over statement that the *Nyāya* methodology of investigation revolves around inference. Thus *Nāgārjuna*'s refutation of *hetvābhāsa* is a big move towards destroying the *Nyāya* method of enquiry into the ultimate nature of reality.

### **AN OVERVIEW OF HETVĀBHĀSA:**

*Hetvābhāsa*, which comes after *vitandā*, is the thirteenth category enumerated in the *Nyāya-sūtra*. The etymological meaning of the term *hetvābhāsa* suggests the nature of the category. We will begin by illustrating the etymological meaning of the term because it gives an outline to what *hetvābhāsa* is. The term *hetvābhāsa* may mean two different things. First, *hetvābhāsa* means a pseudo reason which appears to be an actual reason but is not an actual reason. Second, *hetvābhāsa* may also refer to an error possessing which a reason becomes a pseudo or faulty reason. The two meanings of the term *hetvābhāsa* are different; one stands for pseudo reason and the other one stands for error. However, the two meanings are very closely related to each other as a pseudo reason becomes pseudo by possessing one or more error. In *Navya-nyāya* a precise definition of error of a reason has been dealt with in magnificent details. We believe that a very rough rough sketch of that definition will provide clarification of the nature of *hetvābhāsa*. The idea is this. If a piece of veridical cognition impedes the emergence of an inferential cognition, then the object of that cognition is to be regarded as an error of the reason in question. To explain, the error of the reason is a fact, that is to say it is a truth or a part of reality, and it is not something fictional or illusory. A fact turns out to be an error with relation to a particular reason by virtue of preventing the inferential cognition which has the reason in question. Since we are able to conceive a relation between the error and the reason, the reason becomes faulty. For example, the cognition of the fact that fire is hot impedes the inferential cognition that fire is cold (since it is a



substance). The fact itself cannot impede the inferential cognition; it does so as an object of cognition. So the inferential cognition is prevented from emerging by the cognition of a counter fact. This counter fact is regarded as an error and as a relation between the fact and the reason can be conceived, the reason becomes faulty. Now that there arise many problems in this definition of *hetvābhāsa*, the definition has been greatly modified. As this conception of pseudo reason is a later development in *Nyāya* tradition, we will not go into this modification. *Nāgārjuna*, being a predecessor of *Vātsyāyana*<sup>3</sup>, was concerned with the old definition of pseudo reason. The old view of pseudo reason may be illustrated as follows.<sup>4</sup> In the definition of reason it is claimed that a reason is that which has *sādhya-sāadhanatva*. In other words, the reason which has the capacity of establishing the target is to be considered as a genuine reason. Now the query is what constitutes the capacity of establishing a target. An answer to this question is to be found in the five *hetvābhāsa*. There are five properties of reason and if they exist in the reason and are known then that makes the reason capable of establishing the target. The *hetvābhāsa-s* are understood as the absence of knowledge of these five properties in the reason. Let us consider the five properties. First one is *pakṣa-sattva*. This is the property of being present in the subject of inference, that is *pakṣa*. In other words, the reason should reside in the *pakṣa*. If this property is absent from the reason or it is present but not known, then the reason is considered as *sādhyasama*. For, the target (*sādhya*) needs to be established in the *pakṣa* as much as the reason is required to be established in the *pakṣa*. Second one is *sapakṣa-sattva*. This is the property of being present in the *sapakṣa*. In other words, the reason should reside in the locus where the existence of the target is already confirmed. The absence of this property in the reason is regarded as *viruddha hetvābhāsa*. Third one is *vipakṣāsattva*. This is the property of being absent in the *vipakṣa*. To put it differently, the reason must not reside on the locus where the absence of the target is already confirmed. When a reason lacks this property, it is regarded as *savyabhicārī*. Fourth one is *asat-pratipakṣattva*. This is the property of not having a counter reason. The reason must not have a counter reason. A counter reason is that which establishes the absence of the target in the subject of inference. A reason

which has a counter reason is regarded as a faulty reason and the fault is called *sat-pratipakṣa*. The fifth property of a genuine reason is *abādhitatva*. When a source of knowledge except inference establishes the absence of target in the subject of inference, the reason is regarded as *bādhita*. So these are the five properties that makes a reason genuine and absence of anyone or more of these properties in a reason makes the reason a pseudo reason.

## **REFUTATIONS OF HETVĀBHĀSA:**

### ***First Objection:***

VS-58<sup>5</sup> may be translated as follows: there are no pseudo reasons because there is neither similarity nor dissimilarity. To explain, the pseudo reason is considered as a reason because it is similar to a genuine reason in some aspects. But it is also pseudo because it is dissimilar to a genuine reason with respect to some essential aspects. In this *sūtra*, *Nāgārjuna* claims that neither similarity nor dissimilarity with the genuine reason is possible. What *Nāgārjuna* had in mind may be this. If a pseudo reason is similar to a genuine reason, then it could not be dissimilar to it. In so far as the pseudo reason be identical with the genuine reason, it cannot be considered as a pseudo reason. On the other hand, if the pseudo reason is dissimilar to the genuine reason, then it cannot have similarity with the genuine reason. In the absence of similarity, the reason cannot be regarded as a pseudo reason as well. Therefore, a pseudo reason can neither be similar nor dissimilar to a genuine reason, so it does not exist. In this argument it has been assumed that at the same time a thing cannot both be similar and dissimilar to another thing. It might be replied that this assumption is unwarranted. So the argument fails to establish its conclusion. But it may be responded on part of *Mādhyamika* thinkers that any non-reason could share some features with the genuine reason, but that does not lead us to call every non-reason a pseudo reason. The main difficulty is every non-reason is both similar and dissimilar to a genuine reason. Accordingly, there is nothing that could distinguishes a non-reason from a pseudo reason. Therefore, there are no pseudo reasons.

**Reply-**

The objection articulated in VS-58 may be met by *Nyāya* thinkers as follows. At the first place, *Nyāya* thinkers will deny that two entities cannot be both similar and dissimilar at the same time. According to them an entity can be both similar with a reason in certain aspects and dissimilar in other aspects. Secondly, it has been urged by *Mādhyamika* thinkers that everything has some similarity with everything else which makes it impossible to distinguish a non-reason from a pseudo-reason. A pseudo reason has some similarities to the genuine reason, and a non-reason also has some similarities to the genuine reason. Likewise, a non-reason and a pseudo reason both shares some dissimilarities in some aspects with the genuine reason. The difficult question is: what does distinguish a pseudo reason from a non-reason? It may be answered on the part of *Nyāya* thinkers that to be a pseudo reason is to have at least one of the five essential characteristics of a genuine reason. On contrary, a non-reason which happens to be similar to a genuine reason, does not have any of five essential features of a genuine reason.

**Second Objection:**

VS-59 may be translated as follows: non-deviation is the locus of absence of deviation. According to the commentary<sup>6</sup> associated with this *sūtra*, the *sūtra* implies that *savyabhicāra* or deviation does not exist. The argument embedded may be illustrated as follows: a reason is either intrinsically deviating or happens to be accompanied by a deviation. There is no third possible alternative. Now if we consider the reason to be intrinsically deviating, then it cannot be regarded as a reason. Because non-deviation is an essential characteristic of reason, something intrinsically deviating cannot be regarded as a reason. On the other hand, if the reason is intrinsically non-deviating, then deviation cannot accompany it. Fire is intrinsically hot so cold cannot accompany it as hot and cold are two contradictory properties. Similarity, deviation and non-deviation are two contradictory properties so they cannot reside in the same reason. A property is intrinsic, according to *Mādhyamika* system, when it does not depend on causes and conditions for its existence.<sup>7</sup> Thus a reason is intrinsically non-deviating, its

non-deviation being independent cannot be destructed. Thus deviation cannot accompany the reason. Thus irrespective of whether deviation is regarded as an intrinsic property or a non-intrinsic property of the reason, it does not exist.

***Reply:***

The key idea in the above objection is that deviation is neither an intrinsic nor an extrinsic property of a reason. *Naiyāyika-s* maintain that deviation is not an intrinsic property of a pseudo reason, but rather an extrinsic property of it. An extrinsic property of an entity is understood as that property which the entity has by virtue of its having a relation with some other entity. In short, all relational properties of an entity are extrinsic properties. Now we have to show that deviation is an extrinsic property of a pseudo reason. An entity can be counted as deviating only in relation to another entity. For example, fire is regarded as deviating in relation to smoke. But, fire is to be regarded as non-deviating in relation to temperature. Thus the alleged reason is said to be deviating or non-deviating only in relation to some particular *sādhya*. Thus there seems to be no difficulty in accepting that both deviation and non-deviation are extrinsic properties.

***Third Objection:***

In VS-60 *Nāgārjuna* anticipates an objection on part of the opponent. The opponent could argue that there are numerous examples of deviating reason. Take for instance this inference: space is eternal because it has bodilessness. The reason bodilessness is deviating in relation to eternity. Soul has bodilessness and it is eternal. However, action is non-eternal but it has bodilessness as well. Hence bodilessness is deviating in relation to eternity. Let us take another example of a deviating reason. Atoms are eternal since generality and particularity apply to them. In this inference, the reason is deviating. For generality and particularity apply to eternal entities such as soul as well as to non-eternal entities such as a pot.

As shown above the reasons bodilessness and generality-particularity are claimed to be deviating in relation to eternity. This may be counted as a proof for existence of deviation. Now in VS-61 *Nāgārjuna* argues that bodilessness which is there

in space is different from bodilessness of action. For, the former is deemed as non-originated while the later is deemed as originated. Since bodilessness is different in action and in space, it should not be regarded as deviating. Deviation can exist only under the supposition that the thing that deviates should remain unaltered. On the same line of argument generality and particularity can be shown to be different in atoms and pots. The crux of the above argument is that no reason can be deviating because every reason is different as they are accompanied by different properties. Moreover, a reason is different from another as an individual and every individual is unique.

***Reply:***

*Nyāya* thinkers might respond to this objection by rejecting the presumption that every reason is unique. Even though every reason is different as an individual, those individual reasons could exemplify the same universal. Accordingly, due to their participation in the same universal<sup>8</sup>, the different individual reasons can be regarded as one reason which can remain same in different subjects of inference. Consider the kitchen where fire accompanies smoke as opposed to another place red hot iron where fire does not accompany smoke. In both cases though fires as individual are different, the two cases of fire is same because they exemplifying the one universal fireness and this makes the deviation under question possible. In addition to that if every reason is considered as wholly different and distinct from every other reason, then not only deviation but also inference would become impossible. But, the argument which *Nāgārjuna* is advancing here is arguably a sort of inference, so it will become impossible as well.

***Fourth Objection:***

VS-62 asserts that pseudo reasons cannot exist because of momentariness. *Nāgārjuna* gives here a general argument against pseudo reason. At the first moment a thesis or *pratijñā* is stated and in the subsequent moment a reason or *hetu* is stated. The *hetu* is put forward in order to justify the *pratijñā*. The whole point of advancing a *hetu* is to justify the *pratijñā*. Now that everything is momentary, *pratijñā* is also momentary.

Given its momentariness the *pratijñā* gets destroyed when the *hetu* is stated. In the absence of *pratijñā*, advancement of *hetu* is pointless. More importantly, a *padārtha* becomes a *hetu* only in relation to a *pratijñā*. Without the *pratijñā*, the reason cannot be regarded as a reason as it cannot have a relation with a non-existent thesis. The argument from momentariness shows that reason does not exist. Pseudo reason is regarded as that which is both similar and dissimilar to a reason. Since a reason does not exist, it is not possible for any entity to be similar or dissimilar with a reason. Accordingly, a pseudo reason does not exist as well.

**Reply:**

*Nyāya* thinkers admit that a piece of cognition except *apekṣābuddhi* stays in existence only for two moments. Say at the first moment arises a piece of cognition about thesis arises and it continues to exist at the second moment and it gets destroyed at the third moment. Thus the cognition of thesis lasts only for two moments. And if the cognition of reason arises at the second moment, then the pieces of cognition of thesis and the reason could be simultaneous. In that case the reason can serve as a justification for the thesis. However, this objection applies as much to inference for oneself as to inference for others. In case of inference for others, the objection becomes stronger. For, the reason is expressed in a sentence. Being a sentence, it is a sound and it arises after the destruction of the sentence about thesis. Moreover, the sentence of reason cannot justify the sentence of thesis unless the other sentences that is *avayava-s* of the inference are rendered. But, when the other sentences like example etc are rendered the sentence of thesis gets destroyed. As a result, the reason fails to justify the thesis. We find a solution to this problem in the discussion about *āsatti* in the book titled *Nyāya-siddhānta-muktāvali*. It is to be borne in mind that the same problem arises in connection to many levels. At the most basic level the problem is about explaining how one gets to know a word or *pada*. For example, consider the word ‘pot’ in which the letters ‘p’, ‘o’ and ‘t’ are uttered in a sequence. They come one after another, so when ‘o’ comes into existence ‘p’ gets destroyed. Similarly, when ‘t’ comes into existence ‘o’ gets destroyed. Thus we are not grasping the three letters simultaneously yet we understand the word

‘pot’ very well. The *Nyāya* solution to this problem is that after we hear the last letter, namely, ‘t’ we recollect the three letters ‘p’, ‘o’ and ‘t’ at once. Hearing each letter produces separate impressions, and those impressions collectively gives rise to memory of the three letters at once. Moreover, hearing the last letter ‘t’ plays the role of an activator or *udvodhaka*, and it activates the impressions to produce memory. Thus one grasps three letters simultaneously through memory. This solution also applies to the problem at a different level with regard to comprehending a sentence. Hearing each word of a sentence creates separate impressions and the ultimate word in the sentence activates those other impressions to produce memory of all the words at once. It must be noted here that many different impressions produce one piece of memory. The *avayava-s* are sentences and five *avayava-s* all together makes one long sentence. We understand this long sentence in the above procedure. Thus we have the in one piece of cognition all the five parts of an inference at once and the problem mentioned does not arise.

***Fifth Objection:***

In VS-64, *Nāgārjuna* advances an argument against *viruddha* and *prakaraṇasama hetvābhāsa*. Before stating the argument, we want to say something about *viruddha* and *prakaraṇasama hetvābhāsa*. *Viruddha* is that reason which contradicts the very thesis that it has been employed to establish. Take for example the inference, ‘word is eternal since it is originated’. In this inference the reason is origination and the target is eternity. However, the reason is such that instead of establishing the target it establishes the absence of the target. For, if something is originated, then it must be non-eternal. So the reason proves the contrary thesis of the thesis to establish which it has been advanced. The *prakaraṇasama hetvābhāsa* takes place when there are two different reasons such that one establishes the *sādhya* in the *pakṣa* while the other reason establishes the absence of *sādhya* in the *pakṣa*. The two reasons are considered as *prakaraṇasama* given that they are equally plausible. It may be objected that the two reasons cannot be equally plausible for they establish contrary theses. It has to be the case that one of the two reasons is more plausible. It could be

replied that the plausibility of a reason depends on the knower, so both the reasons can appear as equally plausible.

*Nāgārjuna* refutes *prakaraṇasama* and *viruddha* with one argument which is rendered in VS-64. He argues that both of these pseudo reasons comprise of a form of contradiction. Because contradiction is not possible, *viruddha* and *prakaraṇasama*, which involve contradiction, are not possible as well. First consider the *viruddha*. The inference, for example, would be sound is eternal since it is originated. Here the thesis and reason are claimed to be contradictory. But the precondition for a contradiction is that the things that are contradictory must co-exist. Since everything is momentary, the thesis ceases to exist when the reason comes into being. Thus there can be no contradiction between the thesis and the reason; consequently, there is no *viruddha hetvābhāsa*. Now let us consider *prakaraṇasama*. Here we have two different inferences which puts forward contradictory theses. However, the two inferences are such that one follows the other in course of time. Given the momentariness of everything, when the second inference is uttered, the first one goes out of existence. As a result, a contradiction cannot obtain between the two theses.

**Reply:** the previous reply also applies to this objection.

#### ***A Note on Kālātīta:***

We would like to explain the nature of the pseudo reason *kālātīta* as it provides a background for explaining *Nāgārjuna*'s objections against the same. *Kālātīta* could be understood as a reason which has been uttered at a wrong time. The right time to utter a reason is immediately after the utterance of the *pratijñā* or thesis. If the reason is uttered at any other time, it is counted as *kālātīta*. However, the above understanding of *kālātīta* is unacceptable for the following reasons. First, unless a reason lacks atleast one of the five essential characteristics of a genuine reason, it cannot be regarded as a pseudo reason. The timing of uttering a reason is not included among the essential characteristics of a genuine reason. Accordingly, just because a reason has been uttered at a wrong time, it cannot be regarded as a pseudo reason. Second, there is a *nigrahassthāna* known



as *aprāptakāla* which obtains when a reason is uttered at a wrong time. If we understand *kālātīta* as a mistimed reason, then we would commit the fallacy of repetition. For, *kālātīta* would be a repetition of *aprāptakāla*. So we have to understand *Kālātīta* in another way which is as follows. *Kālātīta* is that reason which attempts to establish such a thesis which have already been refuted by a stronger *pramāṇa*. Consider the inference, ‘Ice is hot because it is a substance’. The thesis that ice is hot has already been refuted by perception of ice as cold. Perception is a stronger *pramāṇa* than inference because inference requires perception and not the vice versa. In a nutshell, *kālātīta* is a reason which is uttered when its thesis has already been refuted. Thus the fault in the thesis is that it is late; if it were uttered before the refutation had taken place then the fault would not have occurred. The point seems to be that if the inference involved takes place before the refutation then the error does not happen but if the inference comes after the refutation, the error happens.

***Objection against Kālātīta:***

*Nāgārjuna* objects against *kālātīta* in VS-66 and VS-67. *Nāgārjuna*’s argument is as follows. Since past time does not exist, the *kālātīta* or mistimed reason does not exist as well. Before the mistimed reason is uttered, the thesis gets refuted. Thus a reason when uttered cannot be regarded as *kālātīta* unless its thesis got refuted in a past time. Now the objection is that the pseudo reason named *kālātīta* does not exist because past refutation does not exist. Past refutation could not exist because past time does not exist. To support the claim that past does not exist, *Nāgārjuna* argues in the following manner; he presents a dilemma that past, present and future are either related with each other or are unrelated. They cannot be related with each other because relation presupposes co-existence. But past, present and future do not co-exist, hence they cannot have a relation. On the other hand, if past, present and future are regarded as unrelated then change would be impossible. For there shall be no connection among past, present and future. As a result, there shall be no connection among my past body, my present body and my future body. Accordingly, the endurance of my body (and likewise other bodies) over time and

its change would be impossible. In addition to this, *Nāgārjuna* claims that past and future do not exist. Of the three periods of time present alone is existent.

*Nāgārjuna* anticipates a reply on the part of the opponents which is in order. Each language has some words that serves to refer to past, present and future time. If there were no past time, then the words referring to past would turn out to be meaningless. Since we hold those words to be meaningful, there is past time which is being referred by words referring to past. To this objection *Nāgārjuna* replies that the present is constituted of a very thin moment. One moment is so small that it is not possible to ascertain it. Put differently, the present time which consists of a present moment cannot be ascertained. Since it cannot be ascertained, it cannot be referred to by words. Moreover, if present time cannot be ascertained then past and future cannot be ascertained as well. For, past and future are understood only if we can understand present time that serves to distinguish past time from future time. Now that we cannot ascertain past time in actuality, what we refer to by words is a conventionally real past.

***Reply:***

The above objection would be met by denying that past time does not exist. *Nyāya* thinkers would embrace the first horn of the dilemma and claim that past, present and future are related. The objection that a relation requires co-existent entities and past, present and future are not co-existent can also be met. It is simply denied that a relation presupposes the coexistence of related entities. For, there are some examples which exhibits that an existent entity can have a relation to a non-existent entity. First, I know with certainty that I will die in future. My future death does not exist now. However, a piece of cognition must have a relation with its content. Otherwise, any piece of cognition would be about anything whatsoever. Now I have a piece of cognition that I will die. Even though the cognition exists at present, my death does not exist at present. This implies that the cognition which is now existent have a relation with the death which is now non-existent. Therefore, it becomes evident that an existent entity can have relation with a non-existent entity.<sup>9</sup> Second, there is a necessary relation between cause and effect. This is to say that a particular effect such as curd is invariably produced by a

particular cause milk. A cloth cannot be produced out of milk. Therefore, milk and curd have necessary relation of causality. However, the existence of milk precedes the existence of curd, they do not co-exist. There is a relation of causality between milk and curd when the milk is there and the curd is yet to arise. It exhibits that the existent milk can have a relation with the curd that is now non-existent and will come into existence in the future.<sup>10</sup> It may be retorted on the part of *Nāgārjuna* that both the examples presume the existence of a future time. For the relations given as examples are between an existent cognition and future content which is now non-existent and between an existent cause and its future effect which is now non-existent. Since the second objection, which is based on thinness of present moment, refutes future time, our examples being guilty of presuming the existence of future time get refuted as well.

### ***The Nyaya View of Time:***

We want to illustrate the *Nyāya* notion of time<sup>11</sup> by which we will try to find out a possible reply to *Nāgārjuna*'s objection. *Nyāya* thinkers presents a dilemma that the property of being past, present or future are either intrinsic or extrinsic properties of time. If the property of being present is intrinsic to time, then it might have either of the two consequences. Either time which is now present was not future and will not be past as intrinsic property of time can never leave it, or else a portion of time is always past, present and future at once. However, this is not the way time is. The same portion of time is referred to as future, present and past from different reference points. Time's being future etc are always due to its relation with something else. Accordingly, they are not permanent properties of time. It follows that the properties of being present, past or future are extrinsic properties of time. On the *Nyāya* view time is counted as a substance. Moreover, it is a one single substance so there are not many times. In time the properties of past, present etc are produced because time comes into connection with other entities. By virtue of being conjoined with these entities, one time seems to have many parts such as moments, minutes, days, past and future etc. The movements of sun, moon etc. are entities which come into relation with the time because of which time appears to be divided into parts. The prior absence of a movement of an entity gets related to the one-

time substance and time is regarded as future in relation to that prior absence. When the same movements get related to time, time is regarded as present with reference to that movement. Destructive absence of that movement comes into relation with time which makes us regard the portion of time as future. Here it could be objected that the above notion of parts of time is circular. For, prior absence cannot be defined without referring to time. The *Nyāya* philosophers define prior absence as that which has no origination but has destruction. Now the question arises as to what origination is. Origination is that which comes into being immediately after sufficient conditions obtains. However, the term ‘after’ refers to a time sequence which cannot be established without establishment of parts of time. This is the circularity. In order to avoid this difficulty, the *Nyāya* thinkers may define present time in another way. An action that qualifies time with reference to that very action that qualified time is regarded as present. For example, time which is in relation with an action like cooking is called present only with reference to that action. And the whole time period in which the process of making food goes on is regarded as present. The action of cooking is regarded as the *upādhi* of present time. However, the cooking is not the *upādhi* of future or past rather the actions that occurred at past is the *upādhi* of past time. Likewise, the action which shall occur in the future is regarded as the *upādhi* of future time. Hence the *Nyāya* philosophers enabled themselves to avoid defining future and past in terms of prior and destructive absence respectively. As a result, the accusation of circularity is avoided. However, it invites even greater difficulties. The present time is defined in terms of action operating at present. But without a definition of present time, the notion of present action is unintelligible. Similarly, past actions and future actions cannot be identified without a prior identification of past and future time. Thus in this way parts of time cannot be defined. We will return then to try to define past and future in terms of prior and destructive absence. However, it will be argued that we would not define prior and destructive absence in terms of causation. In this manner we can avoid bringing in time phrases into our definition. Prior absence accounts for usages such as ‘out of these threads a cloth is going to come into existence’; and destructive absence accounts for the usage like ‘this

clothe is destroyed'. The clear difference of these usages cannot be made intelligible without the notion of prior and destructive absence. Lastly, the *Nyāya* definition is dependent on usage or the ways in which we happen to cognize things. For, usage is passive, it is received not invented. Unless you can show contrary usage, the validity of the previous usage retains. It is the base on which the whole *Nyāya* system is being built. Usage is nothing but an indication of the structure of knowledge that mirrors the structure of reality.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS:

First, in VS we do not find any refutation of the pseudo reason *sādhyā-sama*. In order to see the reason behind leaving *sādhyā-sama*, we first have to see what *sādhyā-sama* is. The *sādhyā* or target is that entity whose existence is to be proved in the subject of inference or *pakṣa*. A reason is that which is characterized by the *vyāpti* of the target and the reason should be known to be already existent in the *pakṣa*. With the assistance of such a reason, the existence of target can be proved in the *pakṣa*. When the reason becomes similar to the target in a particular aspect, the fallacy committed is *sādhyasama*. The aspect in which reason is similar is that both are required to be proved in the *pakṣa*. So, the criteria of *pakṣa-sattva*, which means the reason should reside in the *pakṣa*, is not satisfied. Thus *sādhyasama* is an impediment to inference and is regarded as a fallacy. For example, one infers that darkness is a substance since it has movement like a horse. The reason of this inference is movement but movement like substance-ness is not yet established in the *pakṣa* darkness. The movement is not known to have the characteristic of *pakṣa-sattva*, so the reason is regarded as fallacious. *Nāgārjuna* omits refuting *sādhyasama*; the reason behind the omission could be this. *Nāgārjuna* has already refuted the notion of similarity. This fallacy essentially involves the notion of similarity as it claims the similarity between the reason and the target. As a result, this fallacy should be understood as being refuted.

Second, one observation is that *Nāgārjuna*'s refutation of pseudo reason can be directed against reason as well. The arguments rendered in VS-61, VS-62, and VS-64 all refute pseudo reason as well as genuine reason. They should be counted as objections against

reason in general. Moreover, any attempt to refute pseudo reason obscures the distinction between pseudo and genuine reason. When pseudo reason cannot be distinguished from genuine reason, reason cannot be regarded as a support inferential cognition. It follows that refutation of pseudo reason refutes the veracity of inferential cognition as such.

Third, the replies I have given on the part of *Nyāya* thinkers might sometimes look trivial. This is because the replies commit the *Naiyāyikas* in accepting an entity or belief that *Mādhyamika* does not endorse. But the problem is as the *Mādhyamika* does not admit any thesis, it is impossible to satisfy him with any reply. For, every reply consists of admittance of some thesis. For instance, the replies with regard to VS-59 and VS-61 consists of accepting the existence of extrinsic properties and universals respectively. However, the *Mādhyamika* would not accept their existence and thus the replies are never going to satisfy them. Therefore, the most substantial way to reply them is to criticize them. But, as they do not hold any view it is also not possible to criticize them. However, considering their ‘no doctrine’ thesis, the legitimacy of their participation in a debate may be questioned.

1 *Nāgārjuna's Vīgrahavyāvartanī* -29

2 Some important works on Vaidalysutra.

a. Tola, F., & Dragonetti, C. (1995). *Nāgārjuna's Refutation of Logic (Nyāya)* (No. 24). Motilal Banarsidass Publisher.

b. Westerhoff, Jan (2018) *Crushing the Categories (Vaidalyaprakarana)*. Simon and Schuster,

c. Mohanta, Dilip Kumar. (2009). *Studies in Vaidalya-sūtra of Nāgārjuna*. Center of Advanced Study in Philosophy, Utkal Universityeswar. Bhubaneswar.

3 *Vātsyāyana*, according to Pt. Haraprasad Shastri lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD while *Nāgārjuna* lived in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

4 Tarkavagisa, Phanibhusana. (1981) *Nyāya-sūtra* with *Vātsyāyana-Bhāṣya*. (Vol-1, Sutra no.1/2/4 pg-388) Translated into Bengali with His Own Commentary. West Bengal, Paschimbanga-Rajya-Pustak-Parshad,

5 VS stands for-*s Vaidalya-sūtra* throughout the paper.

- 6 *Vaidalyaparakaraṇa*
- 7 *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 15/2
- 8 *Hetutāvacchedaka*. It may either be a *jāti* or an *updāhi*.
- 9 This example is taken from: Tarkavagisa, Phanibhusana. (1930) *Nyāya-Sūtra* with *Vātsyāyana-Bhāṣya* (Vol-4, Sutra- 4/1/49, pg-294)
- 10 The interested reader may note that this is the core claim of *ārambhavāda* that a non-existent effect can have a relation with an existent effect. A detailed defense of this view can be found in: Tarkavagisa, Phanibhusana. (1981) *Nyāya-sūtra* with *Vātsyāyana-Bhāṣya*. vol-4 pg. 289
- 11 *Upaṣkāra on vaiśeṣika-darśana*, sutra-2/2/8

# CAUSAL CLOSURE AND EMERGENCE: REVISITING THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THEM AND SOME WAY-OUTS

KAMALIKA ROY

**Key words:** Causal closure; downward causation; emergence; mental events; physical events

## 1. Introduction: -

Emergence, which has been through a revival in the recent times both in science and philosophy, is arguably a suitable candidate for explaining many things which are inexplicable in reductive methodology. The matters in which emergence presents itself as a promising alternative include consciousness, a highly debated arena, among other topics. Though the weak version of emergence has been preferred by many philosophers for being comparatively unproblematic, it is the strong version which has been invoked often to account for the efficacy of emergent phenomena, especially in case of mental causation. However, the notion of strong emergence is inevitably tied with the concept of downward causation and verily this concept is what poses a threat to the prospect of emergence itself. Because, apparently downward causation violates the principle of causal closure which is thought to be an indispensable part of the physicalist worldview. Here we shall see to what extent the principle is supportable & what does that bear on emergence. For that purpose, this paper will be divided into four sections after the introduction; the first section will deal with how does this problem arise in the context of emergence i.e., the background of the problem; the second section will deal with the motivations and formulations of the principle of causal closure, the third section will discuss in what ways some thinkers try to avoid conflict with this principle, and the fourth section will deal with our concluding remarks on the prospect of emergence.

## 2. Background of the problem: Emergence & downward causation: -

Emergence, as is commonly held, of a phenomenon happens when it arises from & depend on some more basic phenomena, but at the same time it is autonomous from



that base. Emergence is generally divided into two types- weak & strong. A phenomenon is said to be weakly emergent when it arises from a lower-level domain, but truths concerning the former are unexpected from the principles governing the domain of the latter; whereas a phenomenon is said to be strongly emergent when the truths concerning it are not deducible even in principle from that of the lower-level domain (Chalmers 2006). The strong emergence is held to have more radical consequences than the weak version because the weakly emergent phenomena, though *unexpected*, is deducible from the physicalist fundamental facts, but the strongly emergent phenomena which are not so, need new fundamental laws to accommodate them. This incompleteness of physical laws suggested by the strong version, says (Chalmers 2006), involves a sort of downward causation which denotes exertion of causal efficacy upon the lower-level phenomena by the higher-level phenomena besides being irreducible from the lower one. This division of weak & strong corresponds more or less with another classification of emergence, viz., epistemological & ontological emergence respectively. This is clearly shown in Silberstein & McGreever's (1999, 186) explanation: "A property of an object or system is epistemologically emergent if the property is reducible to or determined by the intrinsic properties of the ultimate constituents of the object or system, while at the same time it is very difficult for us to explain, predict or derive the property on the basis of the ultimate constituents. Epistemologically emergent properties are novel only at a level of description... Ontologically emergent features are neither reducible to nor determined by more basic features. Ontologically emergent features are features of systems or wholes that possess causal capacities not reducible to any of the intrinsic causal capacities of the parts nor to any of the (reducible) relations between the parts."

So, as can be seen, an important point of difference between the strong/ ontological emergence and the weak/ epistemological emergence is that the former one involves an irreducible feature, downward causation. Philosophers like Kim (2006) has referred to it as a central component of emergence. The notion of downward causation is what is compatible with the common-sense view that our mind/ consciousness, which according to emergentism is emergent from physical processes, affects our actions, or

have causal effect upon our body. If this would not be the case, then our mind/consciousness would have been merely epiphenomenon, dangling around without having any determining power over our bodily effects. This would clash with our commonsensical view, as well as leading to a conflict with the matters like free will, moral responsibility etc. However, accepting downward causation is not an easy one. The much-discussed Exclusion argument mentioned by Kim (2006) shows how the acceptance of downward causation leads to overdetermination of physical effects. Besides, there is another related problem, comparatively less discussed, that stems out from accepting it. Higher level phenomenon, like mind, exerting causal efficacy on lower-level phenomena, like the physical base or body, would be problematic for the principle of causal closure which is thought to not allow the violation of the closure principle that gets supposedly infringed during psycho-physical causation.

### **3. Causal Closure: What does it mean?**

Causal Closure is thought to be a cornerstone in our scientific, especially physicalist worldview. Taking the closure principle for granted, scientists embark on their attempt to explain everything. Roughly speaking, the principle states that the world/nature is causally closed; so, anything happening must have a cause. Coupling this with a physicalist outlook, it takes the form of – every physical event must have a physical cause. Now as we know, emergence, especially the stronger version, which has seen a revival in contemporary philosophy and science alike, holds that the emergent phenomenon, though irreducible to & dependent upon the base, exerts downward causal influence on it. This novel causal power, i.e., downward causation is what makes strong emergence stand apart as a unique contender in the topic of consciousness, and its related problems like mental causation, psychophysical causation etc. But verily this notion of downward causation puts the concept of strong emergence, and its prospect as a plausible theory in danger. The reason of this can be found in Kim's (1998, 40) words "If you pick any physical event and trace out its causal ancestry or posterity, that will never take you outside the physical domain. That is, no causal chain will ever cross the boundary between the physical and the nonphysical." But if consciousness/mind is emergent in the

strong sense, then it will be supposed to exert downward causation on physical events (bodily events/brain events), if it is not to be rendered epiphenomenal. However, the physical events will have physical causes, following the causal closure principle, as well as mental causes too, due to the emergent mental phenomena exerting causal efficacy on them. This will lead to causal overdetermination. This is how the plausibility of emergent mental phenomena has been challenged, by identifying them ultimately with physical events. Sophie Gibb (2019) articulates this problem through the following argument-

i) Relevance: Some mental events are causally relevant to physical effects.

ii) Closure: All physical effects have sufficient physical causes.

iii) Exclusion: There is no systematic causal overdetermination.

Therefore, mental events (that are causally relevant to physical effects) are identical with physical events.

There is also variety in formulating the principle itself, e.g.-

Smith & Jones (1986, 66) define it as “No physical effect has a non-physical cause”; Papineau defines it as: “All physical effects have complete physical causes (‘complete’ in the sense that those causes on their own suffice by physical law to fix the chances of those effects) [1993, 22], “All physical effects have sufficient physical causes” (1998, 375), “All physical effects are fully determined by law by prior physical events” (2000); Crane (2001, 45) defines it as “Every physical event has a physical cause which is enough to bring it about, given the laws of physics”; Marcus (2005) defines it as “Nothing non-physical can affect the physical”; Kim (2005, 15) defines it as “If a physical event has a cause at  $t$ , then it has a physical cause at  $t$ ”; Bishop (2006) defines it as “All physical effects are fully determined by fundamental laws and prior physical events”. However, as Gibb (2019) has pointed out, not all of these formulations are of the required strength, some being too weak and some being too strong.

Some have made a distinction between the causal closure principle from similar principles. E.g., Jones (2008) mentions that Marcus (2005) and Montero (2003)

differentiates between *causal completeness* and *causal closure*, where the first one claims that we don't need to go beyond physical explanations to explain physical events, and the latter one claims that we are necessarily wrong in doing otherwise. So, the first one is moderate view than closure principle in implying that non-physical causation is not to be ruled out, but we can have always a complete physical explanation for physical effects. Kim (2005) makes a distinction between the closure principle and physical determinism by holding that the latter's claim is that every physical event has a physical cause, whereas the previous one would make sense even if some physical events don't have causes.

There are some opinions regarding what entities are allowed to exist according to the closure principle. Kim (2005, 16) opines that entities and events outside the physical domain e.g., immaterial souls may exist and even causal relations between those nonphysical things may hold. So causal closure, according to him, doesn't rule out mind-body dualism, or substance dualism in general, because the closure principle inhibits only the causal influence of those nonphysical things with the physical things. In his words, "...they cannot meddle with physical events—that is, there can be no causal influences injected into the physical domain from outside." So, unlike Descartes' interactionist dualism, Leibniz's mind-body parallelism, Spinoza's double aspect theory is compatible with closure principle. Kim also mentions that mental and biological domains are not causally closed, unlike the physical domain. Something similar is held by Gamper (2017), according to whom, there may be *universe* or domain of mental objects aside the universe or domain of physical objects, but any two universes cannot causally interact. However, philosophers like Jones (2008, 181) holds that causal closure leads us to physicalism and so, causal closure rules out dualism, immanent theism etc. Anyway, philosophers unanimously agree at least this much that causal closure precludes causal interaction between psycho-physical domains, irrespective of the existence of such domains.

The motivations from which the causal closure principle stems can be traced to the no-gap argument and as an expression of the laws of conservation. Roughly saying, the

no gap argument states that scientists have been successful in finding out the complete & immediate causes of various physical events, and there are many physical events still awaiting explanation, although the scientists don't need to fill these gaps by mental causes, just as they didn't need to do so either in the past. In Jones' (2008, 181) words, "We say that (*causality is strictly physical*) because we have observed past objects to behave in such a way that we can expect the same in the future (Uniformity of Nature/ Induction) and because we have never scientifically observed a nonphysical cause to cause anything physical, we conclude the Causal Closure of Physics". Although having various formulations, the law of conservation, expressed explicitly in the first and second laws of thermodynamics, roughly states that every physical system is conservative or is part of a larger system that is conservative (where a system is conservative if its total amount of energy and linear momentum can be redistributed, but not altered in amount, by changes that happen within it).

So, to save emergence, there can be two ways-- either to reformulate the principle of causal closure or its indicative conservation laws so as to accommodate causally efficient mental phenomena, or to deny the causal closure principle. Let's see how the two alternatives have been approached in the next section.

#### 4. **Avoiding conflict with the principle: -**

The first alternative has been followed by Lowe (2008). He mentions various formulations of the causal closure principle and remarks that for ruling out psychophysical causation, the formulation should be neither too weak so as to be rendered invalid in the closure argument, nor should be too strong so as to not have empirical support and render the non-overdetermination premise of the argument invalid. He then gives weak and strong formulation of the principle and shows that psychophysical causation is compatible with both of them. In case of weak formulation (2008, 46), the principle stands as –

Every physical event which has a cause has a sufficient physical cause.

Here, by sufficient cause he means a non-empty set of physical events, each of which is a cause of the given event and all of which jointly causally necessitate the occurrence of the given event. However, in such case, mental events might serve to render certain physical events non-coincidental which, from a purely physical perspective, might appear to be coincidental.

He (2008, 53) gives a strong formulation too, as following-

Every physical event contains only other physical events in its transitive causal closure.

Here, by the 'transitive causal closure' he means "the set of events consisting of the immediate causes of P, the immediate causes of those causes, the immediate causes of those causes ... and so on: in short, the set which includes every event which stands in the ancestral of the 'immediate cause' relation to P." and the implication of this formulation is that the immediate causes of all physical events are always and only other physical events. However, distinguishing between event causation and fact causation, he suggests that it is possible for a mental event to be the cause of a physical fact. So, Lowe's account suggests that mind exerting causal power on physical is compatible with the principle of causal closure, irrespective of how the principle is formulated. In fact, he even goes on to claim that it would not be unreasonable to posit mind as exerting causal powers on the physical, though remaining invisible, in the sense that "no 'gaps' would be apparent in the causal relations between physical events and all physical events would seem to have wholly physical causal explanations" (2008, 58).

We find another alternative for emergent mental events' having downward causal efficacy without any violation to the causal closure of the physical world from the account of Murphy (2006). She claims that 'emergence' has to be defined in terms of the denial of causal reductionism, and this causal anti-reductionism leads to the affirmation of downward causation. For an account of top-down causation, i.e., downward causation besides the bottom-up causation, we need to accept i) the distinction between lower-level laws and the initial and boundary conditions within which they operate, ii) the distinction between structuring and triggering causes, and iii) a definition of downward causation

in terms of selection among lower-level conditions, structures, or causal processes. Following Van Gulick, she claims that physical outcomes are determined by the laws of physics together with initial and boundary conditions. The patterns of boundary conditions picked out by special sciences have downward causal efficacy in the sense that they can affect which causal powers of their constituents are activated or likely to be activated. So according to her, downward causation can be held compatibly within the causally closed physical world if it is defined in terms of the selection among lower-level causal processes on the basis of their higher-level properties. Thus mental properties can be held to be causally effective in the sense that neural processes become subject to the selective pressures of the environment in virtue of the mental properties.

Gamper (2017) has posited an interface between universes to show a loophole in causal closure whereby it doesn't rule out interaction between them. He follows Steinhart (2009) in defining causal closure as "[a] universe is causally closed iff all causes of events in the universe are in the universe, and all effects of events in the universe are in the universe", and improves this definition by considering the possibility of a multitude of universes, since the causal closure principle is regarding *one* universe instead of *only one* universe. So, considering a multiverse view, we can alter '*the* universe' of the definition to '*a/the same* universe' and the improved causal closure principle stands as "All causes of events in a universe are in the *same* universe". However, to answer the question of what could be the cause of the first event in a universe, he posits an interface between universes. Then we can see that the cause of the first event of a universe comes from the interface between that universe and another one, and thus the rule that no cause of another universe causes an event in our universe is not violated. Thus, he upholds the principle of causal closure by pointing out a possible loophole in it via positing interface.

Ellis (2020) has presented a view which claims that causal closure holds side by side strong emergence. Considering real world contexts like engineering systems and biology, where strong emergence occurs due to the combination of upward emergence and downward causation, causal closure holds in these cases as strictly limited in terms of spatial interactions and effective spatial causal closure can be violated by Black Swan

events. Moreover, he also shows, using example from engineering & biology, that causal closure is strictly an interlevel affair which encompasses all levels from social level to particle physics level in the hierarchy of emergence. He contends, contrary to reductive physicalist approach, that the bottom-most physics level is not by itself causally complete, and causal closure is by nature contextual. He also mentions that the unpredictability of outcomes in quantum level due to the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg and in classical level due to chaotic dynamics (butterfly effect), together with the impossibility of specifying initial data to infinite accuracy undermines the possibility of physics per se being causally closed.

Chakrabarty (2020, 306) has pointed out another remarkable way to avoid conflict with this principle, as found in the analyses of various thinkers. Referring to the textbook formulation (Averill & Keating, 1981; Goldstein, 1950) of the first and second law of thermodynamics and the analyses of the same, she shows that those laws, along with the law of conservation of energy & linear momentum is not against consciousness or its exertion of causal influence upon physical things, as nowhere in the laws a change in the energy is presupposed, nor is the source of the force is held to be physical. In Averill & Keating's paper (1981), we see they hold physical force to be a force whose source is a physical object, and then they show that Cornman's (1978) attack against Broad's (1951) proposed interactionism is stronger than necessity and question begging. According to Goldstein's *Classical Mechanics* (1950), the law of conservation of linear momentum for a system of particles is: "If the total external force is zero, the total linear momentum is conserved". They point out that this law is applicable to all kinds of forces, irrespective of their sources, and not just the physical forces mentioned by Cornman. Besides, a case of change of the total linear momentum of the brain due to a mental force is not a counter-example to the law, as in that case the antecedent of the law is false. The first law of thermodynamics also has no implication about the source of the working force, nor does it imply that there is a change in the energy in the source of the force, nor that the source of the force is part of a physical system, and so it does not imply Broad and Cornman's common error of holding "If X exerts force F on a physical system S, and the total energy



of S is changed due to F, then X is physical.” So, deeming consciousness as a force like thing is an alternative which don’t violate the physical laws behind the causal closure principle.

Some emergentists (Polanyi 1962, Stapp 2004) construe mind/ consciousness as the function of exercising discrimination, which means that mental activity doesn’t need addition of energy to a system. Thus, their view may provide a way of preserving the law of conservation of energy, as noted by Clayton (2006, 17).

However, some have opted for the second option of the two ways to deal with it, viz. to deny the principle of causal closure. This has been suggested in many ways: -

If the universe is held to be an open system, there will be no problem in accepting emergence which incorporates downward causation. Because the principle of causal closure forms the basis of scientific approach when it is a closed system. As Chakrabarty (2020, 304) points out following Davies (2006), “the system as a whole would then be determined partially by micro-level dynamics and partially by the constraints imposed by the external, global principles- principles which may ‘soak up’ the causal slack left by the openness”.

This kind of approach can be found in Popper’s (1977) writings also. In Popperian literature, his contention is that though there is causality, it does not entitle us to posit causal closure (2012). He redefines causality and shows that despite our inclination towards a deterministic explanation of everything, causality does not mean determinism. Its explication can be found in his distinction of various kinds of determinism, among which we can plausibly suppose one kind to hold good while another does not. Positing the world as philosophically deterministic, but physically indeterministic serves the purpose of accommodating our freewill and agency (1995). This indeterministic nature i.e., the open nature of the universe is reflected in his proposal of the three world ontology where the worlds are mutually open to each other. So Popperian stance in this regard is that there is no causal closure of the physical, and organisms, arisen through

emergent evolution, are open systems where mind exerts downward causation upon body.

Chakrabarty (2020) points out again, following Davies (2006), another alternative which is also an unorthodox departure from standard physical theory. This alternative opens up if the physical laws functioning in the basic level are thought to be intrinsically imprecise because of limited computational resources of the universe.

Another way out can be found in Davies' (2006) contention. Referring to the problem posed by causal closure as *causal straightjacket*, Davies remarks that it posits an orthodox idealized view of physical laws which is a bedrock assumption of science. However, as he mentions, some thinkers have challenged this idealization of physical laws (Wheeler, 1984; Landauer, 1967, 1986; Bruckner & Zeilinger, 2003). Reversing the relation between law, matter and information, they hold information as the base of physics, from which matter is derived as a concept, and laws are matter's properties that emerge from matter both conceptually and temporarily.

A remarkable alternative is presented by the quantum mechanics. Mixie (1996) argues that the virtual particles & forces provide a counterexample to the causal closure principle of the physical domain, because the explanation of it, especially the phenomenon of nucleon fluctuations offered by physics is inconsistent with the principle of the conservation of energy. Physics cannot, even in principle, thus provide of the above-mentioned phenomena which complies with the causal closure principle.

Kile Jones (2008) has pointed out some arguments against causal closure. He opines that since causal closure implies that immaterial things can't exert causal influence on physical world, so the examples of happening otherwise prove that causal closure is false. He first provides the example of the Big Bang, where the matter of the universe is thought to be compacted into an infinitely dense ball of heat before the explosion, viz. Big Bang. The philosophical problem of singularity, in this context, has been attempted by some scientists who hold creation *ex nihilo*. But this attempt, says Jones, leads us to conclude that something immaterial had causal efficacy on the physical world. He

provides another example against causal closure by stating that laws, by which physics operates, are immaterial in nature. But these immaterial laws are counterfactually causally connected with the physical world. Besides, he mentions that there is indeed connection between mind and physical behaviour and this is pragmatically verified by psychology and sociology. All these show that causal closure is unwarranted.

Sophie Gibb (2019) has argued that the two of the most popular arguments in favour of causal closure principle fail, and as a result the causal closure principle doesn't provide a general argument against emergentism. She also contends that the principle isn't a fact of current science, instead it calls the principle into question. Not only chemistry, but also physics, challenges it, and the probabilistic formulations of the principle too, is in conflict with the holistic nature of quantum systems. Considering the necessary strength of the principle for arguing against emergence and the available arguments for this purpose, she concludes "...if the causal closure argument is the best argument against emergentism, then emergentism is one of the serious contenders in the debate about the ontological status of certain higher-level entities."

Another argument against causal closure principle has been presented by Ravelli (2020). He doesn't agree with arguments claiming the truth of the principle being proven by the exceptionless nature of physics along with science's need for causal closure. He claims that physical law is just as iffy in nature as mental law and that while science needs causal closure our universe does not.

## **5. Concluding remarks: -**

So, as can be seen from the discussion above, both of the alternatives to save emergence from the threat of causal closure has been availed. Philosophers like Lowe, Murphy, Gamper etc. have tried to reform the principle of causal closure in a promising way for emergence; whereas some recent philosophers and physicists like Popper, Mixie etc. have denied the applicability of causal closure. In view of the whole discussion, I think that another way-out, in line with the first type of approach mentioned here, maybe to call into question the very presupposition that causal closure, if it holds at all, involves

the realm of physics only. It may very well be the case that there is causal closure between the physical and the nonphysical things and phenomenon; after all, causal closure requires only that the world is causally closed, i.e., no state or phenomenon of the world is uncaused. Strictly speaking, this requirement in itself doesn't entitle us to claim the causal closure of the physical from merely the causal closure principle, until & unless we associate it with our bias towards a physicalist outlook for our ease of advantage, in cost of ditching a fact. So this too may be an option worth considering in the arena of this conflict; in that case, the only thing we need to look for is the mechanism of affecting the physical by the non-physical and vice versa.

Anyway, the prospect of emergence, especially its strong version looks promising, irrespective of the alternatives taken. So now we may leave the rest on scientists & philosophers to decide which one suits their theorizing most, maintaining correspondence with scientific facts, and for nonproblematic universality as well.

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# THE DISCURSIVE APPARATUS BETWEEN HARAWAY AND FOUCAULT: LOCATING THE FORMAL FEATURES OF DISCURSIVE SPACE

SHIRSANKAR BASU

**Keywords:** subjectivity; epistemology; situated cognition; feminist poststructuralism; queer theory; logic.

## 1. Introduction: Haraway's Post-Newtonian Subjectivity

Fostering a poststructuralist<sup>1</sup> feminist lens, conflating the “concerns of Marxist and socialist feminism”<sup>2</sup> with science and technology studies, Haraway’s postmodern theorisation of cyborg and enunciation of the politics of production of subjectivity in relation to situated knowledge claims, mark a pioneering trend in the study of post-humanism that integrates the issues of epistemology with the ethical. That the politics of subjectivity as material, embodied, situated and extended, is convoluted...can be thought of as primal in the context of Haraway’s critical envisioning of feminist science and technology studies. The critical envisioning is wherein the speaking subject speaks from a certain politics of location<sup>3</sup>, so as to transgress the boundaries of normative truth claims

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<sup>1</sup> Here it is important we cast a difference between the historic-politically loaded terms: postmodernism and post-structuralism. Although here in this paper the postmodern and the poststructuralist have been shown to be congruent and at times conflated, yet there is a subtle difference between the two. *The postmodern is generically understood as being incredulous towards all classical/modern meta-narratives with special emphasis on difference and incommensurabilities*. While post-structuralism indicates a critical departure from the Saussurian linguistic dimension of formal/ahistorical structuralism which ascribes to a scientific discipline, its status of science. According to the postcolonial theorist, cultural critic Robert Young, “*post-structuralism traces the trace of structuralism’s difference from itself*.” See Robert Young, “Post-Structuralism: An Introduction,” in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young, 1st ed. (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1981).

<sup>2</sup> See Peta Hinton, “‘Situated Knowledges’ and New Materialism(s): Rethinking a Politics of Location,” *Women* 25, no. 1 (2014): 99–113, doi:10.1080/09574042.2014.901104. Through combining Marxist and Socialist concerns with the framework of scientificity, Haraway not only critiqued the demonological standpoint towards science and technology but put forward the theory of cyborgs, upholding a ‘transgressive landscape’, as a strategy to understand ‘fragmented boundary identities’. Cyborgs in her writings stand for fractured-ness, partiality, and fluidity of queer/transgender identities.

<sup>3</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 100.

with a radical constructivism<sup>4</sup> and produce in turn a complex discourse. Emphasizing the ‘politics of location’ as a crucial tool for (‘new materialist’/neo-materialist) Haraway’s feminist inquiry and research, and arguing that this is combined with situated knowledge production, feminist scholar Peta Hinton describes Haraway’s enunciation of feminist politics of location as an important feminist toolkit that serves as an epistemological and methodological requisite. Feminist politics of location indicates a phenomenological<sup>5</sup> specificity of the speaking subject; in which the speaking subject speaks from her phenomenological experiences, from the experiences of her lived embodiment. This, as regards politics of location, is what grounds the theory with an agentic gesture of self-representing political self-definition, turning the discursive space, into a complex realm of ‘positionality’. Thus, these methods of complex discourse(s) analysis, in which the research, the researcher and the researched are situated with respect to each other in a heavily co-constitutive intertwinement, are what constitute the

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<sup>4</sup> See Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (2006): 575, doi:10.2307/3178066. Also, see Kirsten Campbell, “The Promise of Feminist Reflexivities: Developing Donna Haraway’s Project for Feminist Science Studies,” *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 19, no. 1 (2004): 162–82, doi:10.2979/hyp.2004.19.1.162., to understand Haraway’s account of science studies as both feminist and constructivist based on the ‘constructivist concept of reflexivity’ and ‘radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects’.

<sup>5</sup> Here, it is important to give justifications as to why I attribute salience on Haraway’s phenomenological politics of location as to explicate the discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault while it is historically prominent that Foucault was one of the sharpest critics of phenomenology all through his life and philosophical career. It is true that Foucault vehemently tried to distance himself from the Husserlian-Marxist (transcendental) traditions and Sartrean existential traditions of phenomenological thought. But, did Foucault find a way out of Hegelian phenomenology? The answer to this question is indeterminate. Foucault himself admitted that the Hegelianism and phenomenological thought substantially shaped his intellectual formation during his university level education, during early 1950s. Also, Foucault was very much, rather inseparably, part of the historical movement that re-launched Hegelian studies in France; that is, French Hegelianism during the period 1930s-1950s under the guiding light of Jean Wahl, Alexandre Kojève, Alexandre Koyré and Jean Hyppolite. It is the Hegelian ‘constitution of the transcendental’ that troubled Foucault so much that he devised the philosophical technique of problematization to depart from it, thereafter. One of Foucault’s prominent comments on Hegel can be quoted from Foucault’s 1981 publication “The Order of Discourse” in which he writes: “*But to make a real escape from Hegel presupposes an exact appreciation of what it costs to detach ourselves from him. It presupposes a knowledge of how close Hegel has come to us [...] ... he is waiting for us immobile and elsewhere.*” See Michel Foucault, “The Order of Discourse,” in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young, First (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981)., p. 74. *Thus I argue that Foucault’s relationship to phenomenology is troubled, a continuous, repeated “reversal of for and against”, both a rupture and a continuity.* See Pierre Macherey, “Did Foucault Find a ‘Way Out’ of Hegel?,” *Theory, Culture and Society*, 2022, doi:10.1177/02632764221084903.



schematic of discursive space(s)<sup>6</sup>. Although, at an initial glance, discursive space, having its roots in post-structuralist traditions of thought, doesn't appear to be formalizable, yet a deeper investigation of its methods of analysis, especially topological, suggests that it can have formalism in a post-Newtonian, non-Euclidean plane. Because according to Haraway's indication, discursive space has a post-Newtonian subjectivity<sup>7</sup>. Deconstructing the truth claims of scientific objectivity, carried forward by "scientific, positivist" rationality, in traditional epistemologies of science studies, Haraway contended that "*radical historical specificity*", "*radical historical contingency*", "*embodied accounts of truth*" and "*collective historical subjectivity*" are those conceptual linkages that can be attributed to the process of constructive undoing (of objectivity), to this post-modernist deconstructive practice of analysis, so as to highlight a radical constructivist feminist reflexivity. That this post-Newtonian subjectivity can be upheld so as to undo the logic of very many repressive and oppressive social hypotheses pervading across science and technology studies, becomes particularly clear when Haraway argues,

We unmasked the doctrines of objectivity because they threatened our budding sense of collective historical subjectivity and agency and our "embodied" accounts

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<sup>6</sup> Let us first try to map the ontology of discursive space. The definition of discursive space has been straight away derived from the Foucault's post-positivist theorisation of discursive formation according to which a discursive space is based on the idea of a '*dispositif*' (it is a French neologism(dis + positive) which means a complex heterogeneous ensemble or a social apparatus or at times 'set-up'. We have borrowed the definition of discursive space from the famous collection of interviews on Foucault: 'Power/Knowledge' following which and echoing with Foucault, we propose that this idea of complex heterogeneous ensemble or apparatus is heterogeneously constituted of discourses, institutions, spatial architectural forms, regulatory power structures, disciplinary norms, physical laws, gender politics, administrative measures; natural and social scientific statements--- the conjunctures and conflicts between them; philosophical, moral and philanthropic propositions--- in short, both the said; that is, the articulated content as much as the unsaid and the unarticulable. Such are the elements of discursive space. See Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," in *Power/Knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (Pantheon Books. New York, 1980)., p. 194.

<sup>7</sup> Post-Newtonian subjectivity is best understood by the disruption of subject-object dichotomy; understood by the fact that object of knowledge is contingent upon the intervention of subject, in quantum physical sciences. It is linked to the enunciation of (Hiesenberg's) uncertainty principle, complementarity, and nonlocal causation that go on to develop the foundation of "social physics" in which theses of objectivity, determinism, and causality are relinquished to pave the way for subjectivity, indeterminism, uncertainty and probability. See E. Sam Overman, "Continuities in the Development of the Physical and Social Sciences: Principles of a New Social Physics," *Knowledge in Society* 2, no. 2 (1989): 80-93, doi:10.1007/BF02687222.

of truth, and we end up with one more excuse for not learning any post-Newtonian physics.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Discursive Frameworks: Comments on the Methodological Tenability

### 2.1 Mind / Gender as Discursive Formations

The discursive/philosophical frameworks of this paper situate an intersectional hybrid between cognitive science, gender studies and Foucauldian epistemology which, we show in this paper is tenable and resistant to all kinds of polemical attacks.

The central argument or the *position of the paper* is described here as follows: Since gender studies and Foucauldian epistemology both are (1) *critical of representationalism*, or better put, critical of representationalist cognitivism, and since both are based on the concepts of (2) *radical embodiment* and (3) *discursive limits of Classical/Bivalent logic*, hence based on this commonality they can be merged under a new meta-theoretical rubric of cognitive science, keeping their internal differences in tact. The resultant science is what we would call Foucauldian scientificity. This Foucauldian scientificity is how the intersectional hybrid between cognitive science, gender studies and Foucauldian epistemology, can be established.

According to this intersectional hybrid, and because of its very logic of vagueness and heterogeneity planted at the heart of Foucauldian epistemology, mind and/or gender, as discursive formations, have been re-presented in this paper as the *Foucauldian oeuvre* which is “regarded neither as an immediate unity, nor as a certain unity, nor as a homogeneous unity.”<sup>9</sup> Thus mind and/or gender, as effects of semantically indeterminate discourses, have been shown to be *not* pre-shaped by universal, transcendental, a priori conceptual categories. That is, mind and gender, as discursive formations, are shown to be defying the internally consistent unification frameworks of

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<sup>8</sup> This excerpt indicates that Haraway’s deconstruction of “hostile science” is immersed in a post-Newtonian subjectivity. See Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” p. 578.

<sup>9</sup> See Michel Foucault, “Part II: The Discursive Regularities : The Unities of Discourse,” in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, ed. Alan Sheridan Michel Foucault (London. New York: Routledge Classics, 1972), 23–33., p.27.

law-like generalizable universality. Here, the primary reason or impetus to club cognitive science, gender studies and Foucauldian epistemology, which otherwise appear “incommensurable” or “incompatible”, comes from the discursive nature of Foucauldian epistemology in which Foucault departs from classical Cartesian and Aristotelian epistemology to analyse the episteme in terms of “the total set of relations that unite, at a given period, the discursive practices [...]”<sup>10</sup> And thereby, we argue that discursive spaces or discursive (spatial) formations, because of its inherent logic of vagueness, indeterminacies, contradictions, heterogeneities, non-unifications, and internal inconsistencies rooted at the idea of the ‘death of the subject’, or what we can better interpret as the “*decentering of subjectivity*”, perhaps have formalism, or quasi formalism, in terms of the post-Newtonian and non-Euclidean topologies.

## 2.2 Comments on the Formal Features

Such formalism, or quasi formalism, is feasible because both Foucault’s epistemology and gender studies are critical of classical cognitivist representationalism. Here we depart from the universalistic and dualistic ontological assumptions of Classical/Cognitivist representational (-ist) logic. Thus, as a result of this philosophical thought, the formal features of discursive space are chosen as follows: (1) Rejection of centered-ness. (For example: phallogentrism, male-centeredness, euro-centeredness, bio-centrism, phallo-logocentrism etc.); (2) Invalidity of the principle of explosion. (3) Non-normative logical pluralism (in the sense that there is more than one precisification of the concept of logical consequence). (4) Rejection of dualism/dichotomy/binaries; (5) Vagueness and Uncertainty; (6) Undecidability and/or partial decidability; (7) Dialectical Contradictions; (8) paraconsistencies. We have shown where in the discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault, the above-mentioned formal features are validated. Through showing how these formal features are validated, as a resultant theorization model, what we intend to underline is the possibilization of the

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<sup>10</sup> See Michel Foucault, “Part IV: Archaeological Descriptions : Science and Knowledge,” in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, ed. Alan Sheridan Michel Foucault (London. New York: Routledge Classics, 1972), 151–215., p. 211

Foucauldian maxim that human individual and her/her/their mind or gender are nothing but a social construction of, historically contingent and semantically indeterminate, discourse/power complex. I argue that these philosophical frameworks in which Haraway can be situated in relation to Foucault, is nothing but a discursive admixture of phenomenology, deconstruction, feminism, Foucauldian epistemology and the philosophy of cognitive science.

### 2.3 “Threshold of Epistemologization”

In this way we highlight that mind and/or gender as discursive formations; that is, the fact that *mind or gender can be situated as a discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault* in terms of all those above-mentioned non-classical formal features is highlighted here. As a result, we show how the “unity of objects of discourses” comes to be marked with an “internal discontinuity that suspends their permanence.”<sup>11</sup> We, thereby, present a singular; in effect a *nominalist logic of epistemology*, sort of a *particular theory of language*. This singular-nominalist characterization of mind or gender has been shown in this paper in which the “analysis of the episteme” or the epistemological field neither does follow the Cartesian “way of reasoning” underlying the dualistic metaphysic; nor does follow the Aristotelian “precisely ordered mode of abstract thinking”<sup>12</sup> marked by the Aristotelian structural laws of human thought. To be little more precise, the epistemological field of such discursive apparatuses appear neither as “a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge” nor as “general stage of [abstract, ordered, systematic] reason” nor as a “certain structure of thought”. But, *cross* the Foucauldian “*threshold of epistemologization*”<sup>13</sup>; in order to manifest itself in terms of a discursively totalizable field of knowledge that is never-total; that is, presenting the epistemic field as an “indefinite field of relations”, as an “inexhaustible field” uniting the discursive practices of the discursive formations that ultimately resist

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<sup>11</sup> See Michel Foucault, “2. The Discursive Regularities : Discursive Formations,” in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, ed. Alan Sheridan Michel Foucault (Routledge Classics, 1972), 34–43., p. 36

<sup>12</sup> See Genevieve Lloyd, “Reason as Attainment : Descartes's Method,” in *The Man of Reason : “Male” and “Female” in Western Philosophy*, ed. Genevieve Llyod (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1984), 39–50., p. 41

<sup>13</sup> See Foucault, “Part IV: Archaeological Descriptions : Science and Knowledge.”, pp 210-211

finalization and completeness; are therefore marked with the *disruptions of the sovereignty of the subjectivity*.

### 3. Deconstructing Objectivity: Using situated knowledges

In her seminal paper, “Situated Knowledges”, feminist scholar and science historian Donna Haraway claimed---“*feminist objectivity is situated knowledges*”. And, employed ‘*discursive space(s)*’ as an analytical tool, by giving a new (post-modern) paradigmatic model of science, that is contestable, and that which situates the “social constructionist arguments”, used in social scientific studies, in the context of critiquing the concepts of “objectivity” in traditional scientific epistemologies. Application of such a situated cognition paradigm in understanding science thereby deconstructs<sup>14</sup> the normative truth claims (such as, scientific objectivity is disembodied) of traditional “*scientific, positivist*” engagements and its binary oppositional frameworks (such as ‘nature/culture’), and finally develops a “feminist critical empiricism” for a radical history of scientific investigations. For Haraway, the epistemological subject/knower of science, to which the object of knowledge is tied, is always constrained with the power regimes of racial and gendered subjectivity. The epistemological subject is always already tied to the myriad of power relations operating at the micro-level of society. Feminist critics of science have critiqued the object of knowledge in science as passive and inert, calling it fixed. Haraway posed this dream of objectivity as extremely dangerous since it seeks to strip agency from everyone and everything except the

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<sup>14</sup> Here it is important to mention why I’ve invoked Derridean idea of deconstruction to flesh out the discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault. The reason is twofold. One reason is that Haraway herself quite boisterously speaks of the feminist deconstruction of positivist scientific truth and reason. And the second reason is historical. I argue that Haraway draws from both Derridean instinct of the decreative unmaking aspect of deconstruction and Foucault’s “global rejection” of the language of classical Western scientific reason; which is in other words the “language of order” or the “language of the system of objectivity”. Despite the fact there is historically prominent critical split between Foucault and Derrida, yet the truth is that Derridean deconstruction and Foucauldian epistemological discursivity, often cannot be separated in the history of post-structuralism. And, probably it is for this reason Haraway’s post-Foucauldian frameworks are also informed of Derrida’s deconstructive unmaking. It is true that Derrida retorted to Foucault’s scheme of the “archaeology of silence” of madness as if Foucault had the “precomprehension of the concept of madness” but Derrida in no way denies that the objective of philosophy is to “*attempt to say the hyperbole.*” And, it is in this sense perhaps Derrida’s deconstruction can be conflated with Foucault’s episteme. See Jacques Derrida, “Cogito and the History of Madness,” in *Writing and Difference*, ed. Alan Bass (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1978), 36–77.

scientist. Hence, acknowledging such approaches are related more to the issues of (feminist) ethics and politics than epistemology, and in order to give her text a post-colonial positioning, Haraway argued in the paper that “*All knowledge*”, in situated cognition paradigms, “*is understood as a condensed node in the agonistic power field*” which can be pitted against the doctrines of “*objective power*”, in normative, “*masculinist*” scientific engagements that dismiss “embodied accounts of truths”, “collective historical subjectivity”, and “agency”. Thus, “eschewing the *addictive narcotic of transcendental foundations*” in science, Haraway insists on uncertainties and undecidabilities (agonism as indicated by Haraway) of knowledge which constitute the discursive analytical framework, and integrate the scientific discourses of objectivity with its monstrous other---embodied, situated, implicated knowledge. That all knowledge systems are nothing but agonistic nodes within discursive power field is a statement that perfectly sits well with Foucault’s power-knowledge complex and his poststructuralist frameworks that evade transcendentalism. Here, it can be shown that Haraway’s stance is purely post-Foucauldian. By this she means that with the help of Foucauldian power-knowledge complex, one can show how epistemic structures are situated in relation to discursive bodies, historical moments/subjectivities and discursive practices. And, the poststructuralist formulation of ‘knowledge-body-power-subjectivities’ somehow evades the frameworks of transcendentalism. It is this “residual whiff of transcendentalism”<sup>15</sup> that both Foucault and Haraway try to avoid in their de/essentializing systems of thought and theory. This ‘whiff of transcendentalism’ is perhaps that which paves the way to essentialisms, and that, as thought by both Haraway and Foucault, which prevents the formal laws governing every scientific epistemology from intersecting with “vicissitudes of history”.

#### **4. Haraway’s *Radical Constructivist Analysis***

Such analysis technique, in the form of a spatialization apparatus(eg: spatialization of language), mapped onto the conceptualisation of discursive space, in Haraway’s

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<sup>15</sup> See Maurice Blanchot, “Michel Foucault as I Imagine Him,” in *Foucault/Blanchot* (New York: Zone Books, 1987), p. 71.

language praxis, and in her feminist articulation, integrates the apparatuses of biotechnological sciences with that [dispositifs meaning ‘apparatuses’] of human and social sciences, based on three precursory ideas: a) mind, brain and cognition are embodied; mind is extended into the world, situated in the environment from which we, humans, draw various affordances which ultimately differentially shape our lived social realities b) all truth claims are socially constructed c) all knowledge claims are situated and contingent. If these three precursory thoughts are to be mapped onto a feminist practice, then: (1.) delegitimization of ‘universalizing tendencies’ that appropriate biological naturalism of life among queer/trans/intersex subjects which completely avoids the culture-question and (2.) obscuring of “disembodied ambitions of cogito”: these two points are found to be crucial. Here we see the first formal feature of discursive space finds its validation: Rejection of centered-ness; because, to tend to universalize is to totalize, and to totalize is to have a centre. Since, “scientific, positivist” rationality always tends to universalize the materiality in natural sciences, and particularly binarizes the material-discursive socialization of queer/trans/intersex subjects with totalizing narrative(s)<sup>16</sup>, it can be argued that such tendencies of binary constructivism are phallogocentric (phallo-logocentric). Because, they foster dualistic thinking that presupposes Man at the centre, presumes “Western” humanist ideals as putatively universal. This particular de-centering of Man in Haraway’s discursive spaces again reconciles us with Foucault’s insistence on the theoretical and philosophical rejection of the universalistic or foundationalistic meta-interpretations of Western humanist ideals<sup>17</sup> of modernity. That is, to indicate his nominalist avowal that “Man doesn’t exist” or Man is promised to an imminent death as a face drawn in the sand near the edge of the sea.

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<sup>16</sup> The idea of totalizing narratives echoes with the Lyotardian description of ‘postmodern condition’ that marks the end of modernity and its impossibility to continue with grand, totalizing social theories and narratives. However, Fredric Jameson in 1984, in his famous article: “Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”, argued that there’s enough debate regarding how classical Marxism has always been regarded as grand, totalizing social theory, that is, as most inclusive social theory, whereas postmodernism has always been relativized, denigrated as a ‘cultural logic of late capitalism’ despite the fact that theoretical shift to postmodernism brought about sea change in the perspectivization of society, culture, theory, experience and subjectivity.

<sup>17</sup> See Nancy Fraser, “Michel Foucault: A ‘Young Conservative’?,” *Ethics* 96, no. 1 (1985): 165–84, doi:10.1086/292729.

This methodological scepticism here also questions what counts as nature along with questioning what counts as man. Just as nature is always “appropriated, preserved, enslaved, exalted or otherwise made flexible for disposal by culture”, along the lines of capitalist colonialism, the productionist logic in the traditions of Western binary oppositions has always “resourced” sex for its representation as gender. Which Haraway described as a trap of “appropriationist logic of domination” built into the binary oppositions such as nature/culture and sex/gender. For Haraway, truth of these binaries is that these binary constructivisms are in reality co-constitutional.

Now, opposing the binary constructivism, deconstructing (constructively undoing) binary oppositional frameworks that go on to formulate the basic conceptual bedrock of natural sciences, Haraway using her radical constructivist approach, integrates the (feminist) politics of location with feminist politics of difference that forms the basis of situated cognitive subjectivity. But, questions that come across as important, here, are: (a) what is this politics of location? We have already spoken of (a). We shall now investigate: (b) how is this politics of location, as a “postmodern insistence”, submerged in this politics of situated knowledge(s), and integrated with politics of difference?

## **5. Politics of Difference**

In radical feminist terminologies, these differences are (mutual) non-dominant, non-hierarchical: the celebration of which leads to the gradual dismantling of ‘the Master’s house’ which appropriates an exclusionary politics and an exploitative logic through applying the Master’s tools. From this angle, it is clear that the celebration and acknowledgement of difference(s), through mutual interdependence and intersubjectivity, go on to imply subverting the top-down power structure as exercised by capitalist patriarchy and mainstream feminism that reinforce sameness and homogeneity, as opposed to the allusions of heterogeneity, which are often employed in understanding community-building frameworks or collective kinship networks. Hence, celebration of differences speaks of multiplicity and pluralism as democratic agendas in order to accentuate diversity and inclusion in societies. Differences lead to multiplicity of opinions and acknowledgment of pluralism in practices of thought and production of



knowledge(s), through mutual inter-dependence and sharing. But, these difference(s) may also lead to othering, in the sense that it could be exclusionary as well. There could be very many processes of othering/otherisation in a society.

For example:

Case (1.): we can think of socially repressive hypotheses indicating processes of othering a black lesbian feminist woman in a social space administered by cisgendered White heterosexual feminist women; We can imagine another set of psychosocial processes driven by which a Black lesbian feminist woman situates herself in that space as the 'Other', to bridge between her personal and political;

Or,

Case (2.): another social situation wherein a transgendered feminist person\* is regulated, controlled, belittled, and thus intellectually otherised, subalternised by a cisgendered lesbian woman.

Commonalities between these two cases are that all the situations have patterns of similar social processes of othering/otherisation, which are in turn processes of negating/excluding the 'other', perpetuated by processes of maintaining radical differences. So, in short what it reduces to is that processes of enculturating differences both include, by encouraging pluralism, diversity and inclusion, as well as exclude; that is, doesn't include 'others', by subjecting the system to power dominance relations; both inclusion and exclusion being true at the same time and space. And, here it leads to contradictions. We conclude that there are two premises: The first premise is where there is some evidence that says differences need to be enculturated, and celebrated so as to inculcate diversity and inclusion; the second premise claims difference accentuates othering/otherisation, a process of negation. Thus, the two premises contradict each other, in relation to politics of difference. Audre Lorde, underlining the creative function of differences in her seminal text: 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House', proclaims---

Difference must not merely be tolerated, but seen as a fund of necessary polarities between which our creativity can spark like a dialectic. Only then does the necessity for interdependency become unthreatening. Only within that interdependency of different strengths, acknowledged and equal, can the power to seek new ways of being in the world generate, as well as the courage and sustenance to act where there are no charters.<sup>18</sup>

Which implies understanding the culture of differences ought to be in terms a dialectic. Following the similar logic of dialectics, we can contend that Haraway's conceptualisation of cyborg is an exemplification of this irony to put 'incompatible things together', by upholding that the imagery of post-human cybernetic organisms, as a body-machine, as a hybridization of the natural, the social and the technological; and thus highlighted the need to be different to alter the then current face of feminism (second wave) immersed in technocratic capitalism and 'multinational systems of domination', in order to inculcate the practice of third wave feminism. The discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault that we are trying to construct here takes a turn and tries to highlight Foucault's avowed take with respect to differences. We would particularly cite Foucault's take vis-à-vis difference from his 1970 essay: 'Theatrum Philosophicum'. Writes Foucault:

The freeing of difference requires thought without contradiction, without dialectics, without negation; thought that accepts divergence; affirmative thought whose instrument is disjunction; thought of the multiple—of the nomadic and dispersed multiplicity that is not limited or confined by the constraints of the same<sup>19</sup>.

So, we see our formal system for discursive spatial fields of knowledge, also accommodates the fact that difference is not contradictory; To understand this we need to invest ourselves in the archaeology of the un-said propositions about Foucault-Hegel

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<sup>18</sup> See Audre Lorde, "Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House.," in *Sister Outsider : Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde.*, ed. Audre Lorde (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984)..

<sup>19</sup> See Michel Foucault, "Theatrum Philosophicum," in *Between Deleuze and Foucault*, ed. Thomas Nail and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh University Press, 2016)., pp. 50-51

intersections. From the above excerpt it is clear that Foucault firmly believed that dialectics cannot liberate differences. Foucault here prioritizes the method of problematization instead of dialectics. Although, dialectics guarantee how differences can always be recaptured in the form of dialectic. Yet, Foucault was skeptical about this “dialectical sovereignty of the same” and thereby calls into question the “unchanging pedagogical origin of dialectics”, about this “neurosis of dialectics”! Hence, he writes that difference in order to get liberated needs to be thought without contradiction, without dialectics, without negation, without rule of the negative, but with the thought of a “nomadic and dispersed multiplicity”. So, in our queer feminist logical system, that we are terming as the ‘Discursive Apparatus’ between Haraway and Foucault: this fact of difference being thought both in relation and not in relation to contradiction, creates a moment of paraconsistency, and invalidates the principle of explosion. For in saying that difference is and is not contradictory, what we purportedly claim is that both the statements and their negation are true in our logical system.

## **6. The Psychological and the Political**

We know that psychological milieu often intersects with the theoretical milieu and theoretical milieu or space often relates to the political milieu, especially according to post-structuralist, post-modernist formulations. So, let us now analyse the inter-relations between the psychological and the political. Questions that come across as important, here, are: how does one bridge between the personal, the psychological and the political? This is best understood when we look through how, arguing from a feminist politics of location, through the problematization of knowledge production and acquisition procedures in relation to power dynamics, Haraway reads into the equality versus difference debates in feminist political practices regarding science and technology studies and sets her focus on politics of difference(s); that is, on the multiplicity of cultural and sexual differences between “compulsory heterosexuals” and queer/trans/intersex communities. What are worth investigating here is: (a) How is

situated knowledge production associated with ‘situated embodiment’ of women\*<sup>20</sup> subjects and their celebration of differences? (b) How is situated cognitive subjectivity conceptually linked to the practice of acknowledging, enculturating and celebrating embodied differences, particularly understood in terms of a metaphorical representation of the discursive foundation of transgendered embodiment? What is important to note, here, is that these areas of logical argumentation are again mired in (dialectical) contradiction(s). On the one hand, there’s acknowledgement of the fact, through reconfiguring subjectivity, that identity of women can’t be cognized in a straightforward, linear manner; that is, it has some nonlinear elements in it. On the other, at the same time, something of this same identity is linearly drawn in terms of a self-reflexive psychological process of self-identification, in order to ground the subject’s political aspirations and accountability. This becomes clear when we see the feminist scholar Peta Hinton’s argument:

Reading this ‘problem of difference’ into a politics of location, the key issue that emerges here is that its reconfiguring of subjectivity disrupts the capacity to secure the identity of a woman in any straightforward manner, while at the same time, it requires something of this identity in order to ground its political aspirations... in signalling the multiplicity of identities inherent in the category ‘woman’, but also... in opening to question the production of embodied difference by acknowledging materiality’s entangled engagements as suggestive of the complicated production of any identity.<sup>21</sup>

This argument clearly speaks for a vision which understands the “production of embodied difference” and that of categorically complicated multiplicity in theorising the identity category of women\*. So, what is the politics of this vision, here?

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<sup>20</sup> The asterisk ‘\*’ indicates an anti-essentialist conceptualization of the category of woman, encompassing both biological and cultural women. This way of indicating or rethinking the category of woman is borrowed from the gender theorist/philosopher Judith Butler’s acclaimed work: ‘Gender Trouble’.

<sup>21</sup> See Hinton, “‘Situated Knowledges’ and New Materialism(s): Rethinking a Politics of Location.”, p. 101.

## 7. Politics of Vision: Formation of Feminist Objectivity

Now, to know how politics of difference is associated with politics of situated knowledge(s), we need to delve into the politics of vision through the understanding of how embodied differences relate to the deconstruction of subject-object dichotomy and its concerning objectivity, and how we can rework-reconfigure objectivity into a subjectivity produced through the lines of subjectification constituted of the subject's phenomenological experiences or their\* lived social-material realities. To enunciate, what becomes additionally necessary is the understanding of a politics of vision; that is, of the conflict between vision from below / 'view from below' / bottom up vision and the top-down vision / 'view from above' and the central question is which view to adopt as to be more politically correct. That is, which view is to be more regarded as an ethically, politically correct feminist practice of thinking: A 'view from above' that appropriates top-down power structure that radical feminists often critique; or, a 'view from below' that upholds the vantage point of the subjugated, structured through the apparatuses of gender-race-nation-class-sexuality in the Western context, or through the apparatuses of caste-class-gender-nation-sexuality-religion in the south Asian context.

Now, if we place the 'view from below' and situate the caste-class-gender-sexuality-religion apparatus in social-historical context(s), the textual space will take a discursive shift towards the perspectivization of the politics of intersectionality in Trans\*<sup>22</sup>/queer/Kothi/Hijra plane. Discussing geometric foundation of this intersectionality could be another broader area of research. But, let's not digress.

Let us think more about Haraway's understanding of vision in terms of its 'embodied nature', and her reclaiming of the primate visual sensory system that comes with a critical intervention of ---a scientific, masculinist gaze, the 'God's eyeview', the 'god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere': that is, "a way of being everywhere while denying the need to be anywhere". This is specially applied in modern visualisation

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<sup>22</sup> Here the use of asterisk '\*' indicates the inclusion of all transgendered identity categories that can come under the umbrella of Trans\*.

technologies from scanning electron microscopes, to magnetic resonance imaging applied as neuroimaging technologies. Haraway's critique of this scientific gaze, emanating from a 'cannibaleye', in natural science and biotechnological studies, tied to "militarism, capitalism, colonialism, and male supremacy", appears to be informed by Foucault's critique of biopolitical techno-apparatuses reinforcing 'medical gaze' upon the speaking subjects in medical clinics as applied in his discursive analytical inquiry of clinical positivism. Here, Haraway, in this case drawing her political, philosophical lineage from Foucault, actually applies Foucault's analytical technique of associating 'medical gaze' with 'objectivization of the speaking subject' in showing and signifying how scientific gaze; that is, a 'conquering gaze' happens to be associated with phallogocentric universalization of 'objectivity' in scientifically, technologically modern societies that is foundationally built upon racism, male-dominance, militarism, patriarchy, and trans misogyny. She holds that within this scientific gaze are inscribed several "marked bodies" or what we can call marginal individuals which make the unmarked category of Man and White assume power over these discursively marginal bodies. Haraway maintained that, coming from a feminist location, we all will turn into cyborgs in future; that is, she predicted that a time will come when the human race will turn into a bunch of body-machines, *post-human* human-computer interfacial creatures. Haraway argues:

I would like to insist on the embodied nature of all vision ... This is the gaze that mythically inscribes all the marked bodies; that makes unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. This gaze signifies the unmarked positions of Man and White, one of the many nasty tones of the word "objectivity" to feminist ears.<sup>23</sup>

Thus problematizing vision in modern scientific and technological societies, Haraway indoctrinates the 'embodied objectivity' as the 'new materialist' feminist objectivity which is understood in terms of production, acquisition, distribution of situated

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<sup>23</sup> See Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.", p. 581

knowledges. That is, despite deconstructing objectivity, and reconfiguring it into a subjectivity, Haraway did not repudiate universality or objectivity, rather contended that we can mould our ‘stereoscopic vision’ so that the discursive deconstruction of objectivity can be reformulated into the idea of a feminist objectivity, and proclaims,

I would like a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: Feminist objectivity quite simply means situated knowledges.<sup>24</sup>

Haraway adds that this ‘feminist objectivity’ is all about ‘limited location’ and ‘situated knowledges’ and not about the ‘false vision’ of “transcendence and splitting of subject and object”. Rather, much like all the fragmented and porous boundaries of many other binaries such as public/private, personal/political, theory/practice etc., the two poles of binary constructivism—subject/object---too mutually co-determine, co-constitute each other, in order to produce multidimensional social-cultural-political subjectivities. These are not split into binary oppositions.

### **8. *Post-Human Turn in Haraway: Enunciating Cyborg Feminism***

Let us now come to the part of discourse dealing with Haraway’s coinage of post-humanism through her theorisation of cyborg myth; that is, to how she precisified the conceptualisation of ‘what counts as nature’, as something uncertain, through her post-human critical thought, upholding cyborgs as a cybernetic hybrid of man and machine, a body-machine, a mythical creature that subverts the hegemonisation of an “original unity”, an “essential unity”, and a “fullness” that are often contextualised in relation to the “phallic mother”. Haraway, in her post-modernist method of critiquing scientific positivism, denounces the concepts such as “organic whole”, “fullness”, “essential unity”, and insists that it is partial perspectives that give us the vision to see the lines of fractures. Interestingly, these lines of fractures or fragmentation of the subject in Haraway are the lines of subjectification or moments of dispersion in Foucault, which can be visualised both in terms of a complex discourse analysis as to produce subjectivity

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

or in conceptualising identities as contradictory, and therefore fractured. Combining her feminist political location of affirming the ‘connection of pleasure between human and other living creatures’, with the argument that knowledge is situated, Haraway deconstructed the regular notion of nature, proclaimed that truth doesn’t have any unconditioned, transcendental universal nature; rather, all truths are socially constructed. Here again, Haraway’s stance reminds us how Foucault, performing the role of a genealogist, documented “the contingency of historical constructions of truth and identity through the construction of alternative truths and explication of ‘subjugated knowledges’”<sup>25</sup>. That truth(s) must insist on a rhetorical nature opposing a phallogocentric universalization, must critique the biopolitical apparatuses linking social structures and the nation-state, is to be settled through a “dialectical progeny”, and this is what constitutes the foundation of Haraway’s discursive space in which understanding social constructionist arguments is a central feature. In *Cyborg Manifesto*, Haraway expressed it in explicit terms that Foucauldian biopolitics is a “flaccid pre-monition” of the advent of ‘cyborg politics’ in late twentieth century, and conceptualised her concepts of “techno-biopower” from tenets of biopower, and “informatics of domination” from the tenets of repressed/subjugated knowledges. Haraway speaks of embracing her non-human ‘other’; that is, animals, and of embracing her post-human ‘other’; that is, machines, in order to counter-hegemonize the practices of modern societies. Her methodology of queering the textual space, and in the end, speaking of a ‘feminist critical empiricism’ is evident in the way she disrupts/transgresses the boundary between human-animal and human-machine binaries, in how she rejects holism and in how she contests binary oppositional frameworks constituting practices of thinking perpetuated by modern scientific culture. Haraway apprehends that late twentieth century scientific fraternity would place the Man and White at the centre of human history that will appropriate hegemonic tools of oppression perpetrated by the enmeshed web of colonialism and ‘patriarchal capitalism’. Problematizing the production of machines by

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<sup>25</sup> See M.E.Bailey, “Foucauldian Feminism : Contesting Bodies, Sexuality and Identity,” in *Up Against Foucault : Explorations of Some Tensions between Foucault and Feminism*, ed. Caroline Ramazanoglu (London. New York: Routledge, 1993)., p. 103.



these “biological-determinist” cultures of late twentieth century scientific fraternity who would be universalizing Man as nature, Haraway contends that these scientific cultures would appropriate masculinist “ubiquity and spirituality” of the Father; she critiques that these machines don’t have any agency, can never be the ‘man’, a ‘self-moving’, ‘autonomous’ entity, an ‘author himself’ but can only do a mockery or a caricature of that ‘masculinist reproductive dream’. Haraway proclaimed that ‘single vision produces worse illusions’, and single-axis-thinking is never really sufficient to decode into the ‘political ambit’ of ‘domination and possibilities unimaginable from the other vantage point’. Hence, what is called for is an abstract *trans-thinking* through which the perspectival politics of ‘cyborg world’ can be made to appear twofold. One, in which the cyborg world talk about the ‘technological apocalypse’ and the appropriation of women’s bodies in masculinist orgy of war’; and the other perspective, in which the cyborg world is all about ‘lived social and bodily realities’ of people inhabiting a space of ‘joint kinship’ or a ‘political kinship’ with animals and machines, and about transgressing the boundaries between these categories. Enunciating more on the “leaky distinction”, causing boundaries between physical and non-physical, to be *porous*, Haraway argues:

The second leaky distinction was between animal-human (organism) and machine. ... There was always the spectre of ghost in the machine ... But, basically machines were not self-moving, self-designing, autonomous. They could not achieve man’s dreams, only mock it. They were not man, an author himself, but only a caricature of that masculinist reproductive dream.<sup>26</sup>

Implying that these dreams of man making machines, and improvising machine’s ‘cannibaleye’ which has a capacity to see everything from nowhere, are pre-discursive, Haraway claims that the discursive foundation of her postmodernist feminist objectivity lies in situated knowledges. Interestingly, this feminist objectivity, in Haraway’s vision, is formed through deconstructing the objectivity of traditional positivist scientific

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<sup>26</sup> See Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” in *The Postmodern Turn : New Perspectives on Social Theory*, ed. Steven Seidman, 1st ed. (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1994). p. 86

inquiries and reworking that into a subjectivity; -- a situated, embodied, extended subjectivity of agents which are body-machines; that is, cyborgs. Which, for Haraway, becomes the 'new materialist' feminist objectivity. Needless to say that the queering in her textual space lies in her forming the discursive space, that deals with subversive politics of cyborg ontology, in which such non-disaggregating intersectional dimensions as gender, race, nation, class, and sexuality begin to slide in "slippery ambiguities". So, again, here, the discursive space speaks of imprecision, uncertainty and vagueness. If we investigate the historical-genealogical backdrop of Cyborg Manifesto, it reveals that it was already in Haraway's feminist cognition that "textualisation of everything in post-structuralist, post-modernist theory has been damned by Marxists and socialist-feminists", yet she goes on to meta-theoretically conceptualise the perspectively futurist world of cyborgs, clearly suggesting that the scientific discourse on cyborg politics would potentially revamp and extend the culture of socialist-feminism, by its tropological figuration. This argument becomes clear in the following excerpt:

Textualization of everything in post-structuralist, post-modernist theory has been damned by Marxists and socialist-feminists for its utopian disregard for the lived relations of domination ... It is certainly true that post-modernist strategies, like my cyborg myth, subvert myriad organic wholes ... In short, the certainty of what counts as nature... The transcendent authorization of interpretation is lost, and with it the ontology grounding "Western" epistemology.<sup>27</sup>

## **9. Politics of *Radical Embodiment***

We will then come to the 'politics of embodiment' to analyze Haraway's discursive space which is primarily, radically contingent upon the historical-genealogical foundation of sexed bodies, following the lines of discourse in Foucault's analysis of his deployment of sexuality in relation to the objectification of bodies. This gets increasingly clear in the chapter: 'Scientia Sexualis' in '*History of Sexuality volume 1*' where

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 87-88

Foucault clearly explicates how bodies, and pleasures in relation to bodies, are socially shaped, controlled by normative gazes, policed by state apparatuses, and thereby disrupt the boundaries between the permitted and the forbidden: which finally get transformed into a discourse. Taking Foucault completely on board, Haraway cognized that the politics of subversive bodies of social identities belonging to trans\*/queer/intersex spectrum is such that these bodies are often subjected to the application of various soft and hard (bio)medical technologies, and in the end, this radical body modification indicates that these subversive bodies are discursively constituted. Which is the legit reason why they\*—these subversive bodies---can be conceptualised as cyborgs; that is, body-machine hybrids of natural, biological, social and technological. Enunciating more on the nineteenth century discourse on the ‘interplay of truth and sex’, and the ‘sexual embodiment’ especially in relation to Chinese, Japanese, Indian, Greco-Roman cultures, and Arabo-Moslem societies, Foucault crafted his discursive power-knowledge-space triad vis-à-vis pleasures, “aberrations, perversions, exceptional oddities, pathological abatements, and morbid aggravations” somewhat as follows:

In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul. Moreover, this knowledge must be deflected back into the sexual practice itself, in order to shape it as though from within and amplify its effects.<sup>28</sup>

Now, in order to analyze the enunciation of Haraway’s feminist philosophy of body<sup>29</sup>, in her post-modernist, deconstructionist accounts, we probably need to understand: How Haraway cognized the body materiality—the body politics—of

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<sup>28</sup> See the chapter ‘Scientia Sexualis’ from Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: The Will To Knowledge* (Penguin Books, 1976)., p. 57.

<sup>29</sup> Haraway’s feminist philosophy of body is best understood through her politics of embodiment in *Cyborg Manifesto* where she ‘constantly evokes dualisms and contradictions’, claiming that dualisms like materialism/idealism, rationalism/empiricism, public/private etc. mutually determine each other and are ontologically porous. Hence, her political stance in her theorisation is to merge the opposites and blurs the boundaries between them; which is how she transcends dualisms in her work.

cyborgs in her act of creating/crafting a mythical, cybernetic creature? How did she, as a woman, integrate a theory of feminist consciousness, of speaking from lived experiences, into her practice of feminist writing? How did she transgress the boundaries of dualisms, accept vagueness through the production of subjectivity both in logic and language, and give way to a resolution through dialectical contradictions? How does she critique essentialist accounts of science and instead uphold arguments of social constructionism especially in relation to race and gender? How does she critique species-hierarchy and replace the semiotics of representationalism<sup>30</sup> by recourse to linguistic vagueness? How does she cognize ‘politics of embodiment’ in relation to the sexed bodies, and machines that are post-gender creatures? Haraway’s feminist philosophy of body, in relation to all these questions, becomes clear when she argues in *Cyborg Manifesto*, that “the cyborg is not subject to Foucault’s biopolitics” but rather “the cyborg simulates politics” and writes that cyborg is *not* the signification of an essentialist ‘unitary identity’; rather cyborg is always contingent on a never-ending framework of ‘antagonistic dualisms’; cyborg machination is, holds Haraway, not an ‘it’ to be dominated; rather cyborg machines are our cognitive-epistemic processes and an aspect of embodiment :

There are several consequences ... A cyborg body is not innocent; ... it does not seek unitary identity and so generate antagonistic dualisms without end (or until the world ends); it takes irony for granted... One is too few, and two is only one possibility. Intense pleasure in skill, machine skill, ceases to be a sin, but an aspect of embodiment ... Cyborgs might consider more seriously the partial, fluid, sometimes aspect of sex and sexual embodiment.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Critique of the *semiotics of representationalism* often refers to Haraway’s use of diffraction as a dispersive tool of feminist inquiry into the material-semiotic reality of technoscience studies. This also pertains to Haraway’s social criticism of science using semiotic/semiological tools to justify species hierarchy. See Iris Van Der Tuin, “Diffraction as a Methodology for Feminist Onto-Epistemology: On Encountering Chantal Chawaf and Posthuman Interpellation,” *Parallax* 20, no. 3 (2014): 231–44, doi:10.1080/13534645.2014.927631.

<sup>31</sup> See Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” p. 146

To sum up, Haraway's poststructuralist feminist lens to see through social-political identities as contradictory, partial, fluid, fragmented and fractured, unfolding the genealogization of subversive bodies, race, gender and the State, across feminist theories, has undoubtedly a postmodernist feminist objectivity that reflects itself in the theorisation of cyborg politics. Haraway contended that the cyborg politics in science and technological studies accentuate the proliferation of cyborg world, in spite of the fact that universalizing, totalizing narratives in relation to that tradition of scientific objectification among positivist inquiries have always undervalued women and their agentic subjectivity. Here, the term 'women' both include biological women, and transgendered women as well as other transsexual subjects, who have always otherwise been depicted by traditional positivist scientific investigations, as going through gender identity disorder because of having been treated with cross-sex hormones.

#### **10. "Boundary Breakdowns": Haraway's Commitment to Vagueness**

Haraway's deconstruction of binary constructivism(s), her critique of biological naturalism of life, accentuated through biopolitical technologies in "Western" science and politics, her contention that nature should not be appropriated "as a resource for the productions of culture" in technologically mediated societies, and her analysis of the traditions of "reproduction of self from the reflections of the other",... are all historically contingent upon her act of re-visioning nature as a topos, her re-working of nature and culture, and also upon her ontological commitment to "boundary breakdowns" that rendered the cognitive-political-scientific analysis of cyborg theory, feasible. Such understanding of breakdown of the determinate boundaries between human-animal, human-machine, public-private, theory-practice, sex-gender, male-female, masculine-feminine etc are the reflections of her belief in being-in-the-world and her stance of interpretative phenomenological analysis, and her commitment to the analysis of vague objects and vague identities. That cyborg world has a resolute commitment towards partiality, ironic political myths, intimacy, perversity of perspectives, towards oppositionality and utopia, actually reflects Haraway's commitment towards vagueness both in naturality and language which corroborate "the commonly definition of a vague

property that a vague property neither definitely applies nor definitely fails to apply to an object.”<sup>32</sup> This argument in relation to the vague property of cyborg world becomes clear as and when Haraway writes in ‘*Haraway Reader*’, that :

The cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy and perversity. It is oppositional, utopian, and completely without innocence. No longer structured by the polarity of public and private, the cyborg defines a technological polis defined partly on a revolution of social relations in the oikos, the household. Nature and culture are reworked; the one can no longer be the resource for appropriation or incorporation by the other. The relationships for forming wholes from parts, including those of polarity and hierarchical domination, are at issue in the cyborg world.<sup>33</sup>

Haraway’s ontological commitment towards vagueness becomes clear again when, arguing that, “writing is pre-eminently the technology of cyborgs”, she holds in *Haraway Reader* that cyborg politics should be best understood as a “struggle for language and the struggle against perfect communication”<sup>34</sup>; that is, a struggle “against one code that translates all meaning perfectly”<sup>35</sup>. Needless to say that the existence of such a code, engraved as a semiotic technology, in writing that translates all meanings perfectly is often interpreted as the “central dogma of phallogocentrism”<sup>36</sup>.

## 11. Conclusion

So, we see a distinct feature of the category of the indeterminate that, having a positive status, pervades across our attempts to construct a formal logical space that we call the ‘discursive apparatus’ between Haraway and Foucault. We contend that both Haraway

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<sup>32</sup> See Amita Chatterjee, “Vague Objects and Vague Identity,” in *Understanding Vagueness* (New Delhi: PRAGATI PUBLICATIONS, 1994). We argue that along with mountains as real world compositionally vague objects, mind and/or gender as ‘discursive formations’, too, are compositionally vague.

<sup>33</sup> See Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s.”, p. 84

<sup>34</sup> See Donna Haraway, “A MANIFESTO FOR CYBORGS: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIALIST FEMINISM IN THE 1980s,” in *The Haraway Reader* (NEW YORK AND LONDON: ROUTLEDGE, 2004)., p. 34

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

and Foucault are concerned with many ways of constructing or figuring the indeterminate: One is the aspect of psychological indeterminacy, which is neither the belief that P nor the belief that Not-P; and the other aspect is that of semantic indeterminacy which is neither the meaning of P nor the meaning of Not-P. This particularly reminds us of the places in Foucault's epistemic-logical system wherein we find the examples of ambiguous *propositions or statements*. We need to revisit the selected interview collections: 'Power/Knowledge', citing which we can uphold Foucault's infamous utterance that discourses historically create, produce or fabricate certain "effects of truths" which are evaluated to be neither true nor false<sup>37</sup>. Hence to break away from formal structuralizations, or formalisms, Haraway's theorisation of cyborg feminist epistemology actually implies formation of a discursive space(s) that transgresses all dogmatic beliefs in science and technology studies by a 'perverse shift of perspectives' that can enable readers to contest for meanings. I contend such techniques of problematisations have a bearing on Foucauldian critical-immanent problematisation of power relationships across several social-cultural-political institutions, and on Foucault's topological rendering of power as micro-physical. Just as Hegelian dialectical contradictions were initially assumed not to be formalizable, and then, later on, got formalised as dialectical logic, I contend here that discursive space also is formalizable in terms of alternative axiom systems or through some deviant techniques of axiomatizations applying non-classical logic that is a radical departure from Aristotelian syllogistic logic. Here, our text conclusively turns a discursive shift to myriads of questions.

When we talk about transgressing the binary constructivism of bi-valued logic, that is often based on the Law of Non-contradiction (LNC), what sort of axiomatizations, what sort of semiotic technologies would we choose for representing the spectrum? What kind

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<sup>37</sup> Foucault writes: "Now I believe that the problem does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scientificity or truth and that which comes under some category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false." See Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power : Interviewers: Alessandro Fontana, Pasquale Pasquino.," in *Power/Knowledge : Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, New York, 1980)., p. 118.

of formal logical apparatuses would we choose for establishing the foundations of our logic? Perhaps, the formalization of Foucauldian discourse/episteme departing from the classical Newtonian, involves the multivalued logic, or rather a plurality of very many logics disrupting the traditional positivist approaches. Since, traditional positivist approaches are often based on a universal logic or a universal concept of logic; hence the standard observation in discursive space formalization is: That there would be an overlapping networks of logics in terms of a 'later Wittgensteinian family resemblance of disparate logics', so as to ensure the material-semiotic fluidity of Haraway's discursive space of cyborg philosophy where "all knowledge is a condensed node in an agonistic power field". These 'agonistic' interpretations of power/knowledge complex refer to the oppositional, confrontational consciousness coded by Haraway in cyborg politics. Hence, according to Foucault's and Haraway's 'enunciative politics': perhaps there would be a plurality of logics, a non-normative logical pluralism constituted of: (1) logics of vagueness, (2) paraconsistent logic, and (3) quantum fuzzy logic to logically represent three queer social situations in the same order: (1). representing a spectrum, such as a social identity spectrum, where boundaries of binary opposites are blurred by a truth-value gap? (2). representing dialectical contradictions or dialethias that are double truths? (3). representing quantum entanglements, disrupting the bi-valued-ness of binary opposites, respectively? Important question is whether it should be a discrete spectrum or a continuous spectrum where values on the scale are correlated with events mapped onto social-political contexts represented by some statistical model or graph theoretic model, cast as a problem of decision making in social situations Now, the relation between situated cognitive subjectivity and non-Euclidean geometry is best understood when Haraway in the introduction chapter : 'A Kinship of Feminist Figurations' in *Haraway Reader*, tropologically speaks of "remold[ing] kin links"<sup>38</sup>, that is, remodelling the kinship structures in society through a metaplastic cohabitation of the world, with a defined aim to build collective political kinship networks across the "contingent

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<sup>38</sup> See Donna Haraway, "INTRODUCTION: A KINSHIP OF FEMINIST FIGURATIONS," in *The Haraway Reader*, ed. Donna Haraway (New York and London: Routledge, 2004)., p. 2



foundations“ of her “queer family of feminists, anti-racists, scientists, scholars, genetically engineered lab rodents, cyborgs, dogs, dog people, vampires, modest witnesses, writers, molecules, and living and stuffed apes”<sup>39</sup>. The discursive procedures of knowledge productions through “cosmic correspondences” among all these forms of beings talk about such a being-in-the-world view that Haraway contends is traceable only in Post-Newtonian, non-Euclidean geometries. Thus, beginning from the discursive frameworks to the conclusion, what I intend to argue in this paper that the formalizability of discursive spatial formations; that is, formalization of mind as a discursive apparatus between Haraway and Foucault, involves the resuscitation of the discursive subjectivity in terms of the post-Newtonian and non-Euclidean topologies which situate a radical departure, from the classical Newtonian/deterministic worldview, imagining the human history through the model of discursive contingency.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 3

# REFLECTIONS ON NELSON GOODMAN'S CONCEPT OF WORLDMAKING

NASIMA BEGAM

**Keywords:** Nelson Goodman, relativism, rightness, worldmaking, pluralism, irrealism.

## 1. Introduction:

Philosophers are always wondering how we perceive reality? How do we acquire knowledge? What is the knowledge-generation process? These questions always come to our mind when we encounter the world and try to understand how we make sense of the complexity of the world. Nelson Goodman (1906-1998), an important 20<sup>th</sup>-century American philosopher, provides fascinating ideas about the worldmaking process in his *The Ways of Worldmaking* following a constructivist approach. To understand the world, and the worldmaking process, he proposes his concept 'Irrealism'. He defines Irrealism as:

Irrealism does not hold that everything or even anything is unreal, but sees the world melting into versions and versions making worlds (1984, p.29).

To understand Goodman's constructivist approach, we need to first examine what he means by world versions. If we analyse Goodman's statement that "what there are consists of what we make", then it would be easy for us to understand his philosophy. Goodman mentions that there is no single right way to describe the world. There are many ways constructed differently, according to the categories used by an observer. We use several systems to understand the world's experience. Goodman talks about the multiplicity of worlds, which we make through various uses of several symbol systems. Different symbol systems provide various conflicting descriptions of the world. In one description, the earth moves, on the other, it does not, and so on. They picture /interpret the world in multiple ways. Whenever we ask someone about the world, he or she will

describe the world to us by employing categories providing a version or versions. But how is the world separated from these frames of reference? This needs explanation.

## **2. Process of Worldmaking:**

Goodman not only says that there are world versions, rather he goes beyond by saying that the world is made by making such versions. Goodman mentions that all we can grasp are the world versions, we are limited in the way we describe, and our universe consists of these ways. In his words, “world dissolves into versions”. That is why he claims that worldmaking begins with one version and ends with another. He mentions several methods which we use for making worlds from the existing world.

(i) **Composition and decomposition:** Worldmaking consists of the method of composition and decomposition. That means we divide the world into several parts and then compose the parts into the whole.

(ii) **Ordering:** We order the world into different entities. The world versions are not different, but we introduce differences that depend on our particular frames of reference. Goodman states:

As nothing is at rest or is in motion apart from a frame of reference, so nothing is primitive or is derivationally prior to anything apart from a constructional system (Goodman,1978, p. 12).

(iii) **Deletion and supplementation:** Worldmaking involves a deletion and supplementation process, and extensive weeding out and filling. We remove the material which we do not need and we add new material according to our needs.

(iv) **Deformation:** When we make our world in the above process, we sometimes actually destroy as well as distort its original form. These are the processes through which we make the world. Now the question is: how does he make sense of the world and its versions? Is worldmaking simply the making of versions?

### **3. Relation between the world and its versions:**

According to Goodman, the world consists of versions, i.e., we describe the world through versions, and apart from these versions, we cannot say anything about the world. We differ in our versions because description is informed by interest, experiences, own insights, and circumstances, but without versions, we cannot grasp the world.

The activity of knowing involves the processing of raw material into a finished product, and we are involved in this process. Goodman says, “We are confined to ways of describing whatever is described” (1978, p.3). Goodman never speaks about a version-independent world, because we don’t know what the world is like apart from these versions. The world is always understood by some representation. The world we talk about and act in cannot be understood independently of the versions.

Goodman does not directly speak about version transcending world or the noumenal world like Kant because he believes that we cannot find any feature about the mind-independent world, whatever we talk about the world, whatever we acknowledge about the world is only relative to language and symbols which we use. If we abandon all the versions, then it will not be possible for us to say anything about the world. He says that there is no readymade world. We categorize and unite things as world versions. In carving up the world, we make the world by making versions. Goodman states:

To say that every right version is a world and to say that every right version has a world answering to it may be equally right even if they are at odds with each other. Moreover, talk of worlds and talk of right versions are often interchangeable (1996, p.144).

It seems implausible to claim that worlds are similar to versions. Goodman uses ‘right versions’ and ‘worlds’ interchangeably. Concerning these issues, Israel Scheffler (2001) points out Goodman’s ambiguity about the ‘World’. He says Goodman uses this expression sometimes from a versional interpretation and sometimes from an objectual interpretation. Objectual interpretation is expressed when Goodman says:

The many stuffs—matter, energy, waves, phenomena – that worlds are made of ... (1978, p.6).

Goodman did not distinguish these two because he believed that they are intertwined with each other. Worlds are made along with the versions, that's why he claimed the world dissolves into versions. Here one worry is that if the features of the world are generated by the versions, what are they imposed upon? Goodman says:

The world of a true version is a construct; the features are not conferred upon something independent of the version but combined with one another to make the world of that version (Goodman,1984, p.34).

Goodman recognizes the difference between these two, as he states,

The world is not the version itself; the version may have features—such as being in English or consisting of words —that its world does not. But the world depends upon the version (1984, p.34).

However, we cannot demarcate the line between the world and versions. Not all versions make the world; to Goodman, only the right versions do. What makes a version right is discussed in section 5 below. One may argue that just because we cannot describe the world without such descriptions, it does not mean that the 'world' is non-existent or non-important. Goodman claims that we have no options other than to fall back on the versions to know the world. What will remain if we dismantle all the versions? The world will evaporate under such analysis. The world does not exist independently of the versions. He uses worlds as versional and objectual just to emphasize the point that we can never say anything about the world without such versions. Goodman states:

We cannot find any world-feature independent of all versions. Whatever can be said truly of a world is dependent on the saying – not that whatever we say is true but that whatever we say truly (or otherwise present rightly) is nevertheless informed by and relative to the language or other symbol system we use. No firm line can be drawn between world-features that are discourse-dependent and those that are not. As I have said, "In practice, of course, we draw the line wherever we like, and change it as often as suits our purposes". If I take advantage of the privilege to speak sometimes as if there are only versions and other times as if there are worlds for all right versions, I often do it just to emphasize that point (1984, p.41).

#### **4. Sense of ‘Making’:**

Worldmaking is neither the creation of a world nor a description of a readymade world. Goodman explained it with the help of a constellation and a big dipper. Things come into being and constellation is possible only when we select things in a certain way. He stated:

We make a star as we make a constellation, by putting its parts together and marking off its boundaries...., we do not make stars as we make bricks; not all making is a matter of molding mud. The worldmaking mainly in question here is making not with hands but with minds, or rather with languages or other symbol systems...., we make versions, and right versions make worlds (1984, p.42).

The constellation is not already present there for Goodman: “Constellation becomes such only through being chosen from among all configurations” (1984, p.36). He never claims that we create the world as we create a table, chair, etc. That making is different.

Some truths conflict. In one description, it is claimed that the ‘Earth’ moves, in the other, it does not. But this does not mean that there are many Earths floating around at the same time. Goodman says,

Worlds are distinguished by the conflict or irreconcilability of their versions; and any ordering among them is other than Spatio-temporal....,there may be many stars, many planets, many chairs, many things, many events; and truths about them may conflict and contrast in all sorts of ways. But “world” is all-inclusive, covers all there is (1984, p.31-32).

If we consider conflicting truths are because of the biases of the versions, subjective preferences being involved in its formation, will we get the truth beneath the right versions? Goodman says, if we omit all the versions as artificial, the truth will no longer conflict. There will be nothing left because the World will evaporate. We always choose a version for our purposes. When we do that, the world presumably becomes that.

Goodman's statements like, — 'there is no unique right version or world', 'versions make worlds', and 'There is no ready-made world waiting to be labeled' — give an impression that his philosophy is an extreme form of idealism, which he denies. Like Idealists, Goodman does not claim that we make this world from nothing i.e. *ex nihilo*. We are always inculcated with various world versions. Nobody comes into the world with an empty hand. There is always a world already in our hands. The making is re-making. We construct the version out of the versions we already have. Goodman states, "In system building, we never start from scratch" (1988, p. 12). We start with some notions and beliefs about the object at the beginning of a particular cognitive enterprise. Goodman also says there are many worlds, and these worlds are actual worlds, not merely possible or imaginary worlds. It does not mean that the mind creates its own object. He says:

I have not said that there are no worlds, but only that conflicting right versions are of different worlds if any. My nihilism and my pluralism are complementarily conditional; and that, I submit, has more the flavor of irrealism than of idealism (1996, p. 204).

He does not make any confession about something which underlies the versions, some deep structure, which itself is not a version. Philosophers may ask, what is the cause or foundation behind the construction of the world? For Goodman, this talk makes little sense. Whenever we talk about something, we impose certain structures, properties, and concepts. Without this, there is nothing to say, content vanishes without its form. Goodman agrees with Kant here, that things come into experiences when we order that unstructured empirical data in a certain way. As Kant says, a concept without percepts is empty. Goodman says we can only talk about the world as a construction. He states: "Talk of unstructured content or an unconceptualized given or a substratum without properties is self-defeating" (1978, p.6). The reason behind Goodman's thought is that he proposes some kind of theory-ladenness of observation. He opposes the fundamentalist account of facts, which claims that facts are found, not made. Goodman suggests we are involved in a fundamental sort of activity, namely 'making'. According to him, the Constructional world and fact are intertwined with each other. By creating

the world, we create the fact as well. Xavier de Donato- Rodriguez in his paper 'Construction and "Worldmaking": The Significance of Nelson Goodman's Pluralism'(2009) states that for Goodman:

Perception is always conceptual and "facts" are not neutrally given, but they depend from a particular frame or have to be understood as a construction of a certain theory, Facts are "fabricated" (2009, p.216).

Plausibility of the Correspondence theory of truth requires comparison with naked reality, which is implausible. The standard of truth is itself questionable. Goodman is against the correspondence theory of truth. If there was any such version-independent truth, and if we could find that, that would be the sufficient criterion for truth, but it is not possible. Goodman states that we cannot compare a version with the unstructured content or the world itself. Rather, we compare it to the version of the world that experience is presenting to us. There is no bare fact. We find a similar view in the writing of Otto Neurath and Carl Hempel. They state:

For there is...no pure, unmediated consciousness of external objects or facts as they are in themselves, independently of our ways of conceptualizing them. Therefore, we cannot compare our statements and beliefs-our linguistic and nonlinguistic representations—with the world itself in order to see whether they agree or correspond with it (2009,p, 176-177).

So the comparison between these two ultimately leads to a comparison of versions to other versions, not with the world itself.

Goodman refers to his philosophy as "radical relativism". He specifies that his relativism is under rigorous restraints. Of course, his pluralistic view ultimately leads to relativism. But Goodman's pluralism avoids such kind of relativism which takes all views to be equally true. He is not saying that all systems are equally worthwhile. Relativism defines our view of particular phenomena as depending on language, cultures, and belief systems. That means it is relative to the framework. Justification depends on an epistemic system. There is no absolute principle based on which justification can be done. This ultimately justifies the doctrine of equal validity of ways of knowing the world. Goodman



claims that we construct the world from within a certain system. There are many approaches based on which this construction of the world happens. These are valid for certain purposes, practices, and means. However, unlike relativists, his pluralism does not suggest that all versions are true. Pluralism does not require a commitment to relativism. Relativism is assumed to emphasize equal validity claims. Pluralism indicates that there may be more than one correct framework that we can use, which provides contextualized normative resources. Which is in between monism and relativism by rejecting the principles of ‘anything goes’ (anything is acceptable). He states his relativism is “equidistant from intransigent absolutism and unlimited license” (1984, pp.40).

### **5. Goodman’s Pluralism and the Criteria of Rightness:**

How do we make sense of Goodman’s pluralism? To make sense of his pluralism, we have to understand his relativism. Goodman’s relativism shows each version is right under a given system or framework. Let us consider the two statements: (i) The earth always stands still, and (ii) The earth dances in the role of Petrouchka. These two statements conflict with each other. Now if we say (iii) In the Ptolemaic system, the earth always stands still, and (iv) In a certain Stravinsky-Fokine- system, the earth dances in the role of Petrouchka, then they do not conflict, and are compatible. These statements (i, and ii) say nothing about the earth’s motion or how the earth behaves. But when we see it through a certain framework or version, then we can consider these versions as right and wrong. So the truth values of these statements are true and false under a certain context or frame of reference. Goodman writes:

“I am convinced (...) that there is no one correct way of describing or picturing or perceiving ‘the world’, but rather that there are many equally right but conflicting ways — and thus, in effect, many actual worlds” (1984, p. 14).

There are lots of ways how the world is. Every version interprets the world in various ways. Goodman suggests relativity of all versions. He says: “The dramatically contrasting versions of the world can of course be relativized: each is right under a given

system-for a given science, a given artist, or a given perceiver and situation” (1978, p. 3). One may be asked that, when we claim that the earth moves and that it does not, this appears like a contradiction; both versions cannot be true of the same world. But Goodman is aware of this problem, and he talks about the different frames of reference and multiplicity of worlds. He says:

How, then. Are we accommodate conflicting truths without sacrificing the difference between truth and falsity? Perhaps by treating these versions as true in different worlds. Versions not applying in the same world no longer conflict; contradiction is avoided by segregation. A true version is true in some worlds, a false version in none, thus multiple worlds of conflicting true versions are actual worlds, not the merely possible worlds or nonworlds of false versions. So if there are any actual worlds, there are many (2003, p.35).

His relativism does not lead to a negation of normativity. When Goodman says the world consists of these versions, does it lead to the principle of ‘anything goes? One may say that any version is as right as any other. But this is not the case. His relativism does not suggest the principle of anything goes like anarchist philosophers. Many critics argue that Goodman’s position as a relativist is skeptical, but Nader N. Choker in his paper, ‘Nelson Goodman on Truth, Relativism, and Criteria of Rightness: Or Why We Should Dispense with Truth and Adopt Rightness?’ shows how Goodman’s relativism sounds similar to post-modernism, but it also provides a meaningful and objective criterion for evaluation because it is rigorously constrained by the criteria of rightness. He does not provide the sceptical and negative conclusion that the postmodernist thinkers do. Goodman clearly explains that there are conflicting true or right versions but this does not show that there is a mess between truth and falsity. As Goodman says:

Willingness to accept countless alternative true or right world-versions does not mean that everything goes, that tall stories are as good as short ones, that truths are no longer distinguished from falsehood (1978, p. 94).

When Goodman says that versions make the world, he is not simply saying that all versions make up the world; rather, he says the right version makes up the world. We

cannot make the world in any way we want forsaking the concern for truth and falsity. However, Goodman prefers to use the word 'right' and 'wrong' instead of true and false. He questions what constitutes truth? He sees the conception of truth in the sense of ultimate acceptability, which we can never reach out to. For him, truth is neither necessary nor sufficient criteria for version choice. He states: "Some truths are trivial, irrelevant, unintelligible, or redundant; too broad, too narrow, too boring, too bizarre, too complicated" (1978, p.120-121). For the acceptability of conflicting versions instead of truth, he gives the criteria of 'rightness'. It is not that by manipulating symbols we can make the world whatever way we please. Goodman's world versions are not a product of human agency nor do they depend on one's individual opinion, but are selected from a long experience of training in knowledge. To make the world, they must meet the criteria of rightness. So what are those criteria or constraints based on which we make the worlds? They must be internally coherent, practically coherent, must achieve goals, must have an intelligible purpose, fit with intuitive judgment, and be simple. Criteria of 'Rightness' includes certain purposes, practices, and means [utility, consistency, coherence, credibility, comprehension, scope, simplicity, serviceability, effect, relevance, appropriateness, entrenchment, and pragmatic consideration]. For version acceptability, these criteria are taken into consideration. If the version meets the criteria, then it is accepted as right. Being right does not mean that we accept it as a complete certainty, but only consider its durability for some purposes or in some respects. There is no reason to think of truth and rightness as eternal. Goodman does not talk about ultimate acceptability because acceptability is transient. After all, it may turn wrong at a later time. To make the right version, we have to start from somewhere, but it does not mean we start from careless guesses. We cannot establish anything for sure. Although confidence and convictions must be there, Goodman believes that there are no absolute certainties.

Here one worry would be, what happens when we encounter equally well-qualified versions if they conflict with one another? In that case, the decision goes with that version which has better entrenchment predicates, which enables us to make efficient

use of available cognitive resources and habits of thought. He explains his criteria of rightness in terms of the 'notion of fit'. He states: "Rightness of descriptions, representations, exemplifications, expressions...is primarily a matter of fit: fit to what is referred to in one way or another, or to other renderings, or to modes and manners of organization" (1978, p.138). So for Goodman, rightness is a matter of fit with practice. There is no reason to think that the criteria of rightness are arbitrary since consistency, fidelity to antecedent practice, the satisfaction of our goals, and adequacy to the purposes are all considered. He mentions that we do not make versions arbitrarily nor from scratch; instead, we proceed always with an already adopted background, apparatus, or structure, containing elements with varying degrees of initial credibility. He imposes rigorous restraints in terms of the criteria of rightness on his relativism, so we can say his relativism does not follow the principle of 'anything goes'.

Goodman mentions that there are many valid descriptions of the world. These arise from two causes. First, there is an influence of culture, habit, and theory on perception; second, it is impossible to draw a line between the character of the experience and the description which is given by the subject. Goodman in his paper 'The Way the World is' (1960) mentions:

Science, Language, Perception, Philosophy-none of these can ever be utterly faithful to the world as it is. All make abstractions or conventionalizations of one kind or another, all filter the world through the mind, through concepts, through the senses, through language; and all these filtering media in some way distort the world. It is not just that each gives only a partial truth, but that each introduces distortion of its own. We never achieve even in part a really faithful portrayal of the way the world is (1960p.49).

We do not know what the world is like, but we can give some reflection on how the world is by examining the way it is given to us in experience. Goodman's main concern is not what is given, but how something is given. With picturing the world, there are various ways of seeing it, but none of the ways can claim certainty. For Goodman, there are some useful ways to see the world. The pursuit of an ontology of the world is a pointless endeavour to Goodman. The metaphysical questions regarding 'reality' are

also pointless. According to Goodman: “Ontological claims have truth value only relative to a ‘construal of’ or ‘way of taking’ objects, the world, reality, etc” (1951, p. xxvi). Goodman (1960) emphasizes how the world is given to us and mentions the conflicting ways of seeing the world. He states: “If I were asked what is the food for men, I should have to answer “none”. For there are many foods. And if I am asked what is the way the world is, I must likewise answer, “none.” For the world is many ways” (1960, p. 55). However, in his book *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978), he talks about multiple actual worlds, which seems to contradict our common-sense view that there is one world. Goodman states:

As intimated by William James’s equivocal title *A Pluralistic Universe*, the issue between monism and pluralism tends to evaporate under analysis. If there is but one world, it embraces a multiplicity of contrasting aspects; if there are many worlds, the collection of them all is one. The one world may be taken as many or the many worlds taken as one; whether one or many depends on the way of taking (1978, p.2).

Although he does not give importance to the idea of reduction, Goodman thinks:

A reduction from one system to another can make a genuine contribution to understanding the interrelationships among world-versions; but reduction in any reasonably strict sense is rare, almost always partial (1978, p.5).

Goodman does not claim that all the right versions represent “the world”, as he is opposed to the idea of a common base. So, for him, there are many actual worlds. His view differs from the mystic position, which claims that there is a way the world is but that way cannot be captured by any descriptions. Goodman thinks that there is no one way the world is, and that’s why no representation can capture the world as it is. Rather, there are many ways the world is. The question of “the real” or unconceptualized reality is senseless to Goodman because it itself results from construction and interpretation. We need to keep in mind that, when he talks about theory or version comparison, he does not mean comparing things with unconceptualized given, but a comparison of a version with other versions in context. The reason behind not agreeing with a metaphysical realist is that the metaphysical notion of ‘truth’ does not play any role in

the understanding of our theories. Nothing can be said about that reality. Donato-Rodriguez explains (2009), according to Goodman, “The universe as-it-really-is” is not accessible to us; the only things accessible to us are collections of data (that cannot be neutrally given) as interpreted in one or another way (2009, p.217). Goodman’s overall stand depends on the pragmatic ground, which includes our practices, goals, and purposes, and is based on the criteria of rightness.

I have shown how we make sense of his relativism which is constrained by the criteria of rightness. I outline his idea of worldmaking which makes clearer his pluralistic thesis.

## **6. Conclusion:**

If we analyze Goodman’s philosophy, we notice two alternatives, either there is no versionless world or we cannot grasp it. I think it is permissible to claim we cannot have a versionless world instead of a non-existent versionless world. We cannot claim that there is no Grand Canyon or electron unless we create it. Although Goodman recognizes a difference between world and versions, as he said that versions consist of words but the world does not. In spite of that, Goodman does not want to make any rigid demarcation between ‘the world as it is’ and ‘the human construction of it’. Because there is no uncontaminated view, human activity is always involved there. We categorize things in our ways, which depend upon versions. If reality is classified by versions, is there a neutral reality at all? He states:

The world...is a world without kinds or order or motion or rest or pattern—a world not worth fighting for or against (1978, p. 20).

Ontology deals with the question, what is there? There is no satisfactory answer to this question. Disagreement is always there on this issue. Goodman’s position is an epistemic understanding of the world rather than the metaphysical. Whatever we know or whatever we acknowledge about the world is relative to the epistemological point of view. Goodman’s philosophical position replaces the notion of truth with viability within the experiential world, which shifts the focus to usefulness from that of the metaphysical. In this manner, he avoids the ontological question about the nature of reality and proposes

a pragmatic approach that focuses on the practical aspects of practitioners' experiential world. Unlike the traditional sense of a system-neutral standpoint of evaluation, where the goal is to develop an epistemology, whose concern is to truth, Goodman's overall project is system-relative, that depends on pragmatic grounds based on the criteria of rightness. Moreover, Goodman's approach is interesting to explore as an appropriate position in the philosophy of science. Scientists proliferate different models or systems to explain the same set of phenomena, which open up new possibilities and make the research useful. We can count Goodman's pluralism as a defender of scientific modality.

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# AN ENQUIRY INTO THE NOTION OF SECULARISM

APABRITA BHATTACHARYA

## **Introduction-**

Secularism has emerged as a dominant socio-political ideology that had its origin in Western countries. George Jacob Holyoake, a British mender, introduced the term 'secularism' in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For Holyoake, secularism is a study, the task of which is to foster goodness in our life. Being a distinctive approach, secularism seeks to provide a new way of life; where there is no space for any discrimination; instead, it is a solicitation for the right to practice one's religion without causing harm to others. It also advocates the treatment of being equal before the government and law. Giving preference to any religion is very toxic for society, which causes discrimination among different religions. That is why secularism seeks to unfasten religious faith from the social domain. The secular ideology has been cultivated worldwide by many thinkers, whose definition varies from person to person. Despite having diverse meanings, the notion of secularism enlivens men with a new thought about religion and the state. The relation between religion and state has been interpreted differently in the secular domain. In some countries, which proclaim to be 'secular,' the political ideologies of 'secularism' implies a complete separation between religion and state. On the other hand, some other secular countries proselytize religious uniformity and religious equality. Secularism as a socio-political doctrine does not allow religious interference in the state's social, economic, political, and educational issues. That is why one definition of 'secularism' holds:

Separation of religion from civic affairs and the state, and may be broadened to a similar position concerning the need to remove or to minimize the role of religion in the public sphere.<sup>1</sup>

### **A glance at secular attributes-**

Careful scrutiny of some of the definitions of secularism helps us identify some of its essential features. These are as follows:

#### **1. Secular ideas seek to remove all kinds of discrimination, but never being anti-religious:**

The secular ideology intends to isolate religion from the state and tries to remove religious intervention in the public domain. It does not imply that the idea of secularism has any negative connotation about religion. Secularism never repudiated the faith's existence; instead, it intends to free society from any domination. In a secular state, no religion can be adopted as official or state religion; that is why the definition of a secular state is the opposite of a theocratic state. There are multiple religious groups in society, but the dominations made by one group upon another or by some within the same group are not permissible. So, both inter-religious and intra-religious dominations stand in the way of making a secular society and hence these must be eliminated from a state.

#### **2. Secular principles try to replace 'blind faith' with 'reason':**

We all live in a society under the supervision of some religion, where some religious teaching halts our decision-making procedure. Religious rules and rituals have become a tradition, and we are sometimes obliged to obey this because of fear or environmental influences. Human beings are conscious of not doing any sinful acts. It is somehow injected into us that disobeying any religious sanction is sinful. Most people pray to God or the supreme spirit to get rid of the pain and distress they are experiencing and do this out of blind faith. In this case, secular principles differ from religion in that secularism does not grant or obey anything only because of faith; instead, it wants reason behind belief. A worldly person must be fearless, whom George Jacob Holyoake calls a 'Free thinker.' Both religious and secular principles address morality, but the difference is in their nature. Religious views or rules and regulations are static. Religious views are something pre-established like a rock mountain, where we are not allowed to make changes. On the other hand, secular principles advocate a process, which is a dynamic

process used for the welfare of human kind. These principles are like matter; we can give any shape or use it per human requirements. As secularism advocates adopting ‘reason,’ so from this, we can realize that the process of secularism is not only conceptual; it advocates experience, experiment, and practical analysis. Says George Jacob Holyoake—

Secularism encourages men to trust reason throughout and to trust nothing that reason does not establish—to examine all things hopeful, respect all things probable, but rely upon nothing without precaution which does not come within the range of science and experience.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. ‘Humanism’ is the primary identity of a person required in a secular society:**

When we enunciate the word ‘religion,’ it automatically implies a view about some intangible thing, some supernatural power. The religious utterance indicates something that cannot be visualized and prescribes a life with complete uncertainty, i.e., the life after death. But the idea of secularism seeks to find peace in the existing energy, by giving everyone equal dignity and by doing well for human kind. So, promoting ‘humanism’ is one of the essential aspects of secularism. While talking about ‘humanism’ in the secular domain, it is important to talk about some humanistic approaches of some well-known thinkers. These humanistic approaches not only promote ‘humanism’ but also light the lamp of ‘secularism’. In this respect, we can remember the great spiritual thinker Swami Vivekananda, who emphasized the need for humanity. Swami Vivekananda was an adorer of divinity as well as an adorer of human beings. Social inequalities, poverty, etc always strike his mind. He was totally an advocator of universal brotherhood. He found the divinity which is present in every human being. The service for human beings is regarded as service for Shiva or God. That is why, held by this great espouser of spirituality, if we serve people properly, treating them exemplarily, it automatically implies service to God. By advocating universal brotherhood, he tried to unite all people irrespective of their religion, caste, sex, etc.

After talking about Swami Vivekananda’s humanistic approach, it is important in this domain to talk about another great humanist thinker —Rabindranath Tagore.

Rabindranath Tagore gives his full attention to the rational mind by giving importance to the entire humankind. He considers human beings as the highest living intelligence. Like Swami Vivekananda, Tagore also advocates the presence of divinity in the human soul. He considers God as the creator of the world. On the other hand, he also considers human beings who give or put such values and meaning in this world. So, for him, without serving human beings, no one can maintain the balance of the galaxy. Tagore puts his pain to value human existence in this world in his notable works like—*Sadhana* (1913), *Personality* (1917), *The Religion of Man* (1930). By discussing interpersonal relationships, Tagore unites men or humans with nature and all-pervading spirits.

Apart from the two great thinkers— Swami Vivekananda & Tagore—Mahatma Gandhi was another witness to the historical past. We can see the light of ‘humanism’ in Gandhian thoughts. Gandhiji was also very much concerned about human progress. His notion of ‘*Sarvodaya*’, advocates ‘Universal Uplift’ or ‘Progress of All’. By serving human beings, Gandhi wanted to achieve social harmony, peace, and moral order in world society. Through his theory of non-violence and other movements to achieve freedom he wanted to unite human beings irrespective of their religion. Gandhi was a believer in religious harmony. That is why he advocated ‘*Sarva Dharma Samanata*’; which means religious togetherness or equal respect for all coexisting religions.

On the other hand, when we focus on Western countries, we can see lots of thinkers who give importance to ‘humanism’. For example, the famous Greek philosopher Protagoras, by giving importance to human beings, says ‘man is the measure of all things’. The two hedonistic philosophers, John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham were very much concerned about the happiness of human beings. They in their own ways prescribe some utilitarian rules that indicate some goodwill and service for mankind. On the other hand, British reformer George Jacob Holyoake also gives importance to human welfare. By giving full attention to our present life, Holyoake asserts to bring the greatest happiness by serving human beings rather than any deities.

Here it can be said that humanism is a philosophical approach, which is concerned with human existence in our society. By giving importance to human beings, it focuses on the

goodness of human life. As a dynamic process, secular ideologies always try to bring happiness to human life by doing human welfare. All the great Indian and Western thinkers, who themselves are concerned about human dignity, try to do welfare by uniting human beings. Swami Vivekananda considers religious oneness or one ultimate reality. But he saw the presence of that reality only in human beings without discriminating against them. Rabindranath Tagore, in the Indian national anthem, puts a line- '*Bhārat Bhagya Bidhātā*'. Here Tagore tries to create a social blending among the people of the nation. And, he simply tries to make cultural and religious harmony. Mahatma Gandhi also advocates equal respect for all irrespective of their different religious beliefs. So, here we can say that both 'humanism' and 'secularism' are human-centric ideologies. These two principles always say about togetherness. In the *Bṛihadāranyaka* Upanishad, there is an utterance '*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina*' that advocates the happiness, health, and non-suffering of people. Secularism tries to achieve the 'greatest happiness for the most significant number of people, and that is why Holyoake says

Secularism is the study of promoting human welfare by material means, measuring human welfare by the utilitarian rule, and making the service of others a duty of life.<sup>3</sup>

The secular principles advocate that we cannot judge a person based on their caste, creed, race, sex, etc.; instead, they can only be judged by their good or evil deeds. A secular society esteems a person's good intention, the intention of doing good for society, who is chasing some excellent object to have a peaceful community that gives them the vision of truth, love, and respect. In society, we carry with us some religious identities, i.e., Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and many more, which differentiate people from one another. But, 'humanism' has been considered by secular ideas as the primary essence of humankind. So, if we are identified as 'human-being' not Hindu or Muslim or Christian, etc., then there is no room for any disparity in our society.

#### **4. Rectitude is the leitmotif of all secular principles:**

Secular principles always promote equal and fair treatment for all irrespective of religion, caste, race, sex, etc. The idea of secularism is not to brawl with religious faith; instead, it is a fight for people's rights, which they deserve. The secular principle demands the right to propagate irrespective of any consideration of religious faith. It also claims the right to be treated as equal, the right to have equal opportunities, the right to get fair justice, and the right to live a dignified life. The notion of secularism does not seek to compare different religious belief systems, though each has its different perception to experience the ultimate truth.

Secularism espouses a way where a person respects his/her religion; in the same way, he/she respects others' religion too. For this reason, mutual acceptance is required between religious groups regarding their spiritual practice. Religious liberty is one of the main things that secularism seeks to promote. French Revolution introduced and fought for freedom, equality, and fraternity, which secular ideologies adequately appreciated. We can say that these are integral components of secularism. We appreciate the need or importance of equality in different spheres of life. Giving equal opportunity means giving someone the chances they deserve or are capable of. To establish the idea of 'equality,' we must do away with different types of discrimination in our society. If people from different religious groups consider themselves as 'people of the same nation,' this feeling will teach them the lesson of unity and equality. In a secular society, no particular religion can be preferred as more important before the law; people get fair and equal treatment irrespective of their religious identity by the very law. In this regard, we can recall John Rawls, who talks about two principles of justice in his social contract theory. One such principle is liberty, which asserts equal freedom of conscience and equal democratic-rights, and another is the principle of equality, where he cites equal economic rights irrespective of race, sex, or religious background. By providing fair treatment and promoting equality, the idea of secularism tries to declare a battle against all forms of discrimination and oppression.

After discussing some essential characteristics of a secular state, it is important to consider another term called 'secularization.' Sometimes this term is used parallelly with the expression 'secularism.' Due to some misconceptions, some people use the word 'secularization' as a substitute form for 'secularism.' In reality, 'secularization' gives a new interpretation of secularism. Let us discuss the issue a bit more elaborately.

### **Understanding the term 'secularization':**

Secularism as an idea has emerged as a philosophical doctrine. As we have seen, it is a kind of deliberation of thought proposed to make the distance between state and religion. On the other hand, secularization is a process of applying secular thinking in practical life. 'Secularization' is a process of change. The procedure of secularization changes a religious society into a secular one. The abandonment of religious superstitions in a community is the main aim of the transformation process of secularization. Religious superstitions are hostile to scientific as well as political, economic, and educational development. Secularization aims to reduce all the superstitious religious obstacles, which are considered stumbling blocks on the way to the secular evolution of society, by profound observation. In a theocratic state, where a particular religion gets all the attention and benefits, other religions are discriminated against and exploited mercilessly. To stop this kind of exploitation and maintain social equilibrium, we have to adopt the process of secularization. Secularism seeks to make changes in particular fields such as politics, education, etc. However, the process of secularization creates differences in the entire society. Sainen Debnath explains the task of secularization in the following way:

The task of secularization is both constructive and destructive. It is constructive in terms of fabricating the secular ingredients in the society conducive to the purpose of building a solid political system. It is destructive in wiping out the contents against secularism and the common outlook of peace in the society.<sup>4</sup>

By discarding some religious values, which dominate a state, the process of secularization does not deny the existence of the religion at all. Instead, it intends to make a reappraisal of some religious theories. The method of secularization wants to

resettle a religious society into an egalitarian society having no ecclesiastical or sectarian interference. The process also asserts that religious heads must not guide politics so that the escalation of political thought can become possible. Secularization does not want to make religion tight-lipped. It allows religion to give an opinion on social and political matters, and a person is free to choose any religious idea in his private life voluntarily. Still, in the public domain, without judging the depth and goodness of the opinion given by religion, a person cannot be allowed to accept it and make any social decision based on it. The process of secularization keeps all the goodness of some religious groups in the same row and unionizes them with neutral values. The differentiation procedure does not mean the total removal of spiritual values. It intends to erase irrational thoughts. In this regard, Kemal Ataturk's Turkey model of secularism is an example of the process of secularization. Kemal Ataturk's reformatory goal of replacing religion and its laws with secular civil laws highlights the secularization process. It does not promote religion-based rules, which leads us to social biases but instead demands some ideology that causes social welfare.

A mutual understanding between different religious faiths is required to unite humanity. A secular state aims to provide neutral and tolerant behaviour towards other religious communities. Thus, tolerance is an essential component of a secular society. Let us discuss the importance of religious tolerance in the domain of secularism:

**Secular ideas allow all religions on a compassionate ground:**

Spiritual togetherness or co-existence is one of the essential features of a secular society. Here different religious groups have to cooperate under the same social shade. As different religious systems have dissimilar beliefs, the absence of mutual acceptance can cause conflict between them. One's religious view can differ from another, and there must be a probability of disliking others' way of thinking. So, in this domain, any religious group must be tolerant toward different faith without disrespecting the views of others. In this connection, we can remember a famous statement by Mahatma Gandhi about violent or intolerant behaviour: 'an eye for an eye makes the whole world blind.' In the secular domain, this utterance means that if every religion has some negative,



disrespectful and intolerant attitude towards other religions, there will be chances for communal violence; the social balance and the equilibrium in the state will vanish. Being 'tolerant' is an attitude, and this attitude is a kind of positive attitude towards something or someone. Tolerant towards any religion means accepting some groups of religions to practice their religion without creating any disturbance. Every religion is searching for ultimate truth or absolute; some address the ultimate as 'God,' some as '*Isvara*,' some as 'Allah,' etc. But the fact is that, though the paths of every religion are unique, they have different religious symbols, and their means to reach the ultimate are various, but the supreme spirit is the same. If the religious groups realize this truth, there will be no space for disrespectful or intolerant behavior towards each other. In a secular society that promotes religious neutrality, cooperation between different religious groups to serve human well-being is impossible without tolerance. Being tolerant is an attitude towards someone having differing beliefs from us, but still, there is no feeling of being apart. It means treating different people on an equal footing. I have no right to interfere with others' religious beliefs, and I have no right to impose my thoughts on them so that I can adopt unprejudiced behavior towards them. T. M. Scanlon argues in his article 'The Difficulty of Tolerance' that,

Tolerance involves a more attractive and appealing relationship between opposing groups within a society.<sup>5</sup>

Toleration advocates welcoming or lenient behaviour towards others, and it can be justified by showing equal respect. In Indian history, we see Emperor Ashoka, in his 12<sup>th</sup> Rock Edict, was advocating for tolerance toward all religions. In modern times Swami Vivekananda also advocated the principle of religious acceptance and talked about religious equality. He says:

There never was my religion or yours, my national or your national religion, there never existed many religions, there is only the one. One infinite religion existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this religion is expressing itself in various ways.<sup>6</sup>

But there are some allegations or criticism regarding the word 'tolerance.' It has been claimed that having a tolerant attitude towards any religion does not mean religious

equality; instead, it sometimes means giving or granting special rights to some particular groups. It is sometimes claimed that the tolerant attitude somehow addresses granting privilege to some communities. Despite these controversies, mutual understanding between different religious groups can make society conflict-free.

Nowadays, secularism has become a highly discussed concept throughout the globe and a matter of debate also. The participants of this discussion are from different fields, whether secular or anti-secular. Though the term 'secularism' has been interpreted in different ways, without knowing the insights of some disparate models, we cannot comprehend the actual saying of it. Let us discuss different ideologies of some countries that are considered to be secular:

#### **Practising secularism in different ways:**

Some countries, like India, the United States, France, Turkey, Mexico, and South Korea, are considered secular. Despite this, their secularism has distinct shades, as evident from the differences in their practices.

India is regarded as a secular nation, declared in the 42<sup>nd</sup> Amendment enacted in 1976. Despite this declaration, India has a historical past where the idea of secularism was somehow practised. In India, secularism does not imply a complete separation between the state and religion. Religious neutrality is the thing that makes the Indian model of secularism unique. In Ancient India, some incidents or references convey the practice of secularism even when the term was not invented. It has been claimed that we can observe the touch of secularism in our Indian holy scriptures like the Vedas and Upanishads. There is an utterance—“*Ekam Sat Viprā Bahudhā Vadanti*,”<sup>7</sup> which advocates the adoration of the same absolute by different means or paths. It hints at the notion of equality between various religious thoughts. Apart from this, while talking about *Sanātan Dharma*, which asserts an eternal way of living, it is known for its most welcoming nature toward other religious beliefs. Different emperors of India practised secular ideas, notably – emperor Ashoka, whose 12<sup>th</sup> Rock Edicts promoted religious equality and tolerance. Like emperor Ashoka, emperor Akbar also practiced secular

beliefs by promoting equality between Hindus and Muslims. His '*Din-i-Illahi* [Divine faith], '*sulh-e-kul*' [peace and harmony between religions], and withdrawal of the Jizya tax promoted a secular spirit. After the ancient period, in the Medieval period, some great personalities, like Guru Nanak, Sant Kabir Das, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, and Mira Bai—all by their Bhakti and Sufi movements united all religions and spread the essence of love and peace within the society.

It is interesting to note the view of the two great personalities, M.K. Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, about the notion of secularism. They represented a different vision of secular ideas. Gandhiji's notion of secularism intermingled with the notion of religious fraternity, respect, and most importantly, the notion of truth—which asserts truth is one, though the paths are many. On the other hand, Pandit Nehru advocated equal protection by the state for all religions. Pandit Nehru also cites religious tolerance, which can be attainable through economic development and scientific progress. In our Indian constitution, there are interpretations of secularism in Articles 14, 15, 16, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, and 51A. At the same time, discussing the idea of secularism in the modern era, some renowned personalities, like Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Rabindranath Tagore, held that by giving importance to 'humanity' we could strengthen the idea of secularism.

Although as per the Indian idea of secularism, there is no complete separation wall between religion and state, it maintains, according to Rajeev Bhargava, a 'principled distance.' Here a state can interfere in religious affairs to remove some cruel practices in exceptional situations. The Indian model of secularism opposes all kinds of oppression based on caste, creed, race, sex, religious belief, etc. It allows all citizens to practice their religion and teaches them to pay respect to others too. Treating people equally and giving everyone equal opportunities according to their capabilities is another important aim of Indian secularism. Although there are many criticisms regarding the actual application of secular ideas, the characteristics of the Indian model make it unique.

After discussing India's idea of secular ideology, let us focus on the secular ideologies practised by some Western countries. The application of the views of secularism by

western countries represents a different formulation of a state which is quite different from that of the Indian model. The policy of complete separation and religious non-encroachment in each other's periphery is the main aim of the western model of secularism. The social ostracism of religion can be seen in the West. Colonial exhibition of faith is not allowed in the West. It means people, except in their places of worship, are not authorized to carry their religious identity publicly. Religion is not permitted to be a supporting pillar by adding religious institutions. Some major Western countries that practice secularism are France, the USA, Mexico, Turkey, etc. In France, secular ideologies have developed since the French Revolution. Protecting civil rights is one of the core principles of the French model. By advocating the principle 'Laicite,' which means lay or ordinary people, France puts its profound influence on their secular ideologies. This ideology does not grant people to practice their religion in an open field or in the public domain. By the principle of 'Laicite,' French secularism tries to give importance to the ordinary citizens addressing themselves as equals by differentiating between their private and public life. Freedom from religion is the primary propaganda of secularism in France. As this model evolved during French Revolution, so the ideas of liberty, equality, and social justice were highly demanding aspects of it. They are advocating and adopting the principle of banning religious practice in the public sphere and preventing school students from wearing something that signifies their religious identity. So, wearing religious symbols like crosses, turbans, and burqas is prohibited in educational institutions. As a result, students can be treated as equals and consider themselves equal to others. It has been said that, like the Indian model of secularism, it also advocates equal respect for all religions and promotes religious pluralism.

When we look at secularism as practiced in the USA, we find that it follows the complete separation policy between state and religion. It tried to eliminate all types of religious coercion within the state. In this model, we can observe the absence of legitimacy regarding the principle of religious tolerance. 'Freedom from religion' is the main agenda of this model. It excludes all types of intervention of religion within law and

politics. Again, there are a few countries like Turkey and Mexico, where the religious state has been converted or transformed into a secular one by the secularization process.

### **Some debate about 'Secular' ideas:**

After discussing the secular ideologies from different viewpoints, we can say that the different ideas of secularism, more or less, demands equality or harmony between people irrespective of their religious affiliation. It also advocates a fight against every type of discrimination and exploitation. However, it is essential to note that the idea of secularism loses its actual meaning when it is wrongly practiced or practiced with some ulterior motives. In the recent past, we have come across such a debate where it is alleged that what is done in the name of secularism is not done following the true spirit of the term. Instead, these are pseudo-secular practices. On account of this raising debate, it has become imperative to look at the concept itself newly. It has also brought an opportunity for us to examine the idea keeping in mind the current socio-political dynamics. John Stuart Mill in his *On Liberty* held that if there is no contra view, then even truth will become dead dogma. Hence a re-examination of the concept will bring forth some of its new dimensions to my mind. When actually the idea of secularism originated is a matter of mystery. However, from the literature, we come to know that American enlightenment thinkers felt its need and popularised it. When we talk about its necessity, it implicitly reminds us that the concept had some specific spatio-temporal need and origin. Hence, the determination of its socio-political dynamics is the *sine qua non* for its discussion. Such excavation needs a more extended discussion, and therefore, we are refraining from entering into deep delving here.

### **Conclusion-**

In conclusion, it can be said that secular ideologies are intended to promote social harmony by giving equal respect to all religions. But in the case of its adoption, we have to face some general quarries. The fraternity among all citizens, human dignity, the actual interpretation of similar ideologies, a mutual understanding between different

religious beliefs, etc., have become the central curiosity in the mind of people, which they raise in the secular domain. To respond to the queries of people regarding the secular norm, secularism as a dynamic idea needs to be experienced by its practical application. To apply this concept, we must delve deeper into it by revisiting it.

<sup>1</sup> Galen, Luke. W: *The Nonreligious: Understanding Secular People and Societies*, Published in the United States of America, by Oxford University Press 2016, pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Holyoake, George Jacob: *THE PRINCIPLES OF SECULARISM*, LONDON: BOOK STORE, 282, STRAND; AUSTIN & co., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, by LEGARE STREET PRESS 1871, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Debnath, Sailen: and *Secularism Western Indian*. ATLANTIC PUBLISHERS & DISTRIBUTORS (P) LTD 2010, 7/22, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj, New Delhi- 110002. P. 23.

<sup>5</sup> Bhargava, Rajeev: *Secularism and its Critics*, published in India by Oxford University Press 1998, 2/11 Ground Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002, India, p. 61.

<sup>6</sup> Vivekananda, Swami: *The Complete Works IV*. Published by, Advaita Ashrama, p.15.

<sup>7</sup> *Rigveda, the Dirghatama's Sukta*, 9 1. 164. 460.

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# COLLINGWOOD ON ART AS IMAGINATIVE EXPERIENCE

SUBHAM SAHA

**Keywords:** Artistic media, artwork, Collingwood, imaginative experience, ideal theory

## Introduction

A work of art, our common-sense view suggests, is the product of the artistic activity. The artistic activity in question involves the manipulation of any kind of physical medium, and a work of art results from that manipulation. Sometimes, the activity of manipulating the medium is possible solely in the artist's head exercising no physical medium. Literature and music are such kinds of art, though we find literature and music in certain kinds of physical forms. However, these physical forms are not works of art in their real nature. R. G. Collingwood<sup>1</sup> (1889-1943) espouses a view regarding the ontology of art that a work of art exists in the artist's head which is essentially an imaginary thing. In this article, I will scrutinize Collingwood's ontological claim regarding art, that art is an imaginary thing. I will deal with the shortcomings of the imaginative theory and show that this theory is a viable theory of art in relation to the artistic media.

## The Work of Art as an Imaginary Thing

Art is defined in *The Principles of Art* (hereafter, referred to as *Principles*) as being expressive and imaginative. Collingwood states, that by saying art is imaginative we mean what it is, and by saying that art is expressive we mean what it does. It is a way of expressing one's unknown and unexpressed emotional states through imaginative

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<sup>1</sup> Robin George Collingwood was a British philosopher famously known for working on the philosophy of history, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and specially on aesthetics. He is a well-known expressivist aesthetician. Contemporary aestheticians are continuously enlightened by his theory of art. Some of his famous works are, *Speculum Mentis: Or, The Map of Knowledge* (1924), *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* (1925), *The Principles of Art* (1938), *Essay on Metaphysics* (1940), *The New Leviathan* (1942), *The Idea of History* (1946), etc. Collingwood's early writings on aesthetics are found in the *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* but not as much developed as his latter writings on aesthetics found in *The Principles of Art*.



activity. An artist engaged in the creative activity of art is intending to express his/her unexpressed emotion. This creative activity especially takes place in the mind. It is a way of noticing one's emotions imaginatively. Hence, Collingwood says, a work of art is already complete and perfect when it exists only in the mind. Though art is expressive and imaginative, I will focus only on the imaginative aspect of art in order to maintain the primary concern of the article. Collingwood uses the words 'imagination,' 'imaginative,' or 'imaginary' to indicate art. Sometimes he uses 'imagination' as conscious manipulation of the feeling or a process of expression. It helps to express our feelings. In some places in the *Principles*<sup>2</sup>, he identifies 'imaginary' or 'imaginative' as a product of such conscious manipulation that exists in the mind. But the common thing about the phrases such as 'imaginative activity,' 'imaginative experience,' and 'imaginary thing' attributed to art is that they imply that art can be understood with reference to the mental engagement or mental entity.

According to Collingwood, art is an imaginary thing and a kind of making or expressing. This making is very similar to creation, where the artists are creating art deliberately and responsibly. They know what they are doing, but they do not know about the resultant objects that will come out of their processes because art is not a means to a predetermined end. Art is neither made followed by a certain preconceived plan, nor by employing a new form to materials. Unlike other creations, Collingwood says, artwork need not be real or public and physical. It is something to be imagined whose only place is in the artist's mind. Art is not the making of an artifact. Making an artifact comprises two stages; (I) creating the thing in the mind; and (II) fabricating the thing which is like imposing a certain form on some given matter. The activity of art is completed in the first stage, which means it is completed when it is created in the artist's mind, and the latter stage is unnecessary. For instance, a tune is already an existing thing when it has been created in the artist's mind, we may call it an imaginary thing. After that, the artist

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<sup>2</sup> Collingwood divides *The Principles of Art* into three. He named the first part of the book as Book I where he says, that art is an imaginary object. The second part known as Book II provides the philosophical theory of imagination, and the final part named as Book III where he talks about the externalization of art.

may sing it publicly or write it down on paper, this could be called a real tune. Despite that, “The actual making of the tune is something that goes on in his head, nowhere else.... The actual making of the tune is therefore alternatively called the making of an imaginary tune” (Collingwood, 1938, p. 134). Thus, the making of a tune is an imaginative creation, and the same applies to literature, painting, and other works of art.

Artwork implies something physical that can be accessible to all. A piece of music is in the collection of noises, a painting is on its canvas, etc. However, Collingwood claims that the real work is something imaginative, whose only place is in the artist’s mind. Apparently, these two views seem paradoxical. Collingwood assures it is not paradoxical at all, because of the two senses of art, art as a physical object, and art as an imaginary thing, it is only the latter that is actual art. To put it in another way, the artwork is already completed in the composer’s head. Later on, the composer may play the tune publicly but that is not an essential aspect of an object for its being an artwork. Even Mozart and Beethoven thought that “the real work of composition is done in the mind, with writing it down being a trivial matter. Notation, as they describe it, is not something integral to the creative process at all; it comes strictly after the event” (Cook, 1998, p. 64).

The external form of a work is not art proper<sup>3</sup>. It can be regarded as a means through which an audience can reach the real work that is an imaginary thing or an imaginative experience. The only importance, as Collingwood suggests, of the physical media of art is for the audience who can reconstruct the imaginative experience that the artists had or gone through with the help of it. In order to clarify this, he gives an example of experiencing a scientific lecture that is like experiencing art. Suppose that a man attends a scientific lecture. Usually, the lecture comprises the collections of sounds created by the speaker. The man who attends the lecture is not merely looking for the sounds coming from the speaker, but for the essence of the lecture which primarily consists of the meaning or the expressed experience of the lecturer. The essence of the lecture can be grasped if the man understands what the speaker is trying to express, and if the man

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<sup>3</sup> In *The Principles*, true art is known as ‘art proper’ that is an imaginative activity whose function is to express emotion.

imaginatively experiences the same content or meaning as experienced by the speaker himself. Only then the man can enjoy the lecture. Likewise, if a man who attends a concert and makes a certain amount of effort for experiencing the sounds as music, can imaginatively reconstruct the experience that is the same as the artist's imaginative experience, only then he can grasp the real work of art.

### **Comprehensive Character of Imaginative Experience**

When it is claimed by Collingwood that a work of art is an imaginary thing or an imaginative experience, it is not suggestive of partly seeing and partly imagining, rather it is a total imaginative activity. It is a comprehensive way of experiencing art. In the creative process of a painting, the painter not merely records what he sees in his surroundings, but he records what he feels, and how he moves in the surroundings. In the picture, the felt content is reflected in the art through the process of imagination. When a spectator experiences a painting, he also (if he knows how to look at a painting) experiences all the manner of motions and hears the sounds which can only be experienced imaginatively, because those things are not accessible to the eyes. The value of any art is determined not by the delightful experiences of sensuous elements that present before the senses, but by the delightfulness of imaginative experiences whose range is far beyond the senses. Taking an example of poetry where an imaginative experience of total activity has been expressed, Collingwood remarks,

Poetry has the power of bringing before us not only the sounds of which constitute the audible fabric of the 'poem', but other sounds, and sights, and tactile and motor experiences, and at times even scents, all of which we possess, when we listen to poetry, in imagination (1938, p. 147).

Thus, a work of art is not only an imaginary thing, rather it is an imaginative experience of total activity which consists of two parts. The first one is an experience of seeing or hearing or the specialized sensuous experience; the consequent part of the experience is a non-sensuous imaginative experience. In the words of Collingwood, "This imaginative experience from the specialism of its sensuous basis, that we may go so far as to call it an imaginative experience of total activity" (1938, p. 148).

Some may argue that the extra content of the total imaginative experience of an artwork is subjective. Experiencing this extra content in a work absolutely depends on the beholder. Since a painting is a collection of its colours, the experience of sounds and motions is not present to our eyes. If the beholder has the power of imagination, then he can experience something more that is not there in the artistic media. The beholder's imaginative power is necessary for experiencing something more that is not primarily available to the senses. If the imaginative experience is regarded as the artwork, we cannot claim that in our world there is only a single piece of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony, for instance, rather there are countless numbers of Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> symphony imaginatively experienced by countless audiences all over the world because no one's imaginative experience is the same with the other. Even though our experience of a work is very similar to the other. Here Collingwood says if the artist knows how to create a work and if we know how to appreciate a work, then the experience in the work put by the artist and received by the audience would be very close. Thus, an artist's comprehensive imaginative experience is expressed in the art that is shared with the audience.

### **An Alleged Ideal Theory**

Idealism is a philosophical view according to which things or objects exist not in the outer world but in our minds. The ideal theory of art claims a work of art exists in the mind of the artist as well as in the mind of the audience irrespective of its existence in the physical world. In recent times, idealism is a dated viewpoint about the world. We are always keen to refute an idealist point of view about the world, especially about the things that are taken to exist in the empirical world. Collingwood's conception regarding the ontology of art as discussed above is none other than the Ideal theory of art (Wollheim, 1972, 2015; Dilworth, 1998; Kemp, 2003). What Collingwood in his *Principles* says supports the view of the Ideal theory of art. He says,

A work of art need not be what we should call a real thing. It may be what we call an imaginary thing. ...A work of art may be completely created when it has been created as a thing whose only place is in the artist's mind (1938, p. 130).

From the realist point of view, the Ideal theory of art can be theorized in three propositions. Firstly, a work of art consists of an inner state of the artist, i.e., called an expression. Secondly, work is not given but is a product of the process. Finally, an expression can be developed in an artistic media, i.e., as an externalized form of the artist's inner state, but it need not be externalized (Wollheim, 2015). A conclusion can be inferred from these propositions that the Ideal theory only values a work that exists in the artist's mind on the one hand, and on the other, it ignores the value of the artistic media. This is an extreme shortcoming of the Ideal theory that will be discussed below.

### **Issues in Ignoring Artistic Media**

1. Richard Wollheim in the *Art and its Objects* (2015) enquires, that if a work of art is only an imaginary thing or an inner or mental object that exists only in the artist's head, then how is the relationship between the artist and the audience established? It is because of a shared medium that two shores can be linked. Here, the artists and the audiences are the two shores. But we have no bridge between them if we accept that the bridge exists only in the mind of one shore. Hence, only the artists can know or have access to the work.
2. A consequent part of the former objection can be put forth in this way: the Ideal theory promotes the claim, that artwork is free and unmediated and also ignores the importance of the physical medium of art. John Hospers (1956) highlights, as far as the Ideal theory is concerned, that an expression is completed before the artist's engagement with the artistic media, before its externalization. Besides this, Wollheim objects, that according to the ideal theory, a man can be regarded as an artist only because he has an expression in the mind, "the artist is an artist solely in virtue of his inner life" (Wollheim, 2015, p. 76). Empirical evidence insists that artwork exists in a physical medium. The artist's engagement with the public medium is not a trivial matter for his artistic expression. Most artists are enabled to express their emotions successfully only when they interact with the artistic media.

3. It is true that in creating music, the imaginative power of the composer is important. However, it is not only a composer's imaginative experience but the collection of sounds that is the revelation of the artist's soul. If there is disharmony in the sounds, then the performers as well as the listeners can easily get distracted and will not have the intended experience. Thus, it is hard to believe that music only exists internally, and the same applies to the other arts (Saxena, 1994).

### **Not Ideal Theory**

According to the so-called ideal theory, something exists solely in the mind, regardless of its physical existence. The so-called ideal theory of art promotes art as being imaginative and simply rejects the importance of artistic media, and this is the main fault of the so-called ideal theory of art argued against by the realist thinkers, as mentioned above. Aaron Ridley's (1997, 1998, 2011) interpretation of Collingwood's notion of art rescues Collingwood from being labeled as an idealist by showing the significant role of artistic media in his conception of art. Ridley argues that Collingwood was an antirealist "according to which the world is constituted by the thoughts we have about it. Call this Collingwood's Global Idealism" (Ridley, 1998, p. 397). Unlike so-called ideal theory, global idealism acknowledges the importance of the physical embodiment of art. According to Global idealism, artworks are mental items that exist in people's heads. This statement neither implies, according to Global idealism, "the relationship between works of art and the media of their public embodiment must be secondary and contingent" (Ridley, 1998, p. 397) nor "no work of art need ever received embodiment in a publicly accessible medium" (Ridley, 1998, p. 397). In order to understand Collingwood's conception regarding art under his Global idealistic position we need to bracket off his metaphysical position and understand 'thing in the head' as in 'thing in the world,' then it would be clear that when he says, art exists in the artist's head he does not deny its existence in the world. The statement 'thing in the head' has a significant role in his philosophy of art, as Ridley states,

Collingwood is making points about art that do depend on a narrower (but not an Ideal) reference to the mind - points relating to the difference between understanding a work of art and not understanding it. The mediated, publicly accessible work of art is a “thing in the head,” from this perspective, when someone has engaged with it imaginatively and understood it (Ridley, 1998, p. 397).

Very similar to this, we can highlight the crux of Collingwood’s identification of total imaginative activity with language “And language... is inextricably related to bodily behaviour” (Sclafani, 1976, p. 355) that is public. In the case of music, the meaning of music and its verbal reference cannot be understood separately. Mental activities apart from their external manifestation are unintelligible (Sclafani, 1976). Thus, when Collingwood says that art is an imaginative activity it never implies that it is not there as a being in the world.

A step forward in rejecting the ascription of the so-called ideal theory to Collingwood, Ridley (1997) states that a real ideal theory implies a contingent relation between the physical medium of art and its imaginative form. If the relation is contingent, then one can experience the physical form without experiencing its imaginative form, and *vice versa*. In this sense, a work of art becomes purely ideal. But Collingwood holds that art is a total imaginative experience that comprises a physical part and an imaginary part, and these two parts are inseparable. One cannot experience a work of art without experiencing other parts of the work. With a painting,

There are two experiences, an inward or imaginative one called seeing and an outward or bodily one called painting, which in the painter’s life are inseparable, and form one single indivisible experience, an experience which may be described as painting imaginatively (Collingwood, 1938, p. 304-305).

The physical form consists of a collection of audible noises (in the case of music), or a collection of colours on a canvas (in the case of a painting) that is the ‘basis’ for an imaginative experience of the work. The physical medium provides stimuli to the audience, following which the audience can reconstruct the work. Thus, Collingwood

never ignores the importance of the artistic media, but rather says, “Take away the language<sup>4</sup>, and you take away what is expressed” (Collingwood, 1938, p. 244).

Collingwood never ignores the artistic media, but for him, work is mediated; its externalization is not a trivial matter. The making of an artwork is a bodily activity from its starting point. Art, Collingwood reckons, is language and language is a specialized form of bodily gesture. An aesthetic experience for an artist such as the painter is possible when

The painter puts a great deal more into his experience of the subject... in addition, the whole consciously performed activity of painting it... he records there not the experience of looking at the subject without painting it, but the far richer and in some ways very different experience of looking at it and painting it together (Collingwood, 1938, p. 308).

Collingwood understands the importance of the relationship between the artist and the audience and mentions, “The artist’s relation to his audience is thus essential to his being an artist” (Collingwood, 1938, p. 300). The externalized or bodily work is the bridge between the artist and his audience. An artist puts his imaginative experience of total activity into an artistic medium, for example, in a painting, and “we construct for ourselves when we look at the picture” (Collingwood, p. 149). Since work is bodily work, the audience has to access the work and experience the same as the artist experienced. Collingwood remarks,

If he knew how to paint and if we knew how to look at a painting, the resemblance between this imaginary experience of his and the imaginary experience which we get from looking at his work is at least as close as that between the colours he saw in the picture and those we see; perhaps closer (1938, pp. 149-150).

Collingwood did not ignore the significant role of the artistic media. Once the role of bodily work is established and successfully explained, we can say that disharmony in the external medium may obstruct an audience to reconstruct the imaginative experience.

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<sup>4</sup> Language is similar to an artistic medium or publicly accessible medium.



This line of thought implies that, to some extent, the imaginative experience depends on external work.

It is important to note that Collingwood's insistence on the artistic media is very close to his concept of expression. The activity of expressing emotion presupposes one's involvement in the artistic activity (artistic activity is possible when an artist is physically engaged with the artistic media, for example, in the activity of painting or sculpturing.). This point reinforces the importance of artistic media that exist in the outer world.

### **Understanding 'Inconsistency' in Collingwood**

Collingwood's acceptance of artistic media is an easy way to get out from an alleged account of the Ideal theory of art, though this claim about the artistic media does not provide sufficient reason to state that Collingwood did not make an idealistic claim (Dilworth, 1998; Kemp, 2003). Eventually, an acknowledgment of the artistic media makes Collingwood's whole theory of art inconsistent. Our present consideration focuses on the inconsistency in Collingwood's theory of art.

Art as an expression presupposes the significant role of artistic media for the successful expression of emotion. One cannot clarify an emotion without engaging in an act of expressing one's emotion in the artistic media. It is necessary in order to develop and define an experience in the mind an artist must engage himself with the artistic media. Collingwood states in Book III of his *Principles*, "One paints a thing in order to see it. ... A good painter – any good painter will tell you the same – paints things because until he has painted them, he doesn't know what they are like" (1938, pp. 303-304). But in Book I Collingwood puts forth, "A tune... is already complete and perfect when it exists merely as a tune in his (the artist's) head" (p. 139). These two views taken together make Collingwood's whole theory of art seem inconsistent.

The reason for the inconsistency in Collingwood's whole theory of art is that in Book I Collingwood chooses music as an example of art that exists in the mind. He generalizes this concept to other works. In Book III he chooses painting as an example of art and

proves the necessity of artistic media. Now the problem at issue is that it may be possible for music or a short poem to exist in the head. But the same cannot apply to painting. We cannot say that a painting exists in the head in the same way as a poem or music exists in the head (Wollheim, 1972; Davies, 2008). To understand this, the discrepancy becomes important in our consideration of the art process and the resultant work. The discrepancy is very least between a short poem or music that exists in the head and that exists on paper. A poem or music that is on paper is close to its referred imaginative poem or music. This discrepancy would be great between a painting that exists imaginatively and a painting on a canvas (Wollheim, 1972). So, the discrepancy argument entails that other works exist externally and are implausible to exist in the mind only.

Though it seems inconsistent that in Book I Collingwood claims art as something imaginative and in Book III art as an expression involved with the artistic media. But we can positively conclude that the whole theory of art explained in the *Principles* is not inconsistent, though this theory is complex and different from our ordinary understanding. Collingwood asserts,

The artist, as such and essentially, produces... two things. Primarily, it is an 'internal' or 'mental' thing, something (as we commonly say) 'existing in his head' and there only: something of the kind which we commonly call an experience. Secondly, it is a bodily or perceptible thing (a picture, statue, & c.) whose exact relation to this 'mental' thing will need very careful definition (Collingwood, 1938, p. 37).

Thus, the artwork consists of both a mental experience and its physical manifestation. We see above that Collingwood's 'thing in the head' implies 'to understand a work that exists physically.' John Grant (1987) clarifies that 'thing in the head' does not suggest 'exclusively thing in the head.' Physical work is public property. Here, Collingwood uses the word 'public' which means something gets into the head when people engaged intelligently with the artistic media. This point assures that the artistic media and its imaginative experience are inextricably connected. Though an imaginative experience dominates over the physical medium.

It is very difficult to answer the discrepancy argument positively. We can say that on the surface, the creative process is similar for every work, but their differences become visible when the artists engage with the medium. We must agree with Wollheim, that in what sense a poem could exist in the head, a painting, or a more complex artwork like a film could not exist in the head in the same sense. If so, then Collingwood does not make a legitimate generalization, i.e., a work exists in the head, for example, music, and the same applies to painting and other works.

### **Conclusion**

Collingwood holds throughout his *Principles*, that an imaginative experience and an external experience depend on each other, although it is the imaginative experience that he identifies with art. All the confusion is derived from this identification of art with the imaginative experience that exists in the mind which he supported in Book I, and this claim does not match with a realist understanding of art. A realist understanding of art supports, that art is a physical product of the artistic activity, and this product can be accessible by all. In this view, an experience of art commonly known as an aesthetic experience is different from an artwork. An aesthetic experience depends on the concrete physical form of art. It is reasonable to think, that apprehension of aesthetic experience (or any experience) is possible when we mentally engage with the object. Enjoying an aesthetic experience is a mental process, but this does not entail that an aesthetic experience itself is to be recognized as a work of art. Hence, if we follow Collingwood's latter claim on art where he gives importance to the external medium of art, according to which physical form of art is not something incidental but a necessary condition for communicating one's emotion, and an imaginative experience is valued for enjoying an aesthetic experience, then all the confusion will be dissolved.

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## OUR CONTRIBUTORS

1. Prof. Temisan` Ebijuwa is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso, Nigeria.
2. Dr. Ravindra M Singh is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Delhi, New Delhi.
3. Dr. Reena Kannojiya is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Miranda House, Delhi University, New Delhi
4. Dr. Somdatta Bhattacharyya is an Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Cooch Behar, West Bengal.
5. Dr. Sujay Mondal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Visva-Bharati, West Bengal.
6. Dr. Pramod Kumar Dash is a Lecturer and Head in the Department of Philosophy, Nayagarh Autonomous College, Nayagarh, Odisha.
7. Dr. Purnima Das is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Maynaguri College, Maynaguri, Jalpaiguri, West Bengal.
8. Dr. R. Sharmila is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Sree Sankaracharya University Of Sanskrit, Kalady, Kerela.
9. Sri David Khomdram is an Assistant Professor in the Imphal College, affiliated to Manipur University, Imphal.
10. Dr. Bishnupriya Saha is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, A.B.N Seal College, Cooch Behar, West Bengal.
11. Dr. Manik Konch is an Assistant Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Philosophy, Digboi Mahila Mahavidyalaya, Assam.

12. Dr Bikash Mandal is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, West Bengal State University, Kolkata, West Bengal.
13. Dr. Sreejith K K is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Vidyasagar University, Midnapore, West Bengal.
14. Dr Kavita Chauhan is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad.
15. Dr. Malabika Chakrabarti is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Anandamohan College, West Bengal.
16. Dr. Sunandita Bhowmik is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Education Cooch Behar Panchanan Barma University, Cooch Behar, West Bengal.
17. Smt. Anmolpreet Kaur is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Philosophy, Miranda House, University of Delhi, New Delhi.
18. Sri Arka Pratim Mukhoty is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy and Religion, Banaras Hindu University. Varanasi.
19. Smt. Kamalika Roy is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Visva-Bharati, West Bengal.
20. Sri Shirsankar Basu is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the School of Cognitive Science., Jadavpur University, West Bengal.
21. Smt. Nasima Begam is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal, West Bengal.
22. Smt. Apabrita Bhattacharya is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal, West Bengal.
23. Sri Subham Saha is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.

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Published by the Registrar, University of North Bengal  
Printed at the University Press, University of North Bengal