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समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
SAP-DRS of UGC (2002-2020)

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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About the Authors:

1. *Can a Vijnanavadi Consistently Admit The Existence of Other Mind? Dharmakirti vs Ratnakirti*: Prof. Delip Kumar Mahanta, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Calcutta.
2. *Inequitable Right Claims of Unequals? The Abortion Conundrum*: Prof. Jyotish Chandra Basak, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
3. *Adopting and Rejecting Logic*: Dr. Nilanjan Bhowmik, Dept. of Philosophy, Delhi University.
4. *Revitalizing Vedāntic Epistemology - Conception of Depth Epistemology in S. L. Pandey, R. D. Ranade, and A. C. Mukerji: Elements, Typology, and Some Problems*: Dr. Anubhav Varshney, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan.
5. *Unsocial Sociability and Our Predisposition to Goodness: Kantian Perspective*: Dr. Arup Jyoti Sharma, Dept. of Philosophy, Tripura (Central) University.
6. *Theories of Justice and the Epistemic Foundations of Pluralism*: Dr. Md. Inamur Rahaman, Dept. of Philosophy, Presidency University.
7. *Peace Studies: A Brief Philosophical Outline*: Dr. N. Ramthing, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
8. *M. K. Gandhi on Education: A Philosophical perspective*: Dr. Bhupesh Debbarma, Dept. of Philosophy, Tripura (Central) University.
9. *Justice and Punishment: A Critical Study on the Ethics of Kautilyan Daṇḍanīti*: Dr. Swagata Ghosh, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
10. *Philosophical Counselling in the Context of Bhagavad Gita: With Reference to Osho*: Dr. Vinita Nair, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan.
11. *Society's Caste System: A Philosophical Analysis from Swami Vivekananda's Vedāntic Ideal of Equality*: Dr. Arun Kumar Chowdhury, Dept. of Philosophy, Raiganj University.
12. *Berkeley and Early Wittgenstein on Solipsism: A Review*: Rekha Nayak and Manoranjan Mallick.
13. *A Critical Exposition on Quine's Notion of Meaning and Indeterminacy*: Niranjan Adhikari, Dept. of Philosophy, Seth Soorajmull Jalan Girls' College, University of Calcutta.

14. *Equality In Difference: An Analysis with reference to 'Motherhood'*: Dr. Kasturi Datta (Majumdar), Dept. of Philosophy, Victoria Institution (College), University of Calcutta.
15. *Political Ethics: An Enquiry into its Nature, Scope and Relevance*: Deepanwita Dutta, UGC-JRF, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
16. *"Meaning ain't just in the Head": From Meaning to Reference*: Jayanta Barman, UGC-SRF, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
17. *Islamic Feminists' view on Muslim Women's Equality and Empowerment*: Najmun Khatun, UGC-MAF, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
18. *Wittgenstein on Meaning of Life*: Avhijit Ghosh, UGC-SRF, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
19. *A Materialistic Understanding Ecological Rift and Human Alienation from Nature*: Dr. M. P. Terence Samuel, Department of Philosophy and Comparative Religion, Visva-Bharati.
20. *Ethical Issues of Globalisation: A Kantian Solution*: Beauty Das, UGC-NFSC, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
21. *A Transition from Spiritual Enlightenment to Social Action: A Survey on Buddhism*: Kirtika Das, UGC-SJSGC, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
22. *Consumerism on the Rise and the Significance of Indian Traditional Values: A Perspective for Change*: Ankita Sharma, UGC-SRF, Dept. of Philosophy, Punjabi University Patiala.
23. *(The) Mapping of Posthumanism: A Philosophical Study*: Dr. Akoijam Thoibisana, Dept. of Philosophy, Guwahati University.
24. *Deconstructing Aristotelian Concept of Akrasia in Contemporary Perspective*: Arun Garg, Dept. of Philosophy, Gaya College.
25. *Brahman as the Principle of Interconnectedness: The Ground of Upanisadic Ethics*: Kheya Roy, UGC-NFSC, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.
26. *The Concept of Prama and Pramana: An Analysis in the light of Pramanasastra*: Dr. V. Sujata Raju, Dept. of Philosophy, Daulat Ram College, Delhi University.

Book Reviews:

Ratna Dutta Sharma: *Theory of Argumentation: Tradition and Modern*, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in collaboration with Maha Bodhi Book: Reviewed by Prof. Raghunath Ghosh, Lifetime Emeritus Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, University of North Bengal.

Alok Tandon: *Living Together: Rethinking Identity and Difference in Modern Context*, published by Akshaya Prakashan, New Delhi, First Published in 2023, Rs. 300, Page. 152: Reviewed by Professor S. Panneerselvam, Retired Professor, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Madras, Chennai.

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Editorial Note

Season's Greeting!

The journal *Philosophical Papers* is a UGC- Care Enlisted and peer-reviewed journal that carries the legacy of the Department of Philosophy, University of North Bengal. The Department of Philosophy of North Bengal University is a leading Department among the humanities faculties. The UGC SAP Programme, enjoyed by the Department from 2002 to 2020 in different phases, transformed the Department into an ideal higher educational hub. The financial assistance received by the Department under the SAP program has hugely enriched the departmental infrastructure, library, and computer lab to a large extent. During the UGC SAP Programme, the Department published more than thirty-seven books and eminent professors from all over the country and abroad visited the Department. As a result, the students, research scholars, teachers of the Department of Philosophy, and affiliated colleges were immensely benefited.

However, it was a setback for the Department of Philosophy when the journal **Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy (jpp.nbu.ac.in)** was not included in the UGC-Care Enlisted Journals during the Covid period. Prof. Laxmikanta Padhi, the then Head of the Department of Philosophy, almost singlehandedly took the initiative to revive the journal. With his innovative effort, the journal finds its place in the UGC-CARE ENLISTED JOURNAL list. Since then, the journal has drawn the attention of scholars all over India. It is heartening that the Department receives papers of a diverse philosophical nature, and particular emphasis is given to the core philosophical areas covering different branches of philosophy. We also encourage papers related to Indian philosophy and interdisciplinary ones. However, the final selection of the paper is solely based on the blind report received from the reviewers.

Though disheartening, it is still a reality that due to the financial embargo of the authority of North Bengal University, we have no option but to reduce the page quality and the number of copies of the journal. However, the contributor to the journal will get the opportunity to access the online copy. Having said this, the Department, in particular, remained grateful to the Honourable Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar (Officiating), the Finance Officer, and the University Press, whose unvarying support has made the publication possible. We hope the authority of the University will support the Department in the coming days.

This year, we incorporated twenty-four papers and two book reviews. The papers are diverse. The paper entitled: **Can a Vijñānavādi Consistently Admit the Existence of Other Mind? Dharmakirti vs. Ratnakirti** by Dilip Kumar Mohanta deals with the controversy about the existence of other minds between Dharmakirti and Ratnakirti. The author, following texts, argued that Dharmakirti admits to the existence of other minds in the way Yogācāra's view is considered. Ratnakirti refuted Dharmakirti's view regarding the existence of other minds for various reasons. If the **Vijñānavādi** admits that the "other mind" exists in addition to one's own mind, it will contradict the established thesis of Dharmakirti: 'Mind is the only reality.' Moreover, one cannot prove other minds through perception and inference; hence, their independent existence is denied. The author ends the paper with the conclusion that Dharmakirti denies the existence of other minds not from an empirical point of view but from an ultimate point of view.

In **Inequable Right Claims of Unequables? The Abortion Conundrum**, Jyotish Chandra Basak mainly focuses on the controversy associated with the mystical nature of abortion. Even though the issue of abortion is primarily an issue of medical science where medical ethics determines the cogency of abortion, the issue still appears as a serious ethical issue to moral philosophers. Among many other debates, moral philosophers, in particular, cannot ignore the ethical aspect, particularly when, for some reason or other, the mother desires to discontinue the pregnancy and terminate the fetus. The writer, throughout his paper, has developed arguments *for and against* abortion. The writer argues that the problem of abortion is not only an ethical issue but it is equally a social, religious, and cultural issue. Keeping this insight in mind, the writer cited various judicial verdicts, the judicial discrepancies of such verdicts, and side-by-side also exemplified the nascence of the fetus in the light of Ayurved Sastras. Besides, the paper's writer discusses the pragmatic approach of Buddhism and the position of the Quoran and finally revisits the vital issue and debate of the fetus's moral status. This paper reflects that there is a vast gulf between the rational perception of abortion and the religious and ethical implications of abortion. Having said this, the writer, at the end of his paper, concludes by saying that to overcome the problem of abortion, we need to have a society with more rational and progressive thinking.

The paper **Adopting and Rejecting Logic** by Nilanjan Bhowmik provides a motivating insight into logic. In modern times, we confine ourselves to Logic and Logics even though ignoring the substratum of first-order propositional (sentential) logic would be difficult. The writer argues that not all logic obeys classical logic as it seems the fundamental principle of classical logic, namely, the principle of

excluded middle, has been challenged. As a result, it is argued that logic needs to be revised to be on par with the development of science. There lies the relevance of the revision of logic. Indeed, the writer, while substantiating the title "Adopting and Rejecting Logic", in some sense or other, invokes logical revisionism. In this regard, he takes Putnam and Quine and then argues that logical revisionism results from the empirical pressure of Putnam and Quine.

On the other hand, Kripke argues that we cannot set aside reasoning while doing logic. However, the reasoning that we apply in the case of a formal logic system is about the portion of reasoning. In this context, Kripke admits that a formal system of logic is departed from classical logic. The writer also exemplifies the normativity of logic and reasoning in the light of Kripke. The writer is not in favour of rejecting logic; instead, he is in favour of revising classical logic, which creates a new formal system of logic. However, this does not lead us to assume that such a revised form of classical logic is not similar to science, nor do we say that the new formal system is open to rejection. Even though logic is a systematic study of reasoning, it remains sceptical and doubtful about *what logic our reasoning employs*. It is argued that logic deals with a portion of specific human reasoning. The writer further argues that even though some revisionism in logic is welcome, it does not or cannot hamper the apriority of logic. Finally, the writer concludes that the adoption and rejection of logic is a viable practice of logic because if we cannot adopt logic, we cannot reject it either.

The paper entitled: **Re-vitalizing Vedantic Epistemology- Conceptions of Depth Epistemology in S.L.Pandey, R.D. Ranade and A.C. Mukherji: Elements, Topology, and Some Problems** by Anubhav Varshney deals with the concept of Depth Epistemology with particular reference to Professor S.L. Pandey, R.D. Ranade and A.C. Mukherji. The concept of Depth Epistemology bears some novelty and uniqueness, which the author wants to explore in this paper. The author has taken pain in reading the writings of Professor S.L. Pandey, Professor Ranade, and Mukherjee and has explored their own observations regarding Depth Epistemology. Professor Ranade has developed a new variant of Depth Epistemology, while Professor Mukherjee has synthesized the idealistic traditions of India and the West. The author has tried to stress Depth Epistemology to re-vitalize the Vedantic views of knowledge, followed by some problems concerning Depth Epistemology, which are worth pondering.

The paper **Unsocial Sociability and our Predisposition to Goodness: Kantian Perspective** by Arup Jyoti Sharma reflects a new dimension of Kantian *unsocial sociability*. According to Kant, man is a social being, and as a social being, a man expresses goodness and evil in society. The expression of evil may be defined as unsocial sociability. The present paper tries to discern how some use the social

structure to appease evil. In his paper, the author explicates Kant's opinion about unsocial sociability or radical evil and the predisposition to goodness by establishing an ethical community. After such an establishment, an individual tries to encounter it and use it negatively for himself, i.e., for individual purposes. The author claims that using society for individual evil purposes, such as breaking down the society itself is unsocial sociability. Again, by studying the difference between reason and inclination, the author has shown how an individual uses reason to favour the inclinations, leading to evil and the breakdown of the very social structure, which is like a stool in their hands. This area of ethics has yet to be the area of much research. In his paper, the author displays a deep understanding of the subject and how reason has been used to favour instinct from the Kantian perspective.

The paper entitled **Theories of Justice and the Epistemic Foundation of Pluralism** by Md. Inamur Rahaman attempts to develop the significance of justice in the light of modern political thought. Here, he conceives Rawls' concept of justice as fairness, the 'first virtue of social institutions', and Plato's virtue of soul as the form of Good. The author then argues that Rawls' conception of justice as 'the first virtue of social institutions' and Plato's conception of justice as the 'virtue of soul' are two different paradigms of understanding and cognizing socio-political thought and two fundamentally different epistemological systems. The author's main contention is to show the relationship between these two paradigms within pluralism. While substantiating his objective, the author divides the paper into four sections. In the first section, the author shows how Rawls developed and reached an objective principle of justice; in the second section, he develops in what sense the epistemic presupposition of Cartesian Dualism obtained specific knowledge based on similar presuppositions; in the third section, the author in the light of Plato's Republic examines different epistemic and political approaches, and the final section appears as the concluding one where the author attempts to show an alternative way of existence where the integrity of the soul could firmly be established through plural engagements of the world.

We, as humans, need peace, love, and harmony. It is even more relevant when the world is witnessing war at present. N. Ramthing, in his paper entitled **Peace Studies: A Brief Philosophical Outline** explores in what sense peace is imperative for mutual and harmonious global co-existence. Peace Study as an ongoing discipline carries global, theoretical, practical, and normative outlooks. It stands as a promising platform that peacefully resolves conflicts and violence. Peace is not only an abstract idea; rather, one can take it as an essential policy for achieving global peace. The author outlines the relevance of peace studies from a wide-ranging multidisciplinary perspective. Peace can be interpersonal, intrapersonal, political, cultural, or spiritual,

where issues arising from society, state, national, and international are involved. The author relooks at and justifies all these by studying the brief genesis of the evolution of peace studies. Besides, he also illustrates theoretical concepts of peace in the light of classical realism, structural realism, liberalism, and constructivism, and more importantly, considers the *transcendental approach* of peace studies in the light of Galtung. Finally, the author brings the Gandhian Principle of *Ahimsā* as the foundation of Peace Studies. Peace or peace study will remain a far cry without the spirit of non-violence. Non-violence can be the only virtue that can effectively establish peace and perpetual peace. The author ends the paper with the insight that his understanding of peace studies is dynamic, collaborative, integrative, and transforming, where there is no place or room for war. As the world badly needs peace, love, and harmony, a resolution of abolishing war and conflict in the line of *Ahimsā* can be an effective resolution for overcoming war and conflicts.

Education is light, and primary education is a must for all. Thus, life and education are interwoven in a meaningful way. However, not all types of education are coherent with ethical and moral values. Our contemporary thinkers, namely Gandhi, Vivekananda, Tagore, and others, do not consider the so-called higher education as value-based or proper. Bhupesh Debbarma, in his paper titled **M. K. Gandhi on Education** makes a conscious attempt to unfold in what sense the present world overwhelmed with greed and materialistic attitude dismantles value-based education. The web of AI and machine learning educational systems incurs and redirects humans' propensity toward materialism, individualism, and subjectivism and, in turn, gradually diminishes the gulf between basic needs and greed. Within the post-modern civilized environment, cultural and spiritual values are constantly eroded, and formal education is mainly responsible for that. The author argues that the Gandhian concept of education can significantly shape a world of peace by redirecting the web of materialism into spiritualism. The author intends to say that proper education is the education of the Self, not of the mind, and his understanding of education in the light of Gandhi will address questions like, does education stand as a means for livelihood or to achieve academic recognition? What, then, is the highest end of education? The author attempts to unearth the true meaning of education in the light of Gandhi, which will ensure a harmonious co-existence of all living beings. Education that would not address righteousness or a good life is no longer proper, and the modern introduction of formal education is worthless.

The term justice is a desirably-loaded humanitarian concept. Justice means what is just. Naturally, where there is justice, there is no need for punishment. However, punishment is relevant in case of violation of justice. Swagata Ghosh, in her paper titled **Justice and Punishment: A Critical Study on the Ethics of**

Kautilya *Danḍaniti*, makes a mindful effort to conceptualize a just state in the light of Kautilya. She argues that punishment is almost imperative for the offenders to minimize crimes. With particular reference to the *Arthasāstra* of Kautilya, particularly the third and the fourth *adhikaraṇa*, the author subscribes to show how *Danḍaniti* is relevant in maintaining law and order and also restoring peace and harmony in the state by the government. The objective of the panel system is to diminish crimes and offences of various forms. However, it remains an open question whether the panel system acting on monetary, corporeal, and physical punishments, including capital punishment, is morally and ethically justifiable.

The author has rightly claimed that we cannot ignore moral and ethical questions while implementing the *Danḍaniti* of Kautilya. Throughout her paper, the author takes a threshold analysis of Kautilya's vision of statecraft in the light of law and order and also examines the efficacy of the panel system towards restoring justice in society. In the process, the author discusses various forms of punishment and perspectives of law and administration in *Arthasāstra*, eventually guiding an in-depth look at the ethical analysis. The author further contends that the panel system of Kautilya portrays a rigorous system capable of preventing crimes of all sorts. The combination of monetary penalties and corporeal punishments is equally effective in minimizing crime in society. Implementing exemplary physical punishments, including capital punishment, shows that justice has to be restored by any means. While looking at the ethical and moral issues of Kautilya's justice system, the King and the concerned officials must be trained in *Anvikṣiki*, i.e., the science of logic, and enquires into Truth based on *dharma*, i.e., righteousness. This reflects that Kautilya's panel system accredited the humanitarian approach of the legal system. The author ends her paper with a cryptic insight that Kautilya's most extraordinary visionary of statecraft and politics successfully established a law code for the masses and power holders to ensure and minimize crime and maintain a just state.

The paper **Philosophical Counseling in the Context of *Bhagavad Gītā*: With Reference to Osho** by Vinita Nair deals with a new area of therapeutic practice to guide individuals in their complex life journey with ups and downs. The paper builds up on the need for philosophical counseling. It deals with Western and Indian philosophy, culminating with Osho's interpretation of the *Gītā*. The selection of *Gītā* has been well justified as it contains the essence of the four Vedas and *Upaniṣads*. Osho places emphasis on complete mindfulness rather than withdrawal. He considers the *Gītā* the earliest psychological scripture in the East before the writings of Freud, Adler, and Jung. The spiritual journey begins at a point where the cognitive faculties cease. The paper states that due to immense technological advancements and social

complexities, individuals often wrest themselves with existential questions, emotional chaos, and ethical dilemmas. There must be a fusion of philosophical counseling and spiritual wisdom of the *Upanishads*, *Aṣṭavakra Gitā*, and *Bhagavad Gitā*. Indeed, the *Gitā* offers profound insight into the human psyche, addressing existential dilemmas, the nature of reality, and the purpose of life. Here, individuals grappling with questions related to identity, duty, and inner turmoil find solace in its teachings. The philosophical counseling of *Gitā* equally emphasizes self-realization, detachment, and devotion and gives rise to a psychological framework for coping with life's challenges. The primary objective of *Gitā's* counseling was to alleviate Arjuna's despair, which was not individualistic but universal for all. Krishna appears as the Divine Spirit (*Sārathi*) who guides, inspires, and empowers us. The concepts of *loka-hita* and *loka-Sangraha* convey that every individual can assist individuals and societies in managing conflict. However, Osho thinks that Arjuna's dilemma is not spiritual but psychological and practical, and in this regard, it differs from Freud's psychology. Freudian psychology does not encompass phenomena beyond the mind's boundaries, whereas *Gitā* indicates something beyond the mind.

Caste system is a much debated religious issue, and modern thinkers, particularly B. R. Ambedkar, raised serious objections against the functional aspect of the caste system of the Hindu religion. The main contention is whether the hierarchism of caste is determined based on *varṇa* or *guṇas* (qualities). Arun Kumar Chowdhury, in his paper entitled **Society's Caste System: A Philosophical Analysis from Swami Vivekananda's Vedantic Ideal of Equality** explores in the light of Vivekananda that a man differs from others only in manifestations but not in essence. We are the same as *Sat-Īit-Ānaṇḁa*. Throughout his paper, the author explores how Vivekananda explains the society's caste system from the Vedāntic ideal of equality. Vedānta philosophy is central to oneness in the universe; in this sense, we are all equal in the divine essence. As a result, any division is a sheer delusion, an image.

The division is an illusion portrayed in manifestation, but in divinity, there is unity. One has to realize. Self-realization is the key to unearthing or unfolding what lies in existence. As God is the *Sat-Īit-Ānaṇḁa*, God is in you and all of you. One can realize it at the stage of *jivanmukti*. There is nothing wrong with the *Varṇa* system as long as it is not hereditary. However, the hereditary caste system based on priest craft is problematic. It created the so-called social evil (curse) in the name of untouchability. The only solution to overcome this is to emphasize value-based real education and to transform society. Radical transformation of the society based on ideal value-based education can be the only effective measure to overcome the hereditary caste system in India.

The philosophical concept of solipsism has occupied a central place in core philosophical discussion since Berkeley. The idea of solipsism seized sufficient ground over the centuries, and one can find its relevance even in Descartes and Wittgenstein. Rekha Nayak and Manoranjan Mallick, in their paper entitled **Berkeley and early Wittgenstein on Solipsism: A Review** seek to compare Berkeley and early Wittgenstein on the theme of solipsism. Indeed, writers of the *History of Philosophy* Berkeley as a solipsist. Richard Falckenberg has tagged even Descartes as a solipsist. Of course, labels matter, but what a philosopher says matters more. Some contemporary scholars argue that it is a mistake to call Berkeley a solipsist.

While discussing Wittgenstein's appraisal of solipsism in his *Tractatus*, the authors take Berkeley as an advocate of the doctrine and examine his view in light of Wittgenstein's critique. The task is more than a comparison. The authors assess the alleged solipsism of Berkeley and elucidation of Wittgenstein's view on solipsism in the *Tractatus* that it boils down to realism and leads to a thought-provoking conclusion that realism is the root of Berkeley's solipsism, and it is the fruit of Wittgenstein's solipsism. Realism gave rise to solipsism in Berkeley, and solipsism is the same as realism, according to Wittgenstein. Berkeley is situated in the tradition in which an idea is regarded as the primary unit of knowledge. Wittgenstein is situated in the tradition in which a proposition is the primary unit of meaningful expression. The former method is empirical perceptual, and the latter is logico-linguistic. Berkeley elevates *percipient-centric* ideas to *God-centric* ideas, thereby absorbing commonsensical realism, i.e., Hylasian realism, within the framework of idealism. Wittgenstein makes solipsism in realism of the same type. The authors intend to analyze the concept of solipsism following Wittgenstein, referencing Berkeley's view as previous. Thus, they aim to shed new light on the problem of solipsism, opening a vista for further future discussion.

The problem of meaning is a central issue in philosophy in general and analytic philosophy in particular. Analysis matters in analytic philosophy because determining meaning appears to be a daunting task to the philosophers of analysis. Analytic philosophers adopted and approached various paradigms of meaning criterion, and nothing is beyond questions begging. In his paper entitled **A Critical Exposition on Quine's Notion of Meaning and Indeterminacy** Niranjana Adhikari clarifies how Quine concludes that the meaning of a word or a sentence is radical and indeterminate. In this process, he elucidates the referential theory of meaning supported by Russell and the sense theory of meaning developed by Frege. He then clarifies how Quine rejects these theories because meaning is not an entity but a confirmation expressed through a stimuli assent or dissent of a given speaker, i.e., through behaviour. Besides,

the author raises the issue of how, according to Quine, the problem of meaning is rooted in his relativistic interpretation of conceptual schemes and, thereby, in his indeterminacy thesis.

Further, the author argues in what sense the unified core of the conceptual scheme, the foundation of the Kantian knowledge system, for Quine, is relative, i.e., uncertain in terms of translation. After that, the author is concerned with the path for the indeterminacy thesis, the source of which, according to the author, lies in the rejection of the analytic-synthetic distinction by Quine in his "Two Dogmas of Empiricism." Though the indeterminacy thesis is initially based on rejecting the analytic-synthetic distinction, it is eventually grounded on translating an alien language into a customary language because the native mind is inaccessible. For further clarification, the author also analyses the indeterminacy thesis from two different aspects: the 'argument from above' and the 'argument from below'. The former claims that the evidence underdetermines the scientific theory, whereas the latter establishes the indeterminacy of reference. The evidence underdetermines a scientific theory, and the translation, being a particular scientific theory, must be based on some evidence. However, no translation in two different scientific theories could be claimed to have an identical stimulus meaning. For example, the concept '*Gavagāi*' appears whenever there is a Rabbit, but there is no certainty that both have the same stimulus meaning. Thus, it is concluded that every translation under all possible empirical evidence in the form of the native assent or descent is indeterminate. This is how the indeterminacy of translation stands. The author also clarifies in what sense Quine's indeterminacy thesis is explained through the under-determination project. At the end of his paper, the author concludes that any theory to define meaning is not conclusive and, thus, is insufficient because observational data often fails to justify that the meaning of the term "Rabbit" is synonymous with the meaning of *Gavagāi*.

Kasturi Datta (Majumdar), in her contribution entitled: **Equality In Difference: An Analysis with reference to Motherhood**, refers to the concept of gender discrimination, which is one of the essential topics of *Practical Ethics*. Any discrimination hinders the growth of society. All human beings deserve equal rights and opportunities irrespective of race, caste, religion, or sex. The biological differences between individuals can never be taken as a criterion for gender discrimination. The concept of motherhood has been glorified in India to a great extent. In ancient India, motherhood had a significant position in society, although it does not imply that, at that time, women occupied a high status in society. For her, motherhood is considered a glorified aspect of women's lives, but this is a patriarchal ploy to keep women in a cage. We need to re-think our traditional theories to ensure women's equality.

It is often argued that there is no ethics in politics, i.e., ethics and politics are polar concepts. Politicians are just like snakes; when they get opportunities, they bite their counterparts. The state needs moral politicians rather than political moralists. Deepanwita Datta, in **Political Ethics: An Enquiry into its Nature, Scope and Relevance** attempts to discuss the complex affinity between ethics and politics. *Political Ethics* is an adjunction of politics and ethics, where politics, as a social scientific inquiry, invokes philosophical questions of a normative nature. For example, the political question "How a society should be organized" entails an ought question. Ancient political ethics in India acknowledges that politics has never been alienated from religion and morality. It took political activity as an integral part of spirituality that motivated man towards self-realization. Unlike the West, the Indian Society was based on metaphysics and ethics, and it interpreted the essential problems of human existence. For example, *Rājadharmā*, the cascade of all *dharma*, is the central theme of Hindu political thought, where the King protects law-making citizens and punishes wrongdoers. It protects the people with the help of *danḍa*, a means of vigilance that keeps an eye even over the King following certain *niti*. The author invokes political pragmatism in the light of political realists, where the need for flexibility in politics remains open. She justifies flexibility in politics where normative questions, such as "means justifies end" or "end justifies means", are relevant. In this regard, the debate between consequential and deontological approaches is worthy. Being a political realist, Machiavellian argues in favour of consequentialism, saying that "end justifies means" and that unethical means are conducive to sustaining various political lives. The deontological position of Kant and others holds that there is no separation between means and end and that means are, after all, all means. We have control over means but not over end. So, means, not end, has to be the right way.

The problem of meaning is the central issue of analytic philosophy and within the semantics and pragmatics, there are different paradigms employed for determining meaning. To know the meaning of a sentence is to know what the sentence refers to. Again, to know the reference of a sentence means to know the sentence's Truth. Language refers to hooks, maps, pictures, or represents, and based on this, various theories of meaning developed, namely, correspondence, coherence, semantics, pragmatics, internal, extensional, and intentional. Thus, meaning in semantics is deeply associated with the reference and Truth of the descriptive terms or sentences. The famous traditional theory of meaning expounded by Frege and others determines meaning through reference. However, this theory again begs questions from philosophers like Putnam and others. In **Meaning ain't just in the Head: From Meaning to Reference** Jayanta Barman critically accounts for the problem of meaning criteria after Putnam. Putnam, a realist at his initial stage, became the critic of the same

in the second phase of his philosophical career. By denying metaphysical realism, he develops internal realism. He argues that the traditional interpretation of meaning is false because it holds that meaning is just in the head. Putnam thinks the other way around. His famous metaphor, *Twin Earth Hypothesis*, justifies that the traditional concept of meaning and reference is false due to narrow psychologism. Instead, the meaning of a term is determined socio-linguistically, and in this regard, he again uses the metaphor "the division of linguistic labour". This means that it is not the outcome of individual psychology but rather the outcome of a socio-linguistic community. This is how the traditional theory of meaning and reference gains critical conceptual magnitude in his internalistic phase. His internal realism holds that reference substantially determines meaning instead of meaning determining reference. Here, community, environment, and socio-linguistic issues get more priority over narrow psychologism and narrow mentalism. The author ends the paper with the view that Putnam develops an alternative theory of Frege's semantics by bringing the context of the division of linguistic labour and the relevance of society and the environment.

Feminism is a much debated and litigious socio-philosophical, socio-economical matter where issues like women's liberty, equality, and empowerment are critical. It proclaims that women are exploited and subjugated primarily based on gender inequality. Najmun Katum, in **Islamic Feminists' View on Muslim Women's Equality and Empowerment** mainly focuses on gender equality, women's equal rights, opportunities, and empowerment from Islamic feminists' point of view. In this regard, she refers to the Quran, the sacred text of Islam. It is generally alleged that the Quran is the primary source of women's subordination. However, Islamic feminists think the other way around. For them, there is nothing wrong with the Quran; somewhat, it was completely misinterpreted by the patriarchal society. There is no single verse found in the Quran that voices against women's empowerment and gender equality. Islamic feminists thus rise with the external pragmatic interpretation of the Quran where there is no place for a hierarchy between male and female. All are equal in the eye of the Quran, and this position of the Quran conforms to humanism. Women's liberty, equality, and empowerment are the need of the hour. However, all these would remain a far cry if males and females were not treated equally in rights and opportunities. It is where the relevance of gender equality in *Islam* lies.

Indeed, there is no exaggeration in saying everyone desires to lead a meaningful life. Human life only makes sense if it is meaningful or purposeless. The worth of life is, alternatively, defined as the meaning of life. Of course, the meaning of life is evaluated by values. In his paper entitled **Wittgenstein on Meaning of Life** Abhijit Ghosh attempts to unearth the meaning of life in the light of Wittgenstein's conception

of values. For Wittgenstein, there are different levels of values, namely, relative and absolute. What is relative is lower, and what is absolute is higher. Again, what is lower is accidental, and what is absolute is non-accidental. Absolute values lie outside the limits of language and the limits of the world, and as a result, it is ethereal and mystical. The value of ethics (religion, aesthetics) contains absolute values. Wittgenstein tries to determine the meaning of life by examining higher, non-accidental, and ethereal values. It is a revealed value for which we cannot say. As it lies outside the limit of language, it is inexpressible. One has to remain silent about it. However, it is helpful to lead a happy and meaningful life. One needs to have a right view of the world to understand it. It is possible only by seeing the world as *sub-species aeternitatis*. Thus, there is a happy and unhappy world, i.e., the world of happy man and the world of unhappy man. A world of the happy man is the world of eternity; to have the sense of it, one needs to have the feeling of inexpressibility. The feeling of inexpressibility eventually reveals the absolute value, an eternal reality, the foundation of happiness deeply embedded in culture and religion but utterly detached from civilization. Thus, the meaning of life is embodied in human culture as determined by eternal and absolute value.

The burning problem we face at present and for which our future generation would be endangered is environmental degradation and ecological unsustainability. The so-called civilized society, due to their limitless desire for materialism and extreme forms of anthropocentrism, created environmental crises and will leave the world as a desolate and unproductive land for future generations. This is a human catastrophe, an impasse created by modern scientific society, for which future generations will essentially be the misfortune recipients. In his paper entitled **Ecological Rift and Human Alienation from Nature: A Materialistic Understanding**, M. P. T. Samuel attempts to resolve the ecological rift and human alienation from nature by offering a materialistic interpretation. The relationship between nature and humans is widely discussed in philosophical discourse. Approaches such as anthropocentrism, non-anthropocentrism, deep ecological movement, ecofeminism, etc., are some of these. The environmental issues are mainly due to the over and conscious exploitation of nature, which different disciplines have studied. The author argues that there is always a futuristic approach, which is ordinarily absent in many studies that scholars have attempted. Some of the theoretical attempts made by the economists are highlighted in the paper. For example, the scholar mentions the green capitalism developed by Brett Clark and Richard York.

Moreover, the scholar also briefly examines the distinction between shallow and deep ecology. It is shown how Marxism gives particular importance to the co-evolutionary

approach in the context of human beings and nature. It is also shown that Marx provides a solution to the ecological rift through a structural change in the mode of production. The locus of the ecological rift is humans' alienation from nature. This makes a drastic change in humans' attitude towards nature. However, Marx was convinced that human alienation could not be solved through make-shift solutions offered by techno-capitalism, i.e., materialism and anthropocentrism, but by overthrowing the capitalist mode of production. One must address various social conflicts existing in a particular society to overcome the so-called ecological rift. Otherwise, we cannot have a holistic solution to the environmental problems we need for future generations.

The world that we are living in today is the world of globalization. It has both advantages and disadvantages. The world of globalization invites ethical relativism and denies moral absolutism, creating ethical problems. It adulterates our culture and values and, in turn, invites identity crisis. In **Ethical Issues of Globalization: A Kantian Solution**, Beauty Das attempts to apply the Kantian model to solve some of the ethical issues of globalization. What is heartening is that here, the author applies how Kantian categorical imperative has a practical domain in the light of two critical works of Kant. Undoubtedly, some contemporary issues arising from globalization can be seen from different perspectives. The author tries to understand the issue by showing how the concept of *Vasudhaiva Kudumbakam* which speaks about the significance of the well-being of the world community, can be seen in the light of Kant. It is also pointed out that cultural, social, and religious aspects must be considered while discussing the above. The author identifies three major issues globalization engendered: value crisis, identity crisis, and environmental crisis. Here, the author argues that Kantian methodology helps to resolve such a crisis. Kant's importance in understanding the moral nature of human beings is mentioned and discussed. However, the author could have elaborated on this in detail, and the application of Kant in solving the above problems could have been highlighted.

In the recent past, an issue was raised against Buddhism, arguing that Buddhism as a religion is not engaged as Buddha himself was confined to his own salvation through *Nirvāṇa*. Thus, Buddhism as a religion is self-centered and by no means engaged. In **A Transition from Spiritual Enlightenment to Social Action: A Survey on Buddhism**, Kirtika Das intends to show how Buddhist ethical guidelines lead toward practical engagement. It is argued that individual awareness always leads to social welfare, and more importantly, Buddhism has evolved from *Pratyekabudha-s* to engaged Buddhism. Further concept of Bodhisattva always tries to alleviate the sufferings of others. Again, a careful study would reflect that a shift from self-liberation

to liberation for all is possible in Buddhism. It is further argued that spiritual transitions are not about detaching people from society; instead, they raise our hands toward suffering. The emancipation of people is possible from the notion of Self. So, our main objective is to attain *Nirvāṇa*, ceasing our sufferings and mental agonies. A person who attains *Nirvāṇa* can alleviate everyone else's suffering. Throughout her paper, the author cited various Buddhist texts and showed us how Buddhism in different schools is deeply engaged. The issue of engaged Buddhism was initially raised against the *Therāvāda* Buddhists. However, the author argues that the theory of *Therāvāda* is ontologically engaged. As far as *Mahāyāna* Buddhism is concerned, they are practically engaged as they address issues like human rights, social justice, environment, and many more. The author ends her paper with the view that Buddhism is deeply engaged in conformity with humankind.

Within the sphere of modern globalization, consumerism reached its heyday. The web of consumerism gives birth to materialism, individualism, subjectivism, and anthropocentrism. All these are directed to the erosion of our traditional and cultural values. Ankita Sharma, in her paper entitled **Consumerism on the Rise and the Significance of Indian Traditional Values: A Perspective for Change** wants to quash consumerism. Here, the author intends to bring about a change as she feels that consumerism is a Western way of thought developed after the Industrial Revolution, in which mechanized mass production developed, giving rise to the inhuman treatment of workers. This problem did not originate in India because there were always philosophies to guide. The author thus delves into the solution given in Indian Philosophy. She delves into the Vedic values, such as *Puruṣārtha*, i.e. *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma*, and *Mokṣa*. *Dharma* is the guiding principle of *Kāma* and *Artha*. Consumption, in the present-day understanding, has a transformative influence over the dynamic of human life. It establishes patterns in inter-human relations and exerts influence over the elements of lifestyle and social life, contributing to changes in modern social dynamics. The author also explores the significance of traditional Indian values, starting with the *Veda*-s, *Upaniṣad*-s *Śāstra*-s, *Rāmāyaṇa*, and *Mahābhārata*. Further, she explores the Buddhist notion of impermanence and constant change and explains the concept of *Pañcāsila* about consumerism. The ethics of *Gītā* seemed equally relevant in annulling the web of modern consumerism. After that, she deals with the contrasting views of Marx. At the end of her paper, she concludes that the materialistic and individualistic web of modern consumerism can be reversed in a better way by following Indian traditional values.

Humanism carries a lot in philosophy in general and ethics and religion in particular while determining the meaning of life. However, we notice a constant revision of the

outlook on humanism. As we move from the modern to the post-modern era, humanism is transitioning to posthumanism. In her paper entitled **(The) Mapping of Posthumanism: A Philosophical Study** Akoijam Thoibisana studies posthumanism in tune with the studies of postmodernism, poststructuralism, and postcolonialism from a historical perspective and philosophical thought. The paper traces the history of the development of posthumanism in the works of several philosophers, like Heidegger, Satre, Derrida, and others. It looks promising to become a detailed survey of the postmodernist account of the understanding of 'Man'. The crux of the paper is mapping the philosophy of posthumanism through the lens of deconstructing humanism in the light of Heidegger's Humanism and the Concept of Being, Althusser's Theoretical Anti-Humanism, and Lacan's Psychoanalysis. The paper traces the idea of Man along with their critiques and modifications. Thus, in a sense, it shows promise of a good analysis of the history of posthumanism. The author subscribes at the end that Derrida's deconstruction of humanism is not a repetition of humanism but a sure way to deconstruct the anthropocentric thought of the same.

Being a rational and social animal, every man desires to lead a good life. However, the very nature of the excellent life immensely varies across the board. Thus, the issue of how to lead a good life has remained a central philosophical issue since antiquity. In **Deconstructing the Aristotelian Concept of *Akrasia* in Contemporary Perspective** Arun Garg explains the concept of a good life in the light of the Aristotelian concept of *Akrasia*. The term *Eudaimonia*, used by Aristotle, stands for happiness, the fundamental concept of life that theoretically determines the idea of a good life. The paper states that to extract the highest form of good for human beings, Aristotle delves deep into understanding the essence of being human, which occupies a rational soul functioning according to virtue. Thus, Aristotle's virtue ethics can answer the question of the good life. The term *Akrasia*, as used by Aristotle, means weak-willed, which influences our reasoning and leads us away from the Good. It invites motivational conflict between rational and irrational aspects of the soul. Before Aristotle, Plato used the term *Akrasia*. In a dialogue, Socrates says that *Akrasia* is impossible and that no one willingly goes towards bad. However, Plato believes in the possibility of the same and attributes it to the victory of the irrational part of the soul. Within the perspectival discrepancies, both argued that the assumption that reason leads to ultimate Good is not challenged. The emphasis should be placed on the application of reason rather than on understanding the causes of its breakdown. *Akrasia* lies in the middle ground between virtue and vice, and it plays a vital role in ethical reasoning. As reason is the highest virtue that may not be attainable for all, the old definition of man as a rational animal needs modification. As a result, the emotional aspect of man should find a place. Thus, to lead a good life, one needs other virtues.

Friendship, courage, and empathy will enrich a person's life. A person in his every step finds *Akrasia*, a temptation to make a shortcut, a desire to take an easier option, a lure of immediate gratification. However, there remains a hope that knowledge and reason will strengthen an individual, and one can regain self-control and lead a good life.

Morality is the central issue deeply associated with humanism, human values, and the well-being of all. Still, the question of why we should be moral has been relevant in philosophy since antiquity. In ***Brahman as the Principle of Interconnectedness: The Ground of the Ethical Teachings of the Upaniṣad-s*** Kheya Roy examines why we should be moral with special reference to the Upaniṣadic ethics. Here, particular emphasis has been laid on the practical aspect of some ethical codes of conduct suggested by the Upanishads. Upaniṣadic ethics, the author argues, determines our societal behaviour, having a tinge of teleological ethics. The paper promises that Upaniṣadic ethics are usually associated with specific ideas of spirituality, and it was even reflected in Swami Vivekananda's remarks that the foundation of Upaniṣadic ethics is *love, unity, and sameness*. Arguably, ethics that lead to unity are right, and those that lead to division are wrong. A deontologist or a teleologist cannot offer a profound answer to why we should be moral. Still, one can find a suitable answer to the question in the Upaniṣadic doctrine of the oneness and unity of *Ātman or Brahman*. It states that we are interconnected with each other. As *Brahman* is everywhere, He is the highest of all things and is the Self in all. He is the essence of everything, the wool of the whole universe, and is interconnected with all. So, we should be moral in controlling and restraining ourselves; otherwise, we will eventually destroy ourselves. At the end of her paper, the author has landed that the Upaniṣadic ethical theory of interconnected answers to why we should be moral. The ground is not only spiritual; it is equally scientific and practical as well. So, let us promise to be humble and practice the Truth through our moral codes of conduct.

V. Sujata Raju, in her contribution entitled: ***The Concept of Pramā and Pramāṇa: An Analysis in the Light of Pramāṇasāstra*** enunciates the meaning, definition, and nature of *pramā-pramāṇa* among the diverse schools of Indian philosophy. An attempt is made to represent the nature, form, and method of valid knowledge enriched with the commentaries sub-commentaries of sources/literature of epistemological traditions in Indian philosophy (*Pramāṇasāstra*). An overview of various issues, views, and comparative exposition of any system of epistemology deals with the following disputable questions: What is knowledge? What is valid knowledge? How do we distinguish valid knowledge from invalid knowledge? What are the instruments/means of arriving at valid knowledge? To this end, she attempts to synthesize the divergent views of all the concerned schools of Indian epistemology.

At the end I express my heartfelt thanks to all contributors for their submissions to this edition and also for their academic cooperation with the Editorial Team during the production phase. I also express my deep sense of gratitude to the entire Editorial Team whose commitment and perseverance made this journal possible.

Further suggestions and opinions for the improvement of this journal in the coming years is solicited.

With warm regards

Professor (Dr.) Kanti Lal Das

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CONTENT

| Sl | Name | Writer | Page no |
|----|---|--------------------------|---------|
| 01 | CAN A VIJÑĀNAVĀDI CONSISTENTLY ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER MIND? DHARMAKĪRTI VS RATNAKĪRTI | Delip Kumar Mahanta | 1-21 |
| 02 | INEQUITABLE RIGHT CLAIMS OF UNEQUALS? THE ABORTION CONUNDRUM | Jyotish Chandra Basak | 22-39 |
| 03 | ADOPTING AND REJECTING LOGIC | Nilanjan Bhowmik | 41-53 |
| 04 | REVITALIZING VEDĀNTIC EPISTEMOLOGY - CONCEPTION OF DEPTH EPISTEMOLOGY IN S. L. PANDEY, R. D. RANADE, AND A. C. MUKERJI: ELEMENTS, TYPOLOGY AND SOME PROBLEMS | Anubhav Varshney | 54-72 |
| 05 | UNSOCIAL SOCIABILITY AND OUR PREDISPOSITION TO GOODNESS: KANTIAN PERSPECTIVE | Arup Jyoti Sharma | 73-83 |
| 06 | THEORIES OF JUSTICE AND THE EPISTEMIC FOUNDATIONS OF PLURALISM | Md. Inamur Rahaman | 84-98 |
| 07 | PEACE STUDIES: A BRIEF PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLINE | N. Ramthing | 99-113 |
| 08 | <i>M. K. GANDHI ON EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE</i> | Bhupesh Debbarma | 114-119 |
| 09 | JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENT: A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE ETHICS OF KAUTILYAN <i>DAṆḌANĪTI</i> | Swagata Ghosh | 120-130 |
| 10 | PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING IN THE CONTEXT OF BHAGAVAD GITA: WITH REFERENCE TO OSHO | Vinita Nair | 131-144 |

| | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------------------|---------|
| 11 | SOCIETY'S CASTE SYSTEM: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS FROM SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VEDĀNTIC IDEAL OF EQUALITY | Arun Kumar Chowdhury | 147-156 |
| 12 | BERKELEY AND EARLY WITTGENSTEIN ON SOLIPSISM: A REVIEW | S. Rekha Nayak and Manoranjan Mallick | 157-170 |
| 13 | A CRITICAL EXPOSITION ON QUINE'S NOTION OF MEANING AND INDETERMINACY | Niranjan Adhikari | 171-189 |
| 14 | EQUALITY IN DIFFERENCE: AN ANALYSIS WITH REFERENCE TO 'MOTHERHOOD' | Kasturi Datta (Majumdar) | 190-200 |
| 15 | POLITICAL ETHICS: AN ENQUIRY INTO ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND RELEVANCE | Deepanwita Dutta | 201-211 |
| 16 | "MEANING AIN'T JUST IN THE HEAD": FROM MEANING TO REFERENCE | Jayanta Barman | 212-220 |
| 17 | ISLAMIC FEMINISTS' VIEW ON MUSLIM WOMEN'S EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT | Najmun Khatun | 221-229 |
| 18 | WITTGENSTEIN ON MEANING OF LIFE | Avhijit Ghosh | 230-241 |
| 19 | ECOLOGICAL RIFT AND HUMAN ALIENATION FROM NATURE: A MATERIALISTIC UNDERSTANDING | M. P. Terence Samuel | 242-254 |
| 20 | ETHICAL ISSUES OF GLOBALIZATION: A KANTIAN SOLUTION | Beauty Das | 255-264 |

| | | | |
|----|---|--------------------|---------|
| 21 | A TRANSITION FROM SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT TO SOCIAL ACTION: A SURVEY ON BUDDHISM | Kirtika Das | 265-277 |
| 22 | CONSUMERISM ON THE RISE AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN TRADITIONAL VALUES: A PERSPECTIVE FOR CHANGE | Ankita Sharma | 278-295 |
| 23 | (THE) MAPPING OF POSTHUMANISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY | Akoijam Thoibisana | 296-311 |
| 24 | DECONSTRUCTING THE ARISTOTELIAN CONCEPT OF AKRASIA IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE | Arun Garg | 312-318 |
| 25 | <i>BRAHMAN</i> AS THE PRINCIPLE OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS: THE GROUND OF THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF THE UPANIṢADS | Kheya Roy | 319-327 |
| 26 | THE CONCEPT OF <i>PRAMĀ</i> AND <i>PRAMĀṆA</i> : AN ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF <i>PRAMĀṆASĀSTRA</i> | V. Sujata Raju | 328-345 |
| 27 | BOOK REVIEW | Raghunath Ghosh | 346-349 |
| 28 | BOOK REVIEW | S. Panneerselvam | 350-354 |

CAN A VIJÑĀNAVĀDI CONSISTENTLY ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF OTHER MIND? DHARMAKĪRTI VS RATNAKĪRTI

Delip Kumar Mahanta

Abstract

In the history of classical Indian philosophy, the contribution of the Buddhist philosophers is unique and extraordinary. For almost more than one thousand years Indian philosophical tradition has seen the debating attitude consisting of the Nyāya and the Buddhist philosophers as the proponent and opponent on philosophical issues through 'refutation and conjecture' (khaṇḍana-maṇḍana) and later on, the continuation of this debate between AdvaitaVedāntin Śaṅkarācārya and the Buddhist philosophers, and then again through the debate between the Advaita and Nyāya philosophers when the Buddhist philosophers— in the stature of Nāgārjuna, Vasubandhu, Dīnāga and Dharmakīrti— are no more alive. On account of internal weakness, like moral degradation and lacking of logical vigour facing the revival of Vedic-Upaniṣadic thought-web through the great Śaṅkarācārya and his disciples and of external attacks from the Muslims, which results in physical destructions of the Great Institutions like Nālandā, Vikramaśīlā and other Mahāvihāras and forceful conversion to Islam by the patronage of Muslim rulers, conjointly Buddha's Saddharma along with its philosophy, contribute towards the decline and the driving way of Buddhism from the soil of India at large with the solitary exceptions that remained in the hill tracts among the tribal people. But the rich cultural heritage was preserved mainly in translation by the Tibetan (Bhoṭadeśa) and Chinese scholars. Some of the texts were copied in Sanskrit, the language of their origin, were preserved by them. Because of recent restoration of some of them and the bringing back of manuscripts by Mahāpaṇḍita Rāhul Sāṅkrīyāyāna India regained a part of its past glory of cultural heritage.

Keywords: *khaṇḍana-maṇḍana, AdvaitaVedāntin, Vedic thought, Upaniṣadic thought, cultural heritage*

1. Some Preliminary Remarks about Dharmakīrti's *Sāntānāntarasiddhi* and Ratnakīrti's *Sāntānāntaradūṣaṇa*.

It is indeed true that it is very difficult to understand the development of Indian Metaphysics, Epistemology, Logic unless one is acquainted with the subtle polemics and noises introduced by the Buddhist philosophers. Since most of the original Sanskrit

works of this school of philosophy were lost due to Muslim invasion and many of these books were preserved in Tibetan and Chinese translations, the Buddhist primary works, especially stock of the works on Mahāyāna is very poor in Indian languages. However, a good sign of the twentieth century is that some of the works have been re-translated from Tibetan to Sanskrit. It is also true that in most of the philosophical debates in classical Indian philosophy the Buddhist philosophers were the opponents (*pūrvapakṣa*). So without knowing the arguments of the Buddhist philosophers it becomes impossible to get a comprehensive picture of the development of argumentative tradition in the cultural democracy of India. The contribution of the Buddhist philosophers in metaphysics, epistemology, logic and morality deserves special mention. There are four major schools of Buddhist philosophy – Sautrāntika, Vaibhāṣika, Madhyamaka and Vijñānavāda – the first two are realistic and the last two are idealistic in spite of subtle differences among them.

1.1 Dharmakīrti and *Santānāntarasiddhi* (Arguments for the Existence of Other Mind)

Dharmakīrti (7th Century AD) in his *Santānāntarasiddhi* argues that the existence of other mind can be established even from the view-point of Vijñānavāda School of Buddhist Philosophy. Ratnakīrti (11th Century AD) in his *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* has raised objections against this claim. But before entering into the philosophical debate it is better to have some informative account about both the philosophers with their Buddhist background. According to the Vijñānavāda School, which is also known as Antarajñeyavāda, the so-called ‘object of knowing is nothing but consciousness’ which is distinctively internal in nature. According to this view, there is no independent reality of the external world with all its furniture of material objects. Whatever is known is nothing but the representations of consciousness (which is totally internal). Apart from mind or consciousness nothing exists. Mind, consciousness, intention, wills, internal states (*antaḥkaraṇa*) etc. are used as synonymous words in Buddhist philosophy. In Sanskrit it is called *citta* which is the organ of internal cognition.¹ An important question arises here: Is it acceptable on the view of Vijñānavāda that there exists other person apart from one’s own mind? How

¹ The Sanskrit word *citta* is used in Buddhist philosophy in broader sense. What is meant by the Sanskrit words *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahamkāra*, *antaḥkaraṇa* etc. in other schools of Indian philosophy is covered by the word *citta* in Buddhist philosophy. In Vedānta philosophy these are several *vṛtti*-s or objects or effects of *antaḥkaraṇa*. These effects are called the features of the mind by the Buddhists. Wishful state or intention qualifies the *antaḥkaraṇa*, it is meant by the word *manas* or mind. When the *antaḥkaraṇa* is qualified by the feature of certainty, it is known as *ahamkāra*. For the feature of memory it is called *citta*. When there is a contact of *antaḥkaraṇa* with an external object, there arises its feature as the form of an object. This is called *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*. The Buddhists’ use of the word *citta* covers all these connotations.

to explain then other's thoughts and emotions? Are they mere appearances without any real background? A realist philosopher, like a Sautrāntika, argues that the behavioural actions of other persons have similarity with our own. The 'other' is not a shadow or mere appearance of my mind. Here Dharmakīrti has affinity with a classical Sautrāntika philosopher. But, in addition, what he has done is that he claims that from Vijñānavāda standpoint also it could be proved. The Vijñānavāda school of Buddhist philosophy itself admits of different levels of reality, and the ultimate reality is called *ālaya-vijñāna* which is non-dual. The other mind exists as the mind-universal. We cannot reduce the status of the world to a fictitious zero. It has functional value and for this sociology of knowledge is possible only on the recognition of the existence of other mind on the basis of analogical argument. This interpretation of the mind-universal and other issues from Vijñānavādi standpoint saves it from falling into solipsism. A Vijñānavādi, who denies any real status to the external world, considers the phenomenal world as one's mental representation. Dharmakīrti, in spite of his affiliation to Yogācāra-Vijñānavāda, authored this treatise and developed an independent view on other minds (*paracitta*) and argued for its existence.

It may be interesting to note in the passing that not much historical evidences extended to us about his life. But there is a view prevalent among the scholars that in any day of 614 AD he was born in a Brahmin family and in a place named *Trimalaya* in Southern part of India. Trimalaya in those days was a part of the kingdom called *Cūḍāmaṇi*. His father's name was Korunanda and Dharmakīrti was referred as the son of Korunanda, Korunanddāraka. In *Siddhiviniścayatīkā* of Akalaṃkadeva Dharmakīrti is addressed as Korunanddāraka.² His basic education began with Vedic Studies and later on achieved mastery in logic, grammar and other sciences of those days. It is believed that Dharmakīrti was initiated to Buddhism by Dharmapāla, the then chief Acārya of Nālandā Mahāvihāra.³ Later on Dharmakīrti became the disciple of Īśvara Sena and with his guidance he learnt *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Diñnāga and authored a elucidatory note on it. It is also believed that Dharmakīrti was also well trained in Vajrajāna Buddhism. But no strong historical evidences are extended to us in support of this belief. It is also a prominent belief among some scholars of history of Buddhism that Dharmakīrti's tenure in Nālandā is mostly a period between 633--640 AD. However, his main contribution is considered in Buddhist logic and Epistemology. *Pramāṇavārttika* is by far his greatest contribution. It is a commentary on *Pramāṇasamuccaya* of Diñnāga. Apart from *Pramāṇavārttika*, there are six other

² See, Anantavīrya, Akalaṃkadeva's *Siddhiviniścayatīkā*, 1 & 2 vols. Ed. Mahendrakumar Jaina Nyāyācārya, Bhāratīya Jñānapīṭha, Kaśī, 1959 (vol. 1), p.54

³ Dharmapala's direct disciple Śīlabhadra (who was originally from Bengal) succeeded him as the chief Acārya of Nālandā Mahāvihāra in 635 AD.

works authored by Dharmakīrti. These are *Pramāṇaviniścaya*, *Nyāyabindu*, *Hetubindu*, *Sambandhaparīkṣā*, *Vādanyāya* and *Santānāntarasiddhi*. *Santānāntarasiddhi* was lost in Sanskrit, the language of its composition but survived in Tibetan translation. From Tibetan translation *Santānāntarasiddhi* had been translated into Russian language by Th. Stecherbatsky in 1922 and this Russian version was translated into English with the title *Establishment of the Existence of Other Minds* by Harish C. Gupta and included in *Papers of Th. Stecherbatsky* in 1969. Mangala R. Chinchore reconstructed it into Sanskrit and another reconstruction into Sanskrit was done by Jeta Sen Negi. Both the reconstructed texts are published by Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sāranāth in 1997. But English translation with Sanskrit version of the text with necessary explanatory Notes is yet to be done.

There is doubt among scholars regarding the exact philosophical position of Dharmakīrti. According to Pradeep P. Gokhale, Dharmakīrti's position is a dual position.⁴ But saying this he does not mean it either as a 'joint position or synthetic position'. However, for Gokhale, the 'two positions are not logically compatible with each other'. In our understanding, Dharmakīrti, perhaps, independently approached the same problem from different perspectives. It is possible to infer that the very socio-political situation prevailed in the then time might be the cause of making apparent effort to show that from the Vijñānavādi (internalist) standpoint also the recognition of the existence of other minds is possible.⁵

Dharmakīrti's position is realist (of Sautrāntika variety) in *Nyāyabindu* and also in a large part of his commentarial work *Pramāṇavārttika*. However, in some verses of *Pramāṇavārttika* he critically examines the realist position and adopts idealism. Sometimes he confesses about his ignorance about idealist explanation of knowledge.⁶ According to Gokhale, "sometimes he appears to be equidistant from

⁴ In one of his recent papers Gokhale has informed us that "scholars have diversely labelled him (Dharmakīrti) as Vijñānavādin (Yogācāra/Yogācārin), Sautrāntika, Yogācāra-Sautrāntika, a Mādhyamika mystic and Svatantra-vijñānavādin. ⁴ The two major identities attributed to him are that he was a Sautrāntika and that he was a Yogācāra. The third major identity is the combination of the two."—*Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), pp. 66-77

⁵ In Gokhale's own words, "There is a problem about Dharmakīrti's philosophical identity. Dharmakīrti's position is realist (of Sautrāntika variety) in *Nyāyabindu* and also in a large part of his commentarial work *Pramāṇavārttika*. However, in some verses of *Pramāṇavārttika* he critically examines the realist position and adopts idealism. Sometimes he confesses about his ignorance about idealist explanation of knowledge." See, "Dharmakīrti's Dual Philosophical Identity", *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), pp. 66-77

⁶ A confirmed Vijñaptimātratāvādin would say that the particular form (*ākāra*) of an object is not due to the form of an external object, but due to the past impressions of actions belonging to the same series or *ālayavijñāna*. Dharmakīrti, however, says (PV II.353), "If the cognition somehow appears without assuming the form of the object, how does it grasp an object? Really, I also do not

both. In *Santānāntarasiddhi*, Dharmakīrti claims that Sautrāntika type of argument is available to Cittamātra position also. He does not say that Sautrāntika position is wrong and Yogācāra position is correct.”⁷ John Dunne and Birgit Kellner have placed Dharmakīrti’s position in a hierarchical order from the realist Sautrāntikaposition to the Vijñānavāda position. Unlike John Dunne and Birgit Kellner, Dharmakīrti for Gokhale, “was attracted towards both and was clearly or vaguely aware of the limitations of both. He was attracted to idealism (of his variety) for its critical dimension. He was attracted to Sautrāntika position for its capacity to explain the diverse phenomena and lead human beings to their goals.”⁸ Gokhale tries to find out a kind of ambivalence between Dharmakīrti’s approach a kind of ambivalence between the Sautrāntika and Vijñānavāda positions. According to Gokhale, “Dharmakīrti argues for idealism by criticising Sautrāntika realism, but does not engage much with it. He comes back to the Sautrāntika position and engages with it in a sustained manner.”⁹ There is also attempt among modern thinkers to interpret Dharmakīrti’s position as pure and unmixed variety of epistemological idealism. But a close reading of his philosophical treatises at once shows that it is not appropriate to ignore the elements of metaphysical idealism in Dharmakīrti. He tried to draw the implications of Idealism which considerably curtails and obstructs the scope of the Sautrāntika epistemology and logic. I agree with Gokhale that seeing from pure logical point of view these two positions are not compatible, rather a case of *mis-matching* ‘with each other’. It seems that Dharmakīrti applies different standpoints in different texts. What might be the cause of shifting of standpoints is a matter of investigation. Could there be a socio-political reason for that? Or he was aware of logical consequence of solipsistic position of *Cittamātra* philosophy in its simplistic understanding. So far as the text *Santānāntarasiddhi* is concerned Dharmakīrti seems to take two different philosophical perspectives to deal with the issue of other minds.

It is interesting to quote Gokhale here again as he said, “Dharmakīrti was attracted towards both and was clearly or vaguely aware of the limitations of both. He was attracted to idealism (of his variety) for its critical dimension. He was attracted to Sautrāntika position for its capacity to explain the diverse phenomena and lead human

know.”

(*yathākathāñcittasyārtharūpaṃmuktāvabhāsinaḥ | arthagrahaḥkathāṃsatyaṃnājanē’hamapīdrśam*||) This implies a kind of agnosticism about external objects and not their negation. He is suggesting that the existence of external objects cannot be proved, but he is not affirming the non-existence of the external objects.

⁷ *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), p. 67

⁸ Gokhale refers to the opening sentence of the *Nyāyabindu* of Dharmakīrti. There he states that ‘the twofold right cognition leads to attainment of human ends’ (*puruṣārthasiddhi*). In the *Nyāyabindu* Dharmakīrti’s position is a case of external realism.

⁹ *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), p. 67

beings to their goals.¹⁰... I call Dharmakīrti's position as dual position, but I don't call it as a joint position or synthetic position. The two positions are not logically compatible with each other. Still Dharmakīrti is attracted towards both from different perspectives."¹¹

But if we agree with the Vijñānavādi, then we cannot infer the existence of other minds from the bodily movements like going or speaking etc. as the *kāryaliṅga*, the effect as probans/ reason just as we infer the existence of fire from the perception of smoke. Smoke is the effect and fire is the cause and basing on smoke as effect-probans (*kārya-liṅga*) we infer the existence as of fire (*kāraṇa-liṅgī*). If there is nothing real as the external object, then about that unreal thing there cannot be any cognition like the bodily movement or speech-action. Neither by perception nor by inference can we have the cognition of the external world. Verbal Testimony (*śabda-pramāṇa*) in such a state of cognition is not helpful. It is the reveller of the external object. Dharmakīrti (600-660 AD) is usually designated as Svātantrika Sautrāntika-Yogācāra philosopher, because if we closely read his *Santānāntarasiddhi*, we will see that he has gone beyond the usual boundary of both the schools. As an interpreter of philosophical issues he used his freedom to exercises his choice in the line of constructive criticism.

According to Dharmakīrti, from the Yogācāra point of view also we can admit the existence of other minds. However, we cannot know directly the existence of other minds. He uses the words mind, consciousness, intention, will etc. as synonymous to mean consciousness or mind. It is different from the Naiyāyikas understanding of consciousness on the one hand, and from the Vaidāntika's understanding on the other. To him, consciousness itself is action in a sense. All our physical actions are caused by consciousness. But, how from Yogācāra point of view, is it possible to admit the existence of other mind? Dharmakīrti would have said that "philosophica; interpretation should always be in line of constructive critics."¹² For this we are to see Dharmakīrti's argument in *Santānāntarasiddhi*.

It is interesting to note in this connection that another important philosopher of Vijñānavāda school of Buddhism of 11th century AD is Ratnakīrti who refuted Dharmakīrti's arguments for establishing the existence of other minds (*paracitta*) in his small *prakaraṇa* treatise named *Santānantaradūṣaṇa*. He tries to show flows in

¹⁰ As Dharmakīrti in the opening sentence of the *Nyāyabindu* says that the twofold right cognition leads to attainment of human ends (*puruṣārthasiddhi*). The *Nyāyabindu* theory is generally accepted to be following external realism.

¹¹ *Studia Humana*, vol 12: 1-2 (2023), p. 67

¹² See, Kalidas Bhattacharyya, *Fundamentals of K. C. Bhattacharyya's Philosophy* Saraswat Library, 206, Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta (Pin 700006), 1975, p. ii

Dharmakīrti's arguments. He has quoted from Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttikain* in favour of his view. It is philosophically exciting to them in debate as the theorist and counter-theorist with regard to other minds. Let us have an outline of Ratnakīrti's works.

1.2 Rantakīrti and *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* (Objections against the Existence of Other Mind)

Ratnakīrti tries to show that the claim for the existence of other mind cognised through inference is unjustified. He advanced arguments from Vijñānavādi standpoint in *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa*. The text was lost in India but retained in Tibet. Mahāpaṇḍita Rāhul Sāṅkṛtyāyāna brought it back to India as a photo copy of the original Sanskrit manuscript in palm leaves along with *Pramāṇavārttika* of Dharmakīrti and Sanskrit works of Jñānaśrīmitra. The Sanskrit text of *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* is included in *Ratnakīrti-nibandhāvali* edited with extensive introduction by its editor Professor Anantalal Thakur and published from K. P. Jaishal Institute of Patna in 1957. Both Ratnakīrti and Jñānaśrīmitra were renowned ācāryas, the great teachers, of Vikramaśīla Mahāvihāra. They were senior contemporaries of ācārya Dīpaṅkar Śrījñāna Atīśa. So far discovered, there are twelve treatises authored by Ratnakīrti and *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇa* is a small treatise of hardly 22 paragraphs and this is the last one in the collection published so far. These twelve treatises of Ratnakīrti are (1) *Sarvajñāsiddhi*, (2) *Īśvarasādhanadūṣaṇam*, (3) *Aposiddhi* (4) *Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi (anvayātmikā)* (5) *Kṣaṇabhaṅgasiddhi (vyatirekātmikā)* (6) *Pramāṇāntarbhāvaprakaraṇam*, (7) *Vyātinirṇaya*, (8) *Sthirasiddhidūṣaṇam*, (9) *Citrādvaitaprakāśavāda*, (10) *Avayavinirākaraṇam*, (11) *Sāmānyadūṣaṇam* and (12) *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇam*. But *Avayavinirākaraṇam* and *Sāmānyadūṣaṇam*, these two treatises, are not included in the aforesaid *Ratnakīrti-nibandhāvali*. However, in *Sāntanāntaradūṣaṇam* Ratnakīrti has often quoted Jñānaśrīmitra's *Sākārasaṃgraha* in support of his view. In various contexts he has mentioned Maitreyīnāthapāda with reverence. While examining the arguments in favour of establishing the existence of other minds Ratnakīrti does not directly mention the name of Dharmakīrti although a close reading of both the texts at once real that his main intention is to refute point by point the view of Dharmakīrti as expressed in *Sāntanāntarasiddhi*. He starts his refutation stating the *pūrvapakṣa*, the theory under scrutiny by saying 'some people argue' (*kecidāhu*) as if his opponent is a very insignificant thinker. This is not proper and customary academic etiquette in using language in the cultural democracy of classical Indian philosophy. But if we look at other philosophical works of Ratnakīrti, we find that he has expressed great reverence to Dharmakīrti with the word 'lord' (*bhagavān*). The reason for this discrimination is a subject of further research and investigation. Be that as it may, re-reading of Ratnakīrti's works with philosophical

attitude of ‘openness’ leaves impression that he is more interested in independent interpretation of Vijñānavādi philosophy from logical point of view. In this respect he succeeds Dharmakīrti as we argued that Dharmakīrti is an independent (*svatantra*) interpreter of both Sautrāntika realism and Vijñānavāda idealism and he has gone beyond the traditional understanding of both the schools to make his philosophy progressive and ever alive. However, it is interesting to see how Ratnakīrti shows the limitations and flows in Dharmakīrti’s arguments in favour of the existence of other minds. This is what is being followed in the next section.

2.1 Arguments of Dharmakīrti and the issue of Other Minds

The question of understanding ‘other’ is not merely a sociological question. It is basically a philosophical question loaded with the metaphysical and epistemological bearings. Whether ‘other’ is as good as ‘my-self’ or totally ‘different from and independent’ of myself? If independent, then how do I understand other’s existence, other’s emotion, thoughts and actions? In sociology it said that if there is no ‘other’ there cannot be a society. But sociological understanding has also metaphysical and epistemological bearings. A pure internalist such as a Vijñānavādi, who recognises nothing other than his own consciousness, would say that since there is no ‘other’, there is no question of existence for other minds or knowing the thoughts, feelings and actions of ‘other’. A consistent Vijñānavādi position denies any possibility of sociology of knowledge and obviously leads to solipsism. But those who admit the existence of other minds independent of my own mind are realists.

It is usually believed that our knowledge of the minds of other persons is covered by darkness (*paracitta-andhakāravat*). What is going on the mind of other person is not directly accessible to us. But the concept of ‘other’ in philosophy is important, because understanding ‘other-ness’ influences all our relational behaviours in society. It is also important to infer the states of mind of other from the study of his/her behaviour. Modern philosophical study of Behaviourism has affinity with the ancient Indian philosophical investigation about mind. But the problem of other mind is not limited to sociology and psychology; it is extended as well to ontology and epistemology. Among the Indian philosophers, the Buddhist philosophers use the word ‘*citta*’ in a broader sense and it covers what we ordinarily mean by words like mind, consciousness, will etc. Consciousness itself is called *karma*, action. All our physical actions are caused by preceding consciousness. Mind precedes everything. Now an obvious question arises: whether in addition to my own mind, does other mind exist? If it does exist, then what are the possible grounds for its existence? This question is important to both the realist Sautrāntika and the idealist Vijñānavādi philosophers. The former is an externalist while the latter is an internalist. According to the former, the

object of cognition can exist independent of the knowing mind or knowledge. According to the latter, the object of cognition is knower-dependent or knowledge-dependent. Naturally an idealist Vijñānavādi philosopher ordinarily finds it difficult to answer the above question in the positive. If the Vijñānavāda philosopher admits that there exists 'other minds' in addition to one's own mind, then it will contradict the established thesis of the school that 'mind is the only reality'. Nothing external to mind is existent, in addition to one's own mind/ consciousness; nothing external is admissible to him. Therefore, a consistent Vijñānavādi philosopher cannot admit the existence of 'other mind'. But question persists: Is not a futile and meaningless action to uphold one's own view to other, if there is no other mind?

Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti differ from each other in consideration of the aforesaid question. Being faithful to the principle of logical consistency with the fundamental tenet of Vijñānavādin Ratnakīrti denies the independent existence of other minds. For him, to admit the existence of other mind is as good as the acceptance of the external reality of the world. And this contradicts the basic tenets of Vijñānavāda. Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, argues that even from the standpoint of Vijñānavāda it is possible to accept the reality of other minds and inference based on analogy establishes it. In *Santānāntarasiddhi* Vijñānavādi Dharmakīrti refutes the realistic position of Sautrāntika and then gives arguments in favour of the existence of other minds. It is, for him, an admitted fact that before doing any action, say for example our bodily movements and speech acts, we need the necessary intention to act. So our mental determination actually causes our bodily actions. The intention of Rāma is not being seen in Shyāma, because the mind of Rāma is different from that of Shyāma. In our own case of speaking or bodily movements etc. our intentional mind is the cause of our actions. Similarly, in case of other persons their intentional mind is the cause of their bodily actions and speech acts. We see the bodily actions of other persons and by analogical inference on the basis of similarity with our own case we become sure about the existence of other minds. Without this, our practical life in the phenomenal world, which is conditionally true (*samvṛtisatya*), would have been impossible. The cognition of the existence of our mind as the cause of our bodily actions is intuitively evident (*sva-samvedya*) whereas the cognition of the existence of other minds is evident to us through inference, though it is intuitively evident (*sva-samvedya*) to the others themselves. We do not doubt that as we feel to engage in volitional activities due to our wish that arises in our mind, similar is the case with regard to other persons when they engage themselves in any bodily actions which are effects of wishful minds of other. This is the simple analogical argument with which Dharmakīrti tries to establish the existence of other minds.

2.2 Dharmakīrti and Refutation of the realistic position of Sautrāntika and Vaibhāṣika philosophers

According to traditionally popular view of Vijñānavāda, as propounded by its chief exponent Vasubandhu, there is no necessity of admitting other minds; admittance of the reality of one's own mind is sufficient to explain the status of the world as representations of one's own mind. Dharmakīrti has shown that this view is inadequate to explain the issue. But the opponents here argue that once the existence of 'other' were admitted, then the next one and then the next one must be admitted and in this way it would lead to infinite regress. If you once admit the view of non-dual consciousness (*advaya-vijñāna*) that the external object does not exist or only mind exists, then by no argument you can establish the existence of other minds. But in spite of being a faithful follower of Vijñānavāda Dharmakīrti in *Santānāntarasiddhi* has put forward a new philosophical thesis with independent arguments to establish the existence of other minds and his new interpretation, we think, has saved Vijñānavāda from falling into solipsism. However, it must be borne in mind that the subtlety in his analysis and arguments makes his thesis difficult to understand by commoners.

Let us explain it with an example. Devadatta and Yajñadatta, say A and B, are two different persons having different minds. How does Yajñadatta know Devadatta's existence? Usually such a question does not arise in Yajñadatta's mind. In practical life we are intuitively aware of other person's existence either seeing him or listening to him. But if we try to explain this simple fact of existence in the light of epistemology, immediately it would turn into a complicated philosophical problem. The question persists: how does Yajñadatta in the light of Buddhist epistemology cognise the existence of Devadatta? When Yajñadatta 'goes' or 'speaks', in fact, such actions are causally preceded by his (Yajñadatta's) wishful mind and accordingly such physical actions as representations take place. Then perceiving such bodily actions in Devadatta Yajñadatta remembers in his own mind the universal concomitance relation between his bodily actions as the effect and his wishful mind as the cause, that is, the principle 'where there is a physical action, it is preceded causally by wishful mind and it happens in case of the relation between one's own physical actions and one's own mind'. On the basis of this relation of invariable concomitance Yajñadatta infers the existence of Devadatta's mind.

It is to be noted here that in both Sautrāntika and Vijñānavāda philosophies 'pramāṇa-prameya-relation' is accepted from the *vyāvahārika* consideration. With the application of *sahopalambha-niyama* Dharmakīrti claims that the object of perception and perception as cognition are identical. However, Sautrāntika philosopher cannot accept it. For him, 'pramāṇa-prameya-relation' is valid not only from the *vyāvahārika*

consideration only, but it is also true from the trans-empirical (*pāramārtika*) standpoint. When we say, ‘something exists’ it means ‘it exists’ both in empirical and trans-empirical levels. Here Dharmakīrti differs from the Sautrāntika understanding and says that in spite being different in empirical level, from trans-empirical level ‘*pramāṇa*’ and ‘*prameya*’ are identical.

It may be noticed here that Dharmakīrti begins the central discussion about other mind with an inference. But the Sautrāntika philosophers think that the inference given by Dharmakīrti is defective. According to them, in the cognition of Yajñadatta, who infers (*anumānā*), there are representations of wishful mind of Devadatta and this is inferred from the cognition of the bodily movements of Devadatta. Here the principle or law of mutual (*adhipatitva*) is applied. The bodily movements of Devadatta are the effects of his wishful mind and so here from the cognition of effect as *prabans* (*kāryaliṅga*) inference is made for the cause. In other words, the wishful mind of Devadatta is the cause of his bodily movements and the cognition of Devadatta’s bodily movements (*kāyavijñapti*) is the *adhipatipratyaya* in Yajñadatta’s cognition where the representations of bodily movements of Devadatta do appear. Similarly, what is appeared as representation in Yajñadatta’s cognition about the bodily movements of Devadatta is invariably related to the wishful mind of Devadatta. Yajñadatta infers the existence of Devadatta’s wishful mind basing on that invariable relation.¹³ So for Dharmakīrti, in *antarjñeyavāda* also with the afore-said inferential method we can have the cognition of the existence of other minds. There is no doubt that from the ontological standpoint of Vijñānavāda, it is relative to the person who applies it and the entire process of ‘*pramāṇa-prameya-vyavasthā*’ (use of the method consists of instruments of knowing and known) is justified from the empirical consideration (*sāmvvyāvahārika*). Dharmakīrti has presented the issue as a philosophical debate between the Sautrāntika and Vijñānavādi and this has become a universal philosophical problem for consideration.

2.3 Traikālika Jagat Cittamātra, Vijñaptimātra (The World of three times—past, present and future— is nothing but consciousness or mental)

According to Vijñānavādi philosophers, this *traidhātukajagat* (the phenomenal / changing world) consists of three *dhātu*-s. Whatever exists is only mind-dependent. Here by the use of the word ‘only’ the reality of anything external to mind is denied. But there is no external object, then why do we have the cognition of the external object? The externalist thinks that the existence of external object as known is true not only from the empirical consideration but it is also true from the trans-empirical

¹³ “natulyatvāt. pro’ piparajñānapūrvau tau kadāpinapaśyati. Atah tenāpitanna jñāyate” – SS, aphorisms, 45-5.

consideration. The denial of the existence of known as external object leads to nihilism in philosophy.

For Dharmakīrti, we can use both perception and inference to establish the existence of other mind only from empirical viewpoint (*sāmvṛttikadr̥ṣṭi*). This common-sense use of empirical viewpoint cannot be applied justifiably to ontological status of what is ultimately real. In spite of using the *pramāṇa-prameya-vyavasthā* in empirical level like the realists, Dharmakīrti uses ‘sahopalambha-niyama’ in ontology and establishes *viññaptimātratā*.

2.4 Summary of Dharmakīrti’s arguments for the existence of other minds and Some Remarks

A close reading of the text *Santānāntarasiddhi* by Dharmakīrti and its commentary by Vinītadeva at once convince us the fact that it is an exceptional kind of text where the author argues for the existence of other minds on the basis of analogical inference from the standpoint of Viññānavāda. Here the inference is made on the basis of prabans which is an effect (*kāryaliṅga*). In *Pramāṇavārttika* Dharmakīrti from Sautrāntika view point criticised the Cārvāka critique of inference and argued that the existence of other minds can be cognised by inference.¹⁴

The following questions may arise here: It is admitted that we cannot directly perceive other minds. We can only perceive our physical activities as directed by our minds. As our perception cannot give us the cognition of other minds, the cause-effect relation that we apply in case of knowing our own minds cannot be applied in case of other minds. In this context some other factors must be considered: (a) my own mind cannot be the cause of the physical actions such as ‘going’ and ‘speech’ of other persons, because, as a matter of fact, I do not perceive such ‘cause-effect-relation’. (b) I can perceive the activities that arise depending on my wishful mind in my own body although I cannot perceive in other bodies as caused by their wishful mind. (3) Now, if the bodily activities of the other persons are caused by my own mind, then I would have perceived the activities in other bodies as I do in my own case. With my bodily movements my mind is internally connected. But the bodily actions of other persons are not internally connected to my own mind. So if we admit the fact that ‘other persons’ bodily actions are internally related as effect to ‘other persons’ wishful minds, then only such issue could be philosophically explained. Our own actions such as movements or speaking etc. arise in our body whereas actions of other persons arise as things disconnected to our own body. In principle Dharmakīrti here agrees with the

¹⁴ Astyeyaviduṣāṁ vādavahyatvāsṛityavarnyate. Dvairūpaṁ sahasaṁvṛttiniyamāttaccasidhyati (*pramāṇavārttika* 2.398); siddhancaparacaitanyapratipatṭeh pramāṇa-dvayam. Vyāvahāradaupravṛtṭeścasiddhāsatadbhāvābhāvaniścayāḥ (ibid 3.68).

Sautrāntikas that other person's bodily actions are caused by the wishful mind of that person. Now we are left with the option of admitting the bodily actions of other persons as caused by the wishful minds of those persons. This shows that by application of analogical inference we can cognise the existence of other minds.

However, according to Dharmakīrti, in inference of the existence of other mind what is meant by 'other mind' is not the individual mind of a particular person, rather it means 'mind universal'. In other words, "the inference of other minds is concerned only with the universal. Although it cannot reveal other minds themselves, it is valid because our behaviours based on it do not fail us."¹⁵ Because through inference no particular form of anything, which is called *Salakṣaṇa* in Sanskrit, is known. *Salakṣaṇa* is perceptible whereas *Sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is inferable. Had it been not so then there would not have been any difference between perception and inference. Not only this, our claim to know past things for future things by inference would have been irrelevant. That is why there is difference between perception and inference. The object known by inference does not have unique feature (*Salakṣaṇa*). That is why the object known by inference does not have direct *artha-kriyā-kāritya*, volitional success or efficiency. Inference is a *pramāṇa*, because we do act at on the strength of inference and that action has volitional success or causal efficiency reference. The correspondence is considered as the ground of validity and this is meant by saying, '*avisamvāditvampramātvam*'. In other words, being the non-discordant (*aviasamvādi*) with the real object is the defining feature of right cognition. And a real object is something which has a specific form with a definite causal efficacy. Inference that we use for establishing the existence of other minds is an inference based on similarity or analogical inference.

In Buddhist tradition it is usually assumed that Yogins and the Buddha are capable of directly knowing the other minds. But, according to Dharmakīrti, Yogins cannot know other minds directly as such but through resemblance to other minds as they appear in their consciousness. Because they are not above of the distinction between what is cognised and by what it is cognised (*grāhya-grāhaka-bheda*). For Dharmakīrti, they are yet to attain 'bodhi' and so they are still in the realm of discrimination between what is cognised and by what it is cognised (*grāhya-grāhaka-bheda*). Only with 'bodhi', the enlightenment one can rise above the said division. Then question arises: Where lies the validity of the cognition of other minds by the Yogins? The answer is: their cognitions are considered as right, because their behaviours depending on such knowledge never lead them to failure. Finally, Dharmakīrti considers another pertinent question: Does Buddha know the other minds? The answer

¹⁵ See, Masahiro Inami, "The problem of Other Minds in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29:467, 2001.

given by Dharmakīrti seems to avoid any straight answer tactfully. We cannot entertain any doubt about Buddha's knowledge of other minds, because Buddha is Omniscient and Buddha's enlightenment is beyond the reachability of reason and words.

What has been said thus far may be summarised here. The changes and actions that arise in our body are caused by our wishful minds and on the basis of our observation we establish a causal relation between our minds and actions. There is no contrary instance. This is the proof of the existence of our own minds. Now on the basis of similarity we infer the existence of other minds from the actions, which appear in others' bodies and which are not caused by our mind. Bodies of others and that of ours are different and so when know other minds we know minds in general and not a particular mind having unique features. We cannot question its rightness, because others' behaviours caused by it do not lead to failure. It has '*aviasmṃvāditva*', non-discordant (*aviasmṃvādi*) with the real object or simply right correspondence.

3 Ratnakīrti's Refutation of the Arguments for the existence of other minds.

According to Ratnakīrti, an eleventh century AD Vijñānavādi philosopher, it is in no way right to say that the existence of other minds can be established from Vijñānavādi standpoint. The so-called objects external to our consciousness are mere appearances. What is represented does not have any real existence.

3.1 Consideration of Possible Objections

Ratnakīrti starts his refutation of other minds with a linguistic tone of expressing in insignificant manner while referring to the opponent's view. It ignores all proper etiquette. He says, 'some people argue' that there are other minds, because our inference can give us the cognition of those minds. Other persons' bodily activities like movements or speaking etc. have been assumed as effects of the wishful minds of those people. But several questions may arise at this point. What is this wishful mind? Is it perceptible by the person who infers (*anumātā*)? Does it mean mind in general, which does not require to be qualified by the perceptibility or imperceptibility? In other words, whether it is perceptible in general is to be explained first.¹⁶

If it is admitted as perceptible by the person who infers, it amounts to establish its non-existence. In the process of inference we do not perceive other persons intention or wishful mind. On the other hand, if it is admitted as perceptible then we need no inference to establish its existence. Again, if we admit mind in general as the cause of representation of the bodily actions like movements and speech, then further questions

¹⁶“atredamālocyate.tadicchacittamvyāvahārādyābhāsasyakāraṇatayā
vyavasthāpyamānumāturdarśanayogyamathadṛṣyādṛṣavīṣeṣaṇānapekṣmicchāmātram” — *SD*, para
3, p. 145

will arise: How is this causal relation established? We are able to know our mind that causes our bodily actions and for this reason there is no difficulty in calling our own mind as a cause of our bodily actions. But from this by no means it follows that the mind in general is the cause of the appearance of all such actions. Even if there is fire in a remote place, that cannot be claimed to be known certainly by perception. We usually always perceive the causal relation in general between fire and smoke in village kitchen (*mahānasa*). We also speak of the fire of digestion (*jaṭharāgni*). Nobody denies that the fire of digestion is substantially different (*svabhāva-viprakṛṣṭa*) from the fire that causes smoke. There is nothing common between the two. So taking fire in general we cannot say both the cases of fire is characterised by the same general fire. Now about the wishful minds of other persons we can say that if they were really existent as something common between us and other persons, they should have been perceptible. But, in fact, this does not happen. From this it follows that we cannot cognise the mind in general as the cause of the represented bodily actions in other persons.

3.1.1 Inference for the existence of other minds is vitiated by defects

Ratnakīrti here considered a possible objection. In case of self-consciousness (*sva-samvedana*) intention or mind in general as a sufficient causal condition is perceptible to us. Similar is the case with regard to other persons, because their intentions or minds as a sufficient condition for their bodily actions like movement and speaking etc. are perceptible to themselves.¹⁷ Here Ratnakīrti argues that this claim may be true with regard to the person, who infers, but this is not applicable in general, that is, nothing on the basis of other persons' experience becomes perceptible to us. Had anything been perceptible to us on the basis of other persons' own consciousness, then a goblin (*piśāca*) would be perceptually known. It is usually believed by some people that a Yogi person is able to perceive such thing called goblin.¹⁸ Since the minds of other persons are not directly known or perceptible to us, the claim in favour of the mind-universal, which is present in all, cannot be perceptible to us. Though our intention or mind as the cause of our bodily actions and speaking is perceptible to us, this same principle is not applicable for establishing the existence of other mind.¹⁹

¹⁷ “atheccā cittamātram svasamvedanamātrāpekṣayā nasvabhāvaviprakṣtam. Na hyagnirapyekoyenaivendriyavijñānenatenavānyo'pidṛśyaḥ. Tatrathā cakṣurvijñānamātrāpekṣayā

agnimātramdrīyamitivyavasthāpyatetathātrāpivasamvedanamātrāpekṣayā icchācittamātram svaparasantānasadhāraṇamapidṛśyameveti”—*SD*, para 7, p.146

¹⁸ It only reflects the fact that there was a strong belief among common people that by their super-normal power some Yogi persons could see such thing as goblin. The citing of this example by Ratnakīrti is only an expression of the uncritical belief of the common people of those days. This type of assertion cannot stand to critical examination of philosophers.

¹⁹ *SD*, para 8, p. 146

However, if we carefully go through *Santanānāntarasiddhi* of Dharmakīrti, it would become clear that he gave utmost importance to existence of mind-universal. It may be noted here that Mokṣākaragupta also says in his *Tarkabhāṣā* that other minds are perceptible to other persons' self-consciousness. According to him, we can establish a necessary relation between the universal mind and the universal actions. So there is no difficulty, according to Mokṣākaragupta, to say that we can know the existence of other minds through inference.²⁰

Ratnakīrti shows further defects in the inference for the existence of other minds. For him, there are *vādhakayukti*, arguments against the above contention. In Dharmakīrti's treatment introducing the concept of mind-universal, no significant difference is made between one's own mind and the minds of other persons. Had there been the existence of other minds, then there must have been natural difference between the two. But such difference is not evident in the so-called argument. I am self-aware about the relation of causality that exists between my mind and my bodily actions. I myself need no other proof to know this relation. But in case of other I do not have such self-awareness. So the claim of knowing other mind is an extravagant claim. Ratnakīrti²¹ here refers to Jñānaśrīmitra's *Sākārasiddhiśāstra* in his favour. It is argued that if my own mind and the other minds both are existent things simultaneously, in spite of striking similarities, there must be some distinguishing marks between the two. In absence of such marks the difference between the two cannot be established. If two things are similar, then on the basis of this similarity we cannot say that when one exists, the other also necessarily does exist. We cannot also say that both are identical. Likewise, the difference between our own mind and other minds is established only on the basis of the cognition of the both. But as a matter of fact, we can have the cognition of our own minds only. When we perceive our own mind we cannot simultaneously perceive a thing which is non-existent like a rabbit's horn. Accordingly, we are not in a position to make a distinction between the two.

To explicate his contention Ratnakīrti has mentioned three difficulties. (1) Let us assume that our own minds and other minds are different. Then we are to admit that the external objects of the world have an independent existence. But a true Vijñānavādi (internalist/ idealist) cannot accept the existence anything external to mind. On this account a Vijñānavādi cannot admit the existence of other mind without contradicting the basic tenet of the school called *vijñaptimātratā*, 'consciousness is alone real'. (*SD*, 148, b7-10). Again, (2) If we once admit the difference between the two, that is to say,

²⁰ "svasaṁvedanaṁ hi tatravyāptigrāhakaṁ. svaparaśantānagatasamvedanamātrapekṣayā paracittāsyā hi dr̥ṣyatvāt." *Tarkabhāṣā*, ed. H. R. Ayengar, Mysore, 1952, p.44.

²¹ See, RNA 147, 17-18; Cf. JNA 570, 15-16.

the independent existence of our own minds and of things which are external to our minds, then we must admit that there exists a causal relation between the two. But if two things exist in different or distant times, then their contiguity and nearness cannot be established and for this reason their difference cannot be established. As a matter of fact, the causal relation between them, if any, can never be known. Dharmakīrti himself in *Pramāṇavārttika* (III.4.4) said that “*sāmvṛtyāstuyathā tathā*”, which means that the relation of causality holds good only in the level of phenomena (*sāmvṛti*). Now the position of Dharmakīrti in *Pramāṇavārttika* contradicts his own position in *Santānāntarasiddhi*.²² Moreover, the admittance of difference between the two will lead to contradict the doctrine of non-dual consciousness, *citrādvaitavāda*. The internalist Vijñānavādi’s stand is that he admits the non-duality of cognition and therefore, it is impossible for him to admit the distinction between his mind and the other mind, because this distinction is not perceptible. So to admit the difference is to be inconsistent with the theorists of *citrādvaitavāda*. In fact, there seems to be many such contradictions in the philosophical thinking of Dharmakīrti.²³

3.1.2 What is the proof for the non-existence of other minds?

An obvious question arises at this juncture: What might be the proof for the non-existence of other minds? Its non-existence cannot be established by perception, because perception yields the cognition of an object which is positive in nature. In other words, no negative fact can be known by perception. It is also not known by inference either, because inference is incapable of yielding the knowledge of imperceptible object which does not exist. So neither the existence nor the non-existence of the other minds can be established. This is a possible objection for further examination, according to Ratnakīrti.

Ratnakīrti here gives a rejoinder to such an apprehension or objection. This may be considered as a *sādhakayukti* in favour of non-existence and *vādhakayukti* against the claim for the existence of other minds. Our own minds are different from other minds. Suppose, there are two objects, A and B. When we perceive A, we do not perceive it in the form of B. A ‘blue’ object can never be cognised as a ‘red’ object. That is to say, their expressed characteristic features (*prakāśadharmatā*) are different. Be that as it may, one’s mind reveals only itself, not other minds which remain unrevealed. In that case, one’s own mind may not have the form different from that of

²² *SD*, para 17, p. 148

²³ We need to examine such issues like whether Dharmakīrti is a realist or idealist; whether he is a naive realist or a critical realist; whether he is an epistemological idealist or a metaphysical idealist; what might be the reason of taking different philosophical positions in different types? Was the cause of shifting philosophical or socio-political? It may be reserved for another paper.

other minds. There is no reference to any condition that qualifies its ‘perceptibility’. This non-perception of the difference between the two is due to the natural features of difference (*svabhāvānupalabdhi*). If the difference between one’s mind and other minds is not established, it indirectly establishes the non-existence of other minds. As rabbit’s horn does not exist or universal does not exist, so is the case of non-existence of other minds. ²⁴Ratnakīrti indirectly shows the non-existence of other minds by denying the difference of other minds with of our own minds and this indirectly constitute the proof for the denial of other minds by Ratnakīrti.²⁵

3.1.3 Other minds and the cognition of the Buddha Tathāgata

At last Ratnakīrti discusses the issue of other minds and the omniscience of Buddha Tathāgata. If there are other minds, then how does Buddha Tathāgata know it? Common people usually face various doubts about other minds. Since Buddha Tathāgata is omniscient, there is logically no room for arising any such doubt about the existence of other minds in his mind. Had there been other minds, then Buddha Tathāgata must have known it. Is there any proof by which Buddha Tathāgata knows it? Inference is futile in this respect and this has been said earlier. If it is argued that Buddha Tathāgata knows it through inference, then Buddha Tathāgata could not be called Omniscient. But each and every Buddhist Scripture admits the Omniscience of Buddha Tathāgata. Nor can it be said that Buddha Tathāgata knows it by perception. If it assumed simply for the sake of argumentation, then it must be admitted that there exists the relation of ‘cognized (object)-cognizer (subject), *grāhya-grāhaka-sambandha*. This amounts to no other option than to admit the reality of the externality of the world. But according to Vijñānavāda, only one’s own consciousness exists. For Ratnakīrti, we cannot logically admit other minds in addition to our own minds as perceptible.

3.1.4 There is no independent existence of other minds

Ratnakīrti says that there is no independent existence of other minds. And since there exists no other minds, there cannot be any issue of it being known by Buddha Tathāgata. In traditional Buddhist views Buddha Tathāgata is called omniscient, means Buddha Tathāgata knows everything through *Bodhi* (the enlightenment), and so the case of ‘other minds’ is included within the scope of universal quantifier expressed by the term ‘everything’. To such a traditional understanding of the existence of other

²⁴ *SD*, para 18, p. 148.

²⁵ Ratnakīrti wants to say that the *liṅga*, reason is not established (*asiddha*). If there is non-existence of difference between one’s own mind and other minds, then when one’s own mind is perceived, the other minds must have been perceived. But our perception does not yield existence of other minds. Therefore, other minds do not exist.

minds as included in Buddha Tathāgata’s omniscience, Ratnakīrti has not given any adverse comment against it in *Santānāntaradūṣaṇa*.²⁶ What seems to be the actual status of Ratnakīrti with regard to the existence of other minds is that he denies its existence from ultimate consideration which is consistent with Vijñānavāda ontology dominated epistemology. The distinction between the cognised object and the cogniser subject or between our own minds and other minds is not true from the ultimate consideration where reality is admitted as non-dual consciousness. The non-dual consciousness is beyond the reach of all arguments and proofs.

4. Concluding Remarks

We are almost at the end of our study. Obviously a question may arise: what is the conclusion of this study of other minds in the light of two texts: one establishes the existence of other minds and the other denies the existence of other minds in addition to one’s own mind, the former being the view of Dharmakīrti and the latter being the view of Ratnakīrti? Are these views not mutually exclusive?

4.1 . Are the views Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti about other minds mutually exclusive and contradictory?

Both Dharmakīrti and Ratnakīrti are faithful to Vijñānavāda Buddhist philosophers. Dharmakīrti is also a Sautrāntika philosopher. Here their positions seem to be exclusive and contradictory. We have seen that there is a transition of Dharmakīrti’s position from Sautrāntika philosophy to Vijñānavāda philosophy, which is very often apparently lacking consistency. But resorting to the distinction of empirical and ultimate levels of reality in the light of Vijñānavāda Dharmakīrti might have thought of an epistemology that leads to critical realism on the one hand avoiding the naive realism of Nyāya philosophy and on the other hand, interpreting Vijñānavāda philosophy in such a way that will not lead to solipsism. On the other hand Ratnakīrti seems to refute the arguments for the existence of other minds strictly as a logical consequence of Vijñānavāda philosophy. It seems that he has not denied the existence of other minds from empirical point of view but denies it from ultimate point of view. But one point we want to make clear here is that to arrive at any such conclusion requires more research on this subject. And a thorough consideration of the arguments given in Jñānaśrīmitra’s *Kṣaṇabhāṅgādhyāya* would be very relevant in this context. From ultimate standpoint Jñānaśrīmitra denies all differences between the relations of ‘*pramāṇa-prameya*’ (causal instruments of knowledge and object of knowledge),

²⁶ In Vinītadeva’s in his *Tīkā* on *Santānāntarasiddhi* at the end mentions four types of cognition of Buddha. These are in *ādarśajñāna*, *prātyāvekṣaṇajñāna*, *samatājñāna* and *kṛtyānuśthānājñāna*. Among these the first one is above empirical standpoint (*vyāvahārikadr̥ṣṭi*). In the sense of *paramātha* (the ultimate), it is *Bodhi*, the Enlightenment.

kārya-kāraṇa ('effect and cause), *sādhya-sādhana* (end and means). This difference is valid only in empirical level. By no argument or reason the ultimate truth is realised.²⁷ In the context of *Bodhi*, the Enlightenment, all these so-called reasoning and arguments are insignificant (*tuccha*)²⁸ If this is conceded, then for attaining enlightenment both the arguments in favour of establishing the existence of other minds and the arguments against the existence of other minds seem to be abandoned.

4.2 Solipsism and Vijñānavāda

We know that Vijñānavādi philosophers do not admit the reality of anything external to one's consciousness. The so-called other is only an appearance. Now the question arises: whether a pure and unmixed Vijñānavādi philosopher can accept the independent existence of other minds? If the answer is affirmative, then it will contradict Vijñānavādi's own thesis (*sva-vacana-vyāghāta*). On the other hand, if the answer is negative, then Vijñānavādi's theory will lead to solipsism. Solipsism is not a happy position in philosophy. A solipsist cannot meaningfully communicate with others. Even, a solipsist cannot meaningfully use the word 'I'. The words like 'I', you, he/she etc. in use presuppose a community of speakers. Without the recognition of this community of 'I' my use of the pronoun 'I' cannot be its proper use. What I mean by using the word 'I' is understood by you as 'you' and what I mean by using the word 'you' is understood by you as 'I' and vice versa. Any speaker, therefore, indirectly in practice admits the existence of the hearer. So, if we do not accept the existence of other minds, then we cannot meaningfully use our own mind in social communication. A solipsist cannot communicate with others, because he does not recognise 'other' as independently existent. Perhaps, Dharmakīrti was well aware of this fatal consequence of solipsism and to save Vijñānavāda from falling into this undesirable philosophical position had given arguments for establishing the existence of other minds and interpreted Vijñānavāda not in any oft-trodden track but in a new way. His analogical inference based on the similarity of causal relation between our own minds and our bodily action and the causal link of other persons' minds and their bodily actions proves our assumption. So, in our opinion, Dharmakīrti speaks of mind-universal. Dharmakīrti's interpretation retains the status of the functional reality of world as well

²⁷ *santānātarabhāvo 'yamnasiddhāścetphalāṅgavat. Santānātarasiddhiḥ kiṃ samvṛtāstuyathā tathā. Vāstukimātraniravandhena?-- Jñānaśrīmitranibandhāliḥ*, ed. Anantalal Thakur, 2nd ed. Patna, K. P. Jaishal Research Institute, 1987, p. 452.

²⁸ Truth is felt reality, ineffable to the so-called reasoning, either discursive or critical. It can neither be discussed nor be explained. This is another dimension of Buddha's silence over ten unspeakable (*avyākṛta*) questions.

as saves his philosophy of Vijñāna from the charge of solipsism. Ratnakīrti's criticism of mind-universal does not seem to touch the spirit of Dharmakīrti.²⁹

²⁹ Dharmakīrti's arguments for establishing the existence of other minds are applicable at the empirical level (*vyāhārika*). Admission of this does not contradict the realization 'bodhi' and 'mind-universal' which is non-dual. About the trans-empirical level nothing can be asserted.

INEQUITABLE RIGHT CLAIMS OF UNEQUALS? THE ABORTION CONUNDRUM

Jyotish Chandra Basak

Abstract

The present venture tries to bring out the moral contours of the abortion conundrums. It is a controversy that requires the efforts of scientists, legal luminaries, religious leaders and moral experts. In this paper, the author tries to show that at the core of the debate lies specific ethical concerns which pose formidable challenges before legal connoisseurs and others. It indicates that undue rights claim of either side are fraught with difficulties. Hence, utmost caution should be exercised while dealing with such an extremely sensitive issue. Citing many lawsuits and their verdicts, the author shows that though pro-choicers put forward many convincing arguments in favour of their stand, the pro-lifers' ideas work like a safety valve. Thus, we need to create a balance as, with time, the debate is assuming new character due to the ever-increasing sharpness in our analytical approach and tremendous medical advancement. The author adopts a positivistic tenor by holding that intense discussion by all stakeholders can help us to arrive at a stand which will, on the one hand, address the concern of pregnant women who want to abort the foetus for various reasons and also manage our disquiet about an unborn foetus.

Keywords: *abortion, pro-life, pro-choice, viability, CNS, Ensoulment, moral status*

Among many issues of practical ethics, the controversy concerning abortion is a very complicated one and seems to defy any solution. Customarily, abortion means the termination of a foetus through active intervention to forestall its further growth, which amounts to killing it. It is ordinarily admitted that a foetus is an organism that has the potential to develop into a person if nurtured and given the fitting ambience, though it currently lacks some properties of personhood. A scrutiny of the arguments advanced by different sides in this high-profile controversy makes us think that it is the unique status of a pregnant woman (and some concomitant problem inevitably related to this) and the exceptional character of a foetus that are mainly responsible for the confounding nature of this debate. Let us explain this point briefly. Usually, laws, e.g., of rights, duties, interests, restrictions and so on, are framed for a person. But a pregnant woman bears within her body another organism/potential life that entirely depends on

the woman for its growth, well-being, or, to say, for every vital physical and mental process. It is this phenomenon that imparts *sui genre* status to a pregnant woman and a foetus. Women mostly bear all the accompanying problems relating to carrying a potential life within their bodies with utmost care. However, for some reason or other, if they want to discontinue the pregnancy and abort the foetus, several questions come to the foreground which are predominantly ethical. These questions, with time, are swelling as analysis is taking the issue to a deeper level, and our understanding of moral strands, the mechanism of a foetus's growth, and insight from other sources are increasing significantly, bringing forth newer facets in the discourse. Some such questions are: Is this potential life or foetus is life equal to the status of whom we ordinarily call a *person*? Does a pregnant woman have an absolute right to decide about her body, e.g., aborting a viable foetus from her womb only for the reason that it is her body? Does a foetus have a moral status? No short or categorical answers to these questions are possible, as in the debate, we find opposing sides (usually called pro-choicers and pro-lifers) supporting their stands with sufficiently convincing arguments. A study of these arguments gives us the impression that both sides are credible. Thus, we need to ponder their opinions, critically test them using ethical tools, and arrive at a conclusion that we find passes the test of vital moral values such as dignity, privacy, autonomy, justice, accountability and so on, which a society holds in high esteem.

The controversy is age-old but has rekindled in the last few decades due to multifarious factors. In the recent past, the Supreme Court of India (henceforth SC) and several state High Courts delivered their judgements on lawsuits filed by several women who sought permission for abortion for various reasons. A study of some of these judgements makes it clear that the crux of the issue lies in deep, and a resolution of these issues calls for more research by biologists, philosophers, social researchers and cognitive scientists. Their combined efforts, on the one hand, may help us to make some headway on such a vexing issue, and on the other, it may pave the way for a confluence of law, life, value, and literature. I say so as the disputation is predominantly moral, religious and legal.

There are many finer issues jumbled up in the discourse, and disentanglement of these issues will be instrumental to an enhanced understanding of many nuances, which may help to make some headway on the debate. It will be convenient to explain the intricacies of the issue if we refer to some recent cases that the SC and some High Courts heard. No two lawsuits are indeed the same. However, the cases we shall refer to in the present context have family resemblances. Hence, I intend to start the discussion with a litigation that came up for hearing recently (October 2023) in the Supreme Court of India.

I

In October 2023, the SC delivered three judgements (in quick succession on the 9th, 11th, and 16th of October) in one case relating to abortion. The case in question was of a mother of two children who wanted to terminate her third pregnancy, which she asserted she was not aware of before 20 weeks as she considered her condition to be short-term postnatal infertility (called ‘lactational amenorrhea’). Since the woman did not want a further child after her two children and she was experiencing postpartum depression, she wanted to terminate her pregnancy, which was almost 26 weeks long. We intend to discuss the issue in question with the instance of this particular case to bring out subtle ethical filaments of the debate that are of great importance. Let us briefly state the Indian abortion rule. Currently, abortion rules usually invoked in the Court are the 1971 MTP (Medical Termination of Pregnancy) Act and the MTP Amendment Act 2021. The former Act allows safe abortion, irrespective of marital status, in certain specified cases till 24 weeks of gestation. In contrast, the amended Act of 2021 will enable abortions even after 24 weeks, with the opinion of a state-level medical board, if it finds some foetal malformation or severe threat to the mother’s life.

The case, initially heard by two judges (Justice Him a Kohli and Justice B. V. Nagarathana), allowed the woman in question to go for an abortion and directed the AIIMS, New Delhi, to carry out the process. However, a query by one of the doctors on the medical board (which I intend to refer to later as it will shed light on our discussion) prompted the judges to recall the first judgment and reconsider the case. The new information provided a new landscape for further analysis. It caused a rupture in their second verdict, where one judge reversed her stand, and another judge emphatically reasserted her former stand backed by elaborate reasons. Consequently, the case had to be referred to a larger bench. The letter mentioned above of a doctor and subsequent submissions of the counsels and learned judges' viewpoints tried to capture predominantly ethical subtleties. The decision hinges on looking closely at these issues, as the 1971 law or subsequent amendment did not address many problems precisely. At the current juncture, due to a lack of complete knowledge of the process of growth of a foetus, the legislature is not in a position to articulate and bring out a comprehensive bill so that it can address all the future probable predicaments. Hence, we need to fall back on ethical musings.

Incidentally, during the hearing, it was reiterated by the larger bench that the Indian abortion law is flexible, pro-choice, progressive, respects the autonomy of women's choice, and accords reproductive justice but is not, of course, oblivious of foetal rights. While doing this, they gave a new explanation of equality and the notion of dignity. These are highly value-loaded terms. Many books and articles were scripted

to fathom each of these concepts. However, I do not intend to discuss them in detail in the current essay. Nevertheless, I shall touch on some points wherever required.

In the split verdict, the Court (one judge) asserted that it could not disregard the *rights* of a foetus. The rights of the foetus, if recognised, come in direct conflict with the rights of a woman seeking abortion as it makes inroads into the rights of the person carrying it in her womb. Whose rights, in such a claim, should get priority or override the other side's assertion is a moot question.

Interestingly, since *Roe v Wade* (1973), there has largely been a trend (barring a handful of countries) towards easing abortion laws worldwide, thereby giving comparatively trouble-free access to abortion services to pregnant women. This trend is based on the argument of pro-choice stand defenders. One such landmark judgment is the *Mcfall v. Shimp* case (delivered six years after *Roe's* doctrine). In that case, the judge emphatically asserted the primacy of the pregnant woman's rights by way of maintaining bodily autonomy, right to privacy and other privileges to a pregnant woman. An individual (i.e., mother) is not supposed to be in the service of the whole society, asserted Justice P. Flaherty in that pronouncement.

In the aforesaid two-judge bench's first judgement of the SC, we find that they had unanimously allowed the petitioner to terminate her pregnancy, and their judgement is an attestation of the pro-choice stance. However, a medical inquiry where it has been stated that to perform the procedure of terminating, doctors first need to stop the heartbeat of the foetus, and it insisted on an order to this effect from the Court. And herein lies the fault line as Justice Kohli renounced her previous stand.

Citing the relevant clause (article 21), the petitioner's counsel maintained that it is a matter of the petitioner's rights. Let us see what Article 21 says: "No person shall be deprived of his life and personal liberty except according to procedure established by law."¹ Here, two crucial terms are 'life' and 'liberty'. The petitioner's counsel claims that the rights to life and liberty enshrined in the constitution should tilt towards the mother. Put it differently, it should override the foetus's rights (to life and liberty). This assertion takes us back to the question of a foetus's status. We have stated at the beginning that a foetus has a unique position. It resides within the mother's womb and depends on the mother for its sustenance and survival. Consequently, it cannot register its claims. In such a situation, it seems unequal on many counts with the mother. That is why whether a foetus is a living being or not has been debated for a long, but our current knowledge level cannot conclusively decide about this and abortion laws are also silent on this issue. This puts us in a tangled situation that, *prima facie*, seems to

¹ <https://static.mygov.in/indiancc/2021/08/mygov-9999999991694106170.pdf>.

have no solution. Hence, the interest or right claims of the foetus seem to be ill-matched with the mother's declaration of interests and rights. Our society usually adopts a stand that is pro-mother, or we can say pro-choice, as this group can lodge their views about rights, interests, etc. Their perspective ostensibly seems to be cogent. However, philosophy gives a cue for contrary thinking. To my mind, the maturity of a society is confirmed by how it takes care of tenders and invalid ones. That is why we often show our concerns about the affliction of children, elderly people and infirm. If this is the case, taking the side of the mother without giving due consideration to the other side (i.e., the foetus's side) is bound to raise one's eyebrows. Despite their observation that Indian abortion law is pro-choice and liberal, the three-judge-bench, while delivering judgment, seems to have veered off their pronounced stand (i.e., Indian abortion laws are pro-choice). As Sreeparna Chakraborty writes, the Court spared no effort to balance the rights of the unborn child with the autonomy of women.² It is also evident from the statement of Justice Kholi, who held that "judicial conscience" does not permit her to allow termination of the pregnancy. The stand of the government also seemingly drifts towards the pro-life group as it wanted the petitioner to carry the foetus for some time more so that the baby is born and the government will take care of the baby and pitch in for adoption.

However, Justice Nagarathna's stand on putting a premium on the 'decisional autonomy' of the reproductive choice of an expecting woman is in direct conflict with the philosophy mentioned above. She held that the mother's choice is the crucial factor in decision-making and not the viability of the foetus. This is the *raison d'être* for her assertion that as the woman in question expressly stated that she does not want to continue the pregnancy, the other issues, such as viability or health issues of the child to be born, are nugatory. In holding such a view, she propped her opinion on the dependence of the foetus on the mother. On account of its reliance, the foetus "cannot be recognised as an *individual personality* from that of the mother as its very existence is owed to the mother."³ Hence, she is averse to the claim that "the foetus has a separate entity from the mother." She also finds the converse view repugnant to Articles 21 and 15(3) of our Constitution, ensuring the right to life and liberty. While stating this, to buttress her stand, she added that the reproductive capacity is unique to women. Therefore, reproductive health is part of women's human rights. This human right "also includes the right to an abortion." Not giving recognition to this right may affect women adversely in countless ways. In addition to her health condition, her choice also

² Chakraborty, S. *The Hindu*(Delhi), Oct. 15, 2023, p. 12.

³ Miscellaneous Application no. 2157 of 2023 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1137 of 2023, p. 6. (Source: <https://main.sci.gov.in/>)

includes the socio-economic situation to which she has been thrown, as Martin Heidegger would prefer to say. She talked of 'free will' and 'choice' taken without influence. By setting aside the viability of the foetus issue, she clearly sent the message that it is only the mother's choice that is the sole concern. To bolster her stand, she quoted from a previous judgement delivered in 2022 where the bench extensively explained the 'ambit of reproductive rights.'

The new contour of the debate is Justice Nagarathna's observation that a foetus has no distinct "identity from the mother". Giving complete freedom to a woman to choose to continue or not to continue her pregnancy is to "recognise the right to life and liberty" of a pregnant woman. She further holds "right to reproductive health being a woman's human right would also include the right to an abortion."⁴ Thus, it becomes clear that, in her view, what is required is zeroing in our attention on the decision of the expecting mother. As the petitioner stated, her decision is 'a wilful and conscious'; not recognising her affidavit amounts to intrusion on her autonomous choice.

Before we proceed, I want to call attention to some specific points that will be in order and pertinent to our discussion. The use of the term 'reproduction' in the judgement looks pretty commonplace. It can be seen from a different angle, too. In the present case, it has been used in the sense of biological reproduction, which usually means conception. However, the term can mean, or we can say also contain within it, another extended meaning that we need to note. 'Reproduction' is undoubtedly biological. We are usually familiar with this aspect of the term. However, it has some other dimensions, too, which have been spotted in recent literature. It is social as well as ethical reproduction also. In this sense, it also entails nurturing and socialising the foetus after birth. This meaning of 'reproduction' ensures a child's health, where parent and non-parental aides play crucial roles. As this meaning of reproduction is more comprehensive and indeed a difficult task to secure, some scholars, e.g. Ammy Mullian, mooted the capability approach whereby he advocates a right to reasonable care for the incoming child.⁵ We can trace this approach to the views of the other two judges of the SC.

We found that in the judgements, the term 'autonomy' or even sometimes 'decisional autonomy' was used time and again. Reading these terms and context also makes it clear that they have been employed to show that a pregnant woman's decision enjoys a unique status. The term 'autonomy' has a Greek linguistic genesis, used

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁵ Mullin, A. "Children, Parents, and Responsibility for Children's Health" in (Ed.) Arras John D, Fenton Elizabeth, and Kukla Rebecca (2015). *The Routledge Companion to Bioethics*. Routledge, New York.

initially for state or political purposes. However, over time, its meaning has widened and become more inclusive as it has been applied to other activities. In the present context, it has been used to refer to a woman's unbridled control in decision-making in matters of practical importance, which concerns supposedly only the woman affected. When our Court used it to respect the decision of the childbearing woman, it meant the state should not impede her actions, and she should have the freedom to live her life as she chose. J S Mill will term her act is self-regarding. This libertarian attitude is admirable as it accords utmost importance to individual choice. However, this often comes into conflict with some other fundamental values. This happened in the present case also. Because of this lack of harmony between values, the judges had to hold that it was a point like crossing the Rubicon (thus renouncing the autonomy of the mother's decision). Hence, the mother has to continue to conceive despite her emotional unease. Any explanation of autonomy, therefore, needs to be considered in a particular social context. Some social contexts may be autonomy-restricting, whereas others may be autonomy-enhancing. As John D. Arras says, any discourse on autonomy as absolutely self-directed and free from any external impacts is fallacious. "We live and make decisions within a thick social context, pushed and pulled this way and that way by causes and reasons offered up by people and institutional forces within our social environment",⁶ writes Arras.

Not only that, a hair-splitting analysis of the notion of autonomy shows that within this genus fall decisional autonomy, libertarian autonomy, conscientious autonomy, relational autonomy, and maybe some more. In the present case, one judge mentioned the decisional autonomy of the pregnant women. But what is essential to draw attention to is that such autonomy consists of many components. Such a component is the competence of the agent to make informed and voluntary decisions. The first component requires an adequate understanding level of the agent, and the second element involves freedom from external influences. Some scholars talk about the matters of a degree of these two components. To make an autonomous decision, the agent must have an *adequate* understanding (as *complete* understanding is not a viable option) of the issue at hand and be free from significant controlling factors. Catriona Mackenzie thinks that in the health care context, autonomous decision-making faces several challenges, which "include patient vulnerability due to pain, illness, and fear; difficulties experienced ...in understanding diagnoses and assessing risks, benefits, and probabilities; and differences ...in social power, knowledge, levels of education and professional status, or arising from factors such as age, race, gender,

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

disability, or cultural background.”⁷ These are indeed very subtle issues, and taking them into consideration is indeed a formidable task. For Mackenzie, two crucial components of autonomy are critical reflection and authenticity. The former “condition requires that the person in question has competently and critically reflected on the beliefs, desires, values, standards, and commitments guiding her choice; the authenticity condition requires that as a result of such reflection, she regards these aspects of her cognitive and motivational structure as authentically “her own,” rather than, for example, uncritically adopted due to her upbringing and socialisation.”⁸ For Christman, a decision can be treated as autonomous “if, in the light of sustained reflection upon the decision and the historical process leading up to it, the person would accept the decision without feelings of resistance, rejection, or alienation. Acceptance, or non-alienation, indicates that the decision expresses or is consistent with the person's long-standing practical identity (her self-conception and orienting values). In contrast, emotions such as anger or depression in the wake of a decision, if sustained over time, are indicative of alienation and hence a decision that is not autonomous.”⁹ Thus, emotional pressure, coercion, and manipulation, such as social and political restrictions on personal liberty, social oppression, poverty, and limited opportunities, also stand in the way of autonomous decision-making. Moreover, in addition to the libertarian notion of autonomy (which equates it with negative liberty), there are other lines of interpretation of autonomy. One such interpretation is a Kantian notion, which is inextricably tied to adherence to rational norms. Such a notion of autonomy has been termed by many as Conscientious autonomy. We find an allusion to this expression in the second judgement of Justice Kholi. This analysis makes it amply clear that what is going on in the name of the autonomy of a pregnant woman is not so easy to determine. The calculation of autonomy involves multifarious factors, and we can hardly be sure whether they have been considered objectively. Does the woman in the present case have the adequate competence to adopt an autonomous decision, or is she predisposed to such a decision by factors either unknown to her or circumstances beyond her control? These are some questions which need further scrutiny.

In the email above the doctor particularly underscored two points towards which we need to draw attention: (a) “the baby is currently viable (will show signs of life and have a strong possibility of survival).”¹⁰ Termination at this stage, therefore, amounts to committing foeticide. (b) If foeticide “is not performed, this is not a

⁷ Mackenzie, C. “Autonomy”. *Ibid.*, p. 279.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 279-280.

⁹ Cited in “Autonomy” by Mackenzie, C. *Ibid.*, p.281.

¹⁰ Miscellaneous Application no. 2157 of 2023 in Writ Petition (Civil) No. 1137 of 2023, p. 6.

termination, but a pre-term delivery..."¹¹ In her view, such a delivery may interfere with the *baby's quality of life*. These two points, in effect, stole the limelight.

The three-judge bench was in a fix. Hence, they thought it imperative to elicit further medical opinions on specific questions. While framing these queries, it wanted to know "whether any alternate administration of medication consistent with the pregnancy would be available so as to neither jeopardise the well-being of the petitioner or the fetus..."¹² From this extract, it becomes evident that the learned judges were resolutely looking for an alternate route to give importance to the interest of the foetus (a much-debated issue), on the one hand, and the mother, on the other. In its observations, the medical board stated, "with proper care and treatment under appropriate medical supervision, the mother and baby can be managed well during pregnancy..."¹³ This prompted the judges to step in and invoke the MTP Act, which they termed "progressive legislation". As the current situation does not involve "a risk to the life of the pregnant woman" and there is no foetal malformation, the judges thought it wise to continue the pregnancy with the arrangement they suggested for the foetus post-delivery.

The Court recalled its previous judgement for 'complete justice' (a very appealing expression but open to numerous and sometimes contrary interpretations). The judges used two important expressions: (1) 'viable foetus' and (2) stopping the heartbeat. The judges expressed their disinclination to direct the doctors to stop the heartbeat. Because of this, the aborted foetus will face the "risk of lifelong physical and mental disabilities."¹⁴

Thus, the judges showed their leaning towards conferring rights to an unborn child, which they thought could cohere with the rights of a decisional autonomy of an expecting woman and by holding such a view, they placed the duo on a par. Placing them on an equal footing will give rise to heated argumentation. This is one side of the issue. However, if we peruse the problem from a philosophical mindset, we can say that a foetus has been accorded an autonomous moral status in this judgement. This conferral of the independent moral status to a viable foetus has far-reaching implications. It has been presumed that a viable foetus is a life. The point of commencement of life has been a matter of debate since ancient times. In recent discussions, viability has been considered a dawning point of life. Validation in the *Roe v Wade* case gave it a fillip. However, we find several other contenders for this

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

point of inception in the literature. Some such favourites are quickening, developing the Central Nervous System (CNS), emolument, etc. Moral philosophers, religious leaders, and legal practitioners have put forward their views on this pivotal issue. Let us have a short glimpse of their ideas.

II

In India, the Ayurveda Śāstra's explanation of the nascence of a foetus is a bit unique. For it, a mere union of the father's semen and the mother's blood is not enough for the formation of a foetus. Such a union "can produce the foetus only when the *ātman* with its subtle body... becomes connected with it by means of its *karma*."¹⁵ Thus, in addition to the mother's blood and the father's semen, the *karma* of each plays an essential role. The process of transmigration, as stated by Cakrapāṇi, is like this: after death, the soul with subtle body and *manas* moves into a womb. The womb is decided by its *karma*. When it comes in contact with the mingling of the mother's blood and the father's semen, the foetus's growth is kick-started. Thus, we find the association of the subtle body, which comes from the preceding body of a dying person, triggers the development, of course, with the union of semen and blood. Suśruta holds that "the very subtle eternal conscious principles are manifested...when the blood and semen are in union."¹⁶ We can say that the association of the soul with the subtle body imparts life to the blood-semen union. Caraka's account is a bit different as he holds that at the time of combination of the effective semen of a male with the blood of a female having no defect of organs, the soul is connected with the help of *manas*, and a foetus begins its journey.

Some Buddhist scholars, e.g., Madhyamaka scholar Candrakīrti, give an account of the foetus's development, invoking the notion of *dhātus*. When the five *dhātus* (coming from father and mother) admix with the *viññāna*, which is the sixth *dhātu*, the foetus begins its odyssey. Thus, a mere union of father and mother is not the sufficient cause for its beginning. It needs to be aided by some other factors.

The dogma of the subtle body is a contribution of Indian thinkers. It works like a substratum. In the 40th *śloka* of *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, we get its reference (i.e. of subtle body). The subtle body persists ceaselessly till its entry into a state of salvation. Before this, at 'each birth it receives a new body and at each death it leaves it.'

Religious leaders often play a significant role in this debate. Some incidents in Ireland bespeak our claim. The prohibition of abortion in that country was done mainly

¹⁵ Dasgupta, S. N. (1957) *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. I. Cambridge: At the University Press, p. 302.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

under the influence of Catholic Churches. This caused much uproar in that country, and ultimately, this official forbiddance was removed through a referendum in 2018.

Buddhist's stance on this issue is pragmatic. They hold that individual human beings come into existence right from fertilisation, i.e., from conception. Hence, fetal abortion amounts to the killing of a human being. However, if the decision is taken on compassionate grounds to save the life of a mother, it can be allowed even though this kind of reasoning is full of difficulties. We know how abortion rampantly takes place in Buddhist-dominated Japan. To show their penitence and own moral responsibility for such deeds, women in Japan, China and Thailand observe one ritual known as *mizukokuyō*. In Christianity, abortion is an issue where we find many shades of view, ranging from absolutists to liberals. In Islam, abortion amounts to homicide. The *Qur'an* holds life's sanctity. For many Muslim scholars, life begins with ensoulment. The statement of the *Qur'an*, "If any of you saved a life, it would be as if one had saved the lives of all human kind"¹⁷ conveys that abortion is not endorsed by it. However, taking a circumspect view, some modern Islamic scholars hold that in extraordinary circumstances, abortion is permissible. In Judaism, the rabbis, after much deliberation, finally decide that personhood can appropriately be applied at the moment of birth, which in turn implies that abortion is not homicide.

III

Among the several time frames, viability has taken precedence and attracted the attention of legal luminaries. Since its validation in Roe's doctrine, it has become a topic of many debates. In the recent past (2019), the Calcutta High Court, in one judgement, held that at a late stage of pregnancy, the foetal right to life takes priority over the mother's mental trauma. Despite this attestation of the viability stage of a foetus, a section of legal experts seem to take a contrary stand. Suhrith Parthasarthy finds flaws in the recent SC judgement as he says that the judgement "places the rights of a foetus at a pedestal, above that of the rights of a pregnant woman to her privacy and dignity."¹⁸ He further shows that this judgment is incompatible with some other preceding decisions where judges held that "the right to privacy—implicit in Article 21 of the Constitution—enabled individuals to exercise autonomy over their body and mind, and allowed women complete freedom to make reproductive choices."¹⁹ Some analysts have argued that the judgement accorded equal protection and of life to a foetus, which our constitution or the relevant law either did not spell out or remained silent. Thus, primacy has tilted towards the foetus in the verdict, though the law

¹⁷ Source: <https://quran.com/5/32?translations=31,17,19,20,85,84,95>, p. 113.

¹⁸ Parthasarthy, S. *The Hindu* (Delhi), Nov. 2, 2023, P.6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

demands the opposite. Conceding personhood to a foetus, contended by some analysts, is perilous to a woman's reproductive freedom, her dignity and many other things. Justice Nagarathna also seems to uphold this view, although couched differently.

Privacy is an issue that is very frequently evoked in the abortion debate. Privacy is a morally weighty issue and intimately related to other moral concerns such as autonomy. However, 'privacy' is a term which is susceptible to different expositions. Privacy matters in the healthcare sector as it can impact other vital interests. Alan Rubel, in his "Privacy, Surveillance, and Autonomy", holds that privacy may "be justified by direct appeal to individual autonomy, either insofar as privacy is an important object of autonomous choice or insofar as privacy is an important condition for exercising autonomy."²⁰

While arguing in favour of their stands, the counsels of both sides clear out some confusions that ordinary men labour under. The Union's counsel stressed that the foetus has a chance of survival. So, the state must uphold its responsibility. The woman's lawyer emphasised that the mother's interest should override all other considerations. If it is not given paramount importance, the mother's *privacy* and *dignity* will be under threat, and hence, a pregnant woman's choice should be respected. However, the delivered judgement goes by the view that a woman's autonomy ought not to eclipse the rights of an unborn foetus. It reminds us that rights are seldom absolute and usually contingent on multifarious factors. If so, have women's rights to choose been watered down in the present case? This is a moot point.

Neither the Indian legal system nor possibly any country's legal system provides us with an outline of whether a foetus, before or since its viability, is a living being. There is no gainsaying that since conception, a foetus is a potential human being. But when the interests of the mother and of the foetus come into collision, we adopt a stand either based on a religious standpoint or ideology to which we tend to subscribe, e.g., an adherent of libertarianism will put individual freedom at the top of the hierarchy. Only a significant advancement in embryology can shed more light on our debate, which may help us make some headway in the current controversy. Without this, the current arrangement, i.e., striking a balance between the two—pregnant women's autonomy and the rights of the unborn child—is a Hobson's choice for us.

In the judgement and subsequent analyses, Article 14 and Article 21 of the constitution were invoked and interpreted differently. Even the petitioner's counsel argued that her plea is under article 21, which brushes off the MTP Act. Chief Justice

²⁰ Rubel, A. "Privacy, Surveillance, and Autonomy" in (Ed.) Arras John D, Fenton Elizabeth, and Kukla Rebecca (2015). *The Routledge Companion to Bioethics*. Routledge, New York, p. 315.

explained the difference between the intent of the expression 'life' used in MTP, where termination of the pregnancy is allowed in the event where it is 'necessary to save the pregnant woman', and the term 'life' occurred in Article 21 of the Constitution. They should not be equated as "Article 21 upholds an individual's fundamental right to a dignified and meaningful life."²¹ Explaining the difference, he says that MTP "uses life in the context of a life-and-death situation when medical opinion confirms that a woman's very existence hangs in the balance if she attempts to carry her pregnancy to full term."²² In contrast, in Article 21, life has a broader target.

Some analysts have controverted the above interpretation of equality and privacy. Gauri Pillai, for example, disagrees with the view of the CJI and holds: "Typically, abortion cases are seen as involving the right to privacy. However, abortions are also necessary to guarantee women equality. Denying abortions perpetuates women's disadvantage: In pushing some women to seek abortions with unsafe providers, their lives are threatened. For those who are forced to carry an unwanted pregnancy, there is a risk to their physical and mental health.... Being denied abortions has a socio-economic impact on women. It also entrenches stereotypical assumptions about women's role as mothers, leading to abortion stigma and provider bias. The Court has repeatedly held that perpetuating the disadvantage of a historically disadvantaged group is what inequality looks like. Under this definition, the denial of abortion is an obvious equality issue."²³ Thus, the intricate notion of 'equality' has been interpreted differently. This (i.e., equality) is a very appealing but nuanced term, and even after long research over decades, we could not explore all the facets of this notion. Pillai holds that behind the apparently plausible interpretation of the SC lies a more significant issue that we cannot ignore. She finds a chasm between the proclaimed stand on abortion by the laws/judgments and in practice. Though it has been repeatedly asserted that a woman alone has 'the right over her body', practice is replete with contrary instances; hence, she calls it a rhetorical approach as this leads to incoherence in jurisprudence.

We find a similar quandary in a litigation in 2017. In that case, the SC turned down the plea of a 37-year-old woman (Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde and Justice L. Nageswara Rao). The woman wanted to abort the foetus, which was 26 weeks old, as it showed indications of Down syndrome. Finding a fix, the woman challenged the validity of the MTP Act as it did not allow a woman to exercise her rights. Therefore,

²¹ *The Hindu* (Delhi), Oct. 17, 2023, p. 12.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Pillai, G. *The Hindu* (Delhi), Oct. 27, 2023, p. 11.

the learned judges wanted to elicit expert opinions to decide whether a foetus is an independent life.

IV

The most intransigent and unavoidable questions currently are: Is the foetus or organism a person? If not, is it a potential person (in other words, if not terminated, in due course, will it become a person)? An affirmative answer begs the question: will this embryonic structure, once it achieves a state of exercising its rational power, desire its death? Then, we must estimate the benefit/cost/harm analysis in prolonging the foetus. We need to persuasively state reasons for showing that the termination of a foetus is morally permissible. The issue traversing through all these questions is the determination of personhood. What I intend to say is that defining the status of a foetus and having an acceptable definition of a person hold the key to the moral evaluation of active intervention in terminating a foetus. Michael Tooley articulates the second strand of the question thus: ‘What properties must something possess in order to be a person, in the ethically relevant sense?’²⁴

The doctor’s email raised the question of the enormous expenses required for keeping the foetus alive in case of pre-term delivery. This question has drawn the attention of moral philosophers for a long time because of the scarcity of resources available in the medical sector. It is an extremely sensitive and vexing issue, and many thinkers espouse medical rationing. The doctor also raised the issue of quality of life, which requires independent deliberation. If later on, after growing up, the child comes to learn that her/his parents wanted to terminate her/him, will it detract from her/his quality of life? It is a profound issue.

Another pertinent distinction is between 'the death of a person' and 'the death of a biological organism'. Coinage of expressions such as 'right to life' and 'sanctity of life' sometimes partially obscures the distinction. In case of active intervention in terminating a foetus after a benchmark, e.g., viability, we are handling with an organism, which is a potential person. By and large, it is agreed upon that it is morally wrong to harm a likely person.

The rationale for the prohibition of abortion in many countries was that the ‘right to life of the foetus’ was given equal weight with ‘the right to life of the mother’. It is this thing that compounded the problem. During the debate between pro-choicers and pro-lifers, they advance many arguments supporting their respective stand. A

²⁴ Tooley, Michael (1979). “Decisions to Terminate Life and the Concept of Person” in *Ethical Issues Relating to Life and Death*. Ed. Ladd, John, Oxford University Press, New York, p. 67.

cursory look at their ideas makes us think they hinge on a central point. It is that, for pro-lifers, the foetus, at whatever stage it is, right from the time of conception, is either a human being or a potential human being. The pro-choicers come up with several arguments to substantiate their claim that a foetus is not a human being. Feminist writers, of course, added a new dimension to this claim by asserting that abortion is ethically neutral and that it is a woman's *right* to decide about their own body. As an Irish woman said during the referendum campaign: "We were told for so long what to do." As the referendum brought an opportunity to them, she added, "But now, give women the right to choose." All this amounts to saying, "Our Bodies, Our Choice." These summarise the feminist stand.

The question: 'Does a foetus have an equal right to life as that of its mother?' ultimately boils down to asking: Is foetus a human being? This debate has been going on for a fairly long time, though any conclusive answer is yet to be found. A layman's study of genetics gives the impression that a foetus has its genetic code right from the time conception starts. It is this unique code that differentiates it from other members of the species. Then, it keeps developing. This development is a continuous process. Thus, any time limit set, such as before quickening, viability and so on, is contrary to experience gained from scientific research and hence preposterous. For example, consider the 12-week limit: Is there any significant difference in the foetus on its 85th day compared to its 84th day? Embryologists will have to work hard to determine the minuscule difference in an embryo between these two days. Again, if quickening, viability or CNS are regarded as watertight time, the questions we shall confront are: Do they remain static in all cases? and at all the time? The time regarded as viable now might change with the advancement of medical science and the advent of new and more sophisticated neonatal technology. So, any argument given for setting a time limit for the legalisation of abortion fails to stand firm before the tribunal of reason. Finding out the difference in foetuses' growth continuum is a formidable task for embryologists.

V

Moral status: cornerstone of the debate

Let us go back to the previous question: Is a foetus a human being irrespective of its stages of development? If it can be proved that a foetus is a human being, it will have a moral status, which in turn implies that we are not free to act towards it in any way we like, thereby ignoring its well-being, preference and continued existence. Being moral agents, we need to care about its needs, wants and safety. Mary Anne Warren, a notable scholar in this field, writes beautifully that to have moral status is to

be morally considerable or to have moral standing. It is to an entity or being towards which moral agents have moral obligations.²⁵

Without any prior thought, we can say that we usually attribute moral status to any human being once it is outside the mother's womb, irrespective of his/her stages of development. Now, what is at issue is whether we can extend this status to foetus *enventresa mere*, regardless of its stage of development. Some thinkers insist on the ontological continuity of preborn and post-partum human beings. In contrast, some stress on differences between these two states and point of birth is regarded as demarcation. There is no denying the differences in these two stages regarding location, size, stage of development, and dependence. The delivery of a foetus is indeed a quantum leap, as right from that time, many rights are appropriately applied to it. But whether these are enough reasons or appropriate or relevant variables not to accord moral status to a preborn is a moot question. We find no reason to do so as all these, i.e., location, size, and stages of development, are irrelevant to the possession of the status of a human being. Thus, any denial to extend moral status to the fetus is arbitrary. If we do some more hair-splitting analysis, it might help us to have a better understanding of the issue.

Thinkers show reservations about calling a foetus a person when in the mother's womb. This brings us to the question: on what basis do we ascribe moral status to some being? Moral status is accorded based on intrinsic value, and inherent value, in turn, is vouchsafed by intrinsic properties. For an adult, the appropriate intrinsic property is the possession of rational capacity. Is, in this sense, a fetus can be called a person? Many scholars have attempted to find an answer to this question. However, we must remember that such a mind-bending issue does not admit any easy solution, and we need the required finesseto find an acceptable answer.

Even feminists' argument will be nullified as it will confront a clash between rights and interests, on the one hand, and moral obligations, on the other. Feminists' claim of interest or ownership in their own body, though apparently seems cogent, moral scrutiny will show its indefensibility on account of its susceptibility to gerrymandering. Certain limiting factors accompany every right. Cecile Fabre asks, though in a different context: "Is there a Right to do wrong?"²⁶

We have seen that one key factor in the ongoing debate is the determination of personhood. Parameters of personhood have been a matter of deliberation for quite

²⁵ Warren, M. A. (1997) *Moral Status: Obligations to Persons and Other Living Beings*. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

²⁶ Faber, C. (2006). *Whose Body is it Anyway?* Clarendon Press: Oxford. P. 23.

some time, and the literature is too vast, which only substantiates Tagore's notion of 'surplus.' Many definitions of persons have become untenable because of the advent of artificial intelligence, e.g., robots, as it matches many characteristics of persons. Some attributes of personhood that philosophers talk about are experiencing pain and being able to relate and connect these experiences, having memories and dispositions, possessing a state of consciousness, having intentional states, and being self-conscious. Philosophers discussed all these characteristics threadbare. However, people need more confidence in these criteria as they need more comprehensiveness in isolation or together. For philosophers, any adequate definition of a person must contain within its fold the morally relevant concept of a person. Such a notion does not see a person as a mere process or happenings; instead, it is something more. For Tooley, "[S]omething is a person if and only if it is a continuing subject of experiences and other mental states that can envisage a future for itself and that can have desires about its own future existence."²⁷ Derek Parfit puts a reduced view of the person while discussing personal identity thus: "A person's existence just consists in the existence of a brain and body, and the occurrence of a series of interrelated physical and mental events."²⁸ A perusal of some of these accounts makes it clear that according to these premises, self-consciousness capacity is a defining characteristic of personhood.

On account of our incapacity to ascertain the presence of the above capacities in a foetus, thinkers are at loggerheads in giving a fetus full moral status for many reasons. However, some concede some moral position to them, which falls short of full moral status. This raises the question: Are there several sorts of moral standing? If it is, what are they, and how can we determine them? The onus of interpreting this has to be borne by ethical philosophers. We have seen that the mere variable of having intrinsic properties is not enough to determine such a subtle issue. Because of different moral statuses, we treat human and non-human beings differently. When we try to search out relevant variables based on which we concede another moral position to a foetus from an adult human being, the main reason we find for making such differentiation is the lack of sophisticated cognitive capacities in the fetus and the presence of this in an adult of a human being. Some experts in this field have underscored this capacity. They think that if a human possesses sophisticated cognitive abilities, either intellectual or emotional or both, then he/she satisfies the necessary conditions for conferring full moral status.

For Immanuel Kant, the ground for the dignity of all rational beings is his capacity to select ends through practical reasoning. For him, therefore, reason is the

²⁷ Tooley, *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²⁸ Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and Persons*. Clarendon Press: Oxford, P. 211.

only touchstone for regarding a being as an end. Beings lacking reason do not qualify this litmus test. In abortion discourse, the answer we are seeking is contingent on the meaning we ascribe to the expression "possession of reason." Does it mean actual possession of reason or only having dispositional property will meet the requirement? The analysis does not end here. If the latter interpretation is accepted, is it the only actual one, or will it suffice if it is future-oriented? A fetus definitely has the potential to reason, which is future-oriented. Thus, our reasoning tilts towards giving moral status to a fetus.

But other thinkers also talked about some distinct variables such as self-awareness, capacity to value, bargain, assume duties and responsibilities, care, etc. A fetus might lack these capacities or fully bloomed sophisticated cognitive aptitude, but it can develop these competencies if allowed to grow unhindered. Is it not a fact that understanding a process requires proceeding with the flow of the process and not putting an end to the process? Hence, whether we should ignore this potential capacity of a fetus is debatable.

Given all these views, we can say that even if we have a reservation about giving full moral status to a foetus, we should not have reservations about giving it some sort of moral status as it possesses cognitive capacities that might still be at a rudimentary level. It can be proved definitively by citing the reactions it shows when it is inflicted pain. The famous miniseries documentary premiered on the National Geographic Channel (2005) entitled "Life Before Birth" beautifully portrayed it. Intensive research is going on in cognitive science to unmask this curious reality. We can only hope that with some breakthrough in this area of study, determination of this capacity of a fetus and finding out the difference between an adult human being and a fetus (in possession of this cognitive capacity) will pave the way for entering deeper into the debate and which in turn will give a fillip in the determination of rightness and wrongness of our choice. It is imperative to decide as any court's decision or state law on this issue is based on this crucial point. Only on such a landscape can law, life, and literature dovetail. Justice O'Connor et al., in their landmark judgment given in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey case* (1992) in U. S. A., observed that abortion is a profound moral and spiritual question and hence, "Our obligation is to define the liberty of all, not to mandate our own moral code." It demonstrates that the court can only definitively resolve this profound philosophical question with the help of more scientific research and ethical reflections. The present level of research and reflections neither conclusively proves nor disproves that a fetus is a living being. It has been held that from womb to tomb, life manifests a mystery! It is a unique nature of the human mind that it tries to unravel this mystery. This air of mysteriousness has always

intrigued the human mind. Let there be no mellowing down in our effort to unmanifest it. Hence, the assertion “curiosity has its own reason for existence” becomes relevant. A spirit of enquiry is at the centre of philosophical inquisitiveness. It tends to unsettle us from the familiar path, urges us to pursue a hitherto unfamiliar route, and is often rugged though rewarding. This approach propels our society to a more rational and progressive thinking. Human history is replete with such instances.

ADOPTING AND REJECTING LOGIC

Nilanjan Bhowmik

Abstract

It is well known that there are, surprisingly enough, alternative logics. Not all logics obey classical logic. One or the other basic laws of classical logic – like excluded middle - can always be challenged and a different logic can be developed. Sometimes this revision takes place because of developments in science. Putnam (1968) argued that classical logic cannot be accepted for quantum mechanics. This implies that we can adopt a different logic when it comes to quantum mechanics. Putnam's claim supports Quine's notion that nothing is exempt from revision under empirical pressure. Contrary to this, Kripke (2023) argues that we cannot adopt a logic which deviates from a basic principle like the law of excluded middle. Since, we cannot adopt a logic we cannot change our reasoning because of pressure from empirical sciences. In this paper, I will raise the issue of whether we can reject a logic or not and what implications this can have for logic, reasoning and Quinean anti-exceptionalism about logic. In short, I will argue that we cannot reject a logic, but we can revise classical logic and develop a different formal system but this does not imply that the original logic was somehow just like the sciences, open to rejection. In this sense, logical systems are not like Ptolemaic models of the solar system. I will also maintain that it is hard to say what logic our reasoning employs, and that revision is not the anvil on which the apriority of logic should be tested.

Keywords: *Classical Logic Adoption Revision Non-classical Logics Quine's anti-exceptionalism*

1. Introduction

Saul Kripke (2023) has argued powerfully that we cannot adopt a logic. But then, it is well known that there are alternative logics. There are logics that employ more than two truth values. There are logics that reject the “law” of excluded middle. Putnam (1968) suggested that the law of distribution cannot be accepted for quantum mechanics. Hence we need a different logic for the same. These logics can be used by us, and indeed, should be used by us, or so their proponents would argue. When we use them, we adopt them. How can Kripke's notion that we cannot adopt a logic be squared with the existence of alternative logics? Surely, the alternative logics vie for our attention to be adopted. One has to see what best fits our reasoning, as schooled

by our adapting to various pressures, the pressures being empirical for Quine. Various accounts of the conditional suggest that we can have different logics related to different notions of the conditional and we face a choice amongst them as to which agrees with our reasoning best.

Kripke does have a way out. He helps himself to a distinction. He suggests that there is logic – our reasoning, which is whatever we do when we reason everyday – and there are formal systems of logic. One can have whatever formal system one wants to make, driven by one argument or the other towards such formal systems. These formal systems may depart from classical logic. But our reasoning is what is basic to us and this cannot suffer adoption of any formal system that we build with our ingenuity (and our reasoning!). The distinction, then, is between reasoning that we employ in our daily lives using the language we speak and the formal systems that we *construct*, with much labor, to codify portions of our reasoning. In this paper I will develop the implications of this distinction. The implications of this distinction between our reasoning and formal logics in the shape of alternative logics will be brought out by asking: What does the existence of different formal systems tell us about our reasoning? What consequences do these implications have for Quine’s anti-exceptionalism about logic? If Kripke is right that we cannot adopt a logic, then are we in a position to reject a logic?

In the first section of the paper, I will bring out Quine’s (1951) anti-exceptionalism and Kripke’s reply to Putnam and his apparent defense of our reasoning against any empirical pressures to change the way we reason. In the second section I will develop my view as to whether, if we cannot adopt a logic, then whether we are in a position to reject one. In this section, I will also discuss the nature of normativity of logic and reasoning in light of Kripke’s stand on adoption and whether there can be alternative forms of reasoning that a reading of Wittgenstein might suggest. In the third section, I will develop the implications of the difference between formal logics and our reasoning against the backdrop of revision and rejection. Here, I will also discuss the effect of Kripke’s position on Quine’s naturalization of logic and the stand on ontological commitments¹. I will conclude that it is not necessary to think that a formal system’s “analytic” nature is to be given up because of alternative systems being developed under various pressures, even empirical. And I will argue that our reasoning is not to be described as apriori or analytic because we cannot adopt any logic. These

¹ I thank an anonymous reviewer for raising the concerns that I have tried to address in this section and for making the discussion in the paper more nuanced and responsive to various interacting threads of thought.

positions appear rather unusual, but hopefully the reasons I will give will add some weight to them.

1.2 Kripke on Adoption

Quine's rejection of the analytic-synthetic distinction led to the view that there was nothing exceptional about logic as compared to the sciences. The sciences are open to revision, given recalcitrant evidence. So is logic. We may reject the most cherished laws of logic if that is what our experience dictates. Whether this view is justifiable in itself is not something I will address here. Putnam, in a Quinean spirit, suggested that a consideration of results from quantum mechanics suggests strongly that classical logic cannot be accepted as the logic applicable to quantum mechanical discourse. This apparently implies that we have to *adopt* a different logic from classical logic. The implication has some force. After all, why would anyone develop a different logic unless they wanted it to be adopted?

But Kripke (2023) argues that a logic cannot be adopted. This means that if some formal system exists that, say, rejects Excluded Middle or Modus Ponens or Modus Tollens, then we cannot adopt it. Of course we have to ask: what does it mean to adopt a logic? I think what Kripke has in mind is a case where we are told about a particular rule in logic and then told to adopt it, that is, as an addition to the repertoire of rules of reasoning that we already possess. It is an *addition* to our reasoning apparatus.

The point against adoption is made by wondering whether we can adopt Modus Ponens (MPP) and Universal Instantiation (UI), let alone any system that rejects it. So, the point is general. It depends on whether we can adopt *any* system at all, even classical logic. What does it take to adopt Modus Ponens? We are told the rule and then we are asked to apply it. We are told that if one encounters a structure like "If p then q, and p" then we are to infer "q" with appropriate propositions filled for "p" and "q". Same for Universal Instantiation. The student are taught that whenever they encounter "All As are Bs" and they find something that is an A, then that something is also a B.

Kripke presents his objection to adoption or MPP or UI in the following form:

"This is the problem. If he did not already reason in accordance with the pattern of inference we call 'Universal Instantiation', telling him that it was true would do him no good: he couldn't 'adopt' it as a hypothesis, he couldn't use it as an auxiliary to derive further statements. If he was not able to make the simple inference, 'All ravens are black, therefore, this raven is black', then giving him some 'super premise' like 'Every

universal statement implies each instance' as another premise won't help him either" (Kripke, 2023, p. 17)

And, later, clarifying, Kripke writes,

"The point is that logic, even if one tries to throw intuitions to the wind, cannot be just like geometry because one cannot adopt the logical laws as hypotheses and draw the consequences. You need logic in order to draw these consequences. There could be no neutral ground in which to discuss the drawing of consequences independently of logic itself. This is the basic point that I want to make." (Ibid., p. 19)

The idea appears to be that if one did not already have the capacity to reason then how one would know how to apply MPP or UI. There are two distinct versions of the problem in the quotations above.

One is specific to the rule being adopted. The other is general to the rule being adopted. The specific point is that if one has to use MPP, then being given the rule of MPP is of no help. One would not know what to do with it unless one *already understood* MPP. That is because to apply the rule one has to *use* MPP. One has to know how to reason *with* MPP to understand MPP in the first place. Otherwise one can keep wondering what it meant to apply the rule to specific cases. Nothing in the rule of MPP tells you how to use MPP.

The general point is there in the second quote above: you have to use your *reasoning* to figure out how to apply MPP or UI. If you were not a reasoning creature, or had never used reasoning before, you would not know what to do with MPP or UI. So, we have a basic reasoning process in place. Rather, we just reason, when faced with various situations. Or we reason for fun. But we do *reason*. And that reason gives is the go-ahead to understand how to use MPP and UI. The general point leads to the specific one. Since we reason, we are already using what we are being asked to adopt, or we might be. If we are *not* using it, we cannot adopt it for we are epistemologically locked out; if we are already using MPP or UI, then we cannot adopt it either because it is no addition to what we do in any case.

Now, if we have logics that defy some aspect of classical logic, then we cannot adopt that logic because we simply don't reason that way. So if quantum mechanics dictates that the law of distribution cannot be obeyed, we cannot understand that, because we don't reason that way. To us the whole of quantum mechanics would appear weird, or contradictory.

How does this show that Quine's anti-exceptionalism is wrong? Well, we cannot change our logic – our reasoning - if experience to the contrary is admitted. We cannot change *our* logic because we cannot adopt any new logic. We can only understand our logic better. Maybe the change is needed, but that recognition does not require us to wait for new experience. Our reason should itself guide us to the change. There are limits to this change. The limit is our intuitive acceptability of the change that we want our reason to “adopt”. Of course, there is much to be said about Kripke's argument but I want to pursue a different route here (see Birman (2023) and Boghossian and Wright (2023) for clarifying discussions of Kripke's argument).

2. Rejecting a Logic

Assuming all this is correct, if we cannot adopt a logic, can we reject one? One remembers a statement of Wittgenstein here. Wittgenstein expressed the thought that you can only doubt something if you already possess knowledge. Applying that thought to the dialectic here, it seems that if one cannot adopt a logic, then one cannot reject one either. How would one reject a logic? We would have to understand the rules that it wants us to follow before we reject it. Once we understand it, and realize that it does not agree with our reasoning then we can reject such a logic. But that is precisely what we cannot do *even for MPP and UI*. If we cannot do that for classical logic, does that mean we should abandon classical logic? No. That would be contrary to the spirit of Kripke's argument. Thus, if we cannot adopt a logic, we cannot reject it either. It does not really matter whether it is classical logic we are considering or not.

We could find grounds to develop different logics. This can happen in different ways. We can extend a logic. We have the modal system K. We can prove many theorems in it. But we cannot prove that if something is necessarily so then it is so. That is, we cannot conclude from necessarily p to the fact that it entails p. One has to add reflexivity to K to get that result. This new logic with reflexivity added is an extension of K. Whatever can be proved in K can be proved in the new system, but those theorems that need reflexivity in their proof procedures cannot be proved in K (see Priest, 2001, Chapter 3). Theorems of K are respected in the extended system.

We can also develop logics where aspects of classical logic are kept and some aspects are abandoned. We can introduce a third truth value, as is sometimes done in dealing with cases of future contingents. We can accept that contradictions are true, but block the consequence that if a contradiction is true then everything follows from it. Various stratagems can be developed to do so. When we face such logics, we have to labor to learn them. We make frequent mistakes and everyone suffers from the problem of “how to go on in a new case”. We are just not used to reasoning like this. But that, as we have just seen, is no reason to reject the logic.

There is some reason to develop such logics. One reason is that such logics *can* be developed, simply as different formal systems, with properties of being sound or complete or not. The other, weightier reason is that we face problems in our own reasoning as we face new counterexamples. Surely, something has to be done in the face of the fact that the standard truth table for conditionals shows that all counterfactuals are true. Or that in any case it seems very peculiar that the standard truth table for conditionals says that if the antecedent and consequent are false, then the conditional is true. Or we have to do something about whether there are other truth values than the standard True and False given the fact that our thinking about future contingents or the sorites paradox force us towards accepting other truth values. Kripke says that we had to abandon Aristotelian logic because it made the fallacy of thinking that we draw an existential instantiation from a universal statement. We know we cannot do this because we can have statements like “All unicorns have horns” from which we cannot conclude that there is an unicorn. Kripke’s point is that he is not saying that we cannot find problems with the reasoning that we use. The Aristotelian *representation* of our reasoning is not accurate.

There is no doubt that our intuitions feel stretched and we face constant problems of interpreting the alternative logics in the right way. This suggests that either we had never thought about the problems that one faces if one sticks to classical logic or that we simply do not reason in certain ways.

Suppose that there is a logic which twists classical logic in many ways, so many that it is hard to understand what is going on it. Here, in learning how to work with it, we adopt a plodding approach. We look at the rules of the new logic and apply them blindly, replacing one symbol with another. An experience with dealing with non-normal modal logics will give you this idea. It is not as if one adopts S 0.5 or S 2 or understands the rationale for the systems. One just follows the tree rules, say, of the system without really wondering whether this is the way our reasoning works. Kripke is right when he maintains that if we give up classical logic, then we are not thinking at all. I would like to add here that when we are dealing with formal systems that employ more truth values than two or abandon various classical notions, we look at the rules and simply follow their consequences, replacing the symbols with other symbols where necessary. The only thinking or reasoning involved is knowing when to replace one symbol with another. And for this replacement, we use our standard reasoning, the one we are used to. Learning a new formal system does not mean that I abandon my reasoning and learn the new system. I use my reason that I already have and learn the formal system.

Now, it may be objected that this is what adopting a logic means, that one knows when to replace one symbol with another. But that is not reasoning at all. If I just use MPP or UI, that is reasoning, but if I just did MPP by replacing one symbol with another each time I faced the symbols arranged in a particular order, then the only reasoning involved is learning to play with the symbols. No reasoning is going on beyond that.

Let me return to the idea of whether we can reject any logic. Should we reject quantum logic because it violates classical logic? It seems that would be rash. We learn to handle the symbols as Putnam wants us to. We replace one symbol with another. That is all our reasoning amounts to in dealing with quantum logic. One can say that we adopt the rules of symbol manipulation as presented by those who develop quantum logic. We are not doing any thinking there. We are trying to develop a form of symbolization that best suits the descriptive purposes of the language of quantum mechanics. It is precisely because these descriptive purposes are so foreign to us that we have to labor to learn the symbolization. But adopting the symbolization need not mean that we adopt the logic. We say, we cannot adopt quantum logic, which means that we cannot both reason according to the law of distribution and not according to the law of distribution. But we cannot reject it either, for if we have to reject it, we would have to reject classical logic too, for we cannot adopt *that* too.

It is possible that it turns out that we were gravely mistaken about quantum mechanics. All the calculations and observations were just off the mark. There was some undetected fault in our instruments that were measuring the phenomena. In that case, would we reject quantum logic? No. We would have no use for it, that is all. One might say: that is just a fancy way of saying that we did reject it. But that is not the case. It is as with artefacts. Some artefacts are better suited to our purposes, some not. The ones that we do not use are discarded, kept away, kept in abeyance. Quantum logic would be another way in which we could have constructed a formal system. We cannot use it to describe our results in quantum mechanics better as we turned out to be wrong in the first place.

To reject a logic based on a change in experience would suit Quine's idea but not Kripke's. Quantum logic is a formal system. There is nothing to adopt or reject. It may fall in disuse. Many tautologies of classical logic may be very complex and hence never used in reasoning by us. But that does not make those theorems candidates for rejection. They are just not used.

2.1 Reasoning and Logic This raises the uncomfortable question: what is the relation between formal systems and reasoning? Now, if we could adopt various logics that we

construct, then the relation is one of gradual progress and improvement over earlier forms of reasoning. The relation would be one of clarification, improvement, progress and enhancement of our reasoning powers. Formal systems would be clarifying what abstract rules underlie our reasoning. Formal systems would improve upon our reasoning by considering better and more intuitive accounts of our natural reasoning, as we often do in the study of conditionals. Our reasoning would progress with the adoption of new rules and also improve by learning rules that we were completely unaware of before.

But Kripke says that we cannot adopt any logic. What does this imply about the relation of reasoning to formal systems of logic? At best one can say that certain formal systems can bring out background rules by which our reasoning works. Formal systems do not make our reasoning make progress, or improve our reasoning in any way. They, at times, provide us structures which make the reasoning we use clearer to us. Sometimes they do not do this, but adopt certain rules and procedures that are foreign to the way we reason. There are formal systems that don't take contradictions to entail that everything is true. Whether our reasoning works like this is doubtful. In certain domains we may have to give up our ordinary reasoning and "adopt" such systems.

The idea usually advanced is that it is as if our reasoning is outmoded and we have to adopt a new form of reasoning. But in Kripke's conception, there is no such thing as adopting a logic. We use the same reasoning to understand the complex formal systems we develop as we use to understand classical logic. If we follow Kripke's ideas, our reasoning can agree with certain formal systems of logic, and disagree with some, and stare in wonder at others. Our reasoning is privileged in being the judge, the formal system is not. The formal systems can only raise their hands to be attended to in the school of reasoning, but whether they are recognized as having revealed anything about ordinary reasoning depends on whether our reasoning judges that any revelation has been made.

2.2 The normativity of Logic and Reasoning Logic is usually considered a normative discipline. It tells us not only how we *do* reason, but also how we *should* reason. If we don't apply the rules of logic, then we are doing something wrong. Since our reasoning, that is the way we reason in our daily lives, is being revealed, in an abstract manner, in formal systems of logic, and these formal systems are normative, it follows that reasoning too must be normative. The direction of the entailment may be wrong. The opposite might be true. It might be thought that since our reasoning is normative, it follows that the logic we develop is normative. The logic is after all dependent on our reasoning. It is our reasoning that guides us to build what logic we

do. Various pressures on our reasoning tend to make us develop alternative logics. But if our reasoning is not convinced of the pressures – conceptual or empirical or both – that leads to these alternative logics, then these alternative logics cannot be said to be normative in nature. Formal systems are normative only because our reasoning takes them to be intuitively close to the way we reason. I suspect that the existence of alternative logics argues for degrees of normativity, with certain laws of classical logic enjoying a high degree of normativity and certain laws of alternative logics not enjoying that high a degree. Formal systems do reveal to us that our reasoning does contain elements – the laws of logic – that are to be “followed” while we reason. The fact that we debate these rules – of MPP, or Hypothetical Syllogism, using our ordinary reasoning – suggests that formal systems have only degrees of normativity, some more, some less, and it can get unclear which have a higher degree and which a lesser degree. Only further reasoning can tell us which formal systems are more revealing of normativity and which not.

2.3 Wittgenstein and Alternative Reasoning. Wittgenstein appears to suggest in *Philosophical Investigations* that a form of life will determine what reasoning we accept and what we reject. Hence, there can be alternative forms of reasoning, not *just* alternative formal systems. The implication is that humans can actually employ different forms of reasoning corresponding to different forms of life. It is not the case that different forms of life are necessarily associated with the same form of reasoning. I think this does not really deter Kripke’s point about adoption. Whatever form of reasoning one employs, Kripke’s point about adoption holds. We cannot adopt any logic, even the formalized one that represents our reasoning. But surely, it can be said, at least this proves that there are alternative forms of *reasoning*. Suppose we encounter some humans who explicitly do not follow MPP or Hypothetical Syllogism. We would not think that they are reasoning and nor would they think that we are reasoning or thinking. We would not understand what they are doing and they would not understand us. Different forms of life will pass each other by. At least with our bedrock reasoning we understand what formal systems there are and we understand how to manipulate symbols in them. But if forms of life differed, then since they employ alternative forms of reasoning, and not formal systems, we, with a different form of life, cannot even understand what symbols they are manipulating, since to understand that we need to understand their form of life. If the form of life is so different that a different sort of reasoning is going on, then we simply cannot comprehend it. Even if there are alternative systems of reasoning, this does not affect Kripke’s idea of adoption, and it does not affect the point that our form of reasoning is the benchmark for understanding any other form of reasoning or formal system. There is no other viewpoint we can *adopt*.

3. Revision and Rejection

To remind ourselves, Kripke makes a distinction between logic – reasoning – and formal systems. We cannot adopt any formal system. We cannot even adopt classical logic. So, if Quinean revision has any force, it cannot be against the *reasoning* that we employ. For, no revision can be adopted, and if we indeed thought the revision was fine in itself, it is because our reasoning already employs that “revision”. It is just that we did not notice it before.

The remaining candidates for Quinean revisionism are formal systems. We do have a dizzying array of alternative logics. What does it mean to have them, to study them, to advocate them? It means that we sometimes find reason – that is, we use our ordinary reasoning capacities – to realize that the logic we made in a classical formal system is not adequate to handle some problem. We change our logic keeping various influencing factors in mind. We just *supplant* the original formal system with another formal system.

We make the new logic answer to our new needs. This may involve a sacrifice of some favorite of classical logic, either there being two truth values, or some other aspect of it. The change may be brought about because of empirical observations or thinking about how to meet creeping incoherence in beliefs or problems that we encounter when we apply our logic to various epistemological and metaphysical intuitions. Certain formal systems, like classical logic, seem very close to our reasoning (*seem* being the operative word here). Certain formal systems appear far away from anything we can even recognize as our own reasoning process. We explore the alternative logics since we think that the problems we face may be resolved by taking our reasoning beyond classical boundaries.

Adoption and rejection take place – or, to express it better – do *not* take place, keeping our reasoning process in mind, keeping our basic “logical” practices in mind. Revision or supplanting our earlier logics takes place against other formal systems. These revisions are understood by us because we use our reasoning to make the revisions. The revision does not mean that the earlier logic has been rejected. It is simply considered inadequate to deal with certain aspects of our beliefs that we did not think of before as affecting our logic. The revisions may well reflect our actual reasoning process or not. This is up for grabs and it seems will be forever up for grabs. We are able to create various logics and our ordinary reasoning powers – what else? – help us to do so. Which of these alternatives are really representative of the reasoning we employ or the rules we follow while reasoning is quite unclear. Should we follow Edgington’s (1986) powerful arguments against the conditional of classical logic and realize that the proposal made by Edgington is the right one or should we rather think

that Stalnaker's (1971) notion of the conditional is the right one, even though Hypothetical Syllogism falls by the wayside in his system? The choices are hard.

Maybe our reasoning has no clear logic to it, a logic that is at least consciously known to us. Indeed our decisions are not necessarily logical at all. Increasing prices of bakery items may not drive us away from a bakery which we are used to shopping at. Harman (1984) has suggested that formal logic is of no use to reasoning, because reasoning is really used to change beliefs and logic does not dictate change of belief, not on its own at least. Indeed, both Harman and Kripke are thinking about how logic is related to reasoning, that is our natural logic as we use it in daily life. Harman is hard pressed to find any use for formal logic in our natural reasoning process. Kripke finds that we cannot adopt any logic however useful and natural it appears. The arguments presented by both are very different: Kripke's are epistemological and Harman's are related to practical use of logic. But the point is similar: formal systems do not seem to improve our natural reasoning.

So, yes, formal systems can be supplanted without any implication that they are to be discarded forever, precisely for the reason that we do not know which system represents our reasoning process. A formal system can be supplanted for empirical reasons, as Putnam did. We cannot adopt the formal system supplanted nor adopt the formal system that replaces the earlier one. We cannot reject any of these systems either, for adoption and rejection are both not possible. Each of the alternative logics may tell us something about our reasoning, if our reasoning so informs us.

If we do not know what our natural reasoning looks like in detail then it is not right to call it apriori or analytic even though it is not open to revision through adoption. And if formal systems are indeed open to being supplanted then it would be idle to describe them as apriori. I do not mean to say that they should automatically be described as a posteriori. I think more argument is needed and more clarification is needed regarding the status of logical truths. Revision is an indicator of the nature of logical truths, but more is involved in making a logical truth a priori or a posteriori.

3.1 Naturalism and the Adoption Problem Quine was a naturalist about logic, and clearly thought that logic could suffer revision if empirical pressure was high enough for the same. But if that is the case, then it appears that Kripke's position that we cannot adopt any logic goes against naturalism. That may seem so at first sight. But I don't think this implication is correct. We are reasoning creatures, produced by nature. If we cannot reason the way some formal system asks us to reason, then that is as much a part of nature as our reasoning itself is. Kripke's position on adoption of alternative logics or classical logic is as much a piece of nature as Quinean naturalism. I have

argued above that formal systems can be revised under Quinean pressures, but it need not put enough pressure on us to revise our reasoning. This nuanced position does not go against Quinean naturalism but is very much coeval with it. There is nothing non-naturalistic about having a bedrock of reasoning on which other aspects of reasoning are built, agreeing with the bedrock, just as there is nothing non-natural about there being the bedrock of evolution on which all of the species that exist today owe their being. If there were a piece of reasoning that has nothing to do with the bedrock of reasoning, then that is an unusual creature, just like we would find it strange if there were a creature which had no genes or DNA or cells or had no traceable history of evolution.

3.2 Ontological Commitment and the Adoption Problem Quine is famous for the slogan that “to be is to the value of a variable”. This means that when we translate the sentences of our theory of the world into logical language, the entities that the variables of the logical language range over tell us what is there in the world, filling out the ontology of the world in a reliable and satisfactory manner. Kripke’s idea that we cannot adopt a logic is orthogonal to this picture of the use of logic. Kripke can easily accept Quine’s slogan and continue to hold his position that we cannot adopt any logic, since his adoption problem has to do with rules of logic, and not variables employed in logic. As an aside, Kripke actually is fellow traveler with Quine as far as possible worlds are concerned. Neither of them believe that there are possible worlds or denizens thereof. Kripke differs from Quine in thinking that contingency and necessity are properties of entities and not propositions. But this does not affect the present debate about whether a logic can be adopted by our reasoning or not. Kripke would definitely be very much in favor of regimenting ontology through logic. His implementation would differ from Quine. Even if Kripke came to a very different ontology from that of Quine, that would not suggest that this was due to his criticism of the idea that any logic can be adopted.

4. Conclusion

Kripke argues that there are formal systems and logic, the latter being what we bring to the table with our natural resource of reasoning. Quinean revisionism and hence adoption of a new logic do not apply to logic. I have argued that if we cannot adopt a logic, we cannot reject it either. Revisionism does apply to formal systems. Thus while Quinean revisionism is incorrect for our natural reasoning, it is appropriate for formal systems. Given that sometimes the development of alternative logics does have a revealing impact on the nature of our reasoning apparatus, it would follow that the nature of our reasoning is not clear to us as of now. Being open to revision does

not have any clear role to play in the debate between the a priori or the a posteriori nature of logic.

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**REVITALIZING VEDĀNTIC EPISTEMOLOGY - CONCEPTION OF
DEPTH EPISTEMOLOGY IN S. L. PANDEY, R. D. RANADE, AND A. C.
MUKERJI: ELEMENTS, TYPOLOGY AND SOME PROBLEMS**

A. Vershney

श्लाघास्पदं यद्यपि नेतरेषामियं कृतिः स्यात् उपहासयोग्या
तथापि शिष्यैर्गुरुगौरवेण परस्सहस्रैः समुपासनीया॥

Abstract

A dominant mark of many philosophers in contemporary India, has been an engagement with ŚāṅkaraVedānta. It was not uncommon, for thinkers, in the pre and early post-independence years, to have either been an interpreter of the Vedāntic tradition or to have developed one's philosophical ideas in a manner which brought them under the loose rubric of neo-Vedānta. The term 'depth epistemology' was coined by Prof. Sangam Lal Pandey, an academic philosopher of post-independent India and an unparalleledVedāntin, in an attempt to pinpoint the quintessential feature of Allahabad School of Philosophy. The conception as per him, is the differentia of a number of academic philosophers stationed at University of Allahabad, and thus could be seen as the differentia of what he terms as Allahabad School of Philosophy. However, in other writings of Pandey, and from the tenets stipulated by him for the notion of depth epistemology, it gets sufficiently clear that the conception could be located in a number of classical Indian and Western philosophical traditions; prominently in those who adhere to a strict dichotomy between subject and object of knowledge, such as ŚāṅkaraVedānta and Kant, to cite a few instances.

In the lines that follow I propose to do the following: (i) to re-read the literature of S. L. Pandey on his conception of depth epistemology, so as to make sense of the term, (ii) to re-assess the epistemic position of eminent philosopher and mystic R. D. Ranade, so as to understand his variant of depth epistemology, (iii) to re-read some of the writings of A. C. Mukerji - whose originality of synthesis between the idealist traditions of India and the West, demand a distinct slot in contemporary Indian philosophy – thus underscoring a different variant of depth epistemology, (iv) to stress depth

epistemology as an endeavour to revitalize the Vedāntic view of knowledge and (v) to register some problematic issues with the notion of depth epistemology.

Keywords: *depth epistemology, surface epistemology, transcendental knowledge, anubhava, aśeṣapramāṇa, transcendental analysis, coordinate view of knowledge, fallacy of transcendental dislocation, S. L. Pandey, R. D. Ranade, A. C. Mukerji*

1. Introduction: S. L. Pandey's conception of Depth Epistemology- What it is not and What it is?

The notion of Depth Epistemology, was so formulated by Prof. Sangam Lal Pandey (1929-2002) in an anthology, entitled, *Problems of Depth Epistemology*¹, in the year 1987. Prof. Pandey, designates the term coined by him, Depth Epistemology (DE), as synonymous to the Allahabad School of Philosophy. Two claims are made in this remark, one that there was a more-or-less systematic school of philosophizing, at the Department of Philosophy, at Allahabad and two- that it is depth epistemology, which is the core and quintessence of the school. Apart from his prolegomena to the anthology, which summarizes his conception, there are four articles in the anthology, one each, by Prof. P. S. Burrell, Prof. R. D. Ranade, Prof. A. C. Mukerji, and Prof. R. N. Kaul. All these four thinkers were academicians of high repute in pre-independent India, and all of them were professors at the Allahabad University². Insightful remarks are made by him, upon his conception of depth epistemology, in his subsequent thin but concise book on epistemology, *Jñānamīmāṃsā Ke GūḍhaPrašna*.³

One of the many ways, in which Pandey explicates his idea of depth epistemology, lies in contrasting it with surface epistemology. In the opinion of Pandey, surface epistemology (SE), is any such epistemic analysis, which is sheerly concerned with object or objective knowledge or empirical knowledge or even with sheer subject or subjective knowledge⁴; it should be specified here that by the term subject at this juncture, Pandey refers to *jīva* or *vṛttijñāna* and not to *ātman* or *sākṣijñāna*; the latter, as we shall see later, is the real concern of depth epistemology.

¹ Pandey, S. L. (ed.), 1987, *Problems of Depth Epistemology*, Allahabad: Ram Nath Kaul Library of Philosophy, University of Allahabad (henceforth PDE)

² I have omitted a discussion of P. S. Burrell and R. N. Kaul here, owing to brevity and that to my understanding Ranade and Mukerji, represent two different strands of DE; Burrell and Kaul could be located in these. Pandey precedes Ranade and Mukerji, though chronologically of a much later posterity, because it is he, who coins the term and ascribes the same to others, as such a discussion on thinkers of the DE tradition must start with Pandey.

³ Pandey, S. L., 1999, *Jñānamīmāṃsā Ke Gūḍha Praśna*, Allahabad: Darshan Peeth (henceforth JGP)

⁴ PDE, pp.1-2

Pandey further clarifies, drawing from A.C. Mukerji, that an analysis of knowledge which treats all cases of knowledge as a compresence of object and subject⁵, is an instance of surface epistemology; in other words, any theory of knowledge which treats the subject and the object on the same plane, or a theory of knowledge which does not differentiate between the levels of factors involved in a knowledge situation⁶ is an instance of surface epistemology. Giving instances of such a surfaced epistemic analysis, Pandey categorizes the realist epistemic theory of Nyāya as an instance of surface epistemology for the simple reason that in the analysis of Nyāya, *ātman* or the knower too is just another type of *prameya* or object of knowledge⁷; coupling this with the mark that an analysis which has to do with ‘subjective knowledge’ too falls under the same rubric, an enterprise such as that of Vijnānavāda, will join Nyāya in being a case of surface epistemology. Such theories of knowledge in Western epistemology, which yet again fail to underscore the inner oligarchy⁸ of knowledge situation, both Rene Descartes and the theory of rationalism and John Locke and the theory of empiricism fall under this category; the three classic formulations of truth, join suit. One of the philosophers of the Allahabad School, chosen by Pandey, A. C. Mukerji, underscores the position of Spinoza and Berkeley, as quite distinct, in the traditions they represented, on which Pandey would agree that the two carry elements of depth epistemology. Thus, any theory of knowledge, which in the ordinary course of an epistemic analysis, attempts to analyse ‘object’ of knowledge will be an instance of surface epistemology.

In our understanding the primary reason behind categorizing of the aforementioned classic theories or analyses of knowledge, under ‘surface epistemology’, is because they are exclusively committed to either an analysis of the ‘external’/*bāhyārth* or an inner mental state and fail to underscore the foundational role of some factors, compared to some other factors, in the knowledge situation, i.e., a failure to see that some ideas are more pivotal than some others in our epistemic enterprise. A depth epistemology, as such, should obviously not miss the foundational role of some factors of knowledge, i.e., an ‘oligarchy of ideas’ and it should avoid resorting to descriptive analyses of ‘object’ and/or the subjective; these we may add are marks of a psychological analysis of the knowledge situation, instead of the requisite transcendental or foundational analysis.

⁵ Ibid., p. 2

⁶ Ibid. and JGM, pp. 112-113

⁷ JGM, pp. 109-110

⁸ Ibid., pp. 110-111

But other than these negative marks, what precisely would be the nature and concern of depth epistemology. The differentia features of depth epistemology could be delineated, from the assertions made by Pandey in the above two works, and by synthesising the same with the ideas of the four thinkers in his compilation and the traditions which he cites as instances of depth epistemology. Some of the marks of depth epistemology could be seen as corollary of the above stipulations of surface epistemology. For our purpose, after having formed for ourselves, a picture of depth epistemology, based on Pandey's stipulations and ostensions, we shall revisit the question again after making a reflection on Ranade and Mukerji.

The foremost differentia of depth epistemology, is the idea of a levelled view of knowledge. This refers to a gradation between two types of knowledge: empirical knowledge and transcendental knowledge, wherein the latter is of greater value for the philosopher and the proper domain of depth epistemology.⁹ Transcendental knowledge is termed as 'inverted reflexion' by Pandey, among other things; it is the presupposition of empirical knowledge. The same is trans-objective as well as trans-subjective, for the ordinary subjective knowledge is as empirical as the objective one. Thus, clearly enough, depth epistemology is a type of transcendentalism, though different to the Kantian version.

On the trans-objective and trans-subjective character of DE, Pandey clears this idea by introducing the term, *akhaṇḍārthatā*¹⁰. He is of the view that while in objective and ordinarily subjective knowledge, there remains a chasm between the subject and the object or when expressed in propositional form, between the subject and predicate; in such cases, there is either *sāmsarga-sāmsargī-bhāva* or *viśeṣī-viśeṣaṇa-bhāva*, between the subject and predicate. Contrary to this, in the depth-epistemological analysis, there is *tādātmya* and *abheda* between the two, thus the proposition, in DE, is *akhaṇḍārthaka*.

Another prominent feature of DE and its mark of discernment with SE, lies in criteriology¹¹. Pandey stipulates a distinction here between *lakṣaṇamīmāṃsā* and *pramāṇamīmāṃsā*; in his view the latter has to do with sheer enumeration of isolated sources of knowledge, while the former involves a more foundational question. As per Pandey, the most basic question for DE, is that of 'criterion'; what is criterion, how is it related to truth and what is the distinction between the two, are some prominent questions of DE. Such criteriology, Pandey tells us is yet again, a common feature of the philosophers associated with DE tradition and in his view parallel to the tradition

⁹ Ibid. pp. 112-113

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 111

¹¹ PDE, pp. 3-6

of Vico, D. J. Mercier, and Wittgenstein who were dealing with the question of criterion as a philosophical tool, the Allahabad philosophers were also advancing their own criteriology *de novo*. For Pandey, *lakṣaṇais* prior to *pramāṇa*, the latter gains ground only when the former has been settled with rigour, as “a *pramāṇa* is first defined and identified”¹², through a *lakṣaṇamīmāṃsā*. Therefore, in a way, *lakṣaṇamīmāṃsā* is a second order inquiry, in relation to *pramāṇamīmāṃsā*. Per the reckoning of Pandey, for each of the four philosophers of Allahabad in his anthology, the question of criterion is paramount and the same as we shall see later, is ‘internal’ for each of them. As a second order inquiry, criteriology or *lakṣaṇamīmāṃsā* falls in the domain of DE, whilst *pramāṇamīmāṃsā* lies in the ambit of SE.

Extending the relation of DE and criteriology, Pandey posits an interrelationship between DE and analytic philosophy or philosophy of language¹³, which was a movement almost contemporary to DE. He terms this as the “focal point of depth epistemology”. He argues that since criterion is founded on definition, it is necessarily related to language, since definition is a linguistic act, in our understanding the two require prominently an act of clarification of thoughts or analysis of concepts. However, more than this, Pandey does not comment or show as to how any of the four thinkers, resorts to a clarification of thoughts; this lack is identified by Prof. Ambika Datta Sharma in his crisp essay on DE¹⁴. Though this is surely a lack in *Problems of Depth Epistemology*, nevertheless in his subsequent work (1999), Pandey demonstrates a brilliant linguistic analysis of terms, and how the same varies in the stylistics of Navya-Nyāya and that of Advaita Vedānta¹⁵; all the same, Burrell’s exercise of a clarification of the concept of criterion¹⁶, is quite akin to his British brethren belonging to the analytic tradition.

As indicated above, the primary locus of DE, ‘the criterion’, is invariably internal in all the four thinkers of Pandey’s anthology, as much in the editor of the anthology; such internality of criterion is stressed using different lexicon by each of them. Ultimately, the internal criterion is identified with intuition or vision¹⁷ or insight or *prātibhajñāna*¹⁸ or *aparokṣānubhūti*. We are told by the proponent, that Śaṅkara’s

¹² Ibid., p. 4

¹³ Ibid., pp. 5-6

¹⁴ Singh, Ramlal (ed.), 2004, *Philosophical Contributions of Professor S. L. Pandey*, Allahabad: Ram Nath Kaul Library of Philosophy, University of Allahabad (henceforth, PCSP)

Sharma, Ambika Datta, 2004, “Gahan Jñānamīmāṃsā Ke Nihitārtha” in PDE, pp. 209-210

¹⁵ JGM, pp. 115-118

¹⁶ Burrell, P. S., 1987, “The Criterion” in PDE, pp. 17-47

¹⁷ PDE, pp. 6-8

¹⁸ JGM, pp. 111-112

aparokṣānubhūti, Spinoza’s intuitive knowledge, Berkeley’s notion, Bradley’s immediacy, are some aspects of such internal criterion/insight¹⁹. Pandey underscores at this juncture, that “self-knowledge” is the most significant form of knowledge²⁰ and such self-knowledge, which is self-evident, is the complete or *aśeṣa-pramāṇa* or *carama-pramāṇa* in DE, while the six *pramāṇa*-s dealt by SE are all types of *śeṣa-pramāṇa*²¹. The discovery of such self-knowledge or most foundational element or transcendental presupposition of knowledge, also identified by the thinkers of DE tradition, with the foundational consciousness or *sākṣī-jñāna*, is the most pivotal discovery and beginning point of depth epistemology.

We are told that, while, cognitive notions such as *samśaya*, *vipratipatti*, *apratipatti*, *sambhāvanā*, observation, experimentation, belong to SE, DE is marked by *niścaya*, *śraddhā*, *manana*, *nididhyāsana*. We are further told that, depth epistemology enjoins *śānti* and *ānanda*, while SE is dry and insipid²². Depth epistemology is prominently employed in our ventures into the realm of moral, aesthetic, and religious knowledge, while SE is employed more in our inquiries into natural sciences, mathematics, logic, etc²³. From here, Pandey furnishes to us, another important characteristic of DE. Since SE, advances a Procrustean analysis of epistemic issues, it fails to appreciate the synthetic and integral character of knowledge; DE focuses on the foundational character of knowledge and is therefore able to tap the “openness of knowledge situation”²⁴. Pandey and DE tradition do not undermine the importance of SE and empirical knowledge in any manner; the view that is offered to us is a gradation of knowledge. In simple words, knowledge has infinite levels, which include, empirical, scientific, mathematical, logical, moral, aesthetic, and religious knowledge. The infinitude or plurality of knowledge situation mandates a different criterion for each different level. Harping upon this openness and graded view of knowledge, Prof. Hari Shankar Upadhyaya, a student of Pandey and an epistemologist par-excellence, stresses that the attempt of Western epistemologists to analyse all cases of knowledge by one set of paradigms, is not an appropriate way of analysis, as an openness of knowledge situation demands a different set of paradigms, for a specific level of knowledge.²⁵

¹⁹ PDE, pp. 6-7

²⁰ Ibid., p. 7

²¹ Ibid., p.3

²² JGP, p. 112

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ PDE, p. 3

²⁵ Upadhyaya, H. S., “Prof. S. L. Pandey on Openness of Knowledge”, in PCSP, p.155

2. R. D. Ranade: Doctrine of the Criterion and the Epistemology of Self-Consciousness

Ramchandra Dattatraya Ranade (1886-1957) was the first Indian professor and head of the department of philosophy, at Allahabad. Innumerable legends and incredible anecdotes, inside the campus, had gathered around him; his reputation as a saint and a mystic is still a matter of reverence in the spiritual heritage of Maharashtra. Ranade was an unparalleled scholar of Upaniṣad-s, Vedānta and the literature of Sanskrit, Marathi, Greek, Hindi traditions. The article of Ranade, that Pandey has chosen for his anthology, is sourced from his seminal work, *Vedānta- The Culmination of Indian Thought*²⁶. Other than this, one may form some clue of his epistemic position, from his essay, “The Evolution of My Own Thought” in the now classic, *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*²⁷, edited by Radhakrishnanand Muirhead.

The essay by Ranade, in the anthology, “Doctrine of the Criterion”, is an attempt to discover the ultimate criterion in matters of knowledge and truth. The method adopted by Ranade, may be seen as a kind of *pramāṇāntarabhāva* exercise, where some *pramāṇa*-s are reduced into some other ones, and the more basic of *pramāṇa*-s are shown to be incapacitated, in their reach to truth and reality. The ultimate criterion, in Ranade’s argumentation, comes as an intuitive experience or *anubhava*, which in his case is the *carama-pramāṇa*. Ranade also critiques the traditional theories of truth and shows how *anubhava* encompasses in its fold, the cream of all the three theories.

Ranade re-asserts the Vedantin view concerning reality, wherein spirit is the highest grade²⁸, and states that the problem he seeks to discuss in “Doctrine of the Criterion” is how to know the criterion and how to know whether knowledge pertaining to it is true or not²⁹; the criterion which he, therefore, is seeking, is the criterion for the knowledge of such highest reality and also test of truth for such knowledge. Such criterion must be comprehensive, simple, self-evident, and exclusive, i.e., ‘only-this-or-nothing-principle’. For Ranade, one’s epistemic ideas and views regarding criterion are essentially rooted in the basal structure of one’s metaphysical views³⁰. He reduces *anuplabdhi* into *pratyakṣa*, and *upamāna* and *arthāpatti* into *anumāna*, thereafter we

²⁶ Ranade, R. D., 2001, *Vedānta-The Culmination of Indian Thought*, Mumbai: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan

²⁷ Ranade, R. D., 1952, “The Evolution of My Own Thought”, in Radhakrishnan, S. and Muirhead, 1952, *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, London: Muirhead Library of Philosophy (henceforth EMT and CIP respectively)

²⁸ Ranade, R. D., 1987, “Doctrine of the Criterion”, in PDE, p. 48

²⁹ PDE, pp. 48-49

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49

are left with *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*. For *pratyakṣa*, he utilizes the *upamāna* of Rāmaṇuja and shows it to be misleading³¹. For *anumāna*, he argues following Bradley, that all inferences and judgments, yield us, only partial and probable knowledge of the appearance³². Thence, the arguments of Śrīharṣa against *vyāpti* and Śaṅkara's *starkāpratiṣṭhānāta* are invoked to show how invalid and incapable *anumāna* is, in the pursuit of the highest grade of reality.³³ Thus, five out of the traditional six *pramāṇa*-s are shown to be incapacitated. *Śabda*, for Ranade, requires validation by *anubhava* or intuitive experience, lest it is only a ritualistic dogma³⁴. Therefore, it is *anubhava* alone which could be accepted as the criterion of the true knowledge of reality.

The three traditional theories of truth are then shown to be problematic and Ranade demonstrates how, *anubhava* is the most suitable criterion of truth. In correspondence theory, for Ranade, it is problematic to believe how can an idea represent a physical reality; if per Berkeley, things are mentalised, then the problem would still magnify, since now how can two ideas be identical; it remains technically impossible to ascertain correspondence; as such the theory is untenable. The criterion of utility does not work as utility is relative and depends on individual idiosyncrasies; in addition, the theory is assailed by the vitiations of Benthamite utilitarianism. In coherence theory of truth, "absolute coherence is not knowable as the knower will be outside the coherent system"³⁵ and as such it lands into approximation. However, if coherence lands into a plane where the knower, known and knowledge become non-dual, which will be a case of transparent coherence, this will be nothing else than *anubhava*. Similarly, for a realised being (mystic), there is absolute parity (correspondence) between the internal and the external. All the same, *anubhava*, confers on beatification, happiness, highest and unblemished bliss; thus, the pragmatist criterion of satisfaction is also encompassed in this mystic criterion.³⁶

Ranade at the end of his polemical essay, tells us that *anubhava* is an immediate and first-hand intuitive apprehension of reality, self-evident, not requiring an intermediate criterion since it is direct. "Reality though ineffable, is experienceable", *anubhava*, as such is the only appropriate criterion of its knowledge, blinking at intuition on one hand and at beatification on the other³⁷.

³¹ Ibid., p. 51

³² Ibid., p. 54

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 54-55

³⁵ Ibid., p. 57

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 55-57

³⁷ Ibid., p. 57-58

Ranade highlights the epistemological significance of self-consciousness as discussed and portrayed in the Upaniṣad-s, in “The Evolution of My Own Thought”. He notes correctly, that in the Upaniṣadic view, it is not possible for us to know the ‘self’ in the technical sense of the term “knowledge”³⁸; but he adds that the self and God are not mere matters of faith as in Kant, but also objects of mystical realisation. The unknowability of self, per Ranade, in Upaniṣad-s, is not the Spencer-like unknowability but one from the standpoint of ‘philosophical humility’; “to which the eye is unable to go...neither speech nor mind is able to reach”, what else conception, about it, could be formed other than its being *avāṅmanasagocara*. Secondly, the knower itself cannot be an object of knowledge, per *Śvetāswatara* and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. These positions, as per Ranade, raise another pivotal question, given that the self is the pure subject, then “would it be possible for the knower to know himself”³⁹. The question was actually asked by Yājñvalkyā and answered in the affirmative. “Nothing (no knowledge) is possible if self-consciousness is not possible”, the same is the ultimate fact of experience; for Yājñvalkyā, Ranade tells us that, “introspection and self-consciousness are the verities of experience”. It is unfortunate in Ranade’s view that despite the discovery of “unity of apperception”, in Kant, he should have denied the “reality of the corresponding psychological process of introspection”. Self and self-consciousness are the light of man, when, the sun, the moon, the fire are all set and extinguished, Ranade writes, explicating the position of Yājñvalkyā. Thus, in “the act of pure-self-contemplation...the self is most mysteriously both the subject and the object of knowledge”⁴⁰. This, as per our understanding, in Ranade, is the core of all epistemic principles, the centrality of self and its being self-conscious; the self-conscious self, knows or sees itself through *anubhava*.

3. A. C. Mukerji: The Foundations of Knowledge and Suggestions for an Idealistic Theory of Knowledge

Almost every important writing of Anukul Chandra Mukerji (1888/1890? - 1968), is an instance of philosophy without borders, as much as it could be seen as a dialogue between the idealist traditions of India and the West. Termed as the Plato of Allahabad, by Jay Garfield and Nalini Bhushan⁴¹, Mukerji’s work, on the patterns of K. C. Bhattacharyya, presents a Vedāntic critique or emendation of Kant. In my understanding, Mukerji is the only one, out of the four thinkers in the anthology of Pandey, whose primary philosophical objective was an analysis of epistemic problems.

³⁸ CIP, p. 553

³⁹ Ibid., p. 554

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 555

⁴¹ Garfield, J. and Bhushan, N. (eds.), 2011, *Indian Philosophy in English: From Renaissance to Independence*, Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, (henceforth IPE), p. 459

His two important treatises, *Self, Thought and Reality*⁴² and *The Nature of Self*⁴³, are very serious and original advancements in the directions of transcendental idealism. His importance and originality, and at the same time a neglect of his contribution, could be understood from the underneath remark by Garfield and Bhushan:

It is hard to overstate Mukerji's creativity. Most of us would regard Wilfrid Sellars and Donald Davidson (of course along with W. V. Quine) as the most significant exponents of American pragmatist and neo-Kantian thought of the 20th century. We would cite as being among their principal contributions to our discipline, in Sellars' case, the identification of and attack on the "myth of the given" and the harnessing of Kant's idealism in the service of realism, and in Davidson's, the attack on the possibility of alternative conceptual schemes, and of the scheme/content and world/word distinctions. These contributions were made between 1956 and 1980. The circulation and later publication of "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind" (Sellars, 1963) and "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme" (Davidson, 1984, pp. 183–198) transformed Anglo-American philosophy and set entirely new agendas for generations of Anglophone philosophers. Indeed, some of the most important philosophical books of the last few years are direct descendants of these seminal essays.

*Mukerji identified each of these themes and anticipated these conclusions and their arguments long before his better-known American colleagues, and with a distinctively Vedānta motivation and inflection.*⁴⁴

Other than his two aforementioned treatises, this section forms a picture of his ideas banking upon his essay in the anthology of Pandey, which is also found in a later edition of *Self, Thought and Reality*, namely, "Foundations of Knowledge" and upon his "Suggestions for an Idealist Theory of Knowledge" in the Radhakrishnan and Muirhead volume.

A. C. Mukerji is against the democratization of the epistemic domain and rigorously rejects the idea of a coordinate view of knowledge which fails to acknowledge the oligarchic structure and the foundational character of the knowledge situation. Mukerji believes that the ideal of clarity and distinctness, though has rendered a tremendous service to philosophy, all the same, an excess committed for the

⁴² Mukerji, A. C., 1957, *Self, Thought And Reality*, Allahabad: The Indian Press

⁴³ Mukerji, A. C., 1943, *The Nature of Self*, Allahabad: The Indian Press

⁴⁴ IPE, p. 460

sake of these ideals was done at the expense of depth of insight⁴⁵. As against this, for Mukerji, Kant's descent into the foundations of knowledge, is more significant than a venture to seek clear and distinct ideas and that the momentous question raised by Kant regarding transcendental presuppositions of knowledge is foundational to all knowledge situation; though we will see that Mukerji very aptly and lamentingly pinpoints the shortfalls of Kantian views which led to the unfortunate collapse of idealist theory of knowledge, which Mukerji sought to revitalize, by emending the Kantian position.

Mukerji draws our attention to the divide between the "only two directions in which the pendulum of human thought is capable of oscillating"⁴⁶, these two directions are represented by the empirical and the transcendental methods. He argues, that the prime defect of empiricism lies in "its blindness to its own presuppositions", which he terms as "transcendental blindness". Mukerji traces the reason of such transcendental blindness to the Cartesian dichotomous division of the universe.⁴⁷, because of which, Locke found the "dualism already established firmly in philosophical thought", consequently, his problem reduced itself to show that the mistakenly "innate furniture of mind" had its genesis in the external world. Mukerji sees the great dualism in Descartes, as containing the germ of scepticism, for him Descartes had set such a sharp opposition between the spirit and the matter, and the self-centred individuality had been stressed to such an extent, that, only a little re-adjustment and re-orientation exercise was required to develop the germ fully. In his reasoning, with such a sharp chasm between the knower and the known, knowledge cannot be explained; it is beyond imagination, as to how mind could break its boundaries and reach things different from itself. For Mukerji, however, a greater danger that the Cartesian dualism threw on epistemic matters, is that, for it the knower and the known coordinate in status. They are, as per him, in such an analysis, members of a democracy, where none possesses a "privileged dignity over the other"⁴⁸. Such an analysis makes, knowledge a relation of compresence. Locke took this democratization process started by Descartes, more seriously, and attempted to derive ideas such as those of unity and cause from the same experience, which is also the source of the idea of colour and that of sound. Thus, a sharper denial of hierarchy in knowledge situation is brought out by Locke.

⁴⁵ Mukerji, A. C., 1987, "The Foundations of Knowledge" in PDE, pp.59-60

⁴⁶ SITK, p. 434

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 437

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 441

Mukerji therefore, sees the process of levelling down the status of transcendental presuppositions of knowledge situation, to that of the very ideas which they condition, as the source of scepticism. He terms, such a levelling down, as the fallacy of transcendental dislocation.⁴⁹ He contends, that the very contention of empiricists, that the idea of a cause, comes at a later stage of mental development, “owes its intelligibility to the causal principle”.⁵⁰ A confusion between the empirical ideas and the transcendental ideas, is a transcendental dislocation which makes the foundations of knowledge, an ordinary coordinate of its superstructure.⁵¹ After Locke, Berkeley sees the heterogeneity between the spirit which knows and perceives ideas and the ideas themselves, the former is entirely distinct from the latter. The knower in Berkeley, cannot belong to the same order as the things that it knows.⁵² But the intellectual legacy of Berkeley, arrests him somehow from taking this dichotomy to its logical consequence. In Mukerji’s argumentation, Hume’s scepticism, is the inevitable consequence of democratizing the foundational principles of knowledge, who as per Mukerji was more interested in making Locke and Berkeley more consistent with the “creed of empiricism”, than examining the very foundations of empirical outlook. But Mukerji offers astute examples to argue, that even a simple statement of doubt cannot be imagined, without some presupposed certainty; as per him, Hume’s doubt - regarding the sunrise - cannot arise, until one has a presupposed certainty that “there is a world where things remain identical in different contexts and at different times”⁵³ (that the sun of today will remain identical to that of tomorrow) and “where events are so connected that one can only succeed and not precede, the other”⁵⁴ (that tomorrow will definitely succeed today). In simple words, “space, time, identity, causality, are presupposed by the sceptic”⁵⁵; and, therefore, empirical generalizations, rest on the non-empirical.

Mukerji highlights the invaluable source of inspiration for idealists, which comes from the Kantian dive into the transcendental foundations of knowledge, i.e., the subject as the universal pre-condition of all objects of knowledge and a fundamental difference between the nature of its relation to objects and the nature of inter-objective relations; thus the entire superstructure of world of objects which includes both mind and matter is supported by the subject; “we cannot trace the origin of transcendental

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 442

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid., pp.438-439

⁵³ Ibid., p. 445

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

principles of knowledge to the mind conceived as a member of democracy of ideas”⁵⁶, and the “formative principles of self-consciousness” are not of empirical origin. He, detests a naturalistic analysis of thought and proposes that whatever is involved in thinking cannot be a coordinate of things, i.e., they cannot be treated as belonging to the same plane.

Having, eulogized the contribution of Kant, Mukerji points out where Kant follies in his opinion, and where a Vedāntic emendation of Kant is required. He is of the view, that despite having identified the structural role of thought in the knowledge situation, Kant, too, makes thought a coordinate of things conditioned by thought, in his own manner. In his reasoning, since “I think”, is the ultimate transcendental ground of experience in Kant, it follows that all objects of experience must conform to the conditions of self-consciousness; but here Kant’s insight becomes unsteady in offering an analysis of self-consciousness. “On the one hand it was taken to be the pre-condition of all objects, and, on the other hand, it was held to be equivalent to the consciousness of the self as reflected back from the consciousness of object”⁵⁷. While the former “makes the unity of apperception, the transcendental condition of object-consciousness”, “the latter makes it consequent upon the consciousness of object”⁵⁸. The Kantian analysis wavered between these two alternatives, wherein the subsequent development of idealism sustains the latter, and insists the correlativity of the subject-consciousness and object-consciousness and an inseparability of the two. In this interpretation, self and non-self, subject and object, thought and thing are supposed to be correlative, in the same sense as cause is correlative to effect; wherein each correlative term has a necessary relation to the other and would be unintelligible when taken in its abstract identity. This entails that the pure consciousness of self is essentially synthetic, however still the subject is of higher order as the above correlativity is a “correlativity for the subject”; which means that it is the subject which is the locus of such correlativity. This, then implies that the “world is a self-manifestation of a spiritual principle which is a universal that differentiates itself and is yet one with itself in its particularity”⁵⁹. Thus, the knowing mind cannot have a sheer atomic existence, nor can it be a sheer coordinate with matter, but a self-distinguishing principle, which on one hand distinguishes itself from its “other” and on the other over-reaches such distinction.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 446

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 447

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

A great disdain for the naturalizing tendency in epistemology could be seen in the writings of Mukerji, who presciently, anticipates the later debate of naturalized versus normative epistemology in the West; and wages a crusade to safeguard the latter. A naturalistic tendency to treat the thought as coordinate of things, has given birth to a number of paradoxes and prevarications in the course of epistemology, and cautions Mukerji, that to misconceive the universal principle along-side particulars, or to consider thought as one of the members of the relation of distinction, when all distinctions are within thought, will be an unmitigated paradox. As such, following Giovanni Gentile, he repeats the warning that, “the unity of mind” and the “multiplicity of things” must not be put on the same plane.

Other than a more rigorous denial of the coordinate view of knowledge, Mukerji seeks to bolster the Kantian position and idealistic theory of knowledge by importing some insights from Vedānta. For Mukerji, it was deplorable, that while Kant had an insight into the “I” being a “consciousness that accompanies all conceptions”, he still condemns it as completely empty of all content simply on the ground that consciousness cannot be defined.⁶⁰ It is a folly to have simultaneously underlined the centrality of the unity of apperception and yet having dismissed self-consciousness as a sheer abstract identity⁶¹. Therefore, the recognition of “unconditioned unity of self-consciousness as the ultimate basis of knowledge....could alone build up a sound theory of knowledge and experience and lay the foundation of a more robust type of idealistic metaphysics”⁶². As such, Mukerji believes, that the Kantian insight was not developed sufficiently, and a notion like foundational consciousness or the unobjectifiable, *swayāṃprakāśasākṣijñāna*, is essential to sustain and revitalize an idealistic theory of knowledge. The epistemic position of Mukerji could be, in our understanding, seen as a type of Vedāntic transcendentalism.

4. Making some sense of Depth Epistemology: Is it a revitalizing of Vedāntic Epistemology?

A recapitulation is in order, to make some sense out of the idea of depth epistemology, as per Pandey, Ranade, and Mukerji. It follows from the preceding sections, that the notion of depth epistemology may be identified with any epistemic enterprise which seeks to unfold the transcendental and foundational structure of knowledge. In Pandey and the two thinkers cited, the same lies in a recognition of a qualitative, structural and level difference between the self and the object, in an internal or immediate nature of the criterion and in exalting the self-knowledge as the highest

⁶⁰ PDE, p. 70

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 73

⁶² Ibid., p. 75

form of knowledge. Pandey's accounts make Śamkara as the foremost depth epistemologist; his treatment of Kant is ambivalent, he is careful to point out that such elements in Kantian analysis that were dislodged by later epistemologists, for an instance, his illustrations of synthetic apriori judgments, his noumenal agnosticism are traces of SE, while his transcendental analysis, identification of self as an original unity is an element of DE; this as clear from the section of A. C. Mukerji is also the view of the latter who is flustered with the fact that Kant did not develop what is implied by the "I think" to its logical culmination and that the coordinate view of knowledge is not completely dislodged in Kant. Pandey also, absorbing from Mukerji, cites traces of internal criterion in Spinoza, Berkeley, and Bradley. In my understanding, Pandey's own views and his account of DE, is more influenced by Mukerji in comparison to the other three thinkers. However, in the *Jñānamīmāṃsā Ke Gūḍha Praśna*, the places where he cites the mystical bent of medieval poets Kabir, Nabha Das, and others in giving an illustration of the tranquillity and blissfulness that one achieves via depth epistemology, the same is also seen as source of aesthetic, ethical and religious knowledge⁶³; at such places Ranade's beatification/mysticism is clearly influencing Pandey; though what is more likely is that such elements in Pandey's thoughts, are cultivated in his adherence to the Advaitic tradition.

The utmost dichotomy between the 'I' and the non-I or the subject and the object, that has been stressed by Ranade and Mukerji, reiterated by Pandey, is clearly traceable, to Yājñavalkya. Biswambhar Pahi, a logician, academic philosopher of matchless rigor and synthetic abilities, a reformer of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika traditions, suggests a very novel categorization of classical systems of Indian philosophy; in his magnum opus, *Vaiśeṣika Padārthavyavasthā Kā Paddhatimūlaka Vimarśa*⁶⁴, he categorizes the systems under two heads: *santānavāda* and *nityavāda*, the latter systems are again categorized under two sub-heads: *Yājñvalkyīya* and *Kāṇādīyadhārā*s. The *Yājñvalkyīya* systems are such systems, which subscribe to a primacy of viṣayi-viṣaya-bheda; that is the subject and the object are two very different elements and cannot be analysed by the same method; Vedānta and Sāṃkhya are two representative systems of this tradition. The *Kāṇādīya* tradition is founded on the primacy of *dharma-dharmi-bheda*, and considers both subject and object to be on the same plane of analysis, where the two are to be analysed by the same method of *dharma-dharmi* analysis. Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā, Non-Advaitic Vedāntic systems belong to this tradition. Though Pahi himself is a Naiyāyika, and will not accept the positions of Vedānta and

⁶³ JGP, p. 112

⁶⁴ Pahi, Biswambhar, 2000, *Vaiśeṣika Padārthavyavasthā Kā Paddhatimūlaka Vimarśa*, Jaipur: Department of Philosophy, University of Rajasthan, pp.1-3

Mukerji, etc., his categorization and the *Yājñvalkyya* tradition is an apt way to understand the idea of depth epistemology. The hierarchy of 'I' and non-I and the centrality of pure knower or foundational consciousness is the Vedāntic core of depth epistemology.

The emphasis on internal criterion, as *aśeṣapramāṇa*, very much reminds, of *tatvāvedaka* and *atatvāvedakapramāṇa* dichotomy in the Vedāntic tradition. The same is corroborated by Pandey's engagement with the intuitive and immediate apprehension of truth, in its various formulations, in Spinoza, Berkeley, post-Kantian idealists, neo-Hegelians. P. S. Burrell, dialectically establishes that in every man, a faculty to discern between non-sensible objects is the ultimate criterion of truth and epistemic matters. Burrell, suggests that in the classical maxim, 'man is a rational animal', the term rational also means inner and spiritual, and as such, an inward witness, is the ultimate adjudicator of epistemic and axiological matters.⁶⁵ *Anubhava*, in Ranade, is clearly immediate and intuitive experience of reality, as noted in the preceding section on Ranade. The central position of 'thought' in Mukerji, is another formulation of the same position, i.e., inner criterion. In R. N. Kaul, who is a neo-Hegelian idealist, an intuitive grasp of immediacy, following Bradley, is the criterion.⁶⁶

Sākṣijñāna and *swasamvitti* occupy the central stage in Pandey, Ranade, and Mukerji. Self-knowledge as the highest form of knowledge and the key concern of epistemic interests of these thinkers, has been noted in the above sections. It is on this league, that Mukerji suggests an Advaitic emendation of Kant. The emphasis on the pivotal role of the inner criterion, 'self', subject as superior to the object or the I/inner being superior to non-I/external, makes the depth epistemology tradition, very clearly, a specific kind of transcendental idealism.

Therefore, it is not inapt to conclude, that the three thinkers are engaging, in their own ways, with epistemic notions of Vedāntic pattern. While, Ranade is contextualizing Upaniṣadic and Vedāntic ideas in terms of the epistemic categories of other systems of classical Indian philosophy, and attempting to show that it is Vedānta which is the culmination of Indian thought; his endeavour is throughout underpinned by his mysticism. A. C. Mukerji magisterially contemporizes the Upaniṣadic and Vedāntic vision and engages the same with the modern Western idealistic traditions. The inflection of Vedānta, in Kant and Western idealism, is not out of a sense of jingoistic superiority, but the result of a thoroughly well-informed acquaintance with the two traditions of thought; wherein a plausible demonstration of the vitality of

⁶⁵ PDE, pp. 46-47

⁶⁶ PDE, p. 14

Vedāntic ideas in making the ‘normative’ epistemological pursuits of the idealist tradition more robust, is something of remarkable significance for both history of ideas as well as for the furtherance of thought. Thus, to my understanding, in simple words, depth epistemology is a program of furthering and revitalizing the Vedāntic epistemology.

We may very clearly discern, the two broad variants of depth epistemology in the three thinkers dealt by us. The exercise by Ranade, which ultimately culminates into a mystic and beatific experience, is visually distinct to the transcendental or foundational analysis of ideas by Mukerji; the latter is clearly more epistemologically-grounded. A perusal of the vast literature left by Ranade, makes it sufficiently clear that the centre stage of Ranade’s writings is not epistemology, while epistemic concerns, idealism to be precise, is the central component of Mukerji’s philosophical program. This is in no way undermining the philosophical stature of Ranade, who was a source of inspiration to Mukerji, as his senior colleague, but simply pointing out that Mukerji is a core epistemologist, while the same is not the primary concern of Ranade. Thus, we get two distinct strands in the DE tradition. For our understanding, we may term Ranade’s enterprise with epistemology, as an epistemology of self-consciousness or an epistemology of beatific mysticism; he himself uses the former of the two terms; whereas Mukerji’s brand may be seen as an epistemology of foundations for an idealistic theory of knowledge. Pandey, in accordance to his belief in ‘openness’ and infinitude of knowledge situation acknowledges, that there may be a variety of depth epistemologies, though its typology is not clearly specified by him.⁶⁷

5. Some Problems with the Conception and Idea of Depth Epistemology

The conception of depth epistemology, its identification with Allahabad school of philosophy, its uniqueness and distinction from the ordinary understanding of the term epistemology, raises numerous problematic issues, which need to be addressed with seriousness, in order to repletethe ideawith a living continuity.

In the history of epistemology, what we ordinarily understand by its connotation, is that it has to do primarily with ‘veridical knowledge’. The naturalist as well as normative epistemologists in the West, the realist as well as the idealist epistemologists in India, concentrated more of their energies, on an analysis of veridical and empirical knowledge which lay in the scope of ‘confirmation’. This raises a serious concern, that an exercise, which in the end falls back upon, *anubhava* or an intuitive insight into reality or an intuitive grasp of immediacy, how far is it proper to ascribe the label of ‘epistemology’ to such a philosophical exercise. This is not

⁶⁷ JGP, p. 118

degrading intuitive knowledge, which has clear importance in the matters of axiology, religion and even constructing metaphysical, logical, and mathematical systems; but its central role in epistemic analysis, is something unusual for most traditional epistemologists. Is not such a venture blurring the distinction between ‘intuitionism’ and ‘epistemology’, if not between ‘mysticism’ and ‘epistemology’.

Clearly, immediate experience is not the only thing in ‘depth epistemology’, the hair-splitting analysis of thought-thing relation supplemented by a lofty and masterly scholarship of both the traditions of thought is very much a hardcore epistemological exercise. However, here we will have to clearly distinguish the latter normative exercise in pursuit of foundations of knowledge from such epistemic exercises wherein an epistemic discussion is just a sidelight phenomenon. On this league, in our understanding, such depth epistemology is very much viable as an idea which seeks to explore the foundations of knowledge. The transcendental analysis of Mukerji is one such exercise; however, in the accepted sense of the term ‘epistemology’ the categorization of Ranade under any rubric of epistemology may not be a proper venture. Ranade’s synthetic hermeneutics of Upaniṣadic corpus, his unparalleled scholarship and understanding of the classical and medieval Indian as well as Greek traditions, deserves veneration; but he is not an epistemologist, in such sense of the term, in which A. C. Mukerji emerges as an astute epistemologist. Thus, while one pattern of epistemic analysis surely deserves the ascription of epistemology, the question still remains serious: should an exercise, which is centred around an intuitive and immediate experience, be termed as an epistemology of any sort. The juxtaposition of ‘depth’ and ‘epistemology’ is therefore in question, in our understanding.

There are however alternate uses of the term epistemology and episteme in recent history of epistemology. Feminist epistemology, Epistemic injustice, are ideas that broaden the notion of epistemology. Veridical knowledge is not the final import of an epistemic analysis, in all these recent conceptions. Such an alternate view, may save the other type of depth epistemology; though in all likelihood such depth epistemologists will not relish the idea, for the reason that these alternative types of epistemologies emphasise relativity and subjectivity, which is clearly not acceptable to the exponents of DE.

The identification of ‘depth epistemology’ with ‘Allahabad School of Philosophy’ also demands some clarification. Will the four thinkers associated with the idea, agree to such categorization? We should again take a recourse to their literature and see if their philosophical program is primarily focused around the idea of depth epistemology. While clearly Ranade’s literature is not concerned primarily with epistemology of any sort, Burrell and Kaul have left very thin literature, barring a few

articles and text books, they did not leave the kind of serious treatises which Ranade and Mukerji left. As noted above, Mukerji is the most rigorous and serious epistemologist in the list of thinkers. In this way, the identification of DE and the Allahabad school of philosophy, is problematic. This problem gets magnified, when we notice the presence of many other serious scholars and philosophers stationed at Allahabad University, who do not have much association with the conception. After Mukerji, S. S. Roy hints towards a foundational idealist theory⁶⁸; and alongside Pandey, Ramlal Singh suggests an Advaitic revision of Kant⁶⁹. A. E. Gough, G. F. W. Thibaut, H. N. Randle, J. G. Jennings, Ganganath Jha were some very outstanding scholars of philosophy in the colonial period, who served the university but have no direct tinge of ‘depth epistemology’. Shashdhar Datta, V. S. Narvane, S. K. Seth and D. N. Dwivedi too, had different concerns in philosophy. Thus, a good number of serious scholars and academic philosophers at Allahabad University were not directly connected with the idea. If the idea is equated with an Allahabad School of Philosophy, then there seems to be less development on this front post-R. N. Kaul, until Pandey edits his anthology, and then again afterwards, not much significant development regarding the conception is visible.

The conception has sadly been greeted by, either an attitude of reverence or an outright rejection. What is required and hoped, is that the successive generations of scholars and philosophers at Allahabad University and elsewhere, take the idea seriously and contribute to its furtherance, by analysing its theoretical nuances and replenishing the debate on the nature of criterion, among other debates in the larger scene of contemporary academic philosophy in India.

⁶⁸ Roy, S. S., 1965, *The Heritage of Śaṅkara*, Allahabad: Udayana Publishers

⁶⁹ Singh, Ramlal, 1978, *An Inquiry Concerning Reason in Kant and Śaṅkara*, Allahabad: Chugh Publications

_____, 1979, “An Advaitic Emendation of Kant: A Study in Comparative Metaphysics”, *Indian Philosophical Quarterly*, Volume 6, No.2, pp. 175-184

UNSOCIAL SOCIABILITY AND OUR PREDISPOSITION TO GOODNESS: KANTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Arup Jyoti Sharma

Abstract

In this paper, I shall expound Kant's opinion about unsocial sociability and our predisposition to goodness through establishing an ethical community. Human nature, according to Kant, is predisposed to competition with other people, getting one's way despite the will of others, and rising to a higher rank or status in the eyes of others. This inclination of human nature is known by Kant as unsocial sociability. It is also known as a 'radical evil,' denoting that within this basic relation of interdependency, there is a tendency to act in an unsociable manner, cross others, and isolate oneself from them at the same time as being dependent on them. With this 'unsocial sociability,' we aim to dominate others with wealth, honour, and power. Kant identified these three things as features of human tendencies that are hard for us to subdue with reason. People make themselves sad and evil when they strive to be better than others. However, in the process, they acquire skills that benefit both human nature and human history and are passed on to subsequent generations.

Keywords: *Unsociable sociability, ecclesiastical faith, reasoned hope, Church, goodness*

Introduction

In this paper, I shall discuss Immanuel Kant's (1724-1804) account of "unsocial sociability" or "the propensity to radical evil in human nature," which are means to state our dependency as well as moral imperfection. Kant first makes the case for human beings' sociability in an antisocial way in his "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim." In the introduction to this essay, Kant gives an affirmation to his rational comprehension of humans, in so far as he states that "human beings, in their endeavors, do not behave merely instinctively, like animals," but he also recognizes that humans also do not "on the whole [act] like rational citizens of the world in accordance with an agreed upon plan..."¹ These remarks highlight the reality that it is very challenging to construct a cogent story of human events causing human

¹ Amélie Oksenberg Rorty and James Schmidt, (2009), (eds.), *Kant's Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Aim: A Critical Guide*, (New York: Cambridge University Press), p.10 [8:17].

freedom and irrationality. In his essay, Kant attempts to show how, despite their foolishness, people can still nurture because of their inherent nature. Kant states at the outset of his argument that the reason each and every living thing has special, species-specific capacities is our unique potential. He claims that an individual cannot fully develop reason; it can only occur in a species.² Kant then finds what he takes to be how nature stimulates such progress, specifically, “antagonism” among humans in society, which he asserts ends up inspiring the human efforts to create lawful order and peaceful living between themselves. Kant describes this antagonism “unsocial sociability,” by which he means humans’ “propensity to enter into society, which, however, is combined with a thoroughgoing resistance that constantly threatens to break up this society.”³ He continues, “The human being has an inclination to become *socialized*, since in such a condition he feels himself as more a human being, i.e., feels the development of his natural predispositions. But he also has a great propensity to *individualize* (isolate) himself, because he simultaneously encounters in himself the unsociable property of willing to direct everything so as to get his own way, and hence expects resistance everywhere because he knows of himself that he inclined on his side toward resistance against others.”⁴

In this paper, I shall explicate Kant’s opinion about unsocial sociability or radical evil and the predisposition to goodness by establishing an ethical community. For the sake of precision, I have divided this paper into the following parts. In PartI, I shall explain in detail unsocial sociability. In PartII, I shall deal with Kant’s exploration of the need for an ethical community and our reasoned hopes. In PartIII, the role of the Church and the Ecclesiastical Faith are expounded in detail.

Part-I

Evil and Sociability

As we have already discussed that unsocial sociability or radical evil is an instinctive and natural tendency of human nature, a tendency to capsize the moral order of incentives in the maxim of action. This tendency is not itself a natural inclination, nor is it a characteristic of these inclinations themselves. As such, this tendencyabolishes the ground of all maxims and founds radical evil in human nature. In saying that the propensity to radical evil in man destroys the ground of all maxims, Kant does not mean that on account of it, all our maxims are evil, but rather only that there exists, *antecedently* to our every adoption of a good or evil maxim, a tendency to prefer the

² *Ibid.*, p. 11 [8:18-19].

³ *Ibid.*, P.13 [8:20].

⁴ *Ibid.*, P.13 [8:20-21].

incentives of inclination to those of duty. Because extirpation could only occur through good maxims and can't occur when the fundamental subjective ground of all maxims is imagined as corrupt, Kant claims that radical evil is 'inextirpable'⁵ by human forces. Human nature's predisposition toward radical evil does not imply that people always follow bad morals or are morally deficient in general. Rather, it only states that we must assume a 'wickedness of the will' in the shape of an inclination toward evil and start with a constant counteraction against it in order to begin our moral endeavors. We do not start from a 'natural innocence.'

Kant's exposition of the tendency to radical evil in human nature can be found in Book One of the "*Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*". According to Kant, the human will be presented with two different kinds of incentives: incentives of reason, which allude to our dignity as independent, reasoning beings, and incentives of inclination, which point to our innate desires. In particular, when these rational incentives assume the shape of moral imperatives that are objectively true, the later incentives always have rational precedence over the former. However, Kant also maintains that humans have an inbuilt tendency to opt out of the logical hierarchy of these incentives, favoring incentives based on inclination over reason and empirical desires over duty-based reasoning.⁶ Kant describes this propensity the unsocial sociability or "radical" evil in human nature, means that "evil can be predicated of man as a species; not that such a quality can be inferred from the concept of his species (that is, of man in general)-for then it would be necessary; but rather that from what we know of man through experience we cannot judge otherwise of him, or, that we may presuppose evil to be subjectively necessary to every man, even to the best. Now this propensity must itself be considered as morally evil...and as we must, after all, ever hold man himself responsible for it, we can further call it a radical innate evil in human nature..."⁷

This can be seen in two smaller forms: 'fragility' (the propensity to break the moral standards we have adopted) and 'impurity,' in addition to the more obvious expression of 'depravity,' which is the direct preference of instinctive impulses over reasoned ideals (the requirement for actual incentives to follow reason's orders).⁸ It is evident in the "bestial" vices of gluttony, inebriation, and untamed behavior as well as

⁵ Allen W. Wood, (1970), *Kant's Moral Religion*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press), pp. 113-14.

⁶ Immanuel Kant, (1793), *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, translated by Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt. H. Hudson, from *The Philosophy of Kant*, edited with an Introduction by Carl J. Friedrich, (New York: The Modern Library, 1977), Book One, Part II, p.376.

⁷ *Ibid*, Part III, pp.379-80.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.376.

the coarse vices of cruelty and brutality toward other people.⁹ However, it also present, perhaps even more so, in the better-kept ‘civilized’ vices that are brought on by human rivalry and jealousy, such as enmity, ingratitude, dishonesty, and malevolent gloating over the bad luck of others.¹⁰

Kant differentiates three “predispositions” in human nature, which are considered to be good in themselves¹¹:

(1) Animality—the origin of our innate urges for both social interaction and the survival of the individual as well as the species;

(2) Humanity—the foundation of our ability to define goals based on logic and to accept the culmination of our impulses as a complete goal known as ‘happiness’; and

(3) Personality—the basis of our moral accountability—the capacity to make and abide by laws solely via reason.

These three predispositions are good in themselves. We have discovered, nevertheless, that two of them are likewise incapable of becoming the origin of evil. Even if animality may have vices grafted onto it, animality cannot be the genesis of these vices because evil is derived by comparing incentives and choosing one over the other—instinctive impulses alone. Similarly, personality cannot be the source of evil because morality alone is an incentive.¹² The source of evil, thus, should lie in our predisposition to humanity, which comprises “a self-love which is physical and yet *involves comparison* (for which reason is required); that is to say, we judge ourselves happy or unhappy only by making comparison with others.”¹³ The ‘comparative’ nature of human reason stems from the fact that it evaluates an individual's satisfaction based only on how they compare to other rational beings who also make choices and seek happiness. This self-love gives rise to the desire to be valuable in other people's concern. According to Kant, this starts out as just a wish to be on level with others, but with time it becomes "an unjustified need to acquire such superiority for oneself over others" due to our fear that others may try to take advantage of us.¹⁴ It is from this that the greatest vices of hidden or overt animosity toward everyone we perceive as foreign to us can be grafted, namely, competition and jealousy. Therefore, our desire for happiness—which gives rise to the concept of a universal good that includes all of our

⁹ *Ibid*, p.373.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.381.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.372.

¹² *Ibid*, p.373.

¹³ *Ibid*.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

impulses—is a creation of logical humans rather than an animal instinct. Its primary purpose is to enable us to make competitive self in comparison with another. This is an unsociable propensity since it pushes us to strive for unfair supremacy over other people who are our equals in terms of reason. In the fourth proposition of the “*Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent*”¹⁵, Kant claims that within this basic relation of interdependency, there is a stimulating desire to be dependent on others (for the purpose of feeling confident than them), in addition to a drive to act in an unsociable way, cross people, and separate oneself from them. We want honor, power, and fortune through unsociable sociality—that is, dominance over others based on their viewpoint, their desire, or their fear. These three things are the matters of social passions, or our impulses that are hard to rationalize away.¹⁶ In the “*Critique of Practical Reason*”, *Unsociable Sociability* appears as *self-conceit*, meaning thereby that, it is to regard our impulses as legislative rather than the moral rule of reason, placing a higher value on ourselves than our adherence to the moral law. In his words, “...our nature as sensuous being so characterized that the material of the faculty of desire (objects of the inclination, whether of hope or fear) first presses upon us; and we find our pathologically determined self, although by its maxims it is wholly incapable of giving universal laws, striving to give its pretensions priority and to make them acceptable as first and original claims....This propensity to make the subjective determining grounds of one’s choice into an objective determining ground of the will, in general, can be called self-love; when it makes itself legislative and an unconditional practical principle, it can be called self-conceit.”¹⁷

The progress of our logical powers in society is inevitably accompanied by the unsociable sociality that is inherent in human nature. One way to interpret the Christian story of temptation & salvation is as a struggle between the moral precept and the idea that morality should yield to desire. The narrative of the sin of Adam and his banishment from Eden is told in the biblical narrative of the Fall. This story serves as a metaphor for how moral principles can give way to primal impulses.¹⁸ But Christianity also leaves for the way of redemption. As Kant argues, “For man, therefore, who despite a corrupted heart possesses a goodwill. There remains a hope of a return to the good from which he has strayed.”¹⁹ One interpretation of the Adamic

¹⁵ Immanuel Kant, *Idea for a Universal History with Cosmopolitan Intent*, translated by Carl J. Friedrich, from *The Philosophy of Kant*, edited with an Introduction by Carl J. Friedrich (New York: The Modern Library, 1977), p.120.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp.120-21.

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, (1956), *Critique of Practical Reason*, translated by Lewis White Beck, (New York: Liberal Arts Press), p. 77

¹⁸ Immanuel Kant, (1793), *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Op Cit, p. 391

¹⁹*Ibid*, p. 392.

Myths' story of temptation and redemption is as a representation of the interplay among morality, knowledge, and freedom. If the myth of the Fall is understood as a story that symbolically symbolizes our perception of evil as freely chosen but still rejectable, it can be rehabilitated rather than rejected.²⁰

But why does Kant refer to the role of Holy texts or scripture? Probably, the reason is that he sees scripture as a symbol of morality, and he asserts that “reason can be found not only to be compatible with scripture but also at one with it.”²¹ He emphasizes the value of scripture by saying that we should look for a morally instructive message in its tales. As he says, “Since...the moral improvement of men constitutes the real end of all religion of reason, it will comprise the highest principle of all Scriptural exegesis.”²²

According to Kant, evil is consequently a byproduct of human reason operating within the social context that allows for its optimal development. The social aspect of the solution is found in the solidarity of people who come together to build moral communities.

The source of evil, Kant concludes, is *social*. The struggle against it, he argues, if it is to be effective, must therefore also be social. According to Kant, if we view the fight against evil as an individualistic one, with each isolated person valiantly battling against his or her own proclivity for evil, then we are only creating a mechanism for the disconcerting collapse of morality. In his final two books of the *Religion*, Kant reiterates and emphasizes this anti-individualistic thesis on the fight against evil, arguing that “...we have a duty which is *sui generis*, not of men towards men, but of the human race toward itself. For the species of rational beings is objectively, through the idea of reason, destined for a social goal, namely, the promotion of the highest good as a social good.”²³ He further says, “...the highest good cannot be achieved merely by the exertion of the single individual toward his own moral perfection, but instead requires a union of such individuals into a whole working toward the same end – a system of well-disposed human beings, in which and through whose unity alone the highest moral good can come to pass.”²⁴

²⁰ Onorra O’Neill, ‘Kant on Reason and Religion’, *The Tanner Lecture on Human Values*, Delivered at Harvard University, April 1-3, 1996, pp.295-96.

²¹ Immanuel Kant, (1793), *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Op Cit, Preface to the Second Edition.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ *Ibid*, Book Three, p.407.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

Part-II

Predisposition to Goodness through Establishing an Ethical Community

The moral assessment of human beings is the estimation of our dispositions, which Kant considers are mainly the outcome of our choices. But these choices are conditioned by certain predispositions towards good and tendencies toward evil that when reflected together, assist in clarifying in more detail the unsociable sociability in human beings. These inclinations and dispositions are particular to humans and essential to them. They are inseparable from humanity and cannot be eradicated.²⁵ Kant asserts that we are inherently good. This predisposition to goodness can be found through establishing an ethical community; which may result in eradicating evil in human nature. But the question arises: Why does Kant consider battling evil in human nature through an ‘ethical community’? He will answer that through the establishment of an ethical community, we may assume, postulate, *and hope* for the likelihood of introducing moral purpose into the society. According to O’Neill, “This bare structure of hope—the canon of hope—can be expressed in a range of vocabularies whose permissible articulations of hope will be accessible to different people, who may hope for varying conceptions of grace or of progress that might bridge the gap between moral intention and empirical outcomes.”²⁶ Behind this variety of hopes, lies a common commitment to action-social as well as individual. This commitment to action lies in the persuasion of the greatest good (*summum bonum*) in our life, and accordingly, it is also our victory of *good* over *evil* principles. Kant writes, “As far as we can see, therefore, the sovereignty of the good principle is attainable, so far as men can work towards it, only through the establishment and spread of a society in accordance with, and for the sake of, the laws of virtue, a society whose task and duty it is to rationally impress these laws in all their scope upon the entire human race. For only thus can we hope for a victory of the good over the evil principle.”²⁷

According to Kant, a union of men under merely moral laws may be called an ethical society.²⁸ It is that society, which we need to struggle against evil is one that “progressively organizes” all human beings so that they gradually become a cosmopolitan community of this kind. Kant also names this sort of society an ‘ethical community’ or ‘ethical commonwealth’.

²⁵ Christopher Arroyo, (2017), “Such Crooked Timber: Kant’s Philosophical Anthropology,” *Kant’s Ethics and the Same Sex Marriage Debate-An Introduction*, Springer International Publishing, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-55733-5, P. 54.

²⁶ Onora O’Neill, ‘Kant on Reason and Religion’, *The Tanner Lecture on Human Values*, Op Cit, p. 304.

²⁷ Immanuel Kant, (1793), *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Op Cit, Book Three, p.404.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Using the four headings from Kant's table of categories, Allen Wood illustrates the four characteristics of an ethical community.²⁹

Quality (one of the incentives for participating in it): *Purity*, based only on the rational and moral incentives of reason

Quantity (of the community itself): *Unity*, ensured by the universality of its extent

Modality: *Unchangeableness* (of its constitution), but independence and honesty of its mode of administration.

Relation (between its members): *Freedom* acknowledges the absence of coercive government, whether it comes from a legal state or a group of authorities inside the ethical society.

Kant argues that the ideal way to conceptualize the ethical society is as "a people of God" administered by the moral principles of virtue. He makes a distinction between the author of a law, whose will enforces the duty to observe it, and the legislator, who gives an order and may inflict positive or negative consequences. Kant argues that the idea of the rational will of every rational being as such is the only thing that can be regarded as the author of a moral law. However, if the moral law is to be considered a public law, meaning that it applies to a real community of humans, then only God's will can be considered the appropriate legislator. As members of a moral community with God as its governing authority, we ought to regard our duties as mandates from above.³⁰

According to Kant, doubts about whether or not the summum bonum can actually be achieved will inevitably arise. However, he believes that we can overcome these doubts by having faith in God as the ultimate legislator and world governor, whose perfect will, absolute power, and highest knowledge make the greatest good possible. In his words, "The idea of the highest good, inseparably bound up with the purely moral disposition, cannot be realized in man himself...yet he discovers within himself the duty to work for this end. Hence he finds himself impelled to believe in the cooperation or management of a moral Ruler of the world, by means of which this goal can be reached. And now there opens up before him the abyss of a mystery regarding what God may do..., whether indeed *anything* in general, and if so, *what* in particular should be ascribed to God."³¹

²⁹ Allen Wood, "Religion, Ethical Community and the Struggle Against Evil," quoted from [http://www.stanford.edu/~allenw/webpapers/Ethical Community.doc](http://www.stanford.edu/~allenw/webpapers/Ethical%20Community.doc), retrieved on 15/07/16.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Immanuel Kant, (1793), *Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Op Cit, p.408.

However, the idea of the ethical commonwealth dwindles markedly in man's hands. Therefore, Kant holds that we must hold a *visible church* to guarantee our moral aspirations.

Part-III

Church and the Ecclesiastical Faith

Kant's idea of an ethical community is based on institutions of organized religion, particularly in the Christian church. According to him, "An ethical commonwealth under divine moral legislation is a *church* which, so far as it is not an object of possible experience, is called the *church invisible*, a mere idea of the union of all the righteous under direct and moral divine world-government, an idea serving all as the archetype of what is to be established by men. The *visible church* is the actual union of men into a whole which harmonizes with that ideal."³² As far as it is possible for man to bring about the moral kingdom of God on earth, that is the true (visible) church.

The following are the necessities of a visible church³³. They are—

1. *Universality*, and therefore its numerical oneness, requires that it has the quality that, despite being split and holding differing opinions about important matters, it is nevertheless based on such fundamental principles as are required to bring about a general unification in a single church, thus avoiding sectarian divisions.
2. Its *nature* or quality is *purity*, that is, a union liberated from the absurdity of superstition and the craziness of fanaticism, and driven only by moral principles.
3. Its *relation* to the freedom principle; the church's external relationship to political authority as well as the internal relationships among its members, both of which are republican in nature. Thus, there can be neither hierarchy nor illuminatism, which is a form of special inspiration democracy in which an individual's inspiration might vary from another's at their discretion.
4. Its *modality*, "the *unchangeableness* of its constitution, with the exception that incidental rules pertaining to its administration alone may be altered in accordance with time and situation; to this aim, it must already have *a priori* established principles in the concept of its goal within it.

³² *Ibid*, p.410.

³³ *Ibid*.

An ethical commonwealth in the shape of a church serves as a mere *representative* of a city of God and is based on a set of fundamental ideas that are unlike those found in a political constitution because it is not democratic or *monarchical* under a patriarch or pope, nor is it *aristocratic* under bishops and other prelates (as of sectarian *Illuminati*). The best way to explain it is as a family or household headed by a common, yet invisible, moral Father whose Holy Son” understands His will while still having a blood relationship with every member of the household.³⁴

Additionally, every church's constitution stems from a Historical (Revealed) Faith, also known as Ecclesiastical Faith; this is best communicated through a Holy Scripture. According to Kant, “the authority of scripture...as...*at present* the only instrument *in the most enlightened portion of the world* for the union of all men into one church, constitutes the ecclesiastical faith, which, as the popular faith, cannot be neglected, because no doctrine based on reason alone seems to the people qualified to serve as an unchangeable term.”³⁵ He also further says, “It is also possible that the union of men into one religion cannot feasibly be brought about or made abiding without a holy book and an ecclesiastical faith based on it.”³⁶

The foundation of ecclesiastical faiths is a biblical authority that is protected and interpreted by a hierarchy of priests and specialized scholars. By various disreputable means, including fervent claims to mystical insight or empirical divine revelation, superstitious fears, fetishistic attempts to use fictitious magic and sorcery or petitionary prayers to obtain divine assistance or favor, and the "counterfeit service" (Afterdienst) of God through various morally bankrupt rituals and mandatory observances, their "priestcraft" (Plaffentum) rules over minds of people. Kant believed that the historical responsibility of defeating good against evil had been given to organized religion. He looks forward to the day when the true religious kernel emerges from this empirical shell, throws off its fetishistic and superstitious attachments, does away with "the humiliating separation between people and clergy," and approaches the state of a true ethical community.

Concluding Remarks

This essay's aim is to explain Kant's theory of human nature's unsocial sociability and how the formation of an ethical community might help to overcome it. Unsocial sociability, sometimes known as the predisposition to radical evil in human nature, refers to people's inclination to join a society but also to actively fight it, posing a persistent threat to its dissolution. According to Kant, evil is a byproduct of human

³⁴ *Ibid*, p.411.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p.412.

³⁶ *Ibid*.

reason operating within the social context that fosters its optimal development. The solution also lies in the social realm, where we may think of the unity of human beings forms an ethical society. According to Kant, we might assume, conjecture, and expect that moral meaning can be introduced into the universe and that our inclinations toward goodness can be realized through the creation of an ethical community.

THEORIES OF JUSTICE AND THE EPISTEMIC FOUNDATIONS OF PLURALISM

Md. Inamur Rahaman

Abstract

The conception of justice as the “first virtue of social institutions” (Rawls, 1971) and the “virtue of soul” (Plato, 1956) puts forth two different points of view in the realm of social-political thought. From one point of view, the demand for objective principles of justice at the institutional level presupposes a particular epistemic framework where universal/objective truth and specific methods to reach it have been given importance. I would delve into arguing that the presuppositions to reach objectivity in the epistemic and the political realm are quite similar. It is the epistemological foundation of Descartes that facilitates the political to seek objectivity in its principles. On the other hand, by proposing justice as the “virtue of soul”, Plato proposes an epistemology that is grounded in his notion of the Good. The individual in these two epistemological and political systems engages with the world from two completely different approaches. In this paper, I will explore the relationship of these epistemic frameworks with their respective theories of justice and consider the scope of pluralism.

Keywords: *Justice, Knowledge, mind-body dualism, Pluralism*

Introduction: the Rawlsian framework of Justice

The conception of justice as “the first virtue of social institutions” and the “virtue of soul” not only sets apart the understanding of justice in social-political thought but also presupposes two fundamentally different epistemological systems. This paper will largely be divided into four sections – first, how Rawls reached an objective principle of justice, second, how his epistemic presuppositions are provided by Cartesian dualism in reaching certain knowledge and how they are founded on similar presuppositions. Third, we would involve finding out a different epistemic and political approach in Plato’s *The Republic*. And, the fourth is the concluding section. The underlying concern of all these three sections would be to understand whether and how these approaches are allowing plural ways of engagement with the world.

One cannot overlook the contribution that John Rawls (1971) has made to modern political thought through the concept of ‘fairness’ as the first virtue of institutions. It epitomizes the very nature of institutions as the bearer of the

responsibility to assure justice in society. Individuals have been understood as agents of obedience or conformity to the principles of justice for their welfare in society. To understand the function and the role of the individual in the Rawlsian framework of justice we need a little introduction to his method of arriving at principles of justice. Rawls is one of the strong advocates of social contract theory. His unique articulation of the contract took the very notion of the social contract to its optimal height. No one but Rawls, from the social contract tradition, proposed that the very basis of the contract has to be fair to arrive at a just principle.

The idea of the contract, for Rawls, is to connect the individual conceptions of welfare/justice with that of the first principle of justice through a “procedure of construction” (Rawls 1980: p. 516). The idea of a contract is to arrive at principles of justice for the basic structure of society. For that, the need is to construct a procedure through which every participant with their particular/unique conceptions of good can reach the most reasonable principle of justice. Rawls believes that the procedure of reaching a just principle should be such that even if participants holding different notions of justice will still judge the institution governed by the decided principle as just and no element of arbitrariness is present there (Rawls 1971: p. 5).

Let’s explore a little about how Rawls arrives at a principle of justice¹. To understand it, we need a discussion of Rawls’ notion of person/individual and his notion of morality. To make the procedure just, he assumes that we need to construct a hypothetical mechanism called the “veil of ignorance”. Whatever a person’s identity can be for functioning in the world cannot be retained inside the veil of ignorance and we need to stick to a bare minimum. Different substantial features of human beings as normal persons e.g., position in society, belongingness, intellectual capacity, situatedness, etc. are not imperative for the process of arriving at a principle of justice. Their particular distinct ways of engagement with and in the world are not relevant and are not supposed to be present as a form of knowledge inside the veil of ignorance. Rawls broadens this condition by stating that “I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities” (Rawls 1971: p. 12) inside the veil of ignorance. Rawls (1980) validates this exercise and states that he is following Kantian Constructivism where the idea is that the conception of the person needs to be specified in a “reasonable procedure of

¹ Rawls affirms that to reach an objective principle, the requirement is to follow a procedure or means which is fair/just. So, for Rawls, the means must be just to secure just ends. And, in the Rawlsian framework the underlying understanding is that once the means is secured just, justice will subsequently be achieved without involving any extra effort to make the ends just. For him, the means/process/procedure is imperative for the attainment of principles of justice.

construction” (Rawls 1980: p. 516) wherefrom the principles of justice could be produced.

However, Rawls affirms that an individual inside the veil of ignorance will be a rational person. They will be rational beings with a sense of justice (Rawls 1971: p.12). Further, the parties will have an understanding of political affairs, “principles of economic theory”, “laws of human psychology”, “basis of social organization” and “general information” etc. (Rawls 1971: p. 137). Rawls argues that the restrictions on knowledge of the world and know-how about engagement in the world are of “fundamental importance” for a definite theory of justice. Thus, the veil of ignorance is the only viable way to arrive at an objective or universal principle of justice. Individuals with their rational capacity, isolated from the concrete knowledge of the world, would be able to reach just principles.

Through these conditions, individuals will be deciding the principles of justice inside the veil of ignorance. Rawls defines rationality inside the veil of ignorance in a narrow sense. He states that “the concept of rationality must be interpreted as far as possible in the narrow sense, standard in economic theory, of taking the most effective means to given ends” (1971: p. 14). To decide about the fundamental nature of society, people need to be capable of finding out what is the most reasonable or effective way for a universal principle of justice. Rawls gives us certain hints to understand what might be considered the most effective. He states that the rational persons inside the veil of ignorance will be inclined to choose “a wider to a narrower liberty and opportunity, and a greater rather than a smaller share of wealth and income” (Rawls 1971: p. 396). A person there needs to function with the reasoning of accumulating liberty and wealth as much as possible.

Apart from the discussion of the person and rationality, Rawls talks about a thin notion of good. Rawls tries to define it by stating that “thus something’s being good is it’s having the properties that it is rational to want in things of its kind, plus further elaborations depending on the case” (Rawls 1971: p. 405). Rawls puts forth the understanding of “Goodness as rationality” whereby good is being understood in terms of something rational to have or want in conduct or person. Rawls situates goodness within the framework of rationality.² He locates this kind of understanding in Kant and states that “Kantian constructivism holds that moral objectivity is to be understood in

² Rawls maintains his notion of the thin theory of good inside the veil of ignorance. But he also talks about a full theory of good that will apply once we have the principles of justice and right. And, he believes that this thin theory of good needs to be developed into a full theory of good (Rawls 1971: p. 435). Thus, here, I am sticking to the thin theory of good by assuming that the full theory will not radically differ from the present one.

terms of *suitably constructed social point of view* that all can accept” (Rawls 1980: 519).³ So, universal moral principles need to be first, rational and second, crafted/constructed in such a way that it can accommodate plural notions of morality. Rawls’ notion of morality can be understood in this way – an action or person can be considered as good if it meets what is rational to want in them. Human virtues like kindness, being courageous, truthful, honesty, being righteous or just etc. can be seen as good if these virtues are rational to want in a person. Whether being a kind person is a “good thing” or not depends on whether being kind is the rational thing to expect in a person or not (Rawls 1971: p. 397). That too needs to be assessed within the “more than less” kind of rationality.

From this “impartial atmosphere”, Rawls argues that the participants in the original position will choose a principle of equal share as no one will rationally agree to less than the other. And, no one can propose a plan advantageous only for him/her and cannot express a distinct concern because they lack any substantial information about themselves. Inside the veil of ignorance, with the rationality of accumulating more than less, the “mutually disinterested”⁴ person with a sense of justice, thus, will unanimously arrive at the two principles of justice.⁵ Amartya Sen (2009) notifies that Rawls has not provided sufficient reasons as to why only the specific principle of justice will be reached and no other alternative fair principle of justice. He overlooks and limits the possibility of plural conceptions of justice.

Once the principles are there, individuals need not reflect on any alternative way to be just in society and strictly conform to the principles as they unanimously believe that the very procedure to reach these principles is fair and just. The underlying idea is that if the institution is framed through objectively just policies, compliance with it is necessary, and they have no reason not to do so. Hence, people also become just in their daily affairs. In this procedural form of justice if the procedure (means) is just it is presumed that the outcome (ends) will be just. Objectively just principles through a just procedure will suffice to design the entire structure of institutions as just.

³ Italics are mine.

⁴ Rawls makes a special assumption about human nature that inside the veil of ignorance people will be mutually disinterested in each other. He even calls it ‘restricted altruism’. The idea is that people will be least concerned about the other. Or, it can be said that Rawls believes that rationality provides us with the capacity to validate our conceptions, thus considering others’ concerns for erecting a universal principle is not necessary.

⁵ The two principles of justice namely the Liberty Principle and the Difference Principle. The former is concerned with equal distribution of Liberty and primary goods among every member of society and the latter is about how economic inequality can be addressed in society and income opportunities should be equally available to all.

In principle, people, individually, are not required to strive to become kind, honest, truthful, just,⁶ selfless, and courageous in their daily lives. What they essentially need is to be in strict compliance or conformity to the principles of justice and that is all human society needs for preserving justice in society. Justice has been understood as compliance with an objective just principle, leaving less or we can say no scope for any alternative way an individual can be unbiased, fair or just. Plural ways of engaging or understanding the world and plural reasons for justice have been cast away. Systematically Rawls diminishes the scope to be just in plural ways. It restricts the individual in such a way that the individual cannot deviate from the intended track.

As a dominant understanding of justice, this notion of justice is reflected in present society and our mode of being. For example, the State never expects or asks an individual to be a kind or honest person.⁷ It only requires us to comply with the State policies/laws/regulations etc. An individual's being greedy or corrupt internally is not problematic for the Rawlsian framework of justice till the point the individual is conforming to the established principles of the institution. A person who functions on the rationality of 'more than less' and accumulation of more primary goods as a method of survival, illegal income or being corrupt with impunity, hardly seems to be problematic for him/her. This way of functioning broadens the prospects of living a better life. Reports like "the world's richest 1% own 43% of all global financial assets"⁸ and "the top 1 per cent (among the 30% Indians who own more than 90% of the total wealth) own nearly 40.6 per cent of the total wealth in India"⁹ exemplifies the level of accumulation in our world. The financial scams, not only in India but throughout the globe that come out are among the characteristics of this way of functioning. Theoretically, the dual nature i.e., one in private, one in public, of being has not been seen as problematic in this Rawlsian understanding of justice. This approach to justice not only diminishes the scope of plural ways of understanding justice but also simultaneously seeks to establish this mode of functioning universally.

⁶ Just not in the sense of how Rawls has affirmed it but in other alternative ways of being just e.g., showing courage against injustice can also be counted as a way of being just.

⁷ In the present context it seems that the task of inculcating values like kindness or honesty is left to religion. The modern States consider it unnecessary.

⁸ Report by Oxfam International titled "Inequality Inc.: How corporate power divides our world and the need for a new era of public action" (2024) accessed through <https://oi-files-d8-prod.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2024-01/Davos%202024%20Report-%20English.pdf>.

⁹ Report by Oxfam India titled "Survival of the Richest: The India Story" (2023) accessed through https://d1ns4ht6ytuzzo.cloudfront.net/oxfamdata/oxfamdatapublic/2023-01/India%20Supplement%202023_digital.pdf?kz3wav0jbhJdvkJ.fK1rj1k1_5ap9FhQ.

Descartes's Dualism: Rawlsian presuppositions

Instead of focusing on the implications of this liberal notion of justice that Rawls puts forth, we shall dig deeper to understand the foundation of the justifications for this kind of approach. We can trace the idea of objectivity that only our rationality can provide and subsequently, the presuppositions to reach objective knowledge in the philosophy of Descartes. Rawls has deployed a method where to be impartial/fair individuals need to detach themselves from the world. In this section, we will delve into Descartes's framework to reach certainty in knowledge i.e., objectivity in the realm of knowledge.¹⁰

In his classic text *Meditations on First Philosophy*,¹¹ the objective of Descartes was to reach knowledge which is having certainty like it is having in mathematical knowledge. And, to arrive at that kind of knowledge Descartes deployed the method of scepticism. Descartes not only doubts the existence of the world and his *self* but he is doubtful about any notion of existence as if it is a delusion. In the second *Meditation*, he establishes one thing; that even if one can doubt everything, one cannot doubt the very act of doubting. Thus, he concludes that the very act of doubting/thinking affirms one's existence – “*I am thinking, therefore I exist*”. Proceeding further, in analyzing this “I” in “I am thinking” which is self-validating, Descartes found that this “I” contains ‘*ideas*’ about different things like substance, number, duration etc. But it also contains certain ideas which cannot be created by this “I” like ideas of infinite or omniscience. So, Descartes asserts that something exists outside of this “I” and that is God who has created ideas like omniscience, infinite etc. in us. Taking one step ahead, Descartes makes a distinction between *intellection* and *imagination* and defines imagination as “nothing other than a certain application of the knowing faculty (i.e., “I”) to a body intimately present to that faculty, and therefore existing” (*Meditations*, p. 51).¹² Apart from the existence of “I” and God, Descartes approves of the existence of the body, closely associated with “I” and it represents material quality like the extension. The “I” which, for Descartes, is the mind only is not dependent on the body for its existence and for understanding things as well. For *distinct* and *clear* knowledge of anything in the world, the mind “turns itself some way towards itself”, on the other hand, in the case of imagination “it turns itself towards the body” (*Meditations*, p. 52).

¹⁰ Whereas Rawls was trying to reach objectivity at the political or moral level.

¹¹ I have consulted the translation by Michael Moriarty for Descartes' *Meditation on First Philosophy* (1641). From now on I will only use *Meditations* for this reference - Descartes, Rene. (1641). *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *Oxford World Classics: Meditations on First Philosophy – with selection from the Objections and Replies* (2008), trans. Michael Moriarty, New York: Oxford University Press.

¹² Bracketing is mine

Descartes states that the body “in so far as it is only an extended thing and not a thinking thing, it is certain that I am really distinct from my body, and can exist without it” (*Meditations*, p. 55). So, the “I” in “*I am thinking, therefore I am*” refers to the mind or reason alone and the body is something which “I” is associated with. Afterwards, Descartes states that “true knowledge of these belongs to the mind alone, but not to the composite (mind-body) entity”¹³ (*Meditations*, p. 58). And, the body always produces “obscure” and “confused” (*Meditations*, pp. 56-57) knowledge, hence, problematic for getting certain knowledge. This establishes for Descartes that certain knowledge is possible only by the mind alone.

The above discussion presents before us, that to arrive at objective knowledge, we may have to ignore certain aspects of ourselves which prevent us from reaching to truth. The body is something which prevents us from reaching certain knowledge. For Descartes, knowledge arising out of the mind-body union is *obscure* and it is the body that contaminates the process of getting accurate knowledge. Descartes in this process of reaching epistemic certainty not only discards the role of the body but also diminishes any possibility of matter to contribute in seeking truth. Body and Matter or World both share the same quality i.e., extension, and therefore, they have no role in acquiring objective truth. The body is something which situates us in the world, allowing us to engage with the world. Separation of mind from the body also implies a separation of mind from the world. The separation allows the mind to work/function independently and makes it possible to construct the world independently, objectively and impartially.¹⁴ Thus, the very presence of the body itself is being seen as something which lays the ground for difference/plurality of understanding as opposed to objectivity, to be there. By the very logic of this duality, Descartes removes the scope of pluralism and establishes objectivity in the sphere of knowledge.

Independence of the mind either to reach certainty in knowledge (Descartes) or to reach objective principles of justice (Rawls) has faced problems either in the form of body or in the form of body politic. In both cases, the body or situatedness of the body in the world has been seen as something irrelevant to the exercise at hand. A rational person, as a self-validating subject, negates external elements, either body or situatedness of the body in the world, to have any role in any sort of intellectual exercise whether it is to find out an objective truth or the principle of justice. In both cases by ignoring one aspect i.e., body, too much emphasis has been given to the other i.e., mind/reason. It can be argued that though both Descartes and Rawls follow similar

¹³ Bracketing is mine

¹⁴ Impartially in the sense that the world/matter cannot influence the “I” from outside and make knowledge obscure.

presuppositions to reach objectivity in the epistemic and the political sphere respectively, Rawls can take this approach forward in the political realm only because Descartes has provided the understanding of the very possibility of it. The epistemic criterion of truth is decisive for the method to be followed in politics. The understanding of what constitutes knowledge sets the method to be followed in the domain of ethics and politics. The conception of a person detached from the world would have not been possible had Descartes not divided it into two – mind and body/matter/world. Thus, the whole agenda of bringing the idea of a “veil of ignorance” is to reach objective principles by casting away the body politic. Rawls considers the body politic as irrelevant to the task at hand. Rawls relies on reason only to arrive at just principles in politics and is similar to Descartes who emphasizes the “I” which is mind only and not the composite of mind-body to arrive at certain knowledge.

Justice in *The Republic*: An alternative way of engagement

Though the present discourse is largely dominated by this modern-liberal-rational worldview, it is not the case that there is no alternative way to address this issue in the history of Western political thought. The conception of justice that Plato advocated in *The Republic*¹⁵ invites a deeper engagement to observe the alternative. In this section, we will try to understand Plato’s take on justice and how it can provide a better framework of justice.

The primary inquiry in *The Republic* is regarding the nature and definition of justice. In sharp contrast to Rawls, Plato understands justice as the virtue of the human soul and not of the institution or something related to the regulative principles of the institutions. The locus of justice is the human soul; something which one cannot treat as external to one’s being but essentially internal to one’s being. Externality of justice can be understood in terms of acts which conform to the principle of justice which never requires a person to preserve justice in his/her being. Plato explains how a person can be internally just.

Plato makes an analogy between the individual and the State. He states that the individual soul is divided into three parts i.e., Wisdom, Spirit or Courage, and Appetitive part and similarly the State institution also represents three virtues i.e., Wisdom, Courage and Temperance (*The Republic*: pp. 262-281). In the context of a just state, wisdom part represents the highest guardians of the city, courage is the preservative part represented by soldiers, temperance, not like other parts, is “a kind of good orderand mastery of certain pleasures and desires” and “it is stretched right

¹⁵ I will be using translation of Plato’s *The Republic* by W.H.D Rouse (1956).

through the whole city bringing all the strings into concord” (*The Republic*: p. 266). And, Plato states that “here is a thing which makes it possible for the other to be there at all, and it preserves them there as long as it is in them” and that is justice which prevails in every part (*The Republic*: p. 270). Justice, here, has been understood as doing one’s duty and by following that State will be preserving harmony between each part of the institution. Temperance has not been exclusively located in any part but applied to all the parts of the soul. Harmony among the three parts of the State is the condition for qualifying a State as just. Doing one’s duty has a larger meaning for Plato. It emphasizes the realization of one’s duty and performing it.

Plato, then, states that “... a just man then will not differ from the just city” (*The Republic*: p.272). And, by asserting the relation between the individual and the State, he states that “we must remember then that each one will be doing his own business, and will be just, when each part of him will be doing its own business in him” (*The Republic*: p. 281). Subsequently, Plato asserts that the reason part should rule as it has wisdom and “forethought for the whole soul” (*The Republic*: p. 282). The courage part and the appetitive part will show temperance by submitting their will to reason. Regarding the spirit part, Plato talked about proper education so that mastery over an individual’s aptitude can be identified. Temperance has been understood as mastery over oneself and that applies to all three parts of the soul. Plato states that we may consider a soul temperate “whenever the ruler and the two ruled are of one mind and agree that the reasoning part ought to rule” (*The Republic*: p. 282). Justice, within the individual soul, is again understood similarly to the institution. It is doing one’s duty properly and not being intrusive in another’s job. That’s the only way to maintain harmony between the parts of the soul. A harmonious soul has been understood as the underlying condition of justice. And, this harmony between each part of the soul enables a person to be just and to act justly. A person’s doing will be followed by a person’s being and not vice-versa.¹⁶ Plato also describes what injustice is and that is relational with the notion of justice. And he states

“Surely it must be faction among these three, and meddling in many businesses, and meddling in others’ business, and revolt of one part of the soul against the whole in order that this part may rule in the soul though it is not proper for it to do so,..” (*The Republic*: p. 284-285).

So, for Plato injustice is not the failure to conform to certain objective rules or to fail to act in certain predetermined ways, for him it indicates a state of being where an

¹⁶ For a detail discussion on harmonious soul see Dahl (1991).

individual is not in a position to perform just action in society. Being unjust reflects that one has deviated from the virtues of the soul. He proposes the understanding that-

“to implant justice is to settle the parts of the soul so as to rule and be ruled together according to nature; to implant injustice is to settle things so that one part rules and one part is ruled one by another contrary to nature?”
(*The Republic*: p. 285)

Injustice has been understood as deprivation of the virtues of the soul and not performing one's duty and that applies to both levels i.e., individual and institution. However, the primary concern for establishing justice in society or State is to make sure that an individual is internally just. If an individual cannot maintain or preserve internal harmony, justice cannot be reflected in the larger body. Here, Plato does not consider reason alone or any other part independently would be able to preserve justice in one's being or in the State. Harmony among each part, their togetherness, will establish and preserve a just soul and a just State i.e., microcosm and macrocosm reflecting one another.

The implication of this notion of justice can be understood through the crisis that the present society is facing. Connecting the example in the context of Rawlsian justice, the problem of corruption can only be addressed effectively if and only if one's being and doing are consistent with each other. Accumulation of wealth in the hands of few which creates huge inequality in our society can be challenged with an alternative rationality, not the resource-oriented one. Individual needs to be more empathetic, not only a rule-follower, in addressing issues of injustice in society. Plato provides us with the ground where a person's 'doing' will never conflict with one's 'being' as the former follows from the latter and their being just is not confined to rule-following like in Rawls.

One question remains – how to maintain this harmonious state of being? In response to this question, Plato brings in the discussion of epistemology and his metaphysics for an enriched understanding of justice. In contemporary times, justice has largely been seen as solely a political virtue and the discussion of it is only relevant in debates on the functionary of the State. Like, for Rawls, identifying a conception of justice is “not primarily an epistemological problem” (Rawls 1980: 519). However, Plato believed that an understanding of justice completely devoid of the notion of truth is problematic. One cannot preserve the harmony of the soul by not knowing things as it is or thing-it-itself, the *forms*. Making a distinction between a person who is awake and a person who is dreaming, he states that knowledge of things without the knowledge of things-in-itself makes a person a dreamer. One who can understand the

distinction between things e.g., beautiful things, and things-it-itself e.g., beauty itself, and knows how things partake in things-in-itself is a man of knowledge.

To have a better understanding, he makes a distinction between “ignorance”, “opinion” and “knowledge” (*The Republic*: pp, 323-324). Knowledge belongs to what is, the real; ignorance belongs to what is not, the unreal and opinion is “darker than knowledge and brighter than ignorance” (*The Republic*: p. 324). Further, “understanding” is something which rests between opinion and knowledge (*The Republic*: p.365). And, then he describes the journey of a man from ignorance to knowledge through The Divided Line. Each part, “conjecture”, “belief” (the realm of sensible or *becoming*) “understanding”, and “exercise of reason” (in the realm of intelligible or *being*) participates in a certain proportion to acquire different degrees of reality. Through the Divided Line, Plato shows us the journey from appearances to the truth.

But, with the help of the cave allegory, Plato describes that the things visible in the world are not visible by themselves. They are visible because the Sun has provided visibility to our sight and thus, we can see particular things in the world. In the case of *forms* or *ideals* in the world of intelligible like perfect beauty, perfect justice etc. Plato conditions it on the knowledge of the *Highest of Forms* i.e., the form of Good. He states that –

“if you do not know it, you know it will not be of any advantage to us to understand all the rest perfectly without this model, just as it is no advantage to possess anything without the good” (*The Republic*: p.355).

The *form Good*, exactly like the sun, makes knowledge of the known possible. According to Cornford (1918) this notion of Good should not be understood as moral goodness only but it pervades “throughout all Nature” and “the knowledge of the Good, on which well-being depends, is now to include an understanding of the moral and the physical order of the whole universe” (Cornford 1918: p. 207). Knowledge and truth may be “goodlike” but they are not *the Good*. The *form Good* is not only the cause of “becoming known” it is the “cause that knowledge exists and the state of knowledge, although good is not itself a state of knowledge but something transcending far beyond it in dignity and power” (*The Republic*: p. 361).

On the relation between becoming (sensible) and being (intelligible), Plato states that – “what being is to becoming, that exercise of reason is to opinion, and what exercise of reason to opinion, that science is to belief and, understanding to conjecture” (*The Republic*: p.392). This compels us to engage in knowing the truth only through a dialectic method. The cave allegory also indicates the same where the free prisoner

getting the knowledge of images/shadows turns towards the Sun to realize the source of knowledge and then he goes back to the cave and understands the distinction between what is real and unreal. Knowledge of objects is not sufficient but in addition to that the knowledge of the distinction between real and unreal is what makes a person a knower. It requires us to engage with the world with a hypothesis, move forward towards that which is not hypothetical (the first principle) then turn back and move downward to a conclusion. The method itself lays the ground of the actualization of the *ideals* or *forms* in the society which presupposes that they are related to each other. And, each individual as an agent of justice needs to strive for the “instantiation” of the forms in society, thus making it possible to actualize the *ideal State*.¹⁷

Conclusion

The above discussion represents before us that to be a just person in Plato’s framework individual must seek the truth in relation to the *form Good*, which will help the parts of the soul to perform their duty in the proper sense leading to maintaining a harmony between all the parts of the soul. Once an individual can preserve a harmonious state of being within himself/herself, then the individual will be able to realize and perform his/her duty in society. The effort to engage in the dialectic to know the forms as closely as possible and instantiate them in society will make him fulfil his/her duty in the best possible way. Thus, as an agent of justice, each individual has to engage in the dialectic method to make the State a just State. According to Plato, a just person -

“...would be telling us we ought to do and say what will make our inside man completely master of the whole man, and give him charge over the many-headed monster, like a farmer, cherishing and tending the cultivated plants, but preventing the weeds from growing; he must make an ally of the lion’s nature, and care for all the creatures alike, making them friendly to each other and to himself, and so he will nourish the whole” (*The Republic*: p. 462).

The just individual is not required to separate the “mind” from the “body” or “world”, instead, one needs to gain mastery over the “whole man” which Descartes might identify as a combination of mind and matter. The separation will prevent establishing a concord between different parts of the soul which is necessary as the *ruler* (reason) and the two *ruled* (spirit and appetitive part) must not be in faction for preserving justice within the individual. If reason has to demonstrate that it has the upper hand in getting the truth, which is the case in Plato, it is supposed to do it together with the

¹⁷ See Dahl (1991) for a detailed discussion on instantiation.

other parts i.e., the body, and not by rejecting the other as having any value. The distinction between “sensible” and “intelligible” might seem to provide a ground for similarity between the epistemic frameworks of Plato and Descartes. In opposition, Descartes completely discards the knowledge of the sense as it prevents the mind from reaching objective truth. Plato acknowledges it by considering the knowledge of sensible as having a preliminary grasp of truth, better than ignorance. Concerning method, the rational mind, detached from the body and the cosmos, independently decides truth and also validates it which lays the ground for a homogenous understanding of the self, the world and the relation between them. On the other hand, the dialectic method invites the agent to engage with the world of senses, through the knowledge of the particulars the agent emanates to the world of intelligible; having the knowledge of forms descends to the world of senses and makes the distinction between real and unreal. The dialectic method which Plato considers the highest subject of study provides the individual with the scope to engage with the world from one’s capacity and to know the relation between ideals and particulars from his/her way of engagement allowing plural engagements. That does not mean that it produces a relativistic framework where everyone’s truth is relative to the circumstances. It provides us with a ground to engage in the search for truth, but as the self-validating option is unavailable here, it requires us to understand the dialectic relationship that one’s truth has with the form of truth. Understanding the relationship between unity (forms) and plurality (particulars) is the underlying concern of the dialectic.

In the Rawlsian framework, an individual is not required to know the relation between politics, epistemology and metaphysics. It can establish an objective principle of justice riding on the conception of “I” having no relation to the body and body politic. It requires the individual to become a passive agent of justice by strictly conforming to the principle arrived at through a fair procedure. It completely negates any concern for the “other”, who might not be able to conform.¹⁸The implication of that can be seen in his *The Law of Peoples* (1999) where the best way to deal with the “non-liberal” nations is either by imposing sanctions or by waging just war. On the other hand, Plato has never defined the highest form, the *form Good*, making the possibility for each distinct engagement with it through the dialectic. Dialectical engagement, in opposition to conformity to principles, has been emphasized to preserve justice in society. It discards any possibility of upholding the dual nature of being and by that, formulates the separation of being and doing redundant. Being just has been understood as a precondition for doing just, making another dichotomy of “private” and “public” absurd. Plato’s notion of justice as the first virtue of the

¹⁸ See Nussbaum (2006) pp. 96-156 for a detailed account of how it ignores the “other”.

individual soul resists all the ramifications that modern epistemology has given rise to from the homogenization of the politic, discord between theory and practice, discord between being and doing, to the separation of different disciplines as a better way of existence.

This paper is an attempt to showcase an alternative way of existence where the integrity of the self could be firmly established and plural engagements/experiments with the world could be recognized.

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PEACE STUDIES: A BRIEF PHILOSOPHICAL OUTLINE

N. Ramthing

Abstract

Peace is vital for mutual and harmonious global existence. Avenues for academic and practical discourse on international peace are not irrelevant. Peace studies as an engaging discipline, having a global outlook, theoretical, practical, and normative, can be a promising platform for addressing issues concerning conflicts and violence through peaceful means. The enumeration and adumbration of various theories can set a perspective for pragmatically understanding peace for perpetual peace. Peace is not only an abstract idea; practical aspects are woven throughout the ideas. The unfolding of conceptual relevance to practical platforms is generated through the prism of inquiry into widely divergent spheres related to the issues. In light of the critical role of peace studies in fostering constructive conflict resolution to crises and conflicts, this study emphasizes the necessity of bolstering peace studies as an essential tactic for achieving global peace. Any endeavor for a peace strategy that aims to transform and resolve conflicts calls for a nonviolent approach since achieving peace is just as vital as the desired outcome: a peaceful international order. This paper is divided into three sections: the first defines and adumbrates the term, the second identifies and analyses numerous concepts, and the third highlights the discipline as one of the key facets of human enterprise.

Key Words: *Violence, Nonviolent, Ahimsa, Peace, Conflict, War, Peace Studies*

I

Humanity's history is replete with violent confrontations. Violence has rarely stopped throughout human history, with the first recorded instance occurring in the book of Genesis when Abel is killed by his brother Cain. Violence is undeniable, though, that there have been rare instances of peace. It is necessary to comprehend ideas of violence to comprehend peace. Peace studies is a human endeavour to shed light on the possibility of fostering peace; as Xenophanes said, "Not from the beginning did the gods reveal all things to mortals, but in time they find what is better by seeking" (J.H. Leshner 1991:229). Peace studies is the pursuit of understanding that human endeavors hold the key to achieving peace. An innovative and creative synthesis of concepts and theories from different subjects is what makes peace studies an interdisciplinary or

transdisciplinary discipline. Even if the goal is a component of the totality, it goes well beyond the constrained parameters of a specific area of expertise. Peace studies as an academic discipline is primarily concerned with de-escalating violent conflicts by palliating their causes, promoting peaceful methods of conflict resolution, and building peace through nonviolent means. The concept of peace is as old as human civilization and that all the religions speak about peace as an inalienable tenet. Conflict, violence, and peace are meta-disciplines, rendering it transdisciplinary. Discourse on conflict and peace penetrates across disciplinary boundaries. Numerous academic fields have a stake in understanding violence's nature, causes, and effects, including political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, history, geography, economics, law, international relations, gender studies, religious studies, tribal studies, and development studies. True to its name, the discipline explores a range of academic fields that address problems of violence and peace in diverse domains. The studies of peace and its periphery are philosophical, like politics, other social sciences, and related fields of study. Establishing what could make up a whole aspect of peace studies is a contentious question, rendering the definition of peace challenging.

This paper aims to provide a brief philosophical introduction to highlight the vital need for bolstering peace studies and research as one of the main facets of human enterprise. It is not a broad historical genesis of peace studies, an endeavor to establish argument and justification, or an attempt to discern hitherto unknown theories.

The term 'peace' is derived from the Anglo-French *pes* and the Old French *pais*, meaning peace, reconciliation, silence, and agreement. However, *pes* itself originates from the Latin *pax*, meaning "peace, compact, agreement, treaty of peace, tranquillity, absence of hostility, harmony." Peace in Hebrew is *shalom*, meaning to be safe, sound, healthy, perfect, complete, etc., a sense of well-being and harmony both within and without: a state of completeness, wholeness, tranquillity, fullness, absence of discord, calm and serene. Peace is intangible but discernible by its absence or sporadic (occasional) appearance. It is like happiness, justice, health, and other human ideals. In Weber's dictionary, peace is defined negatively as 'freedom from civil clamor (make loud demand) and confusion and positively as a state of public quiet.' Webster's second distinct definition of peace is a 'mental or spiritual condition marked by freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions as well as 'calmness of mind and heart: serenity of spirit.' Thirdly, peace is a tranquil freedom from outside disturbances and harassment. Fourthly, peace denotes 'harmony in human or personal relations: mutual concord and esteemed.' Peace is also defined as 'a state of mutual concord between government: absence of hostilities or war, the period of such freedom from war'. The

sixth definition of peace is the 'absence of activity and noise: deep stillness: quietness, or 'divine peace' or positive inner peace.'

Patrick M. Ragan, in his Presidential address to the Peace Science Society, says, "We cannot be adequate problem solvers or social scientists if we cannot articulate a definition of or the condition of peace" (Patrick M. Ragan 2014:348). According to Charles Webel, peace is dialectical. Peace is neither a timeless essence- an unchanging ideal substance- nor a mere name without a reference, a form without content. Peace is both a historical ideal and a term whose meaning is in flux but sometimes seemingly constant (as in 'inner peace of mind') but also noteworthy for its relative absence in the field of history (as in 'world peace')." For him, "peace is both a means of personal and collective ethical transformation and an aspiration to cleanse the planet of human-inflicted destruction" (Charles Webel 2007: p.7). He further says, "Peace in its progressive or dialectical mode denotes active individual and collective self-determination and emancipator empowerment" (Charles Webel 2007: p.8). Barash and Webel defined positive peace as "[...]a social condition in which exploitation is minimized or eliminated. There is neither overt violence nor the more subtle phenomenon of underlying structural violence. It denotes the continuing presence of an equitable and just social order and ecological harmony" (Barash, David & Charles: 2014).

Kenneth Boulding introduced the term "stable peace," which, according to him, is "a situation in which the probability of war is so small that it does not really enter into the calculations of any of the people involved. War is much more common between political organizations [bands, tribes, city-states, nations, and empires] than between any other kind of social organization" (Boulding, Kenneth E., (1978:7,13).

In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature" (Emily Cohen: 37). The world cannot experience perpetual peace unless we understand the spirit nature in human beings. Animal nature is violent and dominates over the spirit nature unless humanity is awakened to it.

In 1964th, in his founding edition of the *Journal of Peace Research*, Johan Galtung came up with two typologies of peace- positive and negative peace: negative peace is the absence of overt violence, and positive peace is the integration of human society.¹ He emphasizes the importance of violence in understanding the crux of peace by dissecting violence into three kinds: direct, structural, and cultural. The absence of

¹ Johan Galtung (1964) "An Editorial" *Journal of Peace Research*, p.2.

the various types of violence in society can be understood as positive peace, which is challenging to attain.

Some of the Main Characteristics

The scope and characteristics of peace studies require being thoroughly defined to include every potential characteristic that could advance the discipline's competence to identify the critical elements in mitigating and eliminating violence and conflict. In this era of rapid technological development, integrating technology into peace studies is also essential to reaping practical benefits. Innovative technological initiatives can make the message of peacebuilding and peace restoration more rapid, stable, and effective. An in-depth understanding of peace studies requires expertise in the critical features of the topic at hand. The discipline's distinctive qualities come from its multilayer and meta-level methods, which make it wildly vast and varied. "Metalevel" refers to the breadth of perspectives available for comprehending peace. To achieve lasting peace, understanding the concept of peace requires understanding conflicts, violence, and conflict resolution. Yet first, some fundamental components essential to comprehending the idea must be fully revealed to establish the foundation for peace and its initiative.

Peace studies is multidisciplinary, meaning the area of studies within which discourses are generally held is a wide-ranging discipline. Discourses on peace and conflict are not limited to a specific discipline but are every human being' concerned. It will not be out of place to state that peace is the eternal ideal of humanity. Ideals may not necessarily get through with all possible efforts. Nonetheless, the yearning to have stable or perpetual peace is of ageless relevance as long as humans exist. Peace is also not culture-specific, but it is transcultural. Peace is multilevel, ranging from individual, societal, state, nation, regional, and international. Peace can be interpersonal, intrapersonal, political, cultural, and spiritual. The nature of peace studies is analytic as well as normative. It is a symbiosis of both the essential elements. Analyzation of conflicts and violent acts, such as murder and war, is not sans normative goals. The essence of peace studies and the strength upon which the discipline is founded are the theoretical aspects derived from various backgrounds. However, the theoretical elements that play an essential role in understanding the nature and impact of conflicts and violence are ineffective without practicability. Both theoretical and application are equally crucial in the domain of peace studies. The comprehensiveness of the features of the discipline presupposes the entireness of perspectives of human existence and its relation to nature. Peace and conflict are not just about human beings per se but also their relations with nature. Hence, the fundamental essence of peace studies is to analyze the nature, causes, scope, and impact of crises and violence to facilitate

channels of various ideas for framing and reframing schema of peaceful solutions to myriad crises and violence by nonviolent.

It is evident from the foregoing definitions that there cannot be a fixed definition. However, the ultimate goal of peace studies is to prevent, de-escalate, and mitigate conflicts and violence that contaminate mutual relations in national and international arenas. It may not be out of place to state that there has been a significant leap in peace studies over the past 50 years. The availability of resources in peace and research with diverse inputs from different backgrounds profoundly shapes the scopes and boundaries of peace studies as a robust academic discipline. Understanding world peace is a tremendous task because when we think of perpetual world peace, it is a developmental process and not a quick-fix approach. As Paul Wehr pointed out: "stable peace is a developmental process, not merely the absence of visible violence" (Paul Wehr 1979:16).

Brief Genesis of the Evolution of Peace Studies

Skeptics can believe that peace studies is still in its infancy as an academic field, yet given the discipline's history, this is untrue as the field has matured. Within the social sciences, peace studies is a well-established field that includes numerous academic journals, departments at colleges and universities, centers for peace research, conferences, and outside acknowledgment of the value of peace and conflict studies as a methodology. In 1888, Swarthmore College introduced the first-ever peace studies course in higher education. In reality, establishing the UN system during World War II served as an additional impetus for the emergence of increasingly stringent peacekeeping strategies. Many university courses in schools of higher learning worldwide began to develop, which touched upon questions of peace, often concerning war, during this period.

Nonetheless, the inception of peace studies as a distinct field of study stretches back to 1948, when Manchester University's Liberal Arts Collect hosted the first undergraduate peace studies program, developed by Gladdys Muir. (Abrams, Holly:2010-11-13). The students, mainly from the United States, who have concerns about the Vietnam War forced more universities to offer courses about peace, whether in a designated peace studies course or as a course within a traditional major. The 1980s saw an acceleration in the growth of global studies as students' concerns about the possibility of nuclear war and their comprehension of intricate themes like political violence, human rights, etc., grew. Johan Galtung and his colleagues founded the *Peace Research Institute Oslo* (PRIO) in 1959. Another significant advancement in peace studies is the *Journal of Peace Research*, founded in 1964 by Johan Galtung, the father of peace studies. Since its founding in 1998, the journal has published academic works

in international security, conflict resolution, peace and conflict studies, and book reviews. The field, which had a humble beginning, is now one of the fast-emerging interdisciplinary subjects in the academics of the 21st century. It is widely and numerously researched and taught variously in a large and ever-increasing number of institutions worldwide. It is not only increasing in its number but is ever increasing in its relevance to the world. Peace studies as an academic discipline is a vibrant, dynamic, and promising field in understanding violence and its impact in facilitating a discourse on peace for peaceful solutions to human crises.

II

Theoretical Concepts

Theoretical aspects of peace studies are crucial to understanding the concept undertaken. As stated, there are various theories in philosophy, politics, international relations, sociology, psychology, etc., but not all available are equally applicable. Essential concepts from the works of Gandhi, Kant, and Johan Galtung concerning peace are pivotal in ushering in the idea of perpetual peace. Theories in International relations are essential because power and politics are critical in understanding global peace and harmony. Structural realism, idealism, constructivism, negative and positive peace, and concepts of nonviolence are some challenging theories that play an essential role.

Classical Realism

Realism is a critical theory in international relations. Power is the central force for realism, and is skeptical about morality's relevance in politics. For realism, in general, human nature is egoistic and self-centered. The genesis of the theory can be traced back to the ancient Greeks. Thucydides, a fifth-century Athenian historian and general, was a vital realist who laid the paradigm of realism. He authored the account of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta. He emphasizes two essential factors: power politics and human nature. Power is the central idea of all forms of political realism. In the words of Thucydides, "As the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can, and the weak suffer what they must" (Thucydides 1977:64). Human nature is the genesis of the political realism. He says, "Of the gods, we believe, and of men, we know, that by a necessary law of their nature, they rule whatever they can. And it is not as if we were the first to make this law or to act upon it when made: we found it to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do" (Thucydides 1977:226).

In his work, *The Art of War*, Sun Tzu, a Chinese strategist, argues that moral reasoning was not very useful to the state rulers of the day, faced with armed and dangerous neighbors. He showed rulers how to use power to advance their interests and protect their survival" (Sun Tzu:1963). Niccolo Machiavelli, the author of *The Prince*, criticizes the moralistic view of authority in politics. There is no moral basis for judging the difference between legitimate and illegitimate uses of power. The only real concern in politics is the acquisition and maintenance of power.² Machiavellianism could be a radical political authenticity connected to residential and worldwide issues. Realpolitik is a term used to describe a school of thought that rejects the importance of morality in legislative matters and maintains that any measures, corrupt or otherwise, should be used to further particular political goals. Thomas Hobbes is another influential 17th-century philosopher who played a substantial role in extending classical realism. People in the state of nature are in constant fear and rivalry. People seek their own self-interest without government, which he calls the state of nature. Hobbes held the view of strong monarchy and said the law of the sovereign was an ultimate authority. He believes that "human beings, extremely individualistic rather than moral or social, are subject to "a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceases only in death" (Thomas Hobbes:1994).

Neorealism/Structural realism

Structural realism or neorealism is a theory of international politics that believes power is central to international politics. According to structural realism, the system of international relations is defined by the principles of anarchism and the distribution of capabilities. There is no world government to govern in the international relations. There are two forms of structural realism: defensive realism by Kenneth Waltz and offensive realism, advocated by John Mearsheimer.

In his book, *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz argues that the anarchical structure of the international system encourages states to maintain moderate and reserved policies to attain national security (Kenneth, N Waltz 1979:126). States are encouraged by the anarchic system to adopt defensive and moderate measures. They contend that "the first concern of states is not to maximize power but to maintain their position in the system" and that states are not inherently aggressive. Rather than hegemony and dominance, the ideology supports a balance of power.

John Mearsheimer is the principal advocate of offensive realism. Offensive realism holds that the anarchic nature of the international system is responsible for promoting aggressive state behavior in international politics, as there is no international

² Niccolo Machiavelli (2021) *The Prince*.

law. The system of international relations is anarchic. Unlike defensive realism, the theory emphasizes domination and hegemony. The central tenets of the theory are based on five assumptions: The international system is anarchic; states inherently possess some offensive military capability, which gives them the ability to hurt and possibly destroy each other; states can never be certain about the intentions of other states, the basic motive driving states is survival, and states think strategically about how to survive in the international system.³

Liberalism

The term liberalism is derived from the Latin word *liber*, meaning "*free*." Liberalism is an approach whose doctrine is based on international law, morality, and international organization rather than merely emphasizing power alone. The primary concern of liberalists is to foster and achieve lasting peace and cooperation in international relations. The liberalists do not deny the anarchic system of international relations. However, Liberals believe that international institutions play a crucial role in collaboration among states via interdependence (Shirayev, Eric B., Vladislav M. Zubok 2014:86). Liberals place a strong emphasis on nations' shared interests and see the foundation of the international order as a community of states that can work together on international affairs. Unlike realists, liberals think that human nature is positive. The two most well-known liberal thinkers are John Locke and Immanuel Kant.

John Locke is regarded as one of history's most influential philosophers and political theorists and is widely considered the father of liberalism. His ideas of natural law, natural rights, human nature, and limited form of government hugely contributed to the concept of political liberalism. In his work, *Two Treatises of Government* (John Locke 1988), Locke talks about natural rights, such as the right to life, liberty, and property. The government or society does not sanction these rights, but they are inherent to human beings, and therefore, states cannot take away their natural rights. It is a revolutionary doctrine of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used to justify resistance to unjust laws and tyrannical governments. Locke's idea of the rights of men well states thus: "The state of nature has a law of nature to govern it, which obliges every one: and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind, who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions: for men being all the workmanship of one omnipotent, and infinitely wise maker; all the servants of one sovereign master, sent into the world by his order, and about his business; they are his property, whose workmanship they are, made to last during his, not one another's pleasure: and being furnished with like

³ Mearsheimer, John J., "The False Promise of International Institutions", pp.5-49

faculties, sharing all in one community of nature, there cannot be supposed any such subordination among us, that may authorize us to destroy one another... Everyone, as he is bound to preserve himself and not to quit his station wilfully, so by the like reason, when his own preservation comes not in competition, ought he, as much as he can, to preserve the rest of mankind, and may not, unless it is to do justice on an offender, take away, or impair the life, or what tends to the preservation of the life, the liberty, health, limb, or goods of another" (Locke, Second Treatise of Government, Chapter II).

Immanuel Kant is another influential Enlightenment philosopher who tremendously influenced political philosophy. His conception of peace has had a noticeable impact on all previous peace discussions. In his work *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*, Kant makes the case that a stable peace can only exist when every country on the planet is a republic. Only by allowing every politician in the republic to make their own decisions will peace be achieved and preserved. Kant, therefore, insists on republican governments being in place everywhere. Kant contends that decent governments should work towards achieving worldwide peace based on international law to promote peace in the global order. Kant's preliminary articles present the structure for the necessary conditions of perpetual peace among states. These preliminary articles preclude peace treaties with secret reservations, acquisition of states as if they were private property, standing armies, the incurrence of national debt for purposes of foreign adventures, interference with the constitution or politics of other states, and, in general, all acts of hostility that would make mutual trust impossible. The second part of the article, which is known as the definitive article, insists that "the civil constitution of each state shall be republican., insists "the law of nations shall be founded on a federation of free states," and the third definitive article insist on "the rights of men, as citizens of the world, shall be limited to the conditions of universal hospitality" (Immanuel Kant (1903:120-37).

Kant's ideas on peace are vital resources for peace research. He laid the foundation of how world peace can be thought of with a definite schema. His emphasis on federalism and world government adumbrated his concern for interstate relations based on states' autonomy grounded on non-interference. His peace proposal is rich and resourceful for present and future peace studies and research on international relations theory.

Constructivism

Constructivism is a theory coined by Nicholas Onuf, an American scholar in international relations, in his work, *World of Our Making* (Nicholas Onuf 1989). Constructivism aims to explain and illustrate how the fundamental concepts and actors in international relations are products of social construction. To explain international

politics, constructivists concentrate on the norms, rules, practices, and ideas that make up identity. Constructivists oppose the premise that power politics alone determines all aspects of international relations because they believe socially built concepts are important. Wendt contends that "the causal power attributed to "structure" by neorealists are not "given," but rests on the way in which structure is constructed by social practice" (Alexander Wendt 1999:1-4).

Elizabeth Kier, Alexander Wendt, Kathryn Sikkink, and Peter J. Katzenstein are well-known constructivists. Constructivism comes in three flavors: critical radical constructivism, thin constructivism, and critical constructivism. However, all interpretations agree that neorealism and neoliberalism neglect to focus on social construction in global politics. Alexander Wendt proposed two essential features of constructivism, which are accepted as basic tenets of constructivism: "that the structures of human association are determined primarily by shared ideas rather than material forces, and that the identities and interests of purposive actors are constructed by these shared ideas rather than given by nature" (Alexander Wendt 1999:1-4).

For the constructivist, identities, interests, and norms are crucial in analyzing how they behave. Abram Chayes and Antonia Handler Chayes define "norms" as a broad class of prescriptive statements- rules, standards, principles, and so forth- both procedural and substantive" that are prescriptions for action in situations of choice, carrying a sense of obligation, a sense that they ought to be followed" (Abram Chayes; Antonia Handler Chayes 1994:65).

In a nutshell, constructivism as a theory has shown an alternative approach to neorealism and neoliberalism. It has enriched the discipline of international relations by moving beyond the boundaries of traditional international relations theories.

Peace by Peaceful Conflict Transformation- the Transcend Approach

Peace studies without a mechanism for conflict transformation will be incomplete and insufficient. And to understand the concept of peace necessitates the need to delve into the concept of violence. Johan Galtung, the founder of peace studies, is inescapable in peace studies. He founded "The International Peace Research Institute," the first on peace studies, in Oslo in 1959. He also founded "The Transcend International Foundation" in 1993 and the "Transcend Peace University" in 2000, the world's first online peace studies university. Johan Galtung understands violence as any avoidable assault on basic human needs. For him, people's basic needs are survival, well-being, freedom, and identity. The threat of violence against these basic human needs can also be defined as violence because individuals can establish a meaningful relationship with their environment only by meeting their basic needs. This relationship

with the environment can also be at an emotional and spiritual level outside of the physical level.⁴

Johan Galtung distinguished between two sorts of peace: positive and negative, in the Journal of Peace Research's inaugural edition from 1964. Positive peace is defined as the integration of human society—the predominance of justice, harmony, and equality—while negative peace is defined as the absence of violence. He presented three types of violent typologies—structural, cultural, and direct—and clearly distinguished them all in his conflict triangle. According to Johan Galtung, the root cause of invisible conflicts is structural and cultural violence, which then manifests itself as violence. In this perspective, conflict is a dynamic process wherein direct, structural, and cultural violence influence one another. It is a dynamic process in which attitudes, behaviours, and structure always interact. A period of violence, a post-violence phase, and connected pre-violence are some of the stages that he claims conflicts go through (Johan Galtung 2004: 18).

Johan Galtung rightly enumerated values such as the presence of cooperation, freedom from fear, freedom from want, economic growth and development, absence of exploitation, equality, justice, freedom of action, pluralism, and dynamism, which I consider worth adopting in the search for peace in a global scale.

In his work, *Peace by Peaceful Conflict Transformation- the Transcend Approach*,⁵ in row 4, Johan Galtung talks about mediation/dialogue in which he brings out crucial stages for conflict transformation. The three essential characteristics of the model are mapping, legitimizing, and bridging. Mapping means identifying the parties involved in the conflicts and their goals. Legitimizing means knowing which goals are legitimate, and in searching for legitimization, three criteria are crucially significant: law, human rights, and morality. Bridging means creativity. Conflict transformation aims to change the circumstances, people, and interpersonal ties that lead to conflict. Conflict transformation emphasizes the collaborative appraisal of the conflict's interpersonal, social, structural, and cultural aspects to redefine relationships between disputing parties. Johan Galtung also recognizes the importance of integrating human rights as key to successful peace-building worldwide. He highlighted the importance of the two Conventions, the UDHR and fundamental human needs, for successful conflict transformation. As his experience grows, so does the significance of Johan Galtung's contribution to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building.

⁴ Ibid.,

⁵ Johan Galtung (200) “Peace by Peaceful Conflict Transformation- the Transcend Approach”, p.17.

Gandhian principle of Ahimsa

Gandhi's influence on peace studies is unavoidable. He is the proponent of nonviolence as embodied in the Satyagraha ideal. Truth, soul force, forgiveness, tolerance, and nonviolence are the cornerstones of his vision of global peace. In Gandhi's view, war can never be just or unjust. Every conflict is unfair. He firmly believes that "war is not a morally legitimate means of achieving anything permanent" (Rashmi-Sudha Puri 1987:19). Gandhi says that war, with all its glorification of brute force, is essentially a degrading thing. It demoralizes those who are trained for it. It brutalized men of naturally gentle character. It outrages every beautiful canon of morality. Its paths of glory are foul with passion and lust and red with blood of murder. This is not the pathway to our goal" (Emily Cohen:35). War is all about violence and it degrades and corrupts man and increases man's progressive degeneration. Ahimsa is not a policy for the seizure of power. It is a way of transforming relationships to bring about a peaceful transfer of power, effect freely and without compulsion by all concerned because all have come to recognize it as right. For Gandhi, "Ahimsa is one of the world's great principles which no force on earth can wipe out. Thousands like myself may die in trying to vindicate the ideal, but ahimsa will never die. And the message of ahimsa can be spread only through believers dying for the cause" (M. K. Gandhi 2007:77). Gandhi says, "The cry for peace will be a cry in the wilderness, so long as the spirit of nonviolence does not dominate millions of men and women. An armed conflict between nations horrifies us. But the economic war is no better than an armed conflict. This is like a surgical operation. An economic war is prolonged torture. And its ravages are no less terrible than those depicted in the literature on war. We think nothing of the other because we are used to its deadly effects. ... The movement against war is sound. I pray for its success. But I cannot help the gnawing fear that the movement will fail if it does not touch the root of all evil — man's greed (M.K. Gandhi: 5 October 1926).

Gandhi was a man of peace who valued using pure methods to achieve lofty goals. To achieve any goal means and ends are equally crucial. Violence is not the way to achieve world peace. According to him, violence can never bring true and lasting peace. He believed true peace meant abolishing all forms of tyranny, not only the absence of bloodshed. Men who are spiritually awakened are necessary for peace. As Gandhi says, "Man as animal is violent but as spirit is nonviolent. The moment he awakes to the spirit within, he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards ahimsa or rushes to his doom" (M. K. Gandhi 2007:72). For Gandhi peace is never the end but a nobler goal to attain just world order. Gandhi and his ways to achieve peace

have eternal relevance to the world. As French historian and philosopher Voltaire wrote, "Perpetual peace can only be established and achieved through tolerance" (Forcey, Linda Rennie 1988:13).

III

Peace studies is a panoptic activity encompassing peace thinking, peacemaking, peace building, research, reflection, dialogue, and negotiation concerning the causes of war, conflict, and violence and the orientation necessary to establish peace conflict resolution through nonviolence or peaceful means. The field explores fundamental issues surrounding cooperation, conflict resolution, human behaviour, and relationships. It is a field with its own theory, scholarship, and applications derived from discussions, debates, and other studies. It is an analytical, normative, regulative, dynamic, and transformative interdisciplinary academic field with broad theoretical and pragmatic approaches exploring global peace by studying, exploring, and excavating into the causes of violence through the prism of nonviolent and peaceful means. Peace studies adumbrates theories from various fields and disciplines to understand and explain conflicts and violence at multiple levels and stages. To bring a thorough understanding of the complex issues within a discipline, which is by nature a conglomeration of various fields, demands theories from numerous theories existing in different fields. However, the question remains as to which theories are better suited and appropriate for comprehending the causes and effects of violence and conflicts, and how to make practical application relevant for conflict transformation or resolution requires continuing research to address newer issues.

Johan Galtung, the father of peace studies, says, "if we begin with the need to survive, we immediately see that peace is a primary requirement of the human condition itself" (Johan Galtung and Daisaku Ikeda 1995:110). Moreover, in the words of Dalai Lama, "Although attempting to bring about world peace through internal transformation of individuals is difficult, it is the only way... Peace must first be developed within an individual. And I believe that love, compassion, and altruism are the fundamental basis for peace. Once these qualities are developed within an individual, he or she is then able to create an atmosphere of peace and harmony. This atmosphere can be expanded and extended from the individual to his family, from the family to the community, and eventually to the whole world" (Thich Nhat Hanh 1991: vii). The world requires peace, love, and harmony. Peace studies can be a potential discipline in navigating the possibility of discourse on peace the world needs through peaceful dialogue. As aptly pointed "the most disadvantageous peace is better than the

most just war."⁶ It is evident from the discussion that peace studies approaches the notions of conflict, violence, conflict transformation, and peace from an integrative perspective to bring about world peace by appraising issues through nonviolent methods. Peace studies is dynamic, collaborative, integrative, and transforming.

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⁶ Desiderius Erasmus, *Adagio*.

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M. K. GANDHI ON EDUCATION: A PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Bhupesh Debbarma

Abstract

The present world engulfed with greed and materialistic attitude is to some extent seemingly devoid of value oriented educational attitude. This era is of scientific advancement and technology, Information and communication technology, Artificial intelligence and machine learning. And human beings at least at the core of his mind cannot deny the fact that in some ways we have suppressed or underestimated the significance of cultivating ethical virtues. It is of immense necessity to revisit Gandhian concept of education from philosophical perspective whereby moral education could play a significant role in shaping a world of peace. Recognition of inherent capacities in the self is also an important and integral part of Gandhian educational thought. In an attempt to understand true meaning of education certain quest aroused in my mind, such as, Does education stands as a means for livelihood? Does education is to achieve an academic recognition? What is the highest end of education? With some of these query in my mind I ventured to explore Gandhiji's idea on education. Thus, in this paper my sincere attempt would be to assess true meaning of education for a harmonious co-existence of all beings.

Key words: Education, Moral education, Character building, Inherent capacity, Modern civilisation, Philosophy, M. K. Gandhi

I

The concept of education is related to life itself in the sense that life and education are interwoven in a meaningful way. Education, in ancient India denotes self-culture and self-realisation for the ultimate realisation of the ultimate truth. Education is indeed a life – long process. One of the very important aims of ancient education was character training and moral education. Character training was imparted through instruction, glorification of the heroic men of character and through a scheme of discipline. The disciplinary moral concept of life found expression in Brahmacharya. In the Upanishads, self-knowledge has been acknowledged as the true aim of life and education. Such concept of education of the people of ancient India has developed from their philosophy of life. In modern sense, “Education means that process of development in which consists the passage of a human being from infancy to maturity,

the process whereby he gradually adopts himself in various ways to his physical, social and spiritual environment”.¹ Thus, education stands for self-culture or self-improvement that goes on till the end of one’s life. It is a universal process from the cradle to the grave, from the birth to maturity.

Education as an academic discipline ought to have a value-orientation for its impact on society. The philosophical perspective provides directives and offers values to which education should be oriented from time to time. Philosophy provides a framework within which education and educational problems can be discussed. Thus, one may be inclined to say that the philosophical basis makes education more purposive towards ends which are fundamentally good. Philosophical outlook enhance in making education harmonious and self-sufficient in true sense.

II

Gandhiji’s educational thought:

His thought on education well cohere into a complete educational philosophy, which is the coping-stone of his general philosophy. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, “The real difficulty is that people have no idea of what education truly is. We assess the value of education in the same manner as we assess the value of land or of shares in the stock-exchange market. We want to provide only such education as would enable the student to earn more. We hardly give any thought to the improvement of the character of the educated. The girls, we say, do not have to earn; so why should they be educated? As long as such ideas persist there is no hope of our ever knowing the true value of education”.² One can perceive clearly that Gandhiji emphasise importance on moral education or character building as the goal of education. He had conducted educational experiments at Tolstoy Farm in South Africa and he further continued at Sabarmati and Sevagram ashramas. Every work of the ashrama had to be carried on by the inmates of the ashrama, such as adults, women and children. The inmate of the ashrama was required to observe strict celibacy, to learn self-control, truth speaking, non-violence, and non-untouchability. In the later period, Sevagram ashrama was founded the near Wardha where he conceived the idea of his new system of education which is commonly known as *Buniyadi Shiksha* – Basic Education. Under *Buniyadi Shiksha* Gandhi has emphasised the importance of combining theoretical imparting of instruction with practical training.

He had also evolved a new dynamic philosophy of education with this object of realising God in an ideal moral society. What is true education to Gandhiji? To quote

in the words of Gandhi, “By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is one of the means whereby man and women can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education”³. It is obvious that utility of sense organs in the rightful way is of immense necessity for the proper growth of a child’s intellect. In the meantime, spiritual training cannot also be discarded. In other words, proper correspondence of body, mind and spirit is the core of education.

Literacy can never be, as people are apt to believe, the be-all and end-all of education. In his philosophy of education, the personality of the educand is of primary importance, and not the tools and subjects. To him, “True education is that which draws out and stimulates the spiritual, intellectual and physical faculties of the children.”⁴ The principle of education lies in the fact that none of these aspects of a man can be segregated from the other. In addition, education is not to be considered for academic recognition or as a means of livelihood rather it should be for education’s sake.

He had profound faith in the absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. Service to humanity is the core of his philosophy and the end of all education should be service. In the moral society, service to God and community was the greatest creed. Furthermore, “Man’s ultimate aim is the Realisation of God”.⁵ All the activities of man – social, religious, political – is to be motivated by this one aim. Therefore, the first and foremost duty of every man is service to all. Education is a lifelong process whose function is to produce responsible citizens, complete men and women, and also to bring about a harmonious development of all four aspects of the personality – body, heart, mind and spirit. Through sound education children must also be taught to adjust to their immediate environment. The child is being brought up in a family and in a later stage he learns to mingle with others and grow up in a larger society. Thus, in this sense, the elders and parents should also play active role in helping the children to realize their hidden potentiality as well as in character formation. In formal educational institutions also a child learns to develop himself physically as well as intellectually.

His educational thought may be in contradictory to the present day system of education that is prevalent in India. He was not satisfied with the system of education introduced by the English as it did not suit the country and fails to fulfil the needs and aspirations of the people. Education system introduced by the English tended to neglect Mother-tongue, whereby leading to mass illiteracy. To him, this system of education was narrow, theoretical, bookish and impractical. It has failed to develop also the sense

of citizenship. It seems to be the fact that present education system merely imparts instructions, or makes man literate.

In this consonance, he opposed 'Modern Civilization' or 'Western Civilization' indicating that it is emphasizing more importance on bodily comfort rather than spiritual growth of an individual. The mind of every child should be implanted with value oriented education not just being mechanical in thought and action. Mere transformation of life in the form of industrial growth cannot be a parameter of civilization. However, an individual must put an effort for betterment each and every moment through cultivation of virtues and character building. This would ultimately lead society as a whole towards upward mobility.

To him every individual is born with certain basic and inborn tendencies and capacities. To bring out such inherent capacities of every individual should be the aim of education. Further, if education is to fit the future citizens for playing his role in society, he should cultivate in school the character appropriate to a social being. He must be trained for his life. He must have an opportunity to practise civic virtues at schools. He should cultivate breadth of vision, toleration and good neighbourliness.

His educational philosophy has been coloured and shaped by several factors, such as, his experiments in Tolstoy farm, Sabarmati ashram and Sevagram ashram. There are other secondary features which deserve to be mentioned here, such as, free compulsory education under the age of 7-14, Craft centred education, Education should be self-supporting, Emphasis on mother-tongue – the mother-tongue not only to become the medium of instruction, but to occupy the first place among languages, & Philosophy of Non-violence.

An aim of education may be compared, as done by John Dewey, to the summit of a hill from where we get a clear view of a landscape. There is no single aim of education, however, moral or character building has been attached the highest priority as an aim of education by Gandhiji. Gandhiji laid so much emphasis on character building as an aim of education that he would relegate to a subordinate position or even sacrifice literary training, if the choice were to be made between the two. Purity of personal life is for him an indispensable condition for building a sound education. "Students have to search within," he affirms, "and look after their personal character," for "What is education without character, and what is character without elementary personal purity?" The end of all knowledge must be, "the building up of character." ⁶ Undoubtedly, to Gandhiji one must strive towards shaping of self character and this

would lead to the harmonious existence. Character building or value oriented education is the necessity of the education system without which education may seem incomplete.

III

To sum up, Gandhiji regards righteousness or good life as an essential part of character, at which education ought to aim. Addressing a gathering of college boys, he said: “Your education is absolutely worthless, if it is not built on the solid foundation of truth and purity. If you, boys, are not careful about the personal purity of your lives, and if you are not careful about being pure in thought, speech and deeds then I tell you that you are lost, although you may become perfect finished scholars.”⁷ He was convinced that life devoid of the principle of truth and non-violence is worthless. Education is the dynamic side of life and he wanted to realise the ideal of life in and through education. He had always dreamt of an ideal moral society based on truth and non-violence where every citizen should be entitled to equality, liberty, and fraternity. He also wanted to build a society in which the condition should be such that each man should be able to realise the highest aims of life and to regenerate India from moral, political and economic perspective. In order to transform this dream into reality right understanding of education is a pre-requisite in the modern era.

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JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENT: A CRITICAL STUDY ON THE ETHICS OF KAUTILYAN *DAṆḌANĪTI*

Swagata Ghosh

Abstract

In Kautilya's Arthaśāstra, the third and the fourth adhikaraṇa deal specifically with the law and order of his administrative theory. The third adhikaraṇa is known as dharmasthīya, concerning the judiciary and the officials, while the fourth adhikaraṇa is referred to as kantakasodhana, that is, repression of criminals. Kautilya subscribed to a theory of the maintenance of law and order by the government through punishment, referred to as daṇḍanīti. His penal system is based on a complex interplay between monetary and physical punishments. The combination of monetary penalties and corporeal punishments speak of a certain balance that is much necessary to execute convicts of various forms and strata. The implementation of exemplary punishments, including capital punishment speak of the fact that justice has to be restored by any means, even it be by instilling fear in the minds of the people. This might raise the issue of using the offender as the means to keep the society disciplined. Further, and the most important feature of Kautilya's system of justice is that the King and the concerned officials are trained in ānvīkṣikī (the science of logic and enquiries into truth), based on dharma, that is, righteousness. Thus, Kautilya, one of the greatest visionary of statecraft and politics of all times, successfully establishes a code of law for the commoners, as well as the powerholders, that ensure the repression of crime as far as practicable, and accordingly, the maintenance of a just state.

Keywords: *ānvīkṣikī, daṇḍanīti, dharma, justice, punishment*

Crime is an undeniable aspect of human society. From time unknown human beings have tried to execute force, brutality and violation and/or infringement of rights of others. Thus, to curb such propensities in human beings, and to maintain law and order in the society, it becomes an imperative to inflict penalties and punishments in some form or the other on the offenders. In Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*, the third and the fourth *adhikaraṇa* deal specifically with the law and order of his administrative theory. The third *adhikaraṇa* is known as *dharmasthīya*, concerning the judiciary and the officials, while the fourth *adhikaraṇa* is referred to as *kantakasodhana*, that is,

repression of criminals. Kautilya subscribed to a theory of the maintenance of law and order by the government through punishment, referred to as *daṇḍanīti*. His penal system is based on a complex interplay between monetary and physical punishments, which is necessary to curb crimes and offences of various forms and gravity. Inflicting punishments however appropriate or inappropriate often raises the issue of using the offender as an example before the community to prevent them from committing acts. Thus, the ethical issue of using an individual as means, and not as ends-in-themselves, keeps on posing moral questions. Such questions cannot be straight away overlooked. However, one of the most significant features of Kautilya's system of justice is that the King and his officials are trained in the science of logic and enquiries into truth. It is founded on critical examination and outright righteousness. The following article, thus, endeavors to explore Kautilya's vision of statecraft in the context of law and order, and to examine the efficacy of his penal system in establishing and maintaining justice in the society,

I

Categories of the Theories of Punishment

The paper in question is aimed at dealing with the various forms of punishment prevalent in the society, and accordingly, to research on what kind of punishment system is observed in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra*. Further, certain ethical questions have been raised regarding the penal system, and critical remarks have been put forth on the issue.

The forms of punishment have been categorized as follows –

- Retributive Theory
- Deterrent Theory
- Preventive Theory
- Incapacitation Theory
- Expiatory or Compensatory Theory
- Reformatory Theory
- Utilitarian Theory
- Multiple Approach Theory

Retributive Theory:

This theory is also called the 'Theory of Vengeance'. It is based on the doctrine of *Lex talionis*, that is, 'an eye for an eye'. Usually it involves a combination of criminal law and moral law. It involves either of the following approaches –

Doctrine of Societal Personification:

‘When a member of the society is subjected to a very heinous crime, as a result of which, the whole society, as if it were a natural person, considers the offence to be inflicted upon itself, comes to the defense of that person either by way of demanding justice or by conducting the same on its own, the society is said to be personified.’¹

Doctrine of Correctional Vengeance:

‘When the society, in a fit to get justice, demands the concerned authorities to inflict vengeful (as painful as the original act, or even more) punishments upon the victim for creating a deterrent, it is said to exhibit correctional vengeance.’¹

Deterrent theory:

The term ‘deter’ means to abstain from or to be compelled to abstain from committing wrongful acts. The main aim of this theory is to ‘deter’ (to prevent) individuals from committing any crime or repeating similar kinds of crime in future. The objective is to prevent crime by instilling fear in the minds of individuals. By punishing the wrongdoer, the intent is to set an example before the entire society, in order to restrict them from committing such acts. The intent of this form of punishment is exemplified as J. Burnett, had said to a prisoner - “Thou art to be hanged not for having stolen a horse, but in order that other horses may not be stolen”.¹

Social contract thinkers like, Thomas Hobbes (1588-1678), Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794), Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) are believed to have provided the foundation for modern concept of deterrence theory in criminology. According to them, the marks of deterrence should be based on severity, certainty and celerity. That is, the nature and intensity of the punishment should be based on the gravity of the crime. Also, punishments should be precise, definite and should never be delayed, in order to ensure justice to the victim. Further, in Austin’s theory, we find that, “*Law is the command of the Sovereign*”.¹ He held that people will follow the law because people have a fear of punishments. Thus, in his imperative theory, he stated three things that are important in preventing crime and establishing justice, as follows – sovereignty, command and sanction.

Preventive theory:

The theory aims at preventing probable crimes by disabling the wrongdoers. The primary objective is to transform the convicted, either permanently or temporarily. This theory supports death sentence or life imprisonment etc. depending on the gravity of the crime. The disablement may be of two types - temporary confinement and permanent confinement in the prison. It suggests that imprisonment is the best mode of crime prevention, as it seeks to eliminate offenders from society, thus disabling them from repeating crimes.

Incapacitation Theory:

The word 'incapacitation' means to take off someone's power or strength in some particular matter, in order to prevent future offences committed by them. It is defined as follows - "Incapacitation refers to the restriction of an individual's freedoms and liberties that they would normally have in society."¹ Incapacitation is executed mostly by removing the person from the society, (temporarily or permanently) through imprisonment, deportation *etc.* One of the most common ways of incapacitation is incarceration of the offenders. In severe cases, capital punishments are also applied. The theory of incapacitation is most commonly observed in cases where the outlaws are either sentenced to prison or to life imprisonment. However, it also includes those who are being supervised by the police departments within the community, like those on probation and parole.

Expiatory or Compensatory Theory:

The main aim of punishment, according to this theory, is to penalize the offenders, and/or to seek their reformation and rehabilitation with all the resources and goodwill available through the courts and other government and non-government organizations. It must be seen that the offenders are duly judged for their crimes, and also the harassment caused to the victim and towards their family members and property are to be compensated. The followers of this theory claim that the object of punishment is to produce guilt in the mind of the offender. If offenders, after committing an offence, realize their guilt, then they must be shown mercy. In other words, the theory relies on compensation to the victim for the loss caused by the accused. In this way, the offenders are made to realize the same sufferings they have caused to the victim.

Reformative Theory:

It is a somewhat humanitarian approach to dealing with crimes. It is based on the idea that, even though an offence has been committed by an individual, under certain circumstances, the basic rights of the individual, at least for the sake of being a human, are to be taken care of. The practice focuses on reforming the wrongdoers and to bring them back to the society as good and law-abiding citizens. One could say that it is based on the Gandhian principle - 'Hate the sin, not the sinner'.¹ Reformative theories of punishment are mostly applied in case of juveniles. Skills training, counseling *etc.* are provided to the offenders during their period of confinement with the aim that they might start a new life after their serving period.

Utilitarian Theory:

The utilitarian approach to dealing with crimes is based on the principle of 'greatest good for the greatest number'. In this case, laws are implemented to ensure

the good of the society, in the interest of the larger section of the community, as far as practicable. The utilitarian principle being teleological in nature, it holds that crimes and wrongdoings directly hamper the harmony of a society. Hence, offenders are to be kept aloof. And, punishments are to be inflicted accordingly, as to restore and ensure the good of the society at large, rather than individual rights and concerns.

Multiple Approach Theory:

In order to establish law and order in the society and to implement effective justice, often the judiciary needs to seek resort to a combination of more than one theories of punishment. If a single theory fails to meet the objective, then multiple approaches are to be sought for. We find reflection of that in Kautilya's system of law and justice (*daṇḍanīti*), as laid down in his *Arthaśāstra*. The following parts would discuss the above from an ethical perspective, in terms of *rājadharmā*. The prime ethical question is that whether inflicting an individual (though an offender) with exemplary punishment, justifies the position as not using them as means, but as ends-in-themselves (in the Kantian sense).¹

II

Law and Administration in *Arthaśāstra*

Kautilya based his penal system on a complex interplay between monetary and physical punishments. He subscribed to a theory of the maintenance of law and order by the government through punishment, referred to as *daṇḍanīti*. *Arthaśāstra* consists of 15 *adhikaraṇa* and each of it is divided into several *adhyāya* dealing with various aspects of administration. Issues of crime and punishment are found all along. However, the third and the fourth *adhikaraṇa* deal specifically with the law and order of his administrative theory. The third *adhikaraṇa* is known as *dharmasthīya*, concerning the judiciary, and the fourth *adhikaraṇa* is referred to as *kantakasodhana*, that is, repression of criminals. Here, the officials are termed as *pradeṣṭṛ* who are at par with the police, magistrates and the like of modern times.

Kautilya identified four purposes of *daṇḍanīti*-

- Acquisition of the non-acquired
- Preservation of the acquired
- Augmentation of the preserved
- Fair distribution of the augmented

In the verses of *Arthaśāstra*, we further find that -
 'apraṇitastumātsyanyāyamudbhavayati/ (13)' and 'baliyānabalam hi
 grāsatedandadharābhāve/' (14) (1.4.13-14)

Here, Kautilya clearly states that in absence of a strong and appropriate ruler, the state would be an absolute anarchy, where the weak would be devoured by the stronger sections, just as in the fish kingdom. Thus, in order to ensure a just society and to keep the evildoers at bay, he founded a strong penal system consisting of prudent and erudite judges and officials responsible for trying the offenders.

Kautilya emphasized that no one was above the law. Checks and balances were clearly introduced for all public officials including extra fines and punishment for malpractice in public duties. The doctrine of *mātsyanyāya* was to be strictly checked in an administration. If proper law is maintained by the king, the weak would not have to succumb to the fancies of the powerful and thus, it constituted the responsibility of the state to protect the weak and follow the principles of justice. Also, the laws must be clear and concise and properly codified to ensure there remains no ambiguity or room for misinterpretation by judges and officials. Further, he held that the effectiveness of law enforcement depends on three factors –

- honesty of the law enforcer
- intensity and proportion of punishment as per the seriousness of the crime
- justice must not only be done but also be seen

Kautilya has formed an exhaustive and a comprehensive administrative cum judiciary system, in order to take care of as many aspects of the state as practicable. Accordingly, he prescribed the appointment of the following officials, *tīrthas*. The eighteen *tīrthas*, that is, the administrative and judiciary officials were –

- *mantrī*– Minister
- *purohita* – Priest
- *senāpati* – Commander of the Army
- *yuvarāja* – Prince
- *dvārika* – Chief of Palace Attendants
- *antaravamśika* – Chief of the King’s Guards
- *prasastr* – Magistrate
- *samāharṭṛ* – Collector General
- *sannidhāṭṛ* – Chief Treasurer
- *pradeṣṭṛ* – Commissioner
- *nāyaka* – Town Guard
- *paura* – Chief of the Town
- *karmānta* – Superintendent of Mines
- *mantrīpariṣadadhyakṣa*– Chief of the Council of Ministers
- *daṇḍpāla* – Officer of the Army Department
- *durgapāla* – Guardian of the Forts

- *antapāla* – Officer-in-Charge of Boundaries
- *aṭavīka* – Officer-in-Charge of Forests

Keeping the above structure in mind, let us now try to look into the nature of crimes and/or violations that had to be dealt with a, and also the functioning of the judiciary. The fourth *adhikaraṇa* deals with offences of different kinds which are to be tried by the magistrates. The seventeenth *adhyāya* of the third *adhikaraṇa* is called *sāhasa* which talks about the forcible seizure of other's property. This may be divided into three categories -

- One who takes away other's belongings by force in the presence of the owner
- One who takes away other's belongings in the absence of the owner, or in other words, theft.
- One who causes another to commit an act of force *etc.*

Further, in *Arthaśāstra*, we find that – ‘*pradeṣṭārāṣṭrayo mātyaḥkantakasodhanamkuryuḥ*’ (5.1). The said officials are usually three in number, and are of the rank of ministers, who carry out the suppression of criminals. The magistrates are required to keep watch over the artisans like blacksmiths and carpenters who work generally under guilds and receive materials from people for working for them; weavers, laundry people, tailors and goldsmiths, and others dealing with copper, lead, brass, bell-metal, tin, etc. Offences relating to physicians, musicians, actors and the like are also included in this section (4.1).

Constituency of the Court of Law:

Kautilya aimed at forming a bureaucratic system based on the merit and educational foundation of individuals. He appointed officials and magistrates based on their education, intelligent insights necessary for running statecraft appropriately, and righteous attitude towards establishing justice in the society. Thus, administrative courts consisting of three persons proficient in *Dharmśāstras* and three ministerial officers in the administration of law are mentioned in *Arthaśāstra*. A hierarchy of courts, - from the court catering to a group of ten villages to the King's court, was to be maintained. This reflects the decentralization of power to a certain extent, yet the absolute reign being in the hands of the ruler. The decentralization was also necessary in order to ascertain proper functioning of the village administration, catering to the needs of the province with immediacy and efficacy. *Arthaśāstra* contains references to a Code of Law. The code is set forth under seventeen heads, including marriage, property, slaves, theft, injury and assault. He identified four bases of law, as follows – *dharma* (sacred law), *vyavahāra* (evidence), *caritra* (history), *rājaśāsana* (King's edicts). In case of conflict, edicts would override other bases. In such cases, highly

prudent and insightful judges were to appointed, and the jury should be knowledgeable, discerning, kind, balanced and incorruptible.

Furthermore, *Arthaśāstra* contains an elaborate scheme of punishment, not only for the commoners, but also for all kinds of officers to be followed in courts of law. Courts are of two types - civil and criminal. A judge was called *dharmastha* or upholder of justice indicating that ultimately the highest law of the land is *Dharma*. A bench of three magistrates or jury was responsible for the containment of anti-social activities. Though the remedies available in the Kautilyan state varied, in most cases fines were an adequate remedy, but there were also remedies of incarceration, torture and death. Depending upon the intensity or gravity of crime, punishments were divided into the following five categories - fines, mutilation of limbs, exportation from the kingdom, punishment for transgression and capital punishment.

Kautilya considered both kinds of crime, namely, *vākpāruṣya*, that is, verbal abuse and *daṇḍapāruṣya*, that is, physical harm, both the categories to be punishable. He held that maintaining law and order was the essential duty of government, and for that laws and punishments have to be administered, though there would remain a clear distinction between the administration of civil law and criminal law. Kautilya standardized four bases of justice, according to which any matter in dispute must be judged. Namely, -

- *Dharma*, based on truth
- Evidence, based on witnesses
- Custom, traditions *etc.* accepted by the people
- Royal edicts and/or the law as promulgated

In case of arrests, Kautilya spoke of three main grounds – on suspicion, on possession and for crimes such as murder. However, grounds for reasonability were laid down for each of the types of arrests. For example, an arrest on suspicion could only be made for certain crimes such as murder, theft, and corruption.

In order to implement the above statecraft, and to keep an eye on the proceedings of the outlaws and of the society at large, Kautilya used certain state machineries, referred to as *guḍhapuruṣa*. He considered it necessary, to ascertain the proper culprit or offender through direct accusation or otherwise. Kautilya prescribed that the King has to appoint persons in secret service (*guḍhapuruṣa*) (1.11.12). The secret agents could be classified into nine categories -

- Sharp pupils (*pragalbhacātra*)
- Apostate monk (*kāpaṭika*)
- Seeming householders (*grhapati*)

- Seeming traders (*vāṇijako* or *vaidehaka*)
- Seeming ascetic (*muṇḍoljaṭila* / *tāpasa*)
- Secret agents/ Espionage (*guptacara*)
- The bravo (*cara*)
- The poison-giver (*tikṣṇarasada*)
- Begging nun (*bhikṣukī*)

These were the secret agents employed to detect the evildoers, as well as the state of administration in the country. However, apart from the above, the statements of witnesses, and investigations through interrogation and torture were implemented to ascertain crimes in the society.

Another aspect that needs elucidation here is that, Kautilya did not overlook the fact that the individuals in power positions too could become corrupt due to various reasons. Thus, judges and other officials of power were also under the state surveillance. No judge was to threaten, intimidate, misrepresent or to fail on their ethical duties. In case of failure to do so, a hefty fine and even impeachment from office were implemented. Government officials involved in any corruption were to be severely punished. However, leniency was shown within the system only to those suffering from poverty, illness, hunger *etc.* and special circumstances of the person was to be taken into account while fixing the penalty.

III

An Ethical Analysis and Some Observations

An in-depth look into the tenets of *Arthaśāstra* depict that in many a cases, for the preservation of the state, Kautilya was convinced that governance rules could ignore the ordinary concepts of morality and implement evil means, in the form of spies, deceit, treachery, sex, violence and murder. If necessary for the good of society and the stability of the state, such means could be administered in order to protect the state. It is often argued that, Kautilya emphasized on the preservation of the King, rather than on the preservation of the state. It is a stance that cannot be condoned from the standpoint of modern day democracy.

It is further held by thinkers that both Kautilya and Machiavelli (in *Prince*, 1532) approached the problem of politics where separation of private morality from a public one of the same was necessary. Both held that the ends justified the means, where the end is the stability of the state, and the preservation of a strong king. In this context, it could be stated that, Kautilya held that the degeneration of a state was the direct consequence of misrule, ill-governance and lack of political vision. Thus, to prevent the above, he developed such principles of political conduct and good

governance that would cover all such contingencies, with a special focus on the law and order system of the society.

It is at this very juncture that the role of a highly educated ruler and his properly trained officials become significant. Kautilya states that – ‘*ānvīkṣikītrayīvārttānāmyogakṣemasādhanodaṇḍaḥ*’ (1.8.4.4). That is, the sole objective of punishment (*daṇḍa*) is for the purpose of establishing *yoga* and *kṣema*. *kṣema* is the preservation and augmentation of that which is already attained. In terms of statecraft, *yoga* and *kṣema* refer to the attainment of the unattained, that is, may be taxes, material wealth, land *etc.* and even justice. Further, the implementation of *daṇḍa*, in order to establish *yoga* and *kṣema*, are to be founded on the tripod of knowledge, that is, on *ānvīkṣikī*, *trayī* and *vārttā*. *ānvīkṣikī* is the science of enquiries into truth, and is the most significant basis of all kinds of knowledge. *trayī* indicates the study of the three *Vedas* - *ṛk*, *sāma* and *yajur*. And, *vārttā* refers to the study of business, commerce and agriculture. Thus, mastery over a holistic approach of knowledge based on incisive enquiries, were the fundamental requisites of the ruler as well as his magistrates and the other officials of high rank.

The above position is clearly reflected in *Arthaśāstra*, as the very first chapter of it is called *Vinayādhikārika* which is about the education of the King and/or the crown prince. Right from the beginning of *Arthaśāstra*, Kautilya states that the objective of this compendium is to groom the crown prince to rule righteously and to protect one’s kingdom and the subjects. As discussed above, Kautilya talks about the four kinds of knowledge (*vidyā*) that should necessarily comprise a prince’s education. These are *ānvīkṣikī*, *vedatrayī*, *vārttā* and *daṇḍanīti*. Of the four, Kautilya places the most significant emphasis on *ānvīkṣikī*. According to him, *ānvīkṣikī* is the lamp illuminating all knowledge, and it acts as the foundation and the means of all knowledge and actions. It is also considered as the foundation of all *dharmas*. This is expressed as - ‘*pradīpaḥ sarvavidyānāmupāyaḥ sarvakarmānām/ āśrayaḥ sarvadharmānām śaśvadānvīkṣikīmatā//*’.¹

On reaching upon the terminal point, we could emphasize on certain aspects as follows - Kautilya’s penal system portrays a rigorous and meticulous effort to prevent crimes of almost all sorts. The combination of monetary penalties and corporeal punishments speak of a certain balance that is much necessary to execute convicts of various forms and strata. The implementation of exemplary punishments, including mutilation of limbs, body markings, and capital punishment indeed speak of the fact that justice has to be restored by any means, even it be by instilling fear in the minds of the people. This might raise the issue of using the offender as the means to keep the society disciplined. However, one cannot deny the fact that any form of penal system

would subscribe to that in some form or the other. Further, and the most important feature of Kautilya's system of justice is that the King and the concerned officials are trained in *ānvīkṣikī*, that is, the science of logic and enquiries into truth, based on *dharma*, that is, righteousness. Also, certain leniencies that are observed in special cases, speak of the humanitarian approach of the legal system too. Thus, Kautilya, one of the greatest visionary of statecraft and politics of all times, successfully establishes a code of law for the commoners, as well as the power-holders, that ensure the repression of crime as far as practicable, and accordingly, the maintenance of a just state.

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PHILOSOPHICAL COUNSELLING IN THE CONTEXT OF BHAGAVAD GITA: WITH REFERENCE TO OSHO

Vinita Nair

Abstract

The Bhagavad Gita is a wonderful source of philosophical guidance due to the fact that it combines the information that has endured the test of time with the psychological substance that is there. Individuals who are looking for healing from their inner troubles are provided with the opportunity to improve themselves while also obtaining solace and understanding through Osho's interpretations on Gita, which boost its status to that of a psychological advisor. In a time when contemporary civilization is struggling with complex psychological issues, the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, as expounded by Osho, throw light on a route that leads to profound self-awareness and ultimate well-being.

This research paper explores the concept of philosophical counselling within the framework of Bhagavad Gita, focusing on the interpretations of Osho. It examines how the Bhagavad Gita offers psychological relief to individuals seeking answers to existential questions. The paper also delves into Osho's unique perspective on the Gita and his portrayal of it as a psychological guide rather than just a philosophical text. By analyzing Osho's approach, this paper aims to shed light on the psychological dimensions of the Gita and its significance in contemporary philosophical counselling.

Keywords: *Philosophical Counselling, Bhagavad Gita, Psychological Relief, Existential Questions, Osho*

Introduction:

Philosophical counselling, an emerging field in psychological well-being, combines philosophical insights with therapeutic practices to guide individuals through life's challenges. In an age marked by rapid technological advancements and societal complexities, individuals often find themselves grappling with existential questions, emotional turmoil, and ethical dilemmas. It is within this context that the fusion of philosophical counselling and spiritual wisdom from ancient texts gains relevance.

In the Indian context, this concept is deeply rooted in the ancient wisdom of texts like Upanishads, Ashtavakra Gita, Bhagavad Gita etc. Here it has been tried to explore the symbiotic relationship between philosophical counselling and the Bhagavad Gita, a revered philosophical and spiritual scripture, with specific insights drawn from the interpretations of Osho.

Philosophical counselling encourages the exploration of fundamental questions related to existence, values, and purpose. By engaging in philosophical dialogue, individuals can foster personal growth, resilience, and a deeper connection with their inner selves. Both east and west uses their own philosophical theories, ancient and sacred texts to provide individuals with guidance and solace when facing complex life questions. All the three dimensions spiritual, moral, and ethical are integrated to help individuals make sense of their experiences and find meaning in them.

Although the traces of philosophical counselling can be seen deep rooted in the ancient Indian scriptures and texts, most evidently in '*Upanishads*', where the '*Rishis*' (masters) are answering to the questions of '*Shishya*' (student) wherein he is raising questions sometimes spiritual or existential in nature. The best example can be seen in '*Bhagavad Gita*', that encapsulates the discourse between Lord Krishna and Arjuna which not only serves as a philosophical masterpiece but also offers a comprehensive guide to ethical living. But in modern era philosophical counselling has emerged as a therapeutic approach in USA and its gaining popularity as an independent stream of counselling. Drawing theories from Western philosophical traditions, practitioners engage clients in philosophical dialogues to foster self-exploration and personal growth. The works of philosophers like Irvin D. Yalom and Gerd Achenbach have contributed to the development of this field.

Need of philosophical counselling:

Every human mind carries his own world with himself. 'Libinietz' the famous German philosopher while propounding his theory of 'Monadology' states that there is no empty spere in the universe the whole world is made up of monads (metaphysical points that are active and conscious). The spiritual and material world is also a combination of monads. Every monad reflects the whole word in itself and accordingly moves forward in the evolutionary process. Qualitatively every monad is alike but in the process of evolution (development of the self) they stand at different stages or levels due to their difference in understanding. The level of consciousness in every monad is different, so is their understanding about the world which determines their hierarchy in evolution. He also states that the mind monad is superior to body monad because the

paver of reflection and appellation is much stronger in them. Hence the body is regulated by the mind, as the more conscious, more rational always dominates.¹

Thus, the mind creates the understanding according to which the body functions. It is the 'mind' which determines 'my world, my existence'. The mind frames my limitation and gives meaning to 'myself'. The 'I' (defined me), comes out of my understanding about the world.

My perception and my personality is an outcome of a predetermined self acknowledged as 'I'. It is due to the personality which a human being possesses that a pattern appears in behaviour. This pattern of behaviour is so deep rooted that it seems almost impossible to change it. One may hold himself for a certain point of time but it does not last long because this pattern or behaviour of mind is conceptually well ingrained and established in the mind. One may have many reasons to support his beliefs, not to exceed his boundaries but tries to convert the other person into his own frame. While doing so we forget that every person is moved with his own power of reflection and appetite.

When the conversion does not happen, a statement comes up from the disappointed mind -"No one understands me". From here the problem of existence begins, where one finds "the other to be hell".² This is the situation when frustration and disappointment emerges in the mind sometimes even shattering the family or social relations. But this is only one aspect of the coin. The other aspect is that it is the problem of existence which encourages a person to think over his pre-determined personality and redefine himself. The effort of redefining results in the expansion of mind opens up a new and different understanding about the world. The power of reflection improves with the improved perception and the quest for unknown reality springs up within the mind.

Philosophy aims to questions assumption we make about our lives and really dig in the details of why we think, what we think and how we choose to step out. It can help a person to see more clearly that there are other ways of looking at the world other than our own. The philosophical theories help people in dealing with life events in an effective manner. As such, they can be of interest to those who requires assistance to manage life events. The approach utilizes both ancient and contemporary philosophical assumptions and theories to alter human mind so that it can deal with disastrous situations. Assumptions offer the beliefs that philosophy is concerned with providing

1. Thilly, Frank, A History of Philosophy, (2018), SBW Publishers, New Delhi, P7.

2. Sartre, Jean Paul, Understanding Existentialism, (2005), Acumen Publishing, Pp89-109.

answers to the question of how people ought to live a good or healthy life. Theory on the other hand offers the belief that it can help people reach towards such answers.³

The word Philosophy means love for knowledge, knowledge in-turn does not just mean factual information but is the search for truth.⁴ Thus the method of philosophy which is known as 'philosophising' is a continuous struggle to come closer to that one truth. A common opinion about philosophy is that it deals with metaphysics so it always talks about the truth beyond the world. But actually a philosopher through his ideas and doctrines likes to connect with the actual real world and bring a shift in the perception of common people. Not only that a philosopher through the method of philosophising comes across truth himself but also helps others to arrive at the same truth through the proposed methods.

According to Plato, man as he is, is not acquainted with truth. He lives in his own world of desires, aspirations and beliefs. The sensual projections get associated with the individual experiences and create a new truth. Thus truth seems to be many. Each one tries to present his own reflection as true and final but even if they become successful in doing so, the yearning remains. Plato says this yearning is a search for ultimate truth which is often rejected and suppressed by us.⁵

This yearning shows that we have the capacity to break the prejudices and limitations of our 'defined mind'. A doubt remains if the whole truth can be known by a human mind? The answer is that its difficult to achieve absolute reality but even if a part of it is achieved it may give immense pleasure by changing our outlook towards the world.

Various philosophical thinkers have offered various ways to attain this ultimate truth. Like the Dialectical method of Socrates and Plato, the Cartesian method of Descartes, the Dialectical method of Hegal and Marx, Phenomenology of Husserl etc. Contemporary thinkers like Gandhi, Aurobindo, Osho etc. also proposed certain methods and techniques to attain the reality. These methods may help us in understanding the defined and structured mind.

The structure of a 'defined mind' has three elements-

- (1) The particular pattern,
- (2) Particular form,

3. Savage, P., Philosophical counselling Nurs Ethics, (1997), Pp39-48. doi: 10.1177/096973309700400105. <http://Rubmad.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>. 11/03/2022

4. Thilly, Frank, A History of Philosophy, (2018), SBW Publishers, New Delhi, P7.

5. Plato, The Republic, (1974), Translated by Desmond Lee Penguin Publication. Second Edition. Pp235-240.

(3) The thought or concept expressed by a pattern.

Particular pattern means a similar pattern of emotions, thoughts and behaviour resulting in similar mental state. Repetition of the patterned behaviour in every situation for example, if a person is a skeptic by nature, he will express disbelief towards every situation and every person. Such a person will be interested in examining people by keeping oneself aloof.

The second element of a structured or prejudiced mind is the particular form, which is usually realized when one tries to change the pattern of his mind. The pattern of the mind resists any kind of change. Changing the pattern needs conscious effort. Taking the earlier example of the skeptic person, he will need a long continues and conscious effort to change the form of his patterned mind. It is usually seen that one may controls his pattern and mind for sometime but falls back into the old frame soon.

The third element of the defined mind is the thought or concept expressed by the pattern. This means when one works in accordance with the particular pattern of the mind, he wants to explain the situation in a specific manner. In the example of a skeptic person, we can understand his thought in a statement like 'people cannot be believed.' In short what does the 'other' mean for a person can be understood by his patterned behaviour. This can be analysed by the philosophical investigative methods.⁶

Thus the pattern of one's mind, the emotive behaviour and the pattern of the thoughts not only expresses the attitude and thinking towards oneself and others but also shows ones perception and understanding of life. In other words my pattern expresses my concepts about the world. These concepts replicate the structure of my mind/my world. This limitation of the mind is the radius beyond which every human being yearns or aspires to move.

To conclude, we express ourself and our individual world not only through our thoughts but also through our emotions and behaviour.

The underlying problem of one's life can be known through his choices, ambitions, desires and reactions. In day to day living through our behaviour and other expressions, we indicate our attitude towards life. All the ancient Indian thoughts are concerned with the transformation of human mind. The theories proposed in India are just simple devices for entering into meditation. These people were not bothered about the truth or falsity of the theory rather they were interested in its utility. That is its capacity to transform man. So these thoughts can be called as methods for transforming

6. Sharma, K.L., Paridhi ke Pare-Philosophical praxis, (2019), counselling and spiritual healing society Jaipur, Pp19.

the human mind.⁷ Bhagwad Gita also offers a deep dialog between Krishna and Arjuna for eradicating a sense of guilt and confusion within Arjuna due to his pre-conceived notion about morality.

Bhagavad Gita as philosophical teaching for psychological relief:

The Bhagavad Gita, a revered Indian scripture, and a sacred text, offers profound insights into the human psyche. It addresses existential dilemmas, the nature of reality, and the purpose of life. Individuals grappling with questions related to identity, duty, and inner turmoil find solace in its teachings. The Gita's emphasis on self-realization, detachment, and devotion provides a psychological framework for coping with life's challenges.

Bhagavad Gita is a text of '*Brahmavidhya*' i.e., ultimate truth. To understand such a metaphysical text a basic knowledge of Indian philosophy is essential. Other than '*Brahmavidhya*' Gita also consists '*Yoga Shastra*'. The Yoga of Gita is different from Patanjali Yoga. Defining Yoga Gita Says "*Yogah karamastu Kouशलam*". That is, Yoga is the efficacy of doing an action⁸. In representing itself both as brahmavidya and yogashastra (in the colophons), the Gita tells what forms a sacred book. "Brahmavidya means the knowledge of the Ultimate Truth or reality. For imparting such knowledge, it presents a discussion of metaphysics and theology. To acquire brahmavidya, or spiritual knowledge, one should also behave in a certain way consistent with or aimed at this goal. Yogashastra is the science of spiritual striving or *sadhana*. Yoga here does not just mean adopting certain postures of the body, but has the much wider connotation of leading a life of spiritual orientation and rigorous discipline morally and mentally." Thus Gita serves as a guide to both brahmavidya and yogashastra⁹.

Secondly, a sacred book possesses a transcendent quality that extends beyond any specific or limited setting, instead holding a universal importance and relevance that resonates across space and time. While the primary objective of the Gita is to alleviate Arjuna's despair, Krishna's intention extends beyond merely providing him with a motivational prep talk. When Arjuna enquire "what is best (shreya) for him, Krishna's reply is not only about what is best for Arjuna particularly but also what is best generally or universally for all" (Dayananda 1989: 20). Arjuna serves as an emblematic representation of the human condition, therefore making Krishna's Gita

7. Osho, Vigyan Bhairav Tantra 1st series, (1990), St. Martins Gordansville, Virginia USA, Pp-549-556

8. Shatri, Divakar, Ethics of Gita, (2008), Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi.

9. Nadkarni, M.V., The Bhagavad-Gita for the Modern Reader History, Interpretations and Philosophy, (2019), Routledge India.

applicable to all individuals. The objective for the wider dissemination of the Gita is explicitly stated in verses 68 to 70 of the final chapter, Chapter 18, of the Gita. The spread is clearly apparent, namely among those who are loyal and dedicated. Krishna says, “one who teaches or expounds on the Gita with devotion among his devotees is dearest to him and will ultimately become one with him. Verse 71 of the same chapter promises that even if one merely listens to this teaching, he or she will have auspicious destiny.” The narrative extends beyond Arjuna and utilizes him merely as a pretext to convey the profound teaching¹⁰.

Thirdly, a sacred book is one that is widely embraced by a significant number of individuals, particularly within a specific group or belief system. Although numerous Hindu luminaries, such as Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, emphasize that Sacred texts do not serve as replacements for logical thinking, however logical thinking alone may not be enough when humans attempt to comprehend what lies beyond and hence seek spiritual comfort and satisfaction.

Religious literature should strive to achieve a harmonious balance between reason and religion, even when guiding individuals towards a virtuous life. The process of reasoning should be compelling, whereas faith serves as a source of inspiration and motivation. Both Gandhi and Aurobindo, stress the importance of a scripture's ability to facilitate transcendence from ordinary existence and allow individuals to directly experience the truth it conveys. Mere recitation and verbal comprehension of the text, while essential, are insufficient.

Yogananda and other scholars have stated that, “the Gita provided the essence of all the ‘ponderous’ four Vedas, the 108 Upanishads, and the six systems of Hindu philosophy, constituting a universal message for the solace and emancipation of all mankind” (Yogananda 2002, Vol. 1: 169)¹¹.

The Gita Dhyanam, a nine-verse Sanskrit poem that is traditionally performed prior to the Gita, eloquently expresses that “all the Upanishads are like cows, and Shri Krishna – the son of a cowherd – milked them for the benefit of people having a pure mind, with Arjuna being the calf, and the nectar of the Gita is the milk”(verse 4).¹² This section elucidates the reasons behind the widespread acceptance of the Gita as the preeminent sacred scripture among Hindus. The statement recognizes that the Gita is meant to encapsulate the core teachings of the Upanishads, with the purpose of

10. *ibid*

11. Yogananda, Sri Sri Paramahansa, *God Talks with Arjuna: The Bhagavad Gita – Royal Science of God Realisation The Immortal Dialogue between Soul and Spirit –A New Translation and Commentary*, (2002), Kolkata: Yogoda Satsang Society of India, (2 Volumes).

12. <https://shlokam.org/gitadhyanam/>

benefiting individuals. Furthermore, The milkman is regarded as a divine figure, specifically as the deity Krishna in human form. The deity depicted in the Gita is not solely the “abstract Brahman”, but rather a deity with personal characteristics who experiences affection and want to be adored. This stands in stark contrast to the abstract and impersonal deity depicted in the Upanishads.

In order to create an endearing effect, the Gita takes the form of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, with Arjuna repeatedly asking questions and Krishna responding slowly and affectionately with thorough explanations. Krishna firmly tell Arjuna: “Definitely you are dear to me’ (*Ishtoasi mey dridham*, XVIII.64, i.e. Chapter 18 and verse 64); and again, I promise, you are beloved to me!” (*Pratijaney priyoasi mey*, XVIII.65). Lord Krishna extends an invitation to the dedicated audience of the Gita to empathize with Arjuna and experience the limitless love and safeguarding of the Lord. Arjuna is merely an emblematic representation of a devoted individual, who also happens to be a Friend was shown affection. The Gita does not perceive a devotee as a subordinate or serf, nor does it need a devotee to view themselves in such a manner. A religious individual has the ability to inquire about God and partake in a conversation with him as a close friend. Krishna affirms that a devotee or seeker can attain tranquility by recognizing that He, the Divine, is a friend (*suhrida*) to all beings (V.29). In each line (XII.14–20), The Lord explicitly declares his deep affection for his disciples devotees.”¹³

The popularity of the Gita can also be attributed to its compelling narrative of strife. The conversation occurred directly on the battlefield, where Lord Krishna encouraged a perplexed Arjuna to engage in combat. The Gita does not primarily focus on the ethical aspects of warfare. The text does not address the issue of whether wars are justifiable or provide any information regarding their timing. They exist. However, when faced with an unavoidable conflict that is an inherent part of life, it provides valuable lessons on how to approach it with composure and balance. Gandhi elucidated that “the war confronted by Arjuna is merely a figurative representation of conflicts arising from the innate duality of good and evil within the human condition. The Gita instructs us to confront disputes directly and not avoid them in a timid manner.” (Gandhi 1980: 12–14)”¹⁴.

“Not only is the war in the Gita an allegory, but even the fact of Lord Krishna being the charioteer (*sarathi*) of Arjuna is also of great allegorical significance. Before the war, Duryodhana and Arjuna were given a choice by Krishna between the whole

13. Tilak, Lokmanya, Gitarahasya, (2016), ZX Publication, Delhi.

14. Gandhi, M.K., Anasaktiyoga, (2006), Navjivan Prakashan Mandir, Ahmedabad.

of Krishna's army on the one side and the unarmed non-fighting Krishna on the other. Arjuna chose Krishna, while Duryodhana chose his army. What is more, Arjuna wanted Krishna as his charioteer. In the struggle for life, one need not be alone. One has to invoke Krishna or the Divine Spirit as *Sarathi* to be with us to guide, inspire and empower."

The significance of the Gita's enlightening and uplifting teachings becomes evident when we consider the reasons behind the occurrence of suicides among individuals who surrender to the challenges they encounter. The Gita possesses the ability to instill bravery and provide solace to those who are disheartened and despondent. One must confront the challenges of life with sagacity and composure. The Gita instructs that it is incumbent upon every individual to assist both individuals and society at large in managing this conflict. This is imparted in the Gita's teaching on *loka-hita* and *loka-sangraha*.

As Gandhi clarified, "human reasoning can be depended upon only if it is unselfish and unprejudiced. Gita's God in any case is not an imposing tyrant, but an understanding, friendly, compassionate and liberal teacher, and gives enough freedom to human beings in choosing their path correctly and wisely in the light of His guidance. Ultimately, a spiritual seeker transcends injunctions of the texts and attains realisation through his or her own efforts". (*jijnasurapi yogasya shabda-brahmaativartate*, VI.44)¹⁵.

The ultimate goal of the Gita aims to offer a creative synthesis of different schools of thought and various trajectories of spiritual pursuit. While Bhaskara tried to correct the balance in the interpretation of the Gita in favour of karma and acknowledging the reality of the world, the task of restoring it in favour of bhakti was performed by Ramanujacharya (Ramanuja in brief). Swami Harshananda observes in this context: 'India seems to have a special knack of producing great saints almost on a "made to order" basis, as per the needs of the time' (2008, Vol. 3: 56)¹⁶.

Bhagavad Gita presents a complex interplay between dichotomies such as duty and freedom, right and wrong, action and inaction etc. Which are difficult to reconcile. It shows a single path to be followed for a confused mind to attain the state of a Sthitaprajna. The Bhagavad Gita offers a path towards spiritual liberation by advocating detachment from the fruits of one's actions and the cultivation of an unwavering concentration. Krishna focuses on reconciling the goal of *moksa* with that

15. Gandhi, M.K., *Gitamata*, (2019), Sasta Sahitya Mandal, New Delhi.

16. Nadkarni, M.V., *The Bhagavad-Gita for the Modern Reader History, Interpretations and Philosophy*, (2019), Routledge India.

of dharma. Krishna's first solution to the problem of the conflict of dharma and *moksa* involves doing one's duty with a strong deontological consciousness, which attends to 'duty for duty's sake'. Krishna calls the deontological renunciation of rewards of dutiful action *karma yoga*. In *karma yoga*, one merely gives up fruits of actions, in *bhakti yoga* one offers the fruits of one's actions to God. Whereas in *jnana yoga* one pursues knowledge for its own sake. Krishna appears to hold that any of the ways will result in liberation. Liberation means to be master of oneself. To be free from the enslavement of conditioned mind, to be able to take the right decision without fear and guilty. Above all it means to be in a state of joy (bliss) while performing *karma* (action).

Osho's concept of Bhagavad Gita as a psychological guide:

The previous century was remarkably abundant in the spiritual realm, as it witnessed the existence of several eminent entities. Notable figures include Raman Maharishi, J. Krishnamurti, Osho, Nisargadatta, and numerous others. In addition, a substantial contingent of Western instructors introduced Zen to the United States and Europe.¹⁷

A spiritual master focuses on the indescribable and formless aspects of existence, leaving his listeners in a state of silence, every teacher possesses their own unique style and approaches. Maharishi would compel everyone to fall silent with his unwavering focus on the mind as the sole manifestation, and the Self as the sole ultimate truth. Krishnamurti vehemently criticized orthodoxy and instead emphasized the significance of the individual's pursuit of Truth, thereby restoring its magnificence. Nisargadatta would dismiss all issues as the frivolous manifestations of the mind. Countless individuals experienced the profound impact of these experts. The globe suffered by the brutality of conflicts and disillusioned with consumerism, was presented with an alternative lifestyle. The influence of these experts was experienced throughout various domains of human endeavor, including religion, arts, culture, politics, and even science and technology. The Beat generation, counterculture, back-to-nature movements, yoga, mainstreaming of oriental texts, rejection of materialistic values in democratic discourse, acceptance of human development as separate from economic growth, dignified rise of Zen as a 'philosophy of mind' rather than a religion - these phenomena have had and continue to have widespread impact in various domains. Spirituality, distinct from the rigid doctrines of religion, was being acknowledged and respected. While religion may currently be experiencing a decrease

17. https://www.acharyaprashant.org/en/articles/what-do-you-think-of-osho-1_e6c54a7

in popularity and atheism is gaining traction, the concept of spirituality remains widely embraced.

Currently, it is fashionable for scientists to express themselves eloquently on the merging of science and spirituality, as well as the connection between observable phenomena and awareness. The contemporary movements advocating for climate change mitigation, peace, religious tolerance, egalitarianism, minority rights, animal rights, veganism, sustainable development, denuclearization, and demilitarization, can trace their support, if not their origins, to the spiritual movements of the previous century and earlier.¹⁸

During such a period, amidst a cluster of radiant stars in the celestial realm, Osho shone with exceptional brilliance. Osho's distinguishing trait was his boldness. He possessed profound intelligence, extensively knowledgeable, a mastermind in creating innovative meditation techniques, but his courage stands out as his defining characteristic.

Osho's talks also incorporate the Bhagavad Gita prominently. He delivered extensive lectures on the Gita, beginning in November 1970 and concluding in August 1975. The essence of Gita Darshan is in experiential understanding rather than mere acquisition of knowledge. Osho is an insightful, contradictory, and empathetic instructor. In these discourses, he extensively discusses the divine as our ultimate concern and profound awareness. He also explores the challenges and imperfections of human existence that can be overcome through self-discovery. Furthermore, he emphasizes the symbolic and allegorical nature of scriptures, which should be abandoned once one transcends language. Lastly, he emphasizes the significance of genuine renunciation achieved through action rooted in complete mindfulness, rather than through withdrawal from the world. In order to understand him, one must display humility, receptiveness, and emotional openness. Through deliberate and contemplative reading, one acquires a substantial amount of knowledge on the Gita, Osho, and, of utmost significance, one's own self.¹⁹

Osho emphasizes another crucial aspect within the framework of the Bhagavad Gita. He claims that the Bhagavad Gita is the earliest psychological scripture in the East, predating the writings of Freud, Adler, and Jung. According to him, it would be accurate to refer to Krishna as the progenitor of psychology. The efficacy of Krishna's approach to Arjuna's concerns in the Bhagavad Gita can only be fully grasped when we possess a profound comprehension of the functioning of the human mind,

18. *ibid*

19. <https://www.oshonews.com/2015/12/18/oshos-talks-on-the-bhagavad-gita/>

encompassing its nuances and complexity. According to Osho, everyone of us constantly harbors an inner Arjuna and consistently encounters various scenarios and crises. As we attentively hear him, it becomes evident that our circumstances are also somewhat similar to those of Arjuna, perhaps more intricate and significant. According to Osho, the primary source of all our issues, challenges, suffering, uncertainty, discord, and warfare is none other than the mind. In order to address these difficulties effectively, it is crucial to comprehend the functioning of the mind, including its patterns and conditionings. According to Osho, the mind is the sole source of the problem and the confusion that surrounds us. It is alone accountable for all the disorder we observe. According to Osho, the Bhagavad Gita is not a spiritual shastra, although being referred to as such by some individuals. According to him, no religious scripture may possess spiritual qualities; it can only pertain to the realm of psychology. Shastras are unrelated to spirituality. The spiritual journey begins at the point where the cognitive faculties cease. Osho asserts that a spiritual shastra does not exist, as spirituality is one with life and personal experience. Shastra just aids in comprehending the workings of the mind.²⁰

The Bhagavad Gita cannot be considered spiritual due to the fact that Arjuna's dilemma is not of a spiritual one, but rather a psychological and practical one. The solution to a psychological inquiry can solely be a psychological response. Osho argues that even if someone attempts to solve Arjuna's spiritual problem using spiritual language, it would still be incorrect since it would hinder effective communication between the two.

Osho asserts that no problem can be considered spiritual, as spiritualism itself can serve as the remedy, but problems invariably originate from the mind. According to him, all issues can be attributed to psychological factors, while spirituality serves as the remedy. "The mind is the sole issue." The mind itself embodies disorder. Hence, anything that is considered shastra is inherently limited to the realm of the mind, while anything that transcends the mind is inherently nameless.

Osho says that the majority of our problems stem from the mind, as they are predominantly psychological in nature. Therefore, the answers to these problems must also be of a psychological nature. Therefore, Krishna, in order to address Arjuna's issue, lowers himself to Arjuna's level or, in other words, to his degree of understanding. However, if Krishna approaches his problem from his current perspective, that is, from his own position of authority, then no communication will be

20. <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/philosophy/bhagwad-gita-as-seen-by-osho-philosophy-essay.php>

feasible between the two individuals; Arjuna will not comprehend anything. The disparity lies in the contrasting characteristics of the contemporary educator and the Upanishadic sage. The difference is that of the methodologies. A modern teacher always keeps his student on the centre whereas the rishi of Upanishads, he himself happens to be the centre. Krishna communicates with Arjuna in a manner of a contemporary educator. He refrains from preaching to him and instead engages in a discussion about the problem.

Osho asserts that only psychological scriptures hold potential for the future. The field of metaphysics lacks any prospects for future development. Individuals encounter challenges and seek resolutions for those challenges. Anyone who provide answers to their problems will be rewarded with a place and a promising future. According to Osho only if Krishna shows the courage to stand in a queue with Freud and Jung, then and only then Gita will have a future.²¹

Osho says When I refer to the Gita as a scripture on psychology, I am not implying that it is comparable to Freud's theories in psychology. Freudian psychology does not encompass phenomena that lies beyond boundaries of the mind. According to him, everything is limited to the mind, but the Gita indicates something that is beyond the mind.

The Gita directs attention towards the inner self, spirituality, or what can be referred to as the ultimate existence. Spirituality is inherently ineffable and cannot be fully articulated by language. The scriptures merely serve as indicators of the ultimate truth, as the metaphysical experience within an individual causes the cessation of thought. Language serves as a means to convey and reflect our thoughts and experiences. The absence of ideas during a spiritual encounter cannot be described. The spiritual experience is a state of transcendence characterized by the absence of thought and surpassing the limitations of language. The Upanishad employs the term '*NETINETI*' to describe '*BRAHMAN*', meaning neither this nor that. No matter what terms one may employ, it is not that. Osho asserts "that spiritual scriptures do not exist; rather, there are scriptures that can merely point towards spirituality, and the Gita is one such example. The indications for truth (*BRAHMAN*) or ultimate existence are confined to the boundaries of the mind, that towards which the language indicates is beyond mind." The understanding of scripture pertains to the understanding of the mind, and wherever the mind is engaged, there is a psychological description or explanation. Spirituality transcends the limits of the human psyche. All schools of

21. *ibid*

psychology are closed withing themselves and do not acknowledge anything that lies outside the realm of the mind.²²

Osho says that here Gita is different from other books of psychology. “Gita is a scripture of psychology which points that which is beyond mind.”²³

The analysis in this research highlights several important findings, as seen in the table below.:

22. Osho, Rajneesh, Gita Darshan, (2012), The Rebel Publishing, Pp108-110.

23. ibid

SYNTHESIS OF PHILOSOPHICAL WISDOM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING:

• Osho's interpretations reveal that the Gita's teachings encompass more than intellectual contemplation; they serve as tools for addressing emotional and psychological challenges. This synthesis speaks to the holistic nature of human existence, emphasizing that true well-being encompasses both intellectual understanding and emotional balance.

UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN STRUGGLES:

• Osho's portrayal of Arjuna's inner conflict as a reflection of universal human struggles reinforces the timelessness of psychological challenges. Osho shows that despite cultural and temporal differences, individuals grapple with common issues such as doubt, fear, and confusion. This universality underscores the Gita's applicability as a psychological guide across diverse contexts.

THE GITA AS A ROADMAP TO SELF-UNDERSTANDING:

• Osho's emphasis on practices like meditation and mindfulness underscores the Gita's potential to facilitate personal transformation by helping individuals navigate their internal experiences.

OSHO'S UNIQUE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE:

• Osho helps to bridge the gap between the spiritual wisdom of the ancients and the psychological insights of the moderns. The approach that Osho takes broadens the scope of philosophical counseling to include psychological rehabilitation. He does this by offering the Gita as a practical guideline for managing emotional and mental issues.

Relevance for Contemporary Philosophical Counseling:

• Osho provides a distinctive methodology in the realm of modern philosophical therapy. The psychological components of the Gita offer a new viewpoint for persons pursuing comprehensive well-being amidst a rapidly evolving environment. Osho's perspective highlights the usefulness of ancient literature as helpful resources for those navigating intricate psychological terrains, which can complement contemporary therapeutic approaches.

THE BRIDGE BETWEEN EASTERN SPIRITUALITY AND WESTERN PSYCHOLOGY:

• A link between Eastern mysticism and Western psychology is established by Osho's reading of the Bhagavad Gita. He has made the profound teachings of the Gita understandable to people all across the world by presenting them in terms of psychology. By bringing people from different cultural backgrounds together, this bridge hopes to improve both the study of Eastern spiritual traditions and the efficacy of Western psychological treatments.

AUTHOR'S COMPILATION

CONCLUSION:

It can be concluded that the Bhagavad Gita is an exceptional source of philosophical counseling due to the fact that it combines timeless wisdom with psychological depth. The interpretations of Osho increase its stature to that of a psychological guide, providing individuals who are looking for healing from their inner troubles with solace, understanding, and the opportunity to improve themselves during the process. The teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, as expounded by Osho, shed light on a road that leads to profound self-awareness and total well-being at a time when modern society is struggling with complicated psychological issues.

SOCIETY'S CASTE SYSTEM: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS FROM SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VEDĀNTIC IDEAL OF EQUALITY

Arun Kumar Chowdhury

Abstract

Caste or varṇa system is still a live issue in the present era. Many socialists and philosophers try to explain the caste system in their own ways. Swami-Vivekananda is one of them. He accepts the caste system based on qualities. To him, we are created with three qualities or guṇas. That is why we are different from each other by nature. So, we should act according to our nature. These three guṇas make someone a brāhmaṇa or a kṣatriya or a vaiśya, or a śūdra. We should not treat the caste system as hereditary. For a long time, it has been interpreted in the wrong way. That is why there is more dissimilarity in our society. According to him, we differ from each other only in manifestations not in essence. We are the same in essence as Sat-Cit-Ānanda Brahman. Through this paper, I will show how Swami-Vivekananda explains society's caste system from the Vedāntic ideal of equality.

Keywords: Caste, Dharma, Priestcraft, Hereditary, Ṛgveda, Ṛṣihood

Paper

Varṇa or caste system plays a predominant role in ancient India as well as in modern India, though it has been modified based on socio-economic status in the modern era. In general, the term *varṇa* is used in various senses. In *the practical Sanskrit- English dictionary*, Vaman Shivram Apte uses the term *varṇa* to mention colour, hue, complexion, beauty, a class of men, tribe, caste, class, race, kind species, fame glory, a good quality, merit, virtue, etc (Apte 947). In *the Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa*, it is used as a class (four classes) of men (Kale 127). In some of *Ṛgveda's* verses, it is 'associated with groups of people having a skin of dark or fair colours' (Sharma 65). It is the earliest meaning of the term *varṇa*. Based on account of the colour of people's skin, ancient human society was divided into two *varṇas* or classes. These are *ārya varṇa* and *dasyu varṇa*. The *ārya varṇa* had a white colour and the *dasyus* had a dark colour. In a way, *śūdra* was treated as *dasyu* mainly because of its dark skin. According to P.V. Kane, the term '*varṇa*' itself is not used once in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* (henceforth PS) of the *Ṛgveda*, though the terms *brāhmaṇa*, *rājanya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra* do occur. Moreover, the words *brāhmaṇa*, *rājanya*, *vaiśya*, and *śūdra*

do not occur together anywhere else in the whole of the *Ṛgveda* except in the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, even though the terms *brāhmaṇa* and *kṣatriya* do occur frequently in the *Ṛgveda* (Kane 27). For him, ‘the *Puruṣa-sūkta* is a much later hymn than most of the hymns of the *Ṛgveda*’ (27). The origin of the four *varṇas* is found for the first time in the *Puruṣa-sūkta*. According to the *Puruṣa-sūkta*, this entire world, ‘whatever has been (*bhūta*) and whatever will come to be (*bhavya*) is *Puruṣa* alone. Further (*Uta*), this *Puruṣa* is the lord (*īshāna*) of immortality (*amṛta*)’ (10.90.02). “The *Puruṣa* who was got ready to be sacrificed, had *brāhmaṇa* as his face (or mouth), the *rājanya* (or *kṣatriya*) as his arms, the *vaiśya* as his thighs; and the *śūdra* was born from his feet” (10.90.12). It means that the above-mentioned four *varṇas* originated from different parts of the body of the sacrificed *Puruṣa*. The *Manu Samhita* (henceforth MS) like the *Puruṣa-sūkta* claims that for the sake of the welfare of the world, the Supreme Being creates the *brāhmaṇa* from His mouth, the *kṣatriya* from His arms, the *vaiśya* from His thighs, and the *śūdra* from His feet (MS 1.31). Here, the four *varṇas* are described as of divine origin in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* and the *Manu Samhita*. That is why the four-fold division of *varṇas* in these two *śāstras* is rigid as well as hereditary.

Swami-Vivekananda was known as Advaita Vedāntin. His Vedānta teaching known as Practical Vedānta is different from the Advaita Vedānta of Śaṅkara. Śaṅkara’s Vedānta was in the hands of Sannyāsins: they went into the forest for the realization of Brahman through *jñāna-mārga*. Vivekananda brought Śaṅkara’s Vedānta into our practical life. To him, “Shankara left this Advaita philosophy in the hills and forest, while I have come to bring it out of those places and scatter it broadcast before the workaday world and society. The lion-roar of Advaita must resound in every hearth and home, in meadows and groves, over hills and plains” (Vivekananda Vol. VII 155-56). He, unlike Śaṅkara, does say that one can get *Mokṣa* through *karma-mārga* as well as *jñāna-mārga*. In this way, he harmonized between spiritual life and physical life.

His Vedānta philosophy’s central idea is the idea of oneness in the universe. He claims that we all are equal in the divine essence. To him, all beings (men and animals etc.) are reflections, not real. They are simply illusory reflections. In the universe, there is one Infinite Being and that Being appears as I and as you; but the appearance of divisions is a delusion after all. Only appears to be divided, the Infinite Being has not been divided (Vivekananda Vol. III 10). ‘He is both the subject and the object, He is the “I” and the “You”’ (10). Again he claims that all beings, (great or small) are equally manifestations of God; the difference is only in the manifestation (Vivekananda Vol. I 414). The God in you is the God in all (419). He is the *Sat-Cit-Ānanda* Brahman. He is in all, and he is all. He is the all in all. It means that we as

human beings are divine beings in human covering. When one realizes it through true knowledge, one gets *Jīvanmukti*. It is the aim and end of one's life. After getting *Jīvanmukti*, one can realize one's identity with the Absolute as 'I' am Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. However, it does not mean that Swami-Vivekananda does not accept differentiations in men. These differentiations may be physical, mental, or spiritual in different men. It does not mean that one has the right to get a special privilege to others. However, some important serious questions are: Does Swami Vivekananda accept the hereditary caste system? Can Swami Vivekananda's Vedānta philosophy remove all social evils of the caste system in the present era? Is Swami Vivekananda's caste system opposed to his Practical Vedānta? Does he accept the so-called Brāhmin's priestcraft? Is there any rational explanation for creating different castes in Swami-Vivekananda's philosophy? These and many more relevant important ethical questions need to be addressed to discuss Swami-Vivekananda's Caste system from the Vedāntic ideal of equality.

Caste System Based On Qualities or *Guṇas*

As a Vedāntic, he believes in spiritual equality in men. That is why he claims spiritual equality in the *varṇa* or caste system. He, like Lord Kṛṣṇa, explains the *varṇa* system based on *guṇas*. In the *Bhagavadgītā* (henceforth BG), Lord Kṛṣṇa holds that he creates four *varṇas* based on *guṇas* and *karma* (BG 4.13). The four *varṇas* are brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra. For Swami- Vivekananda, these four castes are everywhere present at all times, in all civilized societies (Vivekananda Vol. IV 447). There are three *guṇas*. These are *Sattvagūṇa*, *Rajogūṇa*, and *Tamogūṇa* According to the Sāṃkhya Philosophy, the *Sattvagūṇa* is 'responsible for the manifestation of objects in consciousness' (Sharma.154). It produces pleasure in one's body. It is white. It is the cause of the power of reflection, upward movement, happiness, and bliss. The *Rajogūṇa* is the main cause of motion, pain, and restless activity in one's body. It means foulness. It is red. And the *Tamogūṇa* is the principle of inertia. It is the cause of apathy ignorance, negativity, indifference, and confusion in one's body. It is dark. "These three *guṇas* which constitute *Prakṛti* are never separate. They conflict and yet co-operate with one another and are always found intermingled" (154-155). It is also mentioned that these three *guṇas* cannot remain static even for a moment. It means that they are said to be ever-changing (155).

According to Swamiji, these three *guṇas* make someone a brāhmaṇa, or a kṣatriya, or a vaiśya or a śūdra. It means that these *guṇas* are present inherently in every *varṇa* or caste, more or less. Every time one or other of these *guṇas* predominates in us in varying degrees and it is manifested accordingly. He explained his above claim with the help of our different pursuits, for example: when we are engaged in serving

for pay, we are in sūdrahood; when we are busy transacting some piece of business for profit, on our own account, we are vaiśyas; when we fight to right wrongs, then the *guṇas* of kṣatriyas come out in us; and when we meditate on God or pass our time in conversation about Him, then we are brāhmaṇas. Naturally, we can change our caste into another. Otherwise, how did Parashurāma become a kṣatriya and Vishvāmitra become a brāhmaṇa? (Vivekananda Vol.V Pp380-381). According to the Indian tradition, Vishvāmitra was a kṣatriya, ‘who officiated as a priest at his brothers’ sacrifice, was a prince of the kuru family’ (Ghurye 44). He was the chief author of *Maṇḍala* 3 of the *Ṛgveda*. He was also the author of the *Gāyatrī Mantra*. By birth, Parashurāma was a brāhmaṇa, but the *guṇas* of kṣatriya come out in him. That is why he fought with many kings to establish righteousness in society. Some scholars claim he had the skills of brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya. It would be noticed in this connection that Vishvāmitra was a kṣatriya, but due to his qualities, he changed himself into brāhmaṇa. Parashurāma was a brāhmaṇa, but due to his qualities, he fought as a kṣatriya. In this connection, Swamiji himself also mentioned that SatyakāmaJābōla, Nārada, Drona, Karna, Vasishtha, and others of questionable parentage were raised to the position of higher castes (brāhmaṇa and kṣatriya) in virtue of their superior knowledge or valour; but it remains to be seen how the maidservant, fisherman, prostitute or the charioteer class was benefited by these uplifting. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from the higher castes were always brought down to fill the ranks of the sūdras (Vivekananda Vol. IV 467).

Therefore, it is not always true that the son of a brāhmaṇa must be a brāhmaṇa. In this regard, he gave an example of a brāhmaṇa, namely, Aghore Chakravarti of Braghbazar, whose nephew became a sweeper. Who is Ṛṣi? In reply, Ṛṣi Vātsyāyana claims that “He who has attained through proper means the direct realization of *Dharma*, he alone can be a Rishi even if he is a Mlechchha by birth” (Vivekananda Vol. III 470). In this connection, Swamiji says that in ancient times, Vyāsa, the son of a fisherwoman, Vasishtha, born of an illegitimate union, Nārada, the son of a maidservant with uncertain parentage, and many others of like nature attained Ṛṣihood (470). There are many examples as Guru Rabidas, Haridas Thakur, etc, where one changes oneself into another caste. Guru Rabidas belonged to the *Chamar* community. His father's original occupation was leatherwork. That work made his family an untouchable caste as the *Chamar* community. However, he changed himself into Guru. He was treated as a Dalit Guru. He was an Indian mystic poet-saint of the Bhakti movement. He was also the founder of the Ravidassia religion. Through his brāhmaṇa qualities, he made himself a spiritual figure in modern society when the so-called rigid caste system was at its peak position. Haridas Thakur was born into a Muslim family but he became a prominent Vaiṣṇava saint. All these above-mentioned examples show

that we can change ourselves in the direction of spiritual figures. It means that one lower caste can change oneself into a higher caste by acquiring higher qualities (Vivekananda IV 290). Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion that Vivekananda does not accept the rigid and hereditary caste system as mentioned in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* and the *Manu Samhita* because the explanations of the caste system of these *śāstras* oppose his qualitative caste system. He preached his caste system based on the Vedāntic ideal of equality or oneness, where everyone can change his caste into another caste in the direction of spiritual figures by doing actions according to his qualities.

Here it must also be clear that the social caste system existed long before the *Bhagavadgītā* and Vivekananda. But the *Bhagavadgītā* preached their qualitative caste system based on Advaita philosophy. It just speaks on the origin of four *varṇas* or castes, and their prescribed duties (*svadharmas*) to get *Mokṣa*. Some important serious queries are: Is there any chance for a lower caste to change his caste into a higher caste? If there is any chance then how does one lower caste change oneself into a higher caste? Is there any example in the *Bhagavadgītā* where a brāhmin's son may be brought up to be a śūdra and vice versa? How do we level our caste in the present era? These and many more relevant important queries were not clearly solved in the *Bhagavadgītā*. It means that there are so many ambiguities about the caste system in it. That is why the *Bhagavadgītā* failed to implement its qualitative caste system in our society in a proper way. As a result, the so-called brāhmaṇas can misinterpret the messages of the *Bhagavadgītā* to the common people till now with their priestcraft (which is in its nature cruel and heartless). On the other hand, Vivekananda tried to explain the qualitative caste system based on his Practical Vedānta. We have seen that Vivekananda solved rationally some of the above-mentioned queries with his Practical Vedānta and we will see that some of the above-mentioned queries will be logically solved from his Vedānta. It means that Vivekananda's explanation of the qualitative caste system is more logical and rational than the *Bhagavadgītā*.

The Caste System is a Natural Order as a Social Group

Swami Vivekananda realizes that human beings cannot live without making a group in society, because they cannot get rid of that. Wherever you go, there will be caste (Vivekananda III 260). Human beings are social beings. It is the nature of human beings to form themselves into groups. They make groups according to their inner inclinations and inherent qualities. The above-mentioned three qualities play an important role in forming such a group. These three qualities predominate in everyone to a different degree. If the qualities of brāhmaṇa predominate in someone then he should perform as a brāhmaṇa. If the qualities of śūdra predominate in someone then

he should perform as a śūdra and so on. It leads that qualities are the guiding principles within human beings. One who does actions according to these qualities, acts spontaneously and freely in society. It is known as the original caste or *Jāti* system. In the system, everyone is free to express his qualitative nature, in this way, it remained for thousands of years (Vivekananda Vol. IV 363). The present society's caste system is not real *Jāti*. It is a hindrance to real *Jāti*'s progress. Moreover, it really has prevented the free action of real caste or variation (363). It means that one should be allowed to live a life according to oneself in the original caste system. One should follow the social duties according to one's qualities otherwise many problems would arise there. That is why the duties of someone should not be imposed hereditary.

For Swami-Vivekananda, the fourfold classification of the social group (caste) is the natural order. It is good (Vivekananda Vol.III 260). It would be noticed that this social group or caste is still the most scientific system. In these groups, one can do one duty and another can do another duty. However, it does not mean that one must claim an advantage over another. It does not mean that there should be any privilege for anyone. It lays equal chances for everyone to rise to a higher, through his own efforts. Thus qualitative caste system grades human beings. To develop society, the original caste system is needed in our society because everyone's capacities to do work are not the same. That is why we need to vary based on the qualitative caste system, but not on the hereditary caste system. In this regard, he claims that the original social caste should not go; but should only be readjusted occasionally (Vivekananda Vol. V 207). Those who want to abolish this original caste system are nonsense.

Most of the teachers from the Upaniṣads to the present day wanted to break the barriers of the caste system which was in its degenerate state (190). In other words, many great teachers made a great effort to break down the hereditary caste system. One of them was Buddha, who tried to abolish the hereditary caste system and tried to re-establish the original caste system which was the most glorious institution in India. To Swamiji, "Caste is a social custom, and all our great preachers have tried to break it down. From Buddhism downwards, every sect has preached against caste, and every time it has only riveted the chains" (316).

The hereditary caste system hinders society's progress and prevents men's natural order. It is a barrier to India's progress. It has been separated among us for a long time. As a result, we cannot realize the truth of a functional division of society. It means that it is opposed to the religion of the Vedānta (316). It is not a religious constitution. If we accept it as a religious constitution then we make a big mistake. It has nothing to do with religion (Vivekananda Vol. IV 195). For this reason, in the past, various great persons like Gautama Buddha, Ram Mohan Roy etc made the great

mistake of holding the caste system as a religious institution. As a result, they tried to pull down caste and religion altogether and failed (Vivekananda Vol. V 23).

The Role of Priest craft for Preaching Hereditary Caste System in Our Society

For him, caste is a very good thing. It is the plan we want to follow. What it really is, not one in a million understands (206). Here he talked about the original caste system, not the hereditary caste system. To him, due to ambiguities and misinterpretation of our *sāstras*, the *brāhmaṇas* preached it as hereditary with their priest craft. Priest craft is one of the main evils of the degenerating caste system in India. The so-called *brāhmaṇas* preached a caste system as hereditary for their own benefit. They kept away lower cast to study *sāstras*. They hold higher social status along with maximum privileges in our society. They give the next social status to *kṣatriya* along with maximum privileges but less to *brāhmaṇas* and the last status to *sūdras* along with minimum privileges. It is the *brāhmaṇas*, who preached the hereditary caste system with the help of their priest craft to get more advantage. In this regard, it is nothing wrong to say that the hereditary caste system is nothing other than a hereditary trade guide. That is why society has no faith in the *brāhminhood* of the so-called *brāhmaṇa*.

For Vivekananda, the enjoyment of an advantage over another is a privilege (Vivekananda Vol. I 425). It means that they keep away us from the qualitative caste system. That is why Swamiji opposed *brāhmaṇas*' harmful system of priest craft. In this regard, Swamiji holds that 'priest craft is in its nature cruel and heartless. That is why religion goes down where priest craft arises (418). The idea of social privilege is the bane of social life as well as human life (413). As a result, he concludes that no privilege mental, physical, or spiritual should be accepted by anyone because human beings are the same in the divine essence. To him, we are the same in power, the same potentiality is in us; we are differed only in manifestation as more or less. Where is the claim to privilege? (413). There is no meaning that someone is born higher than another in the Vedānta Philosophy. That is why no privilege should be claimed there. Again he claims that the Supreme Being is in all human souls. He is the Soul of man. What privilege can men ask? (413-414). Therefore, the philosophy of Vedānta breaks down all privileges that higher castes claim as their own.

The Solution of the Leveling of All Castes

He notices that by degrading the higher castes or by crushing the higher castes or *brāhmaṇas*, the problem of the leveling of caste is not solved. That is why he places stress on education to uplift the so-called lower castes and to develop their ethical and moral values. In this connection, he holds that we can level our society's caste with the help of appropriate education and culture, which is the strength of the higher castes

(Vivekananda Vol. III 306). Again he claims that we have to elevate all our caste first if we want to rise to a higher caste in India, and then there is nothing in our onward path to hold us back (Vivekananda Vol. IV 290). In this way, Swamiji gives a solution to the caste system in India. He also praises British Rule and Mohammedan Rule for removing exclusive privileges and claims of higher castes. To him, One-fifth of our Indian people have become Mohammedans, because the Mohammedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the downtrodden, to the poor. It was not the sword that did it all (Vivekananda Vol. III 309).

A Rational Explanation of Creating Different Castes

For Swamiji, the ideal man of our ancestors was the brāhmaṇa (210). An ideal brāhmaṇa works selflessly to acquire the power of love and propagate wisdom. Ideal brāhmaṇa is moral, spiritual, and good. He is the ideal of humanity and the man of God. He has known the Supreme Being. That is why he must not go. To him, the plan in India is to make everybody a brāhmaṇa (Vivekananda Vol. V 206). Here it would be clear that the ideal brāhmaṇa does not mean the so-called brāhmaṇa that we often see in our society. According to *Śanti-Parva* (henceforth SP) of the *Mahābhārata*, “There is in fact no distinction between the different castes. The whole world at first consisted of Brāhmaṇas. Created equally by Brahman, men have, on account of their acts, been divided into various castes” (SP 188.10). Vivekananda narrated this explanation of the *Mahābhārata* in his own way as there was only one caste which was brāhmaṇa at the beginning of *Satya Yuga*. They have divided themselves into different castes for different occupations by beginning degeneration. As a result, different castes were created in our society. For him, it is the only true and rational explanation for creating different castes. That is why he gives all credit to the brāhmaṇas for more men with real brāhminess have come from them and for all the other castes have come from them (Vivekananda Vol. III 308). Moreover, he also claims that if there is any defect in brāhmaṇas then we must be bold enough to speak of their defects, but at the same time, we must give all the credit to them which they deserve. To him, all the different castes will have to go back to the same condition, in the coming *Satya Yuga* (308). In other words, when the cycle of four *Yugas* (*Kṛta* or *Satya Yuga*, *Treta Yuga*, *Drapara Yuga*, and *Kali Yuga*) turns round then they (different castes) will be elevated to brāhminhood (212). He asks us to strive after that brāhminhood or Ṛṣihood, which should not be stopped till we have attained the goal (470). It means that everyone must do actions with the original caste system on the Vedāntic ideal of equality to get brāhminhood. As a result, everyone will get Ṛṣihood in the upcoming *Satya Yuga*. Every caste will be brought into single groups (brāhmin group), as was the case in *Satya Yuga*. According to him, it is ‘the scheme of human progress that has been laid out in the most perfect order by our ancestors’ (210) and we have to complete the

practical realization of that scheme. Here it would be noticed that the brāhmaṇa's priestcraft and brāhminhood are not identical. Therefore, four castes and many subdivisions of castes were created from brāhmaṇas, which has to be abolished and a single brāhmin caste to be made by uniting them all in the upcoming *Yuga* (Vivekananda Vol. V 407). It would be noted that he wants to establish a brāhminclass society based on the Vedāntic Ideal of equality. One class society means a classless society where no kind of privilege is to be granted.

Concluding Remarks

From the above discussion, I would like to conclude that Vivekananda's qualitative caste system is a discovery of natural originality in us. Though he was influenced by the *Bhagavadgītā's* qualitative caste system, at the same time he felt that it was unable to remove the hereditary caste system and failed to re-establish the original caste system. In other order, it was unable to prevent men's natural order because of its ambiguities. That is why he tried to reform our society with a qualitative caste system where a brāhmaṇa has two sons one can be brought up to be a śūdra and the other a brāhmin. It is an excellent mechanism of social adjustment that provides a chance for everyone to get brāhminhood. In this way, he was able to give a satisfactory explanation of a flexible caste system admitting mobility from one caste to another. To him, it is possible to form such an ideal society by putting Practical Vedānta's principles into practice for spiritual upheaval. It can alone solutions to all problems of our society. To implement Practical Vedānta's principle into practice, he emphasized imparting education to the people, because he felt that real social reform may come from working at the root by making them enlightened. Therefore, if we want to implement Vivekanada's caste system then first we have to educate our people to practice Vedānta's principle; otherwise, there is no chance to escape from the hereditary caste system till now.

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BERKELEY AND EARLY WITTGENSTEIN ON SOLIPSISM: A REVIEW

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Abstract

This paper gives an exposition of the conception of solipsism of both Berkeley and early Wittgenstein followed by a critical assessment of the same. Both of them argue that solipsism is not different from realism. The difference lies in their methodological inquiry into the issue of solipsism. Berkeley believes in the epistemological-perceptual method, whereas Wittgenstein considers the method of logico-linguistic analysis to understand the sense of the world and life in his early work Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Berkeley's philosophy of 'subjective idealism' is regarded as leading to the problem of the denial of the independent existence of anything beyond the knowing self or 'I'. It is common knowledge that I exist in a world of various types of things and beings. This realistic position can hardly be denied by any philosophical doctrine. Similar is the case with Wittgenstein. His problem is more important than that of Berkeley. Wittgenstein deals with the problem concerning the relationship between language and the world. There is a sense in which Wittgenstein agrees with solipsism. One natural way of expressing the view of solipsism is to say "The world is my world." In this sense, solipsism becomes the same as realism. In another sense, he disagrees with solipsism in so far as the whole of sayability centres on self, which is nowhere found in the world. So it is rather the philosophical self. This cannot be asserted to exist because there would be logical absurdity in doing so. Wittgenstein is right in saying that solipsism is correct in principle, but the difficulty with it is that it cannot be stated in language.

Keywords: Berkeley, Wittgenstein, Solipsism, Self, World

I

This paper gives an exposition of the conception of solipsism of both George Berkeley and early Ludwig Wittgenstein followed by a critical assessment of the same. Both of them argue that solipsism is not different from realism. The difference lies in their methodological inquiry into the issue of solipsism. Berkeley believes in the epistemological-perceptual method, whereas Wittgenstein considers the method of logico-linguistic analysis to understand the sense of the world and life in his early work

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Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.¹ Berkeley's philosophy of 'subjective idealism' is regarded as leading to the problem of the denial of the independent existence of anything beyond the knowing self or 'I'. It is common knowledge that I exist in a world of various types of things and beings. This realistic position can hardly be denied by any philosophical doctrine. Similar is the case with Wittgenstein. His problem is more important than that of Berkeley. Wittgenstein deals with the problem concerning the relationship between language and the world. There is a sense in which Wittgenstein agrees with solipsism. One natural way of expressing the view of solipsism is to say "The world is my world."² In this sense, solipsism becomes the same as realism. In another sense, he disagrees with solipsism in so far as the whole of sayability centres on self, but is nowhere found in the world. So it is rather the philosophical self which is the precondition of any proposition. This cannot be asserted to exist because there would be logical absurdity in doing so. Wittgenstein is right in saying that solipsism is correct in principle, but the difficulty with it is that it cannot be stated in language.

Commonsense moves in an unorganised way, science in an organised refined way and philosophy moves in the most organised way. Berkeley starts his philosophy by discussing the status of matter, which is the subject matter of common sense and science. His predecessor John Locke left the idea of matter as problematic as he said that matter, that is substance, must exist as the support of qualities, but what that substance is, is not known. The point of view that Berkeley wants to contest is that objects like tables, chairs, houses, plants, rivers, mountains, etc., exist in the world out there on their own independent of being perceived. People in general believe in the outer world because they can see it, touch it, hear it, smell it, and taste it. Are the sensible qualities of things in the world the cause of perception of their existence? Locke believes in such a view. Berkeley rejects the causal theory of perception and the existence of matter too. It seems that if we take away all sensible qualities, then there is nothing left that is sensible. So, things are nothing but a set of sensible qualities. Sensible qualities are but the ideas in the mind of the perceiver. To exist is to be perceived - *esse est percipi*. This is called the doctrine of idealism. As the ideas are ideas in relation to a subject, it is called Subjective Idealism. According to Berkeley, Self or Spirit alone can be the cause of ideas as those are inactive by themselves. Berkeley has been pictured in this way in many books on history of Western philosophy and introductory books on philosophy. They also say that when subjective idealism is pushed to the extreme, as Berkeley does in his *Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous* and his *Principles of Human Knowledge*, it becomes a doctrine of solipsism.³ 'Solipsism' literally means 'I and my ideas alone exist.'

According to Berkeley, there is no such entity as matter or a physical world, or, in the sense of existing independently. All that we ordinarily call physical objects are a totality of ideas in the mind of the perceiving being. The appearances that are experienced are the very objects. The appearances are sensations or perceptions of a thinking being. According to his '*esse est percipi*' - 'to be is to be perceived' - thesis, all the things surrounding us are nothing but our ideas. Sensible things have no other existence distinct from their being perceived by us. This also applies to human bodies. When we see our bodies or move our limbs, we perceive only certain sensations in our consciousness.

Berkeley argues that since we never perceive anything called 'matter', but only ideas, the view that there is a material substance lying behind and supporting these perceptions is untenable. For him, everything is mind-dependent. If one cannot form an image of a thing in the mind, then that thing cannot be said to exist. It is argued that if there were no material substrate supporting our ideas, how is it that things persist when no one perceives them? Berkeley's response to this is that all our perceptions are ideas produced for us by God. It appears that Berkeley succeeds in his attempt to avoid the allegation that he is a solipsist. However, his thought falls into the category of what could be called Divine Solipsism. The Divine Being and His ideas alone are real ultimately. Only relatively, 'I' and my ideas alone are real. Berkeley's attempt to avoid the label of solipsism is not as successful as he thinks. He is only creating within his own mind an idea of a God within whose mind all things exist as ideas. He makes his God a solipsist and makes him the God of God. As he argues that all things are merely ideas that arise within the mind of the individual, it becomes natural to conclude that Berkeley is indeed a solipsist. But it would be an unfair appraisal of Berkeley.

Berkeley cannot be described like this, not as an idealist, or as a subjective idealist, or as a solipsist in the ordinary sense of these terms. Plato's Ideas are Ideals, but Berkeley's ideas are not Ideals. The Idea of the table, according to Plato, is the Idea of the perfect table to which tables of the empirical world approximate. John Hospers calls Berkeley an 'idea-ist.'⁴ The perceiver, according to Berkeley, admits his own existence by inward feeling or reflection. Besides his own existence, he also admits the existence of other selves by analogical reason. Besides these finite selves, he admits the existence of an infinite self, that is, God. Therefore, it would not be proper to label Berkeley as a subjective idealist or a solipsist. Berkeley could better be known as a critical realist.

II

Ludwig Wittgenstein is a frontline philosopher of the twentieth century. He is a leader in the analytical tradition that began with Frege, Moore, and Russell. His *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (TLP)*, one can say, is the Bible of this tradition that showed the new path of doing philosophy. He says that this is not a text in philosophy, but claims that this deals with the problems of philosophy. Here he takes up the important problem regarding the relationship of thought with reality in the logical mode and the problem is rephrased as the problem of relationship of language with reality. This involves the further problem of the scope and limits of what could be said in language about reality.

According to Wittgenstein, the structure of reality is the same as the structure of language. By 'language' he does not mean any natural language like German, English, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, or Hindi. All such different languages are used to talk about the same reality. Hence they must have a common and essential structure. What is that? The task in *TLP* is to discover this structure. Wittgenstein, however, does not start with language to find out its structure. He starts with aphoristic statements about the structure of the world. The reason behind this must be that the world is the common point of reference of any language.

According to Wittgenstein, the world is a totality of facts, not of things. By 'fact' Wittgenstein means facts in their simplest form. Whatever facts are described by propositions need to be analysed into the simplest form, if they are not in that form. This is a logical need. Hence, Wittgenstein asserts that even if the world is infinitely complex, it must ultimately be analysed into the simplest facts. He calls them state of affairs. The world is, therefore, a totality of states of affairs.

He then comes to language. The smallest unit of expression is a proposition, not a word. Language consists of propositions. If a proposition is not a simple one, its sense cannot be easily apprehended. Wittgenstein is in search of clarity in thought and expression. So, he searches for the simplest form of proposition that carries thought. According to him, language is ultimately a sum total of the simplest propositions which he calls elementary propositions.

The sameness of the structure of language and the world is now found. An elementary proposition is a representation or picture of a state of affairs. Wittgenstein emphasises the sameness of structure from the point of view of meaning. His view of meaning as the picture has three characteristics: (1) elemental similarity, (2) structural similarity, and (3) rules of projection that make it possible to have the state of affairs

when an elementary proposition is given and have the elementary proposition when the state of affairs is given.

It follows from the above that if all the elementary propositions are given, then all the possible states of affairs are given and that fixes the limit of the world. This is the general position regarding the relationship of language with the world. In respect of any particular user of language, say, Tom, Dick, or Harry, this general position would apply. For anyone, his/ her conception of the world is built and bound by elementary propositions in that resource of language, which he/she could build out of elements, called names. The world for any user of language is a limited whole, because nothing lies outside the limits of his/her language. I cannot conceive of a world outside the one that is bound by the stock of language which I possess. As Wittgenstein puts it, "The limits of my language mean the limits of my World."⁵

In other words, the limits of language are also limits of the reality that can be thought or described. Now, it could be seen that the phrase 'reality that can be described or thought' is an extra thing here for the reasons that we shall now discuss. The above expression does not make sense and needs to be dropped. That which it intends to say can only be shown. One cannot say that the limits of language are the limits of the only reality that can be described or thought. This has the implication that there is another reality beyond the reality depicted by language which is not specified. This is not correct. George Pitcher explains it in a simple manner.⁶ He takes aRb as a symbolic example of a state of affairs. For example, the state of affairs aRb belongs to the reality that can be described or thought. The negation of this statement cannot be significantly stated in language. It turns out to be nonsensical. It appears to say something, but it does not say anything. Wittgenstein says, "Logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits."⁷ He says further that we cannot say in logic, "The world has this in it, and this, but not that." The world is a limited whole. The world is limited by the logic of language and not by any physical boundary. This leads to the discussion of solipsism. As we discussed earlier, solipsism is the doctrine that I and my ideas alone exist. What of I do not have an idea, including other selves, does not exist. We have pointed out that in the history of philosophy George Berkeley is shown as a philosopher who was a subjective idealist and a solipsist.

III

It appears as if Berkeley and Wittgenstein, who are two centuries apart, are advocating the same doctrine of solipsism. Berkeley is putting it up in terms of ideas, whereas Wittgenstein is putting it up in terms of language. We have contested the claim that Berkeley is a solipsist. Wittgenstein, however, would agree with what solipsism

says. As we discussed above, Wittgenstein says that the world that I refer to and describe is the world that I depict by means of my resources of linguistic implements. This is but natural and real. “The world is my world,” Wittgenstein states.⁸ This statement is quite true and natural. Here, ‘natural’ does not mean that nature dictates what is to be called what. It rather means that when one thinks and speaks about reality, one thinks about it within the limits of one’s language. That is why he says that solipsism coincides with pure realism. The phrase ‘that can be described or thought’ must be dropped and it simply reduces to reality and reality alone. In the same way, ‘my world’ reduces to ‘the world’. ‘My World’ means the language which I only can understand, I only can think, I only can convey, etc., and that limits the world for me. This is what my world is and this is what the world is; both are one and the same. This is the spirit of solipsism and in this sense Wittgenstein says that solipsism is right. The implication of Wittgenstein’s solipsism is that “I am my world”⁹ from the logico-linguistic point of view.

My language and my world are equipollent. For Wittgenstein, my world exists as far as my language goes. But, the only problem here is the thesis of solipsism cannot be stated in language. It is only shown in the way one uses language to talk about the world within the framework of logic. Leaving the self aside, solipsism wants to say: (1) what I experience exists and (2) whatever I do not experience does not exist. But, neither (1) nor (2) is a proposition having sense. Following Wittgenstein’s search for simples, we find that both (1) and (2) denote complexes and complexes are to be analysed into propositions containing only particulars. What I experience is the state of affairs aRb. Its linguistic expression is the proposition aRb. This complex aRb containing names and relations appears to be the symbolic form of a simple proposition. When it is broken up into simple propositions, we get “‘a’ exists” and “‘b’ exists”. These utterances “a exists” and “b exists” are not genuine propositions as their negations are self-contradictory and senseless. a and b are objects of the world and they must exist to make sense of any proposition possible.

Therefore, “My experiences are my experiences” and “My world is my world” lack sense. I cannot *say* that my world is all there is, but that is so can readily be seen. I cannot say that there is another world that lies outside me. It does not make any sense to say so. But, it is a correct viewpoint. So, what solipsism wants to say is correct, but it cannot be said in meaningful terms. “For what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but makes itself manifest. The world is *my* World: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of *my* world.”¹⁰

The thesis of solipsism underlies a dualism. There is the thinking, knowing, or experiencing self; it is a thing that has experiences. Then there must be an experiencing self, but it cannot be the object of experience. Whenever there is experience, there is an experience. But, the experiencer is not within the domain of experience. The experiencer is not the object of experience. There is no such entity as thinking, knowing self - a metaphysical self. Such a thing as appears to be there in epistemological analysis cannot be logically supported. Here, the thinker is the thought; the experiencer and the experience are non-different. Berkeley maintains the duality between I and my ideas. This is so from the point of view of empirical psychology. Wittgenstein maintains that my statements are alone there. This is from the logico-linguistic point of view. The self is nothing but the sum total of episodes like thinking, knowing, willing, etc., which shows itself forth in the meaning-bearing statements.

“The ‘I’ is not an object.”¹¹ What Wittgenstein means by saying that there is no such entity as self in the world is that ‘I’ in “I see ___”, “I think ___”, “I feel ___”, and so on, is not the name of an object. Here the remaining part is the ‘see ___’, ‘feel ___’, ‘think ___’ and so on could be meaningfully expressed with the prefix of an impersonal subject like ‘it’. “I think” is only an accidental grammatical form that misleads us to suppose that ‘I’ must be there as an object in the world. Instead of saying “I think”, we can very well say “It thinks”. In this form of expression the confusion does not occur.¹²

IV

Jaakko Hintikka’s explanation of what Wittgenstein understands by ‘metaphysical subject’ is worth our attention. He says that Wittgenstein’s solipsism identifies the metaphysical subject with the sum-total of one’s language. To be more clear, Wittgenstein identifies the limits of one’s language with the limits of one’s self. Here, he is not concerned with the empirical subject, but the ‘metaphysical’ subject discussed in history of philosophy. There is no part of the world of which it can be said that it necessarily is. “No part of experience is . . . a priori.”¹³ Hence, “in an important sense, there is no subject”; the ‘thinking, imagining subject’ does not do as the metaphysical subject.¹⁴ The ‘metaphysical’ subject is the totality of propositions. It cannot, therefore, refer to itself, for it follows from the other doctrines of the *TLP* that no propositions can refer to itself.¹⁵ The metaphysical subject being the totality of propositions is identified with the totality of thoughts for “the thought is the significant proposition”. Therefore, nothing is private and psychological about Wittgenstein’s notion of thought.¹⁶

Marie McGinn makes the same point in a different language. He says that the subject does not create the world. Which states of affairs exist or do not exist is independent of the subject and established only *a posteriori*.

However, the world is not conceivable other than in propositions that belong to a system of representation that stands in a projective relation to reality. Moreover, the idea of the projection of language onto reality contains the idea of a subject who makes the projection. Wherever there is a representation of the world in propositions, there is a subject who is in a position to say 'I think ...'.¹⁷

The 'experience' that we need to understand logic is not that something or other is the state of things. That goes on changing and falls under the scope of science which enquires into the 'how' of states. But the state of things that does not change is the 'what', which is the concern of logical philosophy. Hence, Wittgenstein observes that logic is prior to the question 'How', not prior to the question 'What'. Thus, logic is in between 'How' and 'What'. It is prior to the world, but not independent of the world. This is well explained by G.E.M. Anscombe. Everything logical about a significant proposition is understood before it is known whether the proposition is true or false. But logic cannot be thought of as something independent of the world. If logical truths were there without there being any world, then when a world comes to be, it cannot apply to the world.¹⁸ We cannot say of that world that such and such a thing cannot be, because there exists a logical fact which is inconsistent with it. It is a logical riddle. "If there would be such a thing as logic, even if there were no world, then how can there be such a thing as logic, when there is a world?"¹⁹ Although logic is prior to every representation of how the world is, its limits can, in this special sense, be said to coincide with the limits of the world.

I am a solipsist if I think "I am the only *I* and the world including all the people in it, is *my* experience." In a sense, this is all right. But how can I put it in language which is only intersubjectively used and understood? It is natural to think that where there is consciousness, there is an *I*. How do we speak of *an I*? There is a consideration 'from inside' and there is a consideration 'from outside'. In order to locate *an I* from the inside, one perceives the contents of consciousness like the pain, the image, the visual field, and the like, whereas, from the outside, one perceives manifestations of them in verbal and physical behaviour. Explaining Wittgenstein's position, Anscombe points out that it is illegitimate to speak of '*an I*'. 'From inside' means only 'as *I* know things' and I describe those things. However, there remains something I cannot communicate or express, that is about the *I* behind descriptions. I try to do so by saying that I speak 'from an inside point of view'. But the trouble is that there is no other *point*

of view. If others speak also ‘from an inside point of view’, that would be *my* experience.²⁰ In the words of Wittgenstein, “what the solipsist *means* is quite correct; only it cannot be *said*, but makes itself manifest.”²¹ The ‘I’, taken in this sense, cannot be found as a mind or a soul or as a subject of consciousness. All that can be found is the content of consciousness. In this sense, “I am my world” and “The world and life are one”.²² The ‘I’ refers to a point from which everything is seen.²³

V

There is a type of proposition which gives the impression the self is correlated as an object with facts, such as, “A judges that *p*”, “A believes that *p*”, “A has the thought *p*”, and “A says *p*”. These are called intentional propositions. This is a misunderstanding according to Wittgenstein. He tries to dispel it by bringing out the logical form of such propositions in a unique way. According to Wittgenstein, the mind cannot be explained as a thinking subject or a judging subject. “A judges *p*” is really of the form “‘*p*’ says *p*”. For him, what we do have is not a simple object but a complex here. The composite self cannot be a simple object. The self that appears to be here as an object is nothing but a bundle of psychological elements. It is not an object which can be found in this world. There is no such thing as a subject that is the seat of activities like thinking or entertaining ideas.²⁴

“A believes that *p*”, “A has the thought *p*” and “A says *p*” are all of the form “‘*p*’ says *p*”. (*TLP*, 5.542) Any one of the above three does not involve a correlation of a fact with an object. It involves the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects. Now the question arises, what is the difference between the correlation of fact with an object and the correlation of facts by means of the correlation of their objects? The point is that it is denied that a fact is not coordinated with the self as an object. But, it is affirmed that a propositional sign as a fact is coordinated with a proposition and the sense of the proposition, that is, a state of affairs of the world involves a correlation of objects. This becomes clear when we take the following aphorisms together.

“We use the perceptible sign of a proposition (spoken or written, etc.) as a projection of a possible situation.”²⁵

“A proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world.”²⁶

“Instead of, ‘This proposition has such and such a sense’, we can simply say, ‘This proposition represents such and such a situation’.”²⁷

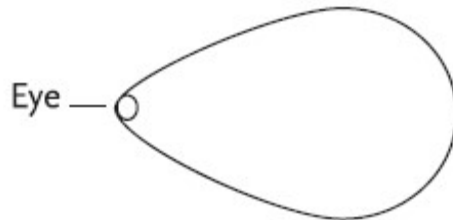
The sense of a proposition is objective and it does not need a psychological-empirical self to manifest it. Marie McGinn explains,

The proposition that I use to express this recognition ‘A judges that p ’ – identifies the subject to whom I attribute the thought by means of reference to an empirical subject: the human being denoted by ‘A’. However, in recognising the other as expressing a thought, I implicitly recognise that the other is not merely a constituent of my world, but that he, like me, has an orientation towards it.²⁸

According to Wittgenstein, a proposition is also a fact. The proposition “A has the thought p ” does not involve a correlation of fact with an object; rather it involves a correlation between a propositional fact with the fact of the world. The propositional fact is concatenated with the name and the world fact is concatenated with the object. A fact can picture a fact; a non-fact cannot picture a fact. So, if we take a concrete example, it would be like this: the propositional fact “Cuttack is to the north of Bhubaneswar” states a fact of the world that Cuttack is to the north of Bhubaneswar. “A believes p ” is equivalent to “A utters ‘S’ and ‘S’ says that p .” (‘S’ stands for statement) Here, the supposed thinker does not exist as an object. It is rather like that the thought is there without a thinker. We know that for Wittgenstein, thought is propositional. In the psychological sense, we say that there is a thinker very much as Descartes does, but in the logical sense, there is no need for it.

V

At 5.632, Wittgenstein's notion of a subject is that it does not belong to the empirical-psychological world or a transcendent metaphysical world. It exists in the domain of philosophical logic as a formal concept. It is said to constitute the limits of the world. It is the transcendental ‘I’ which is not part of the world, nor apart from the world. To explain this, he gives the analogy of the eye and the visual field in *TLP*, 5.6331:



He means to say that although the visual field is for the eye, the eye is not inside the visual field and the eye is not completely outside the visual field either. It is the limit of the visual field. Particular cases of representation of the world show that there is a conscious subject. The existence of the visual field shows the existence of the eye.

Here, we take ‘visual field’ as the consciousness of the world or representation of the world, and ‘I’ as the conscious subject. As ‘I’ is not in the consciousness in the visual field, that consciousness is not there as one of the representations of the world. Representation of the world *shows* that there is consciousness that represents. We cannot *say* that in so many words. There are representations of the world, but no representation of consciousness. That would be a contradiction. The existence of the visual field shows the existence of the eye. Similarly, the self does not itself appear in the representations of the world, simply because consciousness is coordinated with it already. As H.O. Mounce puts it, Wittgenstein seems to suggest that philosophy can bring out, though not state, a sense of the self, which has not been captured in what has been said about the empirical self.”²⁹ At *TLP*, 5.62, Wittgenstein says, “For what the solipsist means is quite correct; only it cannot be said but makes itself manifest.”As explained already, there is nothing, which is the neighbour of the visual field in contrast with which the given visual field would be provided a boundary to differentiate it from the supposed other. There is no other area. It is not that the conception of solipsism is right and when we express it, it becomes confused. It is not like that. What then is the point in saying that what solipsism means is quite correct? His point, according to Mounce, is that solipsism is a confused attempt to say important something else. Solipsism is not true, but there is something behind what is called solipsism. This Wittgenstein wanted to say which cannot be said in language. Therefore, it shows itself. The truth is not that ‘I’ alone is real. It is rather that I have a point of view on the world which is without neighbours.³⁰ The so-called doctrine of solipsism, according to him, is that there cannot be any doctrine called solipsism. But, there is a doctrine that cannot be said.

Wittgenstein asserts, “The world is *my* World.”³¹ This is not stated in language, but shown by what is stated in language. As per Wittgenstein’s philosophical logic, non-elementary propositions are truth-functions of elementary propositions and an elementary proposition is a truth-function of itself. So, when we analyse any proposition to get its sense, we ultimately reach elementary propositions. The sense of a non-elementary proposition can be derived by analysing the same into elementary proposition. When the sense of elementary propositions is known, the sense of the given non-elementary propositions is known. Non-elementary propositions are constructed out of elementary propositions and logical connectives. If someone has a list of all elementary propositions and all the propositional connectives, then (s)he has all the propositions about the world and thereby knows the whole world, or (s)he can describe the world completely. But, none of the users of language have at their command the whole list of propositions because they do not have at their command all the elementary propositions. Suppose that I am given all elementary propositions: then

I can simply ask what propositions I can construct out of them. And there I have all propositions and that fixes their limits.³² A proposition is a truth-function of elementary propositions.³³ If we know all the elementary propositions, then the totality shows the 'limits' of the world. Any proposition, which is not truth-functional is not a description of the world. A complete description of the world is given by listing all elementary propositions and then listing which of them are true and which is false.³⁴

The truth about the world would be explained by different propositions or a set of propositions and if we know this set of propositions, then we know the whole truth about the world. According to the *TLP*, we are confined to the language in which we use to speak about the world. Our world expands or shrinks according to our capability to construct elementary propositions and non-elementary propositions out of them. Therefore, the limits of language fix the limits of reality. My language fixes limits on my take of reality. Here, the word 'my' used in the sentence gives the impression of solipsism as if the existence of the world depends upon *my* knowing the world. But, 'my' is not confined to me only; it is open to each and every user of language. Everybody describes the world using the word 'I' and 'my.' The meaning of reality is the same as the phrase 'that can be described or thought'. So, we cannot use meaningfully the expression 'the reality that cannot be described nor thought'. There is no world beyond this world, which could not possibly be described or thought. There is no such neighbour, there is no such world in a neighbourhood that is described or thought of. One cannot say either (1) the limits of the only reality that can be described or thought, or (2) there may be some other reality beyond this limited reality, which can be described or thought in language. So, the second proposition is self-contradictory, because we cannot say that there is a reality that cannot be described in language. If the opposite of a given proposition is not significant, then the given proposition is not significant. Instead of saying that the limits of reality that can be described or thought, we must say that the limits of language are the limits of reality of the world. So, the phrase 'limits of my language' means that we know the limited part of the ideal whole or know only a limited portion of the elementary propositions. Therefore, my language is a limited part of my language at my command.

Here, Wittgenstein's point is not that there is a language that I alone understand, but that it is the only language that I understand. My conception of the world shows itself only in what I say about the world. The conception of the world, which is given to me in language that I know, does not mean that I have considered other possibilities. So, my conception about the world is, like my visual field, without neighbours.

In conclusion, it may be pointed out that Berkeley's solipsism is not different from realism and Wittgenstein's solipsism is also not different from realism. But, there is a methodological difference between them. Berkeley's method is epistemological-perceptual, whereas Wittgenstein's method is logico-linguistic. In the epistemological-perceptual method, ideas are the smallest units of significance, and in the logico-linguistic method propositions are the smallest units of meaningfulness. For Berkeley, "I and my ideas exist, and my thought is my world". For Wittgenstein, my world extends so far as my language goes. "Logic pervades the world", he says. Hence, for Wittgenstein, "I am my world". "I am my world" is the same for both Berkeley and Wittgenstein only realistically. We can see that realism is the root of Berkeley's 'solipsism' and realism is the fruit of Wittgenstein's 'solipsism'.

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A CRITICAL EXPOSITION ON QUINE'S NOTION OF MEANING AND INDETERMINACY

Niranjan Adhikari

Abstract

This paper contained a critical discussion of Quine's theory of meaning in terms of his indeterminacy thesis. In analytic philosophy, especially in semantics, language is used as a tool to interpret the knowledge of the world. A language consists of propositions. Every proposition in our language must be meaningful. So, meaning is the fundamental component of a proposition. Now the problem is: how do we determine the meaning of a proposition? Quine exemplified that every way to determine the meaning of a linguistic expression by traditional semantics is totally wrong about meaning. Instead of following the traditional semantics, Quine relies on a behaviouristic approach towards meaning. He qualified traditional semantics as a "myth of museum" that exhibits meaning in a certain kind of entity. This article consists of four different sections. In the very first section of this paper, I intended to explain the argument of Quine against traditional semantics on meaning as an entity. The second section deals with a critical evaluation of Quine's notion of stimulus meaning and conceptual scheme. In the third section, I attempted to explain Quine's critical observation on meaning in terms of the indeterminacy thesis. This final section holds concluding remarks, in which I object to some misconceptions regarding Quine's theory of meaning.

Keywords: *Semantics, entities, myth of museum, stimulation, Radical translation, Indeterminacy of Translation*

Paper

W. V. O. Quine is considered the most interesting and prominent figure in 20th-century analytic philosophy. His way of looking at philosophy was different from others. His *naturalistic* interpretation brings an evolution in philosophy, more significantly, in analytic philosophy. His predominant philosophical thesis can be found in the collection of essays *From a Logical Point of View* (Quine, 1953)¹ and *Words and Objects* (Quine, 1960)². He was primarily concerned about the traditional

¹ Quine, W. V. O. (1953). *From a Logical Point of View*

² Quine, (1960). *Word and Objects*

semantic interpretation of language and criticised all the traditional semantics concerning meaning.

The concept of meaning is a conflicting discourse in philosophy, especially in the philosophy of language. Surprisingly, the fact is that several theories have been propounded by different philosophers but those contradict each other. A popular theory of meaning is the *referential theory of meaning*, which holds an objectifying pattern, i.e., every meaningful assertion stands for an object or fact. Therefore, a meaningful linguistic expression represents a fact of the world, which is a matter of empirical verification. But the interesting fact is that the referential theory of meaning seems useless or fails to define the meaning of such linguistic expressions, which do not refer to any object of the world though meaningful. Frege, in his popular article “On Sense and Reference” (Frege, 1892) expounded that the *referential theory of meaning*³ becomes insufficient when we talk about two different propositions that are informatively identical. For example, the linguistic expressions “morning star” and “evening star” are informatively identical (because they refer to the same object) and even different in meaning. Moreover, the referential theory of meaning fails to interpret that linguistic expression that contains abstract objects or something that stands for non-existential entities (Frege, 1892). Hence, Frege conceived that the meaning of a linguistic expression is contained in its sense, not reference.

However, from the above analysis, two different theories can be found in analytic philosophy, viz. *referential theory of meaning* and *sense theory of meaning* (Hong, 2019, pp. 40-45)⁴. But, regarding meaning, Quine was against both of the theories of meaning. He argued that both theories are wrong in such a way that both theories failed to cognize the basic nature of language. And therefore, both theories are wrong concerning meaning. Quine argued that a careful investigation of the nature of language and the acquisition of the meaning of a linguistic expression from a referential point of view has become purely obscure. The same can be argued for the sense theory of meaning. Quine claimed that to define meaning as an *entity* falls under dogmatism. This paper is an attempt to explain Quine’s concept of meaning in terms of his *indeterminacy of translation* (Quine, 1969) thesis and provide a comprehensive analysis.

³ Referential theory of meaning believes that there is a one to one correspondence relationship between name and the objects stands for the names.

⁴ L, Hong (2019). “Meaning in the Philosophy of Language” published in *Advances in Social Science*, ICCSE, pp. 40-45.

Section-I

Quine, to talk about meaning conceived that meaning must *be* public. Therefore, the primary criterion of meaning is to share information between a speaker and a hearer. In this regard, he was totally opposed to the traditional analytic concept of meaning. He claimed that the meaning of a linguistic expression must be understood not from an intuitional point of view (as propounded by Frege and Russell) but from a behaviouristic point of view (Alston, 1986, pp.64)⁵. Gilbert Harman (1967) mentioned that:

“At the heart of Quine’s philosophical position lies his attack on standard philosophical view on meaning. If Quine is right, almost everything that other linguistic philosophers have said and say about meaning is wrong.”⁶

In account of criticising traditional semantics, Quine argued that traditional semantics is totally wrong about meaning. His arguments against meaning can be discussed or explained from two different points of view: rejection of analyticity and rejection of meaning as an *entity*. To deal with meaning, a general conception that has been propounded by traditional semantics regarding meaning is that every meaningful linguistic expression stands for an object and must be categorised as either analytic or synthetic.

However, the mentalistic interpretation of meaning as an entity is a kind of dogma, according to Quine. Regarding meaning, Quine shared the idea that the mentalistic notion of meaning must be replaced by a behaviouristic approach (Alston, 1986; Murphey, 2012). He mentioned that:

“Meaning are, first and foremost, meaning of language. Language is a social art which we will acquire on the evidence solely of other’s people overt behaviour under publicly recognizable circumstances. Meaning, therefore, those very models of mental entities, end up as grist for the behaviourist mill.”⁷

Now, the question is: why does Quine promote meaning as not a psychic entity? To formulate an appropriate answer to this question, we have to look deep inside the theory of meaning propounded by traditional semantics. An unsolved debate regarding meaning can be found in the philosophy of language between the sense or descriptive

⁵ Alston (1986) “Quine on Meaning” in *The Philosophy of W.V.O. Quine* (ed., reprint in 1998). USA: Chicago and La Salle, pp. 64.

⁶ Harman, G. (1967). “Quine on Meaning and Existence” published in *The Review of Metaphysics*, USA: Philosophy Education Society. Pp.124.

⁷ Quine, *Ontological Relativity*, pp. 26.

theory of meaning and the reference theory of meaning (Hong, 2019). The referential theory of meaning holds that linguistic expressions become meaningful because they *stand for a thing* (Lycan, 2008). For example, the linguistic expression “Rabindranath” is meaningful, because the expression denotes the individual Rabindranath. Referential theory of meaning holds an onto-mapping relationship between language and fact. The linguistic expression “cat on the mat” is meaningful if there is a case that a cat on the mat is in reality or the world. On the other hand, the sense theory of meaning states that a linguistic expression becomes meaningful not because it stands for an object but rather for its sense.

However, a careful observation of the philosophy of language shows that from the time of Frege, the problem of meaning came to appear (Lycan, 2008). Frege was the first philosopher to claim that there is a clear distinction between meaning and referring. According to Frege, two names having the same reference may differ in meaning like “morning star” and “evening star”. Moreover, there are such names that do not refer to any object but can meaningfully occur in a sentence, for example, the name “Pegasus”.

But, Quine wasn’t satisfied with Frege’s approach towards meaning. He stated that even one argues that meaning is the sense of the proposition to avoid the meaningfulness of such terms that do not refer to any object but lack a critical observation of meaning. By accepting meaning as a sense of proposition, Frege primarily accepted meaning as something that indicates abstract entities- sense. Quine rejected this concept of meaning as an abstract entity of the individual mind. Therefore, he stated that:

“Uncritical semantics is the myth of museum in which exhibits are meaning and the words are labels. To switch language is to change the labels.” (Quine, 1969)⁸

Thus, the meaning for Quine is a property of behaviour, not entities of mind. Quine has mentioned that there are two different ways to know the meaning of a word, viz. sound⁹ (phonetic part) and semantic part¹⁰. The semantic part deals with the use of words. This part, for Quine, is more complex than the phonetic part. In the article “Ontological Relativity” (Quine, 1969), he remarks:

“The semantic part of learning a word is more complex than the phonetic part, therefore, even in simple cases: we have to see what is stimulating

⁸ Ibid, 27

⁹ Ibid, pp.28

¹⁰ Ibid, pp.28

the other speaker. In the case of words not directly ascribing observable traits to things, the learning process is increasingly complex and obscure; and obscurity is the breeding place of mentalistic semantics. what the naturalist insists on is that, even in the complex and obscure parts of language learning, the learner has no data to work with but overt behaviour of other speaker.” (Quine, 1969)¹¹

However, to explain Quine’s behaviouristic approach towards meaning, this is the first requirement to understand his understanding of language acquisition as described in the celebrated article “Speaking of Objects” (1957, reprint in 1969). Quine’s way of looking at language was purely *ostensive*. He argued that to learn a language, we must rely on the linguistic behaviour of a native person. He exemplified the way a child learned language from his/her parents through an interpretation or indication. In the very beginning, a child learnt some bulk words like, ‘water’ and ‘mamma’ without knowing whether the term “water” is a stuff or not, and similarly for the rest of the other words. In these cases, the leaning pattern consists of an objectifying pattern in general. But, gradually the child learnt the particular homogeneous linguistic pattern and learnt the individuation use of a particular word. In this process of language learning our stimulation plays an important role.

Quine conceived that stimuli evidence is the only source to define the meaning of linguistic expressions. For example, consider an undiscovered alien language; now, if a linguist attempts to determine the meaning of the alien language, the only evidence the linguist will rely on stimuli experience in the form of a native’s assent or dissent (Quine, 1969) for a particular linguistic expression. Therefore, every linguistic expression will be categorised by the paraphrased meaning of *stimuli affirmation* (Quine, 1960). In account of stimuli meaning, Quine defines stimulation by saying that:

“...a stimulation σ belongs to the affirmative stimulus meaning of a sentence S for a given speaker if and only if there is a stimulation σ such that if the speaker were given σ , then were asked S , then we are given σ , and then were asked S again, he would dissent the first time and assent the second.” (Quine, 1960)¹²

It is, therefore, to be claimed that the meaning of a particular sentence must be confirmed by a stimuli assent or dissent of a given speaker. Now, the problem is: if stimulation is the basic criterion to determine the meaning of a linguistic expression by

¹¹ Ibid, pp.28

¹² Quine, Word and Objects, pp. 29

a given speaker, then can it be said that the stimulus meaning of this certain expression carried the exact meaning of the linguistic expression by the given speaker? In this case, our conceptual scheme plays an important role. It is to be pointed out that Quine's understanding of the conceptual scheme shared an opposite view of Kant. The problem of meaning (which is the basic investigation of this paper) is rooted not only in Quine's indeterminacy thesis but also in his relativistic interpretation of conceptual schemes.

Section-II

Our very conceptual scheme cognized the knowledge of the world with the help of linguistic utterance or behaviour from a native person. Quine claimed that every linguistic utterance of a given speaker needs a translation. A conceptual scheme is a psychological aspect of a human being that helps us to cognize the knowledge of this world. In our society, we use language to communicate with each other. Successful communication is possible with the help of this conceptual scheme. Within a linguistic framework, every speaker possesses a conceptual approach or scheme. The worldview represents our conceptual framework and then casts the knowledge of this world employing language. Thus, a conceptual scheme is the most basic form of human thought. Donald Davidson (1973) exemplified that:

“We may accept the doctrine that associates having a language with having a conceptual scheme. The relation may be supposed to be this: if conceptual scheme differs, so do languages.” (Davidson, 1973)¹³

Now, the point is whether there is a unified core of conceptual schemes or there are many conceptual schemes. Some philosophers adhered to the view that there is a unified core of the conceptual scheme, and some others, recognized conceptual relativity. This makes the debate philosophically worthy because the philosophical implication of this debate takes the centrality of linguistic communication between the speaker and hearers.

Based on the above discussion, one may say that there is only one conceptual scheme and this conceptual scheme may be considered as the universal characteristic of all languages. The concept of a universal core conceptual scheme can be realized in Kant's writings, especially in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant, 1781).

In the eighteenth century, Kant's critical explanation concerning knowledge and its foundation unlocked a new way for us to look for knowledge and reality. The

¹³ Davidson. D (1973). “On the Very Idea of Conceptual Scheme” included in Proceeding and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association, vol.47. USA: American Philosophical Association. Pp. 06

synthesised approach of Kant's philosophy almost ends up the classical debate between rationalism and empiricism. The importance of both pure sensation (intuition) and pure understanding (categories/ concepts) is logically explained in Kant's philosophy. And, therefore, Kant stated that: "thoughts without content are empty, intuition without concepts are blind." (Kant, 1781, A 52, B 76).¹⁴

It is to be pointed out that Kant's notion of knowledge is clearly an indication of the concept of a unified core conceptual scheme. According to Kant, the two faculties of knowledge, i.e., *intuition* and *categories*, are like inborn glasses fitted into our minds. And, therefore, all our knowledge concerning reality (phenomenon one) is impossible to cognize without the application of these two *a priori* faculties of mind. Hence, a particular knowledge that is formulated within my conceptual framework must be identical to others' knowledge on that particular subject because of the identical conceptual scheme of our mind. For example, if a machine is pre-programmed by a fixed Mold, whatever material/ ingredient we put in the machine, every time its outcome will be the same and equal. Similarly, if two persons share an equal conceptual scheme, i.e., grounded on Kant's intuition and categories their formulation of knowledge of a particular object must be identical. And, hence, the Kantian notion of the conceptual framework of mind suggests that my conception of a red rose must be identical with yours because of our common and identical foundation of mind.

However, in return to the primary objective of this paper, it is to be said that Kant's unified core conceptual understanding of mind influenced almost everyone, especially the analytic philosophers Frege, Russell, Carnap and so on. But Kant was not critical of the conceptual scheme of mind as Quine does after the mid-twentieth century. A critical discussion of Quine's understanding of conceptual scheme is found below in this article. However, in Quine's philosophy, especially while we are discussing language and meaning, a critical discussion over a conceptual framework of mind becomes important or, to say, necessary. It has been already pointed out that language represents the world, and the world is the subject matter of language. Language becomes blind if reality is not concerned. The connection or relationship between language and the world is made possible through our very conceptual scheme. If the conceptual scheme is one, core and uniform to all, then we share the same kind or, to say, identical type of knowledge about an object of reality. But, if the conceptual scheme varies from individual to individual or more implicitly subject to the subject, then the knowledge represented by the language of an object will become relative.

¹⁴ Kant, I. (1998). *Critique of Pure Reason* (P. Guyer & A. W. Wood, Trans.). UK: Cambridge University Press (Original work published 1781), pp. 193-94.

More precisely, if the conceptual scheme becomes relative, then the knowledge of an object becomes uncertain *in terms of translation*.

Kant's a priori conceptual schemata of mind was popular until the appearance of Quine. It is our general perception that before the appearance of Quine's conceptual relativity, philosophy in general and analytic philosophy, in particular, was dominated by the Kantian unified core of the conceptual scheme. Quine's critical investigation of the cognitive aspect of the human mind brings a reformation regarding the conceptual scheme. Quine claimed that every sentence concerning knowledge of the world holds a cognitive aspect. In his book *Word and Objects* (1960), Quine stated that different aspects of meaning should be determined based on purely empirical grounds.¹⁵ Cognitive language is associated with sensory stimulation. That is to say, all knowledge concerning the empirical world can be acquired from sensory stimulation.¹⁶ That is the cognitive aspect of the human mind is followed by our very conceptual scheme. While cognizing the knowledge of the empirical world, our sensory stimulation experiences the linguistic behaviour of a speaker. Hence, Knowledge, mind, and meaning are interlinked to each other. Now, the question: Does Quine accept Kant's notion of a unified core conceptual scheme? It is to be pointed out that Quine must be opposed to the Kantian notion of a unified core of the conceptual scheme of the human mind. He has rejected the uniform nature of the conceptual scheme and proposed conceptual relativity. It has already been mentioned by Quine that *our language is a social art or conduct* (Quine, 1969). In his article "Speaking of Objects", Quine explained the nature of the human mind in the following:

"It is hard to say how else there is to talk, not because our objectifying pattern is an invariable trait of human nature, but because we are bound to adapt any alien pattern to our own in the very process of understanding or translating the alien sentences". (Quine, 1969)¹⁷

Quine remarked that we humans are not only dealing with our own language but also prone to know an alien language or a newly discovered native language. When we translate a native language, it implies two possibilities. The first possibility is my translation of a native expression can be in so-and-so form, i.e., my translated meaning and the meaning of the native expression must be identical or determinate. The second possibility is that the meaning of my translation of a native expression may be relatively true. If we accept a unified core conceptual scheme that is shared by every human

¹⁵ Gosselin, Mia (1990). *Nominalism and contemporary nominalism*. London: Kluwer Academic Publishers. pp. 62.

¹⁶ Hylton, Peter. (2018). *Quine*. New York and London: Routledge Classics. pp.114.

¹⁷ Op.Cit. Quine. *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. pp.1.

being, then any translation based on the conceptual scheme must be determined or, to say, identical or must be in so-and-so form. Now, let us explain based on Quinean way of understanding whether the conceptual scheme of the human mind is a unified core of conceptual scheme or relative.

Quine exemplified his idea of *conceptual relativity* with his famous example, “Gavagai”. Let us explain in brief. Quine imagined a newly discovered language, i.e., an alien language. Now, if a lexicographer tries to translate the native or alien language or the newly discovered language into his language, he must apply his own conceptual scheme to the native’s expression. Suppose the lexicographer experiences a native utterance “gavagai” in front of a rabbit. Based on this experimental data, the lexicographer immediately defined the native utterance “gavagai” as identical to the word “Rabbit”. These observational data help him to make the synonymy of meaning between ‘gavagai’ and ‘rabbit’. Here, in this case, the linguist or the lexicographer applies his own objectifying pattern and then cognizes the native utterance, i.e., gavagai is synonymous with the rabbit. Now, the question raised: Is experimental data sufficient to confirm the term “gavagai” is synonymous with the term “rabbit”? To answer this question, Quine said:

“...the linguist’s bold further step, in which he imposes his own objectifying pattern without a special warrant, is taken when he equates the native expression or any part of it with the term “rabbit”.” (Quine, 1969)¹⁸

Quine here argued that our empirical data is not sufficient to justify whether the translated meaning of the native expression is determinate or not. We can never access other’s conceptual schemes. Therefore, our objectifying pattern for alien language is unwarranted. Quine states that:

“Given that the native sentence says that a so-and-so is present, and given that the sentence is true when and only when a rabbit is present, it by no means follows that the so-and-so are rabbits. They might be all the various temporal segments of rabbits.” (Quine, 1969)¹⁹

However, Quine broadly elaborated that our very conceptual scheme is relative. Having all the necessary and sufficient conditions for access to the native expression, there is no certainty to claim that the so-an-so are rabbits. In the case of defining the term “Gavagai” as synonymous with “rabbit”, the linguist does not make a clear

¹⁸ Ibid, pp.02.

¹⁹ Ibid, pp. 02.

distinction between ‘rabbit’ and ‘undetached parts of rabbit’, or ‘rabbit’ and ‘baby rabbit’, or ‘rabbit’ and ‘rabbit hood’, or ‘rabbit’ and ‘rabbit stage’. The native utterance “Gavagai” may be for ‘baby rabbit’, or ‘undetached parts of rabbit’, or for ‘rabbit hood’, or for ‘rabbit stage’. All these possibilities or choices can be possible because we have no way to access the native conceptual scheme.

Quine’s conceptual relativity argument goes not only against Kant but also criticizes the notion of Rudolf Carnap. Carnap considers that we have a prior conceptual framework for the empirical justification of certain statements. With the help of this prior conceptual framework, a statement is meaningfully constructed in language.²⁰ Quine, against Carnap, claimed that we have no prior conceptual scheme to determine the meaning of a sentence. Meaning can be determined only based on speaker behaviour because every observational sentence depends on the empirical ground. Therefore, rather than accept any a priori conceptual framework, Quine looks towards pragmatism to determine the meaning of a sentence (Gibson, 20226). He conceives that every time our conceptual scheme is guided by observational data. Therefore, there is no a priori conceptual framework present in our minds.

Section-III

Language, meaning and ontology in Quine’s philosophy of language play an important role. In this regard, he not only goes against traditional semantics, but surprisingly, he is more critical and deeper than others. The problem of meaning is concerned with extensional and intentional debates among philosophers. But, Quine, as a behaviourist, is concerned about the problem of meaning and determinacy. Before the appearance of Quine, a general idea about meaning was composed, i.e., the mapping relationship between language and the world. For example, Wittgenstein’s *Picture Theory of Meaning* (Wittgenstein, 1921) suggested that there is a one-to-one correspondence relationship between language and the world. And therefore, every linguistic expression about a fact creates a mental image inside our mind. That’s why the utterance of the linguistic expression “*cat on the mat*” immediately creates an image even though there is no cat on the mat as a fact in front of the hearer. Here comes Quine with a critical mind over meaning and its relationship with the world. Quine, rather than semantics, was more behaviouristic. He conveys that language should be cognized *behaviourally*. For example, in the case of the native utterance “gavagai” the available evidence for the linguist is the native’s assent or dissent. Here, the linguist observes the linguistic expression in the form of assent or dissent only to translate the

²⁰ Sinclair, Robert (2012) “Quine and Conceptual Pragmatism” in *Transaction of the Charles S. Price Society* (vol. 48 no. 3). Indiana University Press. pp.337.

native expression into his own. Meaning, as Quine is concerned, is not possible of a certain linguistic expression without its extensional value or referent. So, the term consists of a linguistic utterance that must have a reference. Moreover, if the meaning is the result of translation (as claimed by Quine), then the reference is the essence. Because translating an expression into our own needs evidence. For Quine, the evidence of a translation involves observational data. In the case of the native expression “gavagai”, the presence of a rabbit is only evidence for the linguist. In “Speaking of Objects”, Quine explained how translation is fundamental for language. In this article, Quine elaborated on how a child learns words from a mother’s utterance and gradually learns about the uses of words. This example signifies that observation of linguistic utterance is the basic method of learning words and formulating meanings. It will become a lengthy discussion that may not be relevant to this current issue. And, hence instead of discussing how a child acquires language, I focused on how Quine established his indeterminacy thesis.

However, Quine’s intention was not only to describe how a child learns language; he aimed to investigate whether the meaning of a certain linguistic expression is determinate or indeterminate. To investigate this, he found that the meaning of an utterance while it comes under translation becomes relative. The ontology or essence of language is meaning. If there is no way to justify whether the meaning of a linguistic utterance is fixed or not, then the very essence of language, i.e., the meaning, will become relative.

However, before discussing Quine’s *indeterminacy of translation*, we have to understand: What is a translation? Translation means to define the meaning of a hitherto untouched language by a linguist in his own linguistic framework. Indeterminacy arises when a linguist translates a newly discovered language within his language based on the empirical ground by applying his objectifying pattern. Here, in the case of translation, the linguist radically translates a native expression because he has no manual to access the native mind. Hence, we have no way to claim that the defining term of the linguist is determinate.

Quine claimed that to make a determinate translation, we need a fully successful manual for translation. A manual is called a successful manual for translation if the manual translates every sentence of a native language in a determinate way.²¹ Quine rejected the idea of a successful manual that could translate every sentence of a newly discovered language. He stated that every translation is based on our ordinary practice or empirical experience. Our notion of a relative conceptual

²¹ Op. Cit. Hylton, Peter. *Quine*, pp.200.

scheme is never able to access a native mind. So, it is a clear mistake or worthless to claim that the meaning of the term is determinately identical to its synonymous term. Hence, we have no translation manual that helps us to translate every language of an untouched language or alien language in a determinate way. Therefore, every translation of an empirical or observational sentence is a *radical translation* (Quine, 1960). A radical translation can never be determined. In every case of translation, our translation is indeterminate. A determinate translation that is based on our empirical ground is impossible.

There is a misunderstanding among scholars regarding Quine's interest in the indeterminacy thesis. According to some of them, Quine is interested in an indeterminacy thesis only for linguistic translation. But, the origin of his indeterminacy thesis is shaped in his article "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (Quine, 1951). In this article, Quine rejected the very possibility to define the meaning of synonymy. The impossibility of defining synonymy between two words leads us to accept that the distinction between analytic and synthetic propositions is not possible. So, this article by Quine, not only rejects the analytic-synthetic distinction in language, it opens the path for the indeterminacy thesis.

However, Quine's indeterminacy of translation thesis follows from his idea of conceptual analysis of the human mind. His behaviouristic approach or pragmatic approach toward the conceptual scheme implies the indeterminacy thesis. The origin of this indeterminacy thesis in Quine's philosophy lies in Quine's "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" (1951, reprint in *From a Logical Point of View*, 1953) and six years later in "Speaking of Objects" (1957, reprinted in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, 1969). His *indeterminacy of translation* thesis takes full phrase in his work *Word and Object* (1960) and his article "Ontological Relativity" (Quine, 1969; printed in *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*, 1969).

In "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", Quine goes against the principle of analyticity to distinguish between analytic and synthetic truth. In this article, he concludes that every meaningful sentence is related to empirical confirmation or infirmation (Quine, 1953). Our empirical confirmation or infirmation failed to define synonymy between "Bachelor" and "Unmarried man". According to him, meaning, analyticity, and synonymy constituted a circle. So, it is a myth to define one with the help of another. He concludes that we don't need to accept such concepts to characterize human knowledge.²² Mind, knowledge, and meaning are interrelated to

²² Kemp, Gary (2006). *Quine: A Guide for the Perplexed*. New York and London: Continuum. pp. 35.

each other. Quine (1969) focused on how a lexicographer attempted to cognize the meaning of a native expression or utterance (i.e., Gavagai) based on empirical ground and translate the native expression “Gavagai” as synonymous with the term “Rabbit”. In this case of translation, the linguist or the lexicographer failed to distinguish between rabbit and rabbit-stage. So, there is a possibility that the native expression “Gavagai” may be for “Rabbit-stage”, not for “Rabbit”. Therefore, Quine exemplified that any translation of an alien language of our own language falls into the trap of indeterminacy because we have no way to access the native mind.

However, Quine in the second chapter of his work *Word and Object* (Quine, 1960) established his indeterminacy of translation thesis systematically. He conceived that translating one language into another is an attempt to determine synonymy. In the case of the native expression “gavagai”, the linguist translated the utterance of the native in his own language based on empirical confirmation or infirmation. Based on empirical ground, the linguist defined the meaning of “Gavagai” as synonymous with the meaning of “rabbit”. The objectifying method here used by the linguist lacks determinate justification, i.e., a proper way to justify the so-and-so is rabbits. The only evidence the linguist relies on is his empirical observation in the form of a native’s confirmation or infirmation. So, every translation made by the linguist is a *radical translation*, because he has no way to access the mind of the native to determine the so-and-so are rabbits.

Quine’s indeterminacy thesis can be further analysable from two different aspects, i.e., ‘*argument from above*’ and ‘*argument from below*’. Argument from above claims that scientific theory is underdetermined by the evidence. Translation, in a particular scientific theory, is made possible based on some evidence. Likewise, in another scientific theory, translation takes place in the same way. Quine explained that two different simultaneous translations of a given utterance are possible in which both are true respective of different theories. It is wrong to say that translation in two different scientific theories has identical stimulus meaning. For example, the native utterance “gavagai” appears whenever there is a “rabbit”, but there is no certainty to claim that both have the same stimulus meaning. Therefore, every translation under all the possible empirical evidence in the form of the native assent or descent is indeterminate.²³ The *argument from below* establishes Quine’s idea of indeterminacy of reference (Quine, 1960). In the case of the native utterance “gavagai” and the

²³ Glock, Hans-Johan (2003). *Quine and Davidson on Language, Thought and Reality*. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 173.

translation of the linguist “Lo! Rabbit”, we are unable to say that both utterances refer to the same object.²⁴

However, a lexicographer or a linguist makes his worldview based on his conceptual scheme. And we have no way to determine whether the linguist is right or wrong. Now, there raised a key question: how does a translation take place in language? According to Quine, in every case of translation, especially an alien language, we used our conceptual scheme based on empirical evidence. All the objective data we get through our experience is unable to make a determinate translation. Translation in every case is radical translation. In this regard, Quine mentioned:

“The utterances first and foremost surely translated in such a case are ones keyed to present events that are conspicuous to the linguist and his informant. A rabbit scurries by, the native says ‘Gavagai’, and the linguist notes down the sentence ‘Rabbit’ (or ‘Lo, a rabbit’) as tentative translation, subject to testing in further cases.” (Quine, 1960)²⁵

However, there is a misinterpretation that Quine’s indeterminacy of translation is an empirical matter. For them, the indeterminacy of translation should be interpreted epistemologically. The empirical data experienced by the linguist helps him to translate the meaning of synonymy. Quine's indeterminacy thesis is not only an empirical investigation of meaning. A careful outlook towards this thesis implies that the indeterminacy of translation is an ontological investigation of meaning, not an empirical investigation. Quine claimed that the purpose of translation is to determine the synonymy meaning of the parts of a sentence. In this regard, Peter Hylton (2008) mentioned that:

“Some commentators have interpreted indeterminacy epistemologically, as the claim that, although there is a uniquely correct translation, the evidence available to the linguist, and the procedures she can legitimately employ, do not suffice to determine it. If that was what Quine meant, then indeterminacy would simply be a case of the more general idea of underdetermination of theory of evidence- the idea that our evidence does not uniquely determine a single theory of the world.” (Hylton, 2018)²⁶

Now, the doubt among scholars would be clear that Quine’s indeterminacy thesis is an ontological investigation of meaning. Quine holds that language, reference and ontology are interrelated. An object is ontologically committed when we put the object

²⁴ Ibid, pp. 174.

²⁵ Quine, W. V. O. (2013). *Word and Object*. Cambridge: The MIT Press. pp.25.

²⁶ Op. Cit. Hylton, Peter. *Quine*. Pp. 202.

under the value of a first-order logical language or regimented language that contains proper names, variables, quantifications, etc. (Quine, 1960). Therefore, the indeterminacy thesis not only investigates how translation becomes indeterminate but also provides a foundation for Quine's projects of ontological relativity. It is to be noted that if the meaning is a translation (as claimed by Quine) and translation becomes indeterminate, then the ontological claim that is committed by a proposition becomes relative under the condition of a background language. And, hence, the search for the meaning of a proposition implies searching for the answer to the ontological question- 'what there is?'. Therefore, it is to be said that dealing with the meaning means dealing with ontology. For example, in the case of the native expression "gavagai", the ontological commitment made by the native becomes relative to the linguist because of the indeterminacy of translation.

However, Quine argued that the indeterminacy of translation is raised not only when a linguist tries to translate an alien language but also elaborated that we can challenge the translation of our home language. In this regard, he asserts that:

"On deeper reflection, radical translation begins at home. Must we equate our neighbour's English words with the same strings of phonemes in our own mouth? Certainly not; for sometimes we do not thus equate them. Sometimes we find it to be in the interests of communication to recognize our neighbour's use of some word, such as "cool" or "Square" or "hopefully," differs from ours, and so we translate that word of his into a different string of phonemes in our idiolect." (Quine, 1969)²⁷

In the case of translating our home language, we use a social method of learning. With the help of this social method of learning a homophonic translation takes place (Quine, 1969). In a particular society, we use a particular language and a particular manual to translate the sentence of our home language. It is wrong to claim that using a particular language means we have an identical conceptual scheme. For Quine, our conceptual scheme can be similar but not identical. To make a determinate translation we need an identical conceptual scheme, which is something like impossible.

Quine's indeterminacy thesis depends on his behaviouristic explanation of meaning. For him, A linguist experiences the speaker's linguistic behaviour to interpret or translate the speaker's utterance. His behaviouristic approach toward the meaning clearly shows that every translation of a native utterance is a *radical translation* because only based on the behaviour of a native, one cannot determine the meaning of synonymy. A neurological approach has been taken by some philosophers to solve

²⁷ Op. Cit. Quine, W.V. O. *Ontological Relativity and Other Essays*. pp.46.

Quine's indeterminacy thesis. In neurology, there is an appeal made by neurologists regarding the acquisition of meaning. In neurology, it is argued that meaning in two different manuals can be synonymous through mentalistic explanation.

However, a logical analysis of Quine's indeterminacy thesis rejected the neurological approach in semantics. A neurologist becomes neurolinguistic when he deals with the structure of meaning in terms of our brain function. They explain how does human brain becomes capable of acquiring language. It is the study of the language-brain relationship that appeared after the 1960s. Neurolinguistics are more concerned about the causal relationship between language acquisition and brain function rather than the meaning of language. Their activities involve the whole process from producing a linguistic utterance to changes in the cerebral part of the brain. Meaning, as Quine is concerned is not an internal matter of brain or nervous functionality, rather it is a matter of the speaker's behaviour. And therefore, meaning is always an external effect defined based on observational data. One can defend that if one can analyse the speaker's mind or able to analyse all possible functions of the human brain, then it can be possible to find out the definite meaning of a linguistic utterance. Quine conceived that neurology only provides us with a causal explanation of meaning. Neurology explains the cause of verbal sentences, i.e., it suggests to us how our brain activity occurs when we hear a sentence from a speaker. So, it makes a correlation between verbal expression and some regions of the brain. It tells us how some parts of our brain function when we observe a verbal expression from a speaker. It says nothing about the meaning of the verbal expression or observational sentence uttered by a speaker. Meaning is the subject matter of semantics. There is no role for neurology in semantics. So, the meaning of a sentence, for Quine, still can be determined based on the behaviouristic approach. Neurology only deals with the function of our brain, not the meaning. The relevance of neurology comes to appear when we ask for an explanation of our verbal behaviour. Thus, for Quine, it is impossible to solve the indeterminacy thesis based on the neurological approach toward the study of meaning, because indeterminacy lies in linguistic meaning, not in the explanation of verbal behaviour.²⁸

The indeterminacy thesis of Quine can be explained through the underdetermination project of Quine. Quine's underdetermination project states that science does not consist of one particular theory. Many theories are interrelated with each other. The indeterminacy arises in meaning when we shift one theory to another theory. For him, there is the possibility that two different theories have the same

²⁸ Gaudet, Eve. (2006). Quine on Meaning. New York: Continuum Studies of American Philosophy. Pp.61

empirical ground, but it is wrong to claim that the meaning of a sentence (observational sentence) is synonymous with each other in both of these theories. In the case of the native utterance “gavagai”, the meaning of assent by the native and the meaning assent by the linguist is not determinate, though the empirical ground is the same.

Thus, every translation of an untouched language, for Quine, is a *radical translation*. A linguist used his manual to interpret a foreign language or alien language. So, according to him, two manuals can be equally true, but wrong to claim that both are interchangeable in a determinate way. In this regard, Quine asserted that:

“A manual of Jungle-to-English translation constitutes a recursive, or inductive, definition of a *translation relation* together with a claim that it correlates sentences compatibly with the behaviour of all concerned. The thesis of the indeterminacy of translation is that these claims on the part of two manuals might both be true and yet the two translation relations might not be usable in alternation, from sentence to sentence, without issuing in coherent sequence. Or, to put it another way, the English sentences prescribed as a translation of a given Jungle sentence by two rival manuals might not be interchangeable in English contexts.” (Quine, 1992)²⁹

Therefore, based on radical translation, the translated meaning of a native sentence has become indeterminate. There is the possibility that the meaning of a sentence may differ in another manual. So, based on the indeterminacy thesis, it is hard to say whether a manual is true or false. Every manual translates a sentence of a native language based on a behaviouristic approach or observational data. Having sufficient observational data, we cannot say the meaning of the term “rabbit” is synonymous with the meaning of the term “gavagai”.

Section-IV

Quine’s indeterminacy thesis is hard to believe when we are concerned about meaning in our daily life conversation. But, a critical study on semantics, as propounded by Quine hard to ignore. If meaning is the linguistic use or behaviour of a given speaker, then the meaning of any particular linguistic expression becomes a kind of radical translation and hence falls under indeterminacy. A misconception regarding Quine’s theory of meaning most of the time argued by scholars, i.e., Quine was fully negative concerning meaning. Opposed to this objection, it must be pointed out that Quine never disbelieved in meaning; rather, he proposed that any way to define meaning becomes obscure. And therefore, any theory to define meaning is insufficient.

²⁹ Quine, W.V. O. (1992). *Pursuit of Truth*. USA: Harvard University Press. pp. 48.

Moreover, it is to be noted that Quine was optimistic about meaning. He argued that to cognise the meaning of a linguistic expression in the most promising way, we must master this or that particular language.

However, Quine's philosophical position is revolutionary and praiseworthy. On the one hand, it challenged Kant and Carnap and thereby opened a new vista in the philosophy of language, and on the other hand, it equally challenged Noam Chomsky's very idea of the internalization of language. It also sets the future of the philosophy of language by denying the unified core of the conceptual scheme and adopting conceptual relativity. Thus, in a sense, it goes closer to later Wittgenstein. For Quine, every meaningful sentence is somehow linked with empirical investigation. Going through Quine's indeterminacy thesis, we can see that there is an attack against meaning in the indeterminacy thesis. According to Quine, meaning is defined in terms of *sameness of meaning* (Quine, 1960). To determine the sameness of meaning is nothing but to define synonymy. In "Two Dogmas", Quine clearly shows that every way to define synonymy unsatisfied us. We define synonymy based on the empirical ground. In the example of "gavagai," Quine stated that having necessary and sufficient evidence to experience the native utterance, a linguist fails to define synonymy between "gavagai" and "rabbit".

Quine's indeterminacy of translation and inscrutability of reference, I do reckon, forces us to rethink *meaning*. According to Quine, in the matter of translating a native sentence, we use our objectifying pattern, then translate the native sentence in our language and impose an ontological value. There is no necessity to claim that the ontological commitment that we are making when we use the term "rabbit" is identical to the ontological commitment assent by the native when the native uses the term "gavagai". So, not only does the indeterminacy of translation happen when we shift to another language, but we also claim ontological relativity. Thus, we conclude by saying that *shifting the language means shifting the ontology* (Quine, 1969). Because there is no criterion to justify whether the native's expression "gavagai" is identical to the linguist's translation "rabbit". Here, the linguist's translation "gavagai" can stand for "rabbithood", "undetached part of rabbit", and so on, even though after the native's confirmation/assent in the presence of the rabbit or infirmation/descent in the absence of the rabbit. And, therefore, changing language or shifting language i.e., from a native alien language to the hitherto spoken home language to define the meaning of synonymy means shifting ontology or more specifically making ontology relative because there may be all the necessary and sufficient conditions present to translate an utterance, even though there is no justification to claim that 'x's translation 'y' under all their necessary and sufficient conditions imply that "x=y" and vice-versa.

However, a common question can be raised: What is the standpoint of Quine regarding meaning? Here I would like to mention two aspects of meaning: Meaning realism and meaning relativism. Quines have been suggested to become more critical concerning meaning. His confirmational holism states that a sentence in a particular language theory becomes meaningful only if the proposition is confirmed by the theory. Translating the sentence into another theory falls into a sort of *radical translation* and *indeterminacy of translation*. Even, for Quine, in our home language, we are not certain about determinacy. Because, for him, our home language is also subject to a question from an indeterminacy point of view. From this entire discussion, it can seem to others that Quine is a sceptic regarding the ontology of meaning. My response to this view is negative. Indeed, in Quine's questions against meaning and its determinacy, he was not a sceptic regarding meaning; rather he is a meaning relativist under a particular theory.

EQUALITY IN DIFFERENCE: AN ANALYSIS WITH REFERENCE TO 'MOTHERHOOD'

Kasturi Datta (Majumdar)

Abstract

Gender discrimination is one of the important topics of Practical Ethics. Any kind of discrimination hinders the growth of society. All human beings deserve equal rights and opportunities irrespective of race, caste, religion, sex. Biological differences of individuals could never be taken as criteria of gender discrimination. Motherhood is considered as glorified aspect of women's life, but this is a patriarchal ploy to keep women in a cage. Now this is the time when we should re-think our traditional theories in order to assure equality to women.

Keywords: *Gender, Discrimination, Equality, Maternal Instinct, Super-ego*

Philosophy introduces new areas of study to discuss social issues from ethical perspective. Any kind of discrimination hinders justice / equity. Differences from any aspect (race, class, sex, religion) should not be taken as the cause of inequality which in turn results inequity or injustice. Here I try to analyse how could we be able to assert equality amidst differences with reference to 'motherhood'.

Motherhood is a significant phase of a woman's life. It is an institution which includes certain responsibilities and duties. It is usually a wonderful experience for most women. But to sustain the uniqueness of motherhood women should not be discriminated by their gender characteristics that are related to motherhood.

There are biological differences between females and males, but the fact that gender roles vary so much between cultures indicate that they cannot be based on or explained away by 'sex' alone. We should remember a simple rule of science-- Variables (gender roles) cannot be explained by Constants (chromosomes, genitalia or sex)¹. Inequality between women and men are (hu)man-made. Inequality is constructed and can be questioned, challenged and changed. Motherhood of a woman should not be the reason of her subordination, job opportunities, education. To have equal rights, equal opportunities one should not possess identical biological characteristics.

¹ Kamala Bhasin, *Understanding Gender*, 2000, Kali for Women, New Delhi, p.11;

A new born baby is not only classified by sex, but also assigned by gender. The specific process of socialization teaches children their gender roles. Different social mechanisms teach children masculinity and femininity of personality and make them 'internalise' behaviour, attitudes and roles. According to Ruth Hartley, socialization takes place through four processes, namely, 1) manipulation, 2) canalization, 3) verbal appellation, and 4) activity exposure. All these are normally differentiated by sex and all are features of the child's socialization from birth on². 'Manipulation' means the way we handle a child. Boys are treated as strong, autonomous beings right from the beginning. On the other hand, girls are dressed in a feminine fashion to look pretty. These physical experiences of early childhood are very important in shaping the self-perception of girls and boys.

The second process, i.e. 'canalisation' involves directing the attention of male and female children to object or aspects of objects, for example, girls' play-objects are dolls, kitchen-sets and the like, whereas boys are given balls, guns, cars to play. Thus familiarity with certain objects directs the choices of women and men in future.

'Verbal appellations' are also different for girls and boys. For example, girls are told 'how pretty you look' but we often say, "you are looking big and strong" to boys. Research studies show that such remarks construct the self-identity of girls and boys.

Female and male children exposed to traditional feminine, masculine activities from their early childhood. Their process is known as 'activity exposure'. Girls are usually asked to assist their mothers in household chores, but boys are asked to accompany their fathers outside. All these processes contribute in constructing femininity and masculinity which girls /women and boys/men internalize almost unconsciously.

'Motherhood' is regarded as the success of femaleness. It introduces meaning and purpose into the life of women since child-rearing brings power, responsibility, satisfaction and independence. 'Maternal instinct' is taken as natural to women. This instinct is supposed to have two manifestations—1) to bear children, 2) to care for them³ and by extension to care for others. The traditional view holds that the mindset as well as the social expectations have been guided and determined by the presence of

² Oakley Ann, 1985, *Sex, Gender, and Society*, England Gower Pub Comp.p.174-175;

³ Paula Nicolson, "Motherhood and Women's Lives" in *Introducing Women's Studies: Feminist theory and Practice*, (ed) Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson, The MacMillan Press Ltd, London,1993; p.208;

this biological instinct in women. 'Femininity' can be characterized in the following way—

- a) All women have a biological drive towards conceiving and bearing children,
- b) Nurturing the children
- c) The skills /capacities required to care for infants or children emerge or evolve immediately after the birth without the need for training.

Elisabeth Badinter⁴ distinguishes the 'maternal instinct' from 'maternal love'. According to her, maternal love is a human feeling and like other feelings this feeling is also uncertain, fragile and imperfect. Such feelings are not deeply rooted in femaleness. As soon as women experience motherhood, they develop a 'special way' of explaining and perceiving the world. This special way is termed as 'maternal thinking' by Sarah Ruddick⁵. By thinking in this way, women get involved in culturally approved activities which are necessary for nurturing the infants. These activities do not greatly differ from culture to culture and therefore 'maternal love' that generates those activities can be called 'universal, but not 'instinctual'.

A child is considered to be an extension of the mother's body, her 'Self' and therefore the mother becomes the sole care-taker of the baby. Motherhood gives women an agency through which she 'possesses' the child. According to Simone De Beauvoir, a woman can find her independence through the child. A woman considers motherhood as something which justifies her femaleness or gives her a feeling of being a complete woman⁶. Beauvoir says in her book, *The Second Sex*, women experience pregnancy as an enrichment and also an injury. The foetus is a part of her body which she possesses⁷. This concept of possession becomes greater if the child is a male child. Hence, many women prefer sons, since through the son, the mother can possess the world only if she can possess the son⁸. In a patriarchal society only the male-gendered individuals have an agentic role. Hence, mothers perceive themselves as acquiring 'agentic-role' through sons, even though this 'agency' is indirect and mediated through sons.

Women learns to consider motherhood as the ultimate destiny of her life, thus she feels guilty if she fails to become (biological) mother. Custom, culture and history

⁴ Mother Love: Myth And Reality: motherhood in modern history, 1981;

⁵ Maternal Thinking; Philosophy, Politics, Practice (ed. By Andrea O'Reilly), 1982;

⁶ Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, (translated and edited by H.M Parshley), Jonathan Cape Ltd., Great Britain, 1953; p.501;

⁷ Ibid, p.512;

⁸ Ibid, p.531-32;

influence the perception as well as the experience of a woman in relation to motherhood. Like other social institutions, motherhood also has specific social meanings and in most cases women cannot separate their experiences of motherhood from the special meanings given to it. Women get an agency by being mothers, a function that they could not fulfil through any other socially acceptable role, like daughterhood/sisterhood. Moreover, motherhood enhances the position of women in social as well as familial sphere. Till today, mother of a son gets much importance in most Indian families. The glorification of motherhood could be a ploy to maintain the gender division of patriarchy.

The concept of motherhood has been glorified in India to a great extent. In ancient India, motherhood had a significant position in society although it does not imply that at that time women occupied a high status in society. Hindu scriptures considered the ordinary woman to be sinful, but in religious texts the mother goddesses were regarded as powerful and wrathful. In a real life situation, the 'mother' was expected to be self-sacrificing, heroic, and noble. It seems that as mother's women were glorified, since procreation had been taken as a 'power' of women in early human history. The socio-economic condition of ancient India determined the treatment to women and their role as mothers. As agriculturists they prayed for sons to handover their property (land), and women were meant for producing heirs. In this way women acquired social recognition of 'motherhood'. By 7th century B.C. the Aryans had become an agricultural people and as a result they were very much motivated by agricultural concepts; for example, their view of 'parenthood' was male chauvinistic—they considered woman as a 'field' and man sowed seed in her. Moreover, as the seed and the field belonged to the man in this patriarchal society, so the son belonged to the father.⁹ At that time, men considered themselves to be active participants in the matter of production and procreation. Subsequently women were given a subordinate role. From the discriminatory perspective ancient Indian society applied those agricultural concepts to motherhood which established women's passivity in the productive procedure; for example, it was held that women who were considered as equivalent to fields, carried the seed passively and the foetus grew in-itself just as after sowing, the seed grew automatically without any active effort of the field. Here it is to be noted that in conventional biology, which was mainly dominated by male scientists, the '**sperm**' was considered to be the active factor for pregnancy but in recent days, as women start researching on this issue, they have come to know about the equally active

⁹ Sukumari Bhattacharji, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, Basumati Corporation Ltd., Calcutta, January, 1994; p.28;

role played by the ‘egg’ in pregnancy.¹⁰ It seems that in order to control women’s reproductive labour and sexuality, men try to devalue women as inferior in every respect, procreation and birthing being no exception. Women had no freedom to choose their pregnancy and their role had been considered as ‘passive’ since the role of ‘egg’ had been devalued in the context of pregnancy. At the same time a mother was blamed for delayed pregnancy or any abnormal syndrome of the child. It means, the attitude of society towards women was oppressive.

Various rituals were performed in ancient India for the welfare of children and their fathers. Some of these rituals are still observed, namely ‘*Shasthi-Puja*’ (for the welfare of children), ‘*Korwa-Chawth*’ (for the welfare of husbands), etc. Besides there are other kinds of rituals, such as ‘*Sādh*’ (offering favourite dishes to a pregnant woman) to celebrate the occasion of pregnancy. Moreover, if the pregnancy is delayed, women have to carry out different vows for conception. If women fail to conceive or to deliver normally then the whole blame is directed towards them; for example, in recent days, the movie, ‘*Paromitar Ekdin*’ (A day of Paromita), directed by Aparna Sen (released in 1999) portrays the character of Paromita’s husband who throws all the blame on Paromita for their spastic child, although his own sister is mentally retarded.

Ancient Indians being agriculturists very well knew that a dead seed can never produce crops in a fully fertile field; but their treatment towards the female sex did not correspond to their agricultural concepts. An impotent husband was never stigmatised, rather his wife was stigmatised as ‘barren’. The problem in the ‘sperm’ could hamper pregnancy of a woman. But their agricultural concept was not applied in the case of child-birth. Consequently, women had to carry all stigmas which indicated the discriminatory attitude of the society. Not only ordinary people, Hindu scriptures also expressed discrimination between men and women; for example, Manu said (Manusamhitā IX:35), “of the seed and the womb, the seed is superior. All creatures of life assume the qualities of the seed.”¹¹ Moreover, he opined (Manusamhitā IX:26), that women were created for the purpose of giving birth and for this they were worshipped.¹² Women were treated as the mediums to produce legitimate heirs to the family; so motherhood had been considered as successful only with the birth of a male child.

¹⁰ V. Geetha, (Series editor Maithreyi Krishnaraj), *Theorizing Feminism: Gender*, Stree Pub., Calcutta 2002; p.18;

¹¹ Sukumari Bhattacharji, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, Basumati Corporation Ltd., Calcutta, January, 1994, p.28;

¹² *Ibid*, p.28-29;

The glorification of motherhood does not signify the enhanced status of women in the patriarchal society; for example, a single mother in spite of being a mother does not get any respect rather she is stigmatised in society. She has to face hurdles in course of upbringing the child. Glorification is a patriarchal ploy to cover-up the exploitation of the society towards women, otherwise 'motherhood' obtains equal respect irrespective of the status of women in the society. In ancient India, children were controlled, supervised and trained by the father. The decisions regarding the education of children were guided by patriarchal values under the supervision of the father. Without attributing any role to mothers for instilling values in the life of their children, the concept of 'motherhood' had been glorified to a great extent in order to make women susceptible to exploitation. Even in present-day, fatherhood has both a familial as well as a social status; for example, most of the official application forms in India require the name of the father of the applicant to be stated. In most families, fathers get preference in comparison to mothers. Till today it is a common practice to mention father's name as the guardian of a child, no matter whether the father fulfils his responsibilities or not. Thus, glorification of motherhood does not assure equal treatment to women.

According to scriptures, (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa III:24:27, Āpastamba Dharmasutra 1:10:51-53), a good woman was "one who pleases her husband, gives birth to male children and never talks back to her husband"¹³. So the life of a woman become successful only with the birth of a male child and she had no separate entity as a social being or an intelligent individual who could have her own desires, emotions besides being the mother of a (male) child. Even women themselves considered motherhood as the ultimate end of their lives, and condemned barrenness. Women themselves perceived motherhood as their 'power' because in a polygamic family a mother enjoyed more privileges than a barren woman. In order to perform motherly duties women became imprisoned within the house which made them completely dependent on men for their livelihood.

If we look back to history, it is found that in the ancient period there was no division of work for men and women. History tells us that in pre-agricultural period women took part in expeditions. The Ṛgveda states that women in the Vedic Age (the period between Ṛgveda and Vedāngasutras) fought in the battle field; for example, Mudgalini won a battle (RVX;102:2). The early Vedic family was the patriarchal type, although patriarchy never denied women their rights and privileges. From 4th century B.C. to 3rd century B.C. girls were given education. A change occurred in the socio-

¹³ Ibid, p.531-32;

economic and political life of Vedic people--Instead of remaining as nomadic people, they began their agricultural life. Consequently men liked to handover the property which they acquired from agriculture to their legitimate heirs. Due to this, wives were forbidden to meet other unrelated males, to ensure that a wife could not cohabit with any male other than her husband. In this way they were imprisoned within the house and completely dependent on their husbands for their livelihood. Slowly and steadily household chores became the primary duty of women, but their labour was not considered as 'productive' in the economic sense, rather it was taken as reproductive and supportive¹⁴. Such a division of work between men and women ultimately paved the way for the suppression of women under patriarchy. It is known from scriptures that women had no control over her sexuality. The tragedy of 'motherhood' in ancient India was the compulsion which was imposed on women without paying any interest to their will.¹⁵ Even in recent days women have very little control over their bodies and reproduction—the vast instances of marital rape establish this point. Although contraceptives technology helped women to distance sexual love from marriage and motherhood, still mainly men take decisions regarding the number of children to be had. The Indian family reserves the authority to control woman's reproductive labour. Separating reproduction and sexuality is a rare phenomenon among Indian women. Most of the cases women don't have any freedom of taking decisions regarding the number of children to have. Sometimes women are deprived of motherhood as they are forced by men to go through abortion. It becomes clear that women are treated as 'objects', not as 'subjects' even in the context of 'motherhood'.

If we look back to history it is found that at the time of the freedom movement in India the nation was symbolised as 'mother'. This tribute to the nation as the 'mother' did not imply the referred condition of women in society at that time, since such honour could not free women from the oppression under the patriarchal system. At that time our Nation was worshipped as our 'mother', but this could not change the treatment of society towards women.

The oppressive status of women was reflected in the literature, for example, the novel "*Yogayog*" written by Rabindranath Tagore (published in 1929) depicted a character named Kumudini who became pregnant through marital rape, but she did not accept her motherhood as a bliss, rather she said: "**liberation of oneself in the true sense of the term cannot be neglected at any cost even for the sake of a child**"

¹⁴ Sukumari Bhattacharji, *Women and Society in Ancient India*, Basumati Corporation Ltd., Calcutta, January, 1994, p.10-11;

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.32-33;

(translation mine).¹⁶ This novel was written at the time when the nation was worshipped as the “mother”. Thus, it seems that the oppression of women within the patriarchal structure remained under the veil of glorification of the concept of motherhood. The movement to free our mother- Nation could not improve the condition of women and failed to emancipate them from the cage of patriarchy.

Women’s dissatisfaction towards the patriarchal system became prominent in the twentieth century and women revolutionaries began to express their discontent regarding the social (patriarchal) treatment to the female sex. Pritilata Waddedar who took part in the Chittagong armoury raid, committed suicide due to the failure of the mission and wrote: “If women still lag behind men, it is because they were deliberately left behind”.

The discussion reveals that at the time of freedom movement, i.e. when the nation was worshipped as the ‘mother’, women experienced oppression in various forms. This oppressive state of women still persists in our contemporary society. Hence, glorification of motherhood cannot abolish discriminatory attitude of the society towards women. Generally women like their motherly roles and where women deviate from this role are considered as ‘abnormal’ or ‘unnatural’. Previously women suffered from depression for their barrenness. But in our modern society there are women who choose to not being ‘a mother’ and there are also other women who feel depressed after being ‘a mother’. There are some factors which make them unhappy rather than feel ‘complete’. This is much applicable for working women. Lack of support system in the family make her nervous regarding the upbringing of the child, since she has to maintain her job simultaneously. Moreover there are other women who are very conscious of their physical beauty and become very upset as they are disfigured after being ‘a mother’. There are other cases where a mother suffers from *Postpartum depression*. According to gynaecologists, biological as well as psychological factors are responsible for this state. After delivery some hormonal disorders happen in a woman’s body which result such type of depression.¹⁷ All these women are not kind to their new-born babies and ‘motherhood’ cannot glorify their womanhood. There are other women who in spite of physical discomforts, loves nurturing her child. In recent days, many fathers also take equal part in rearing the child. But paternal role is taken as optional, whereas mother’s role is considered as **essential** till today. Here a question automatically arises: are the gender specific roles

¹⁶ “..এম্ব কিছু আছে যা ছেলের জন্য খোয়ানো যায় না”

¹⁷ Anandabazar Patrika, 20th April, 2013;

necessary outcome of biology or are they interpreted as ‘essential’ by the society to satisfy the interest of patriarchy?

The values of patriarchal system influence us to such an extent that we internalise them as the essence of our lives. Therefore, we do not even bother to question the essential relationship between sex and gender, i.e. whether the gender attributes are in reality essentially related to sexual characteristics. Patriarchy is omnipresent in all the social institutions. Each institution is supported, rationalised or justified by an accompanying theory; for example, scientific institutions are justified by scientific theories, medical institutions are justified by medical theories and religious institutions are supported as well as justified by theological doctrines. What the individual experiences at the concrete level of practice is endorsed by patriarchal institutions; these in turn are justified by theories with a patriarchal bias. A good example of the correlation between theories, institutions and practice is instantiated in the Freudian theory of Selfhood construction and the institutions that are formed on those principles. These institutions in turn give rise to a form of practice.

In the context of equality, it is necessary to know the actual relation between sex and gender, because the prescription for equity is closely related to how one perceives the sex-gender relationship.

According to Freud, anatomical or sexual factors determine the psychological aspects of an individual which in turn affect the roles played by them. In other words, gender characteristics ‘essentially’ follow from biological factors.

Simone de Beauvoir (a liberal thinker.) in her book The Second Sex¹⁸ maintains unlike Freud that biology together with societal factors give birth to gender attributes.

Chodorow states that, at birth the infant cannot differentiate between subject/self and object/other. The child experiences itself as continuous with its mother or caretaker.¹⁹ Here Bowlby refers to the ‘**primary object clinging theory**’ according to which, “there is in infants an in-built propensity to be in touch with and to cling to a human being. In this sense there is a need for an object independent of food which is as primary as the ‘need’ for food and warmth.”²⁰

¹⁸ First published in French, 1949; this translation (translated and edited by H.M. Parshley) first published in Great Britain by Jonathan Cape Ltd, 1953; Published by Vintage, London, 1997;

¹⁹ Nancy Chodorow, “Early Psychological Development” in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, London, England, 1978; p.61;

²⁰ John Bowlby, (1969) *Attachment and Loss, Vol.1: Attachment*; London, Penguin Books, 1971; p.222;

Michael Rutter, a child psychiatrist and Rudolph Schaffer, a psychologist mention the studies which assess the variations in parenting²¹. It can be known from the studies that children do not suffer in the following situation:-

- a) When a person who mothers the infant shares her duties with a small but stable number of surrogated mothers, for example, when the biological mother leaves for a job ;²²
- b) When societies extend households and share the responsibility of child-care.²³

Children generally face problems in the following cases:

- i. Multiple parenting situations and if the child is separated from its primary caretaker;
- ii. Insufficient interaction with the care taker and
- iii. Disturbance in the children's lives due to family crisis or for any other reason²⁴.

It can be said that human body is a product of interaction between bio-mechanism and socio-environmental factors in which it usually participates. Actually patriarchal society and the institutions that are governed by patriarchy, endorse essentialist thoughts since this theory places male-gender virtues, e.g. **objectivity, neutrality, separateness, rationality** over female-gender traits i.e. **passivity, relatedness, emotionality** etc.

Liberation never comes without complications. Motherhood in twenty- first century recognises maternal desire in its own rights and exists independently of sexual desire. Now we get the opportunity to re-evaluate traditional theories of motherhood. Instead of taking motherhood as the ultimate end of womanhood, women can consider it as a function which they may/ may not embrace. To attain equity we should not restrict ourselves to essentialism, and at the same time we have to focus on Freud's

²¹ Michael Rutter, *Maternal Deprivation Reassessed*; Baltimore, Penguin Books,1972; Rudolph H. Schaffer, *Mothering*, Cambridge, Harvard University Pres,1977;

²² Yudkin and Holme, 1963, cited in Michael Rutter, *Maternal Deprivation Reassessed*; Baltimore, Penguin Books,1972; p.61; and Rudolph H. Schaffer *Mothering*, Cambridge, Harvard University Pres, 1977, p.10;

²³ Margaret Mead, "Some Theoretical Considerations on the Problem of Mother-child Separation", *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, vol.24, Pub.by AmericanOrthopsychiatry Assn., New York, 1954, p.471-483;

²⁴ Nancy Chodorow, "Early Psychological Development" in *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and Sociology of Gender*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, California, London, England,1978; p.75;

view regarding Super-ego, i.e. Freud's conception of Conscience, which admits the role of societal, cultural factors in gender construction. We should separate sex from gender and should not restrict any category(women/men) in a particular frame--feminine/masculine. Therefore, 'differences' of gender characteristics could not pose obstruction to attain 'equality'.

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POLITICAL ETHICS: AN ENQUIRY INTO ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND RELEVANCE

Deepanwita Dutta

Abstract

In this essay, an attempt has been made to discuss the complex rapport between ethics and politics. This paper has been divided into three sections. The first section seeks to discern the nature of the rupture between ethics and politics. The second section outlines the intricate relationship between ethics and politics in early Indian political thought. The third section addresses some pertinent questions that arise in studying political ethics. A conclusion has been drawn based on a critical survey of early Indian and Western political thought.

Key Words: *political ethics, individual morality, private morality, dirty hands, rājadharmā*

Section-I

The phrase "Political Ethics" is a conjunction of politics and ethics. Ethics is one of the significant branches of philosophy, which is primarily a normative discipline. However, it involves a great deal of meta-ethical and practical discourses. On the other hand, politics is a social scientific inquiry into the activities associated with the governance of a country and its policies. By applying empirical method, it seeks to describe and explain political phenomena. It is a systematic study of the processes of government, its organs and institutions. Although it is a descriptive study, it involves philosophical questions such as "How a society should be organized?" "Why do we need government?" "How ought the governance to be?" Hence, it also attempts to answer "Why" and "How" which inevitably entails "ought" questions. So, it includes a normative approach as well.

Moreover, the normative sections of politics call for meta-ethical enquiries. Meta-ethical reflection contains a conceptual analysis of political ideas and values such as duty, right, necessity, obligation, accountability, justice, and so on. The topic under discussion is basically discussed under the domain of political philosophy. Thus, political ethics is an ethical evaluation of government officials' political activities and policies (intra-national and international).

To examine the nature and scope of political ethics, we need to answer some central questions: To what extent do the ethical principles that govern public life differ from those that govern individual life? What constitutes the rationale for formulating state morality as distinct from private morality? Individual morality is basically the set of norms and values that an individual adheres to in his personal life while dealing with family, friends, relationships, etc. On the contrary, political morality is often interpreted as public morality. Administrators, government officials, or those in political power must recognize that every political activity has a long-term impact that profoundly affects the lives of the masses. Hence, those who hold administrative power must be morally accountable to the people they govern. Although the concrete reality of politics is intricate and full of conflicts, it is not devoid of ethics. However, it replaces the common man's normative principles with those that serve the state's interest.

In this connection, Prof. P. K. Mukhopadhyaya in his article “On Understanding Practical Philosophy”, pointed out that we must demarcate immoral from amoral in politics. He holds that in amorality, there is no harm if prudential considerations precede morality.¹ Now, the pertinent question is, how do we distinguish amoral from value-loaded areas? This distinction can be made on the basis of the following principle: Political matters that do not influence the public and the state's welfare can be considered amoral or value-neutral. On the contrary, political problems that are intimately tied to the public and the commonwealth's interests inevitably call for ethical scrutiny. Prof. Debasis Guha in his “A Defense of Political Ethics” observes that although some political issues may *prima facie* appear value-neutral, but an attentive inspection would unearth that they essentially call for ethical evaluation. Hence, many political issues, especially the core issue of state morality invite ethical inspection of political rights, duties and obligations.²

If we reflect on the cause of the origin of the state, we shall find several hypotheses. However, it is agreed upon that the state has originated due to a contract between the rulers and the ruled. Before the origin of a state, it is usually presumed that there was a condition called the state of nature. At this stage, men had unrestricted liberty. Even man was free to exploit or oppress others. Soon, it led to a moral degeneration where stronger people began to exploit weaker people, what we call ‘*mātsyanyāya*’ in Indian terminology. As a result, a chaotic situation began to prevail.

¹ Mukhopadhyaya, P. K. “On Understanding Practical Philosophy”. Source: Basak, Jyotish Chandra, and Bhattacharyya, Anureema (ed.) *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, 2023, p. 49.

² *Ibid.* p. 173.

At this juncture, people started feeling the need for security, peace and order. So, the state came into existence as a result of an agreement among people to check the rampant moral decadence. Some argue that the contract was social, whereas others held it was divine. However, people agreed to accept some external restrictions upon their absolute freedom to preserve life and the common good. Thus, some constraints on man's autonomy become necessary conditions for man's general well-being. However, forming a well-ordered society presupposes the existence of a just person in power committed to dispensing justice by terminating anarchy. But the moot question is: What if the person in administration refuses to keep his oath taken at the time of his enthronement? In fact, history has witnessed innumerable examples of such hypocrisy, cheating and unscrupulous practices. Holding power, even by unethical means, has become their primary concern. Actually, it is a paradox—whereas state heads are conferred power to ensure common men's welfare, but they want to retain power even at the cost of public well-being. This tendency has become the cause of concern and moral decadence.

From the ancient period, thinkers have been concerned about the persistent moral decline in politics. From ancient to post-modern times, both Indian and Western thinkers viewed political ethics from various angles and they articulated it in many different ways. So, we get several accounts on this subject. They may be categorized into two main groups: one group contends that ethics and politics are inextricably connected. Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle and seventeenth-century German philosopher Immanuel Kant advocated this view. Aristotle's *Politics* is a complementary work to his *Nicomachean Ethics*. The first line of *Nicomachean Ethics* tells us that every activity has a certain *telos* (end or purpose). In *Politics*, he narrates the form of governance that would best facilitate man to pursue the end described in *Nicomachean Ethics*. For him, politics is the prerequisite for securing the highest end of human life, i.e. *eudomonia* (happiness). Immanuel Kant's account of political morality is best found in his letters. He maintained that there can be no conflict between ethics and politics. His understanding of political morality aligns with his notion of pure ethics, known as "categorical imperative". He writes, "politics cannot take a step back without first paying homage to morals ... all politics must bend its knee before right."³ Hence, his idea is that politics is based on ethics. On

³ Cited in *Political Morality and the Problem of Dirty Hands: A Philosophical Critique and Re-interpretation*, a Ph. D thesis submitted by Demetris Tillyris to the University of Leeds, School of Politics and International Studies, December 2013, pp. 45-46. (Source: <https://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/6810/1/D%20Tillyris%20PhD%20Thesis%20Political%20Morality%20and%20the%20Problem%20of%20Dirty%20Hands%20A%20Philosophical%20Critique%20and%20Re-interpretation%20.pdf>)

examining the relationship between ethics and politics, Prof. Guha remarked that they do not have any logical connection with each other because not all meta-ethical discussions need to be necessarily based on politics and not all talks in State governance need to be necessarily based on meta-ethics, though some meta-ethical talks involve politics and some political talks of governance involve meta-ethics. If this be the case, then neither ethics nor politics can be shown to be necessarily and sufficiently based on one another.⁴

Another group argues that politics is neutral to ethical considerations. It has nothing to do with conventional morality. Here, only prudence reigns over irrelevant everyday morality. Even the adoption of immoral means like hypocrisy, cheating, falsehood, betrayal, corruption, and even murder is fair in politics. Sixteen-century Italian diplomat Nicolo Machiavelli advocated a kind of state morality distinct from individual morality. According to him, the morality that governs commonwealth must be different from the morality that governs an individual's life. He argued in support of his contention that if one follows honest means in politics, that may lead to bad consequences, whereas if one resorts to dishonest means, that may lead to desirable ends.⁵ Hence, his notorious lesson in *The Prince* is that expedient and responsible politics requires its practitioners to master how not to be good. His account of state morality has been expressed through the concept of *virtù*. Though he never describes *virtù*, he does not opine it a conventional moral virtue. For him, *virtù* is the prudent precaution men must take to combat adverse situations. Machiavelli's political principle is irrelevant to binaries such as justice or injustice, kindness or cruelty. For him, “that alternative should be wholeheartedly adopted which will save the life and preserve the freedom of one's country.”⁶

Taking cue from Machiavelli's *The Prince* Jean-Paul Sartre coined the phrase “dirty hands”. His composition *Dirty Hands* 1948 is a political drama. The main thesis of dirty hands goes as follows: In extreme emergencies, political leaders might be obligated to dirty their hands and allow immoral actions for the greater good. The drama's main theme is that right political action can be incongruous with standard morality. The play's focal point is the tension between morality and effective political action. The ideological conflict between Hugo and Heoderer represents a difference in ethical grounds. Hugo is an absolute deontologist, while Hoederer is a consequentialist.

⁴ Guha, D. “A Defense of Political Ethics”. Source: Basak, Jyotish Chandra, and Bhattacharyya, Anureema (ed.) *Essays on Ethics and Politics*, University of North Bengal, Darjeeling, 2023, p.168.

⁵ Machiavelli, Nicolo, *The Prince*, Antonio Blado d'Asola Press, Italy, 1532, pp. 91-92.

⁶ Cited in “Political Morality vs. Political Necessity: Kautilya and Machiavelli Revisited” by Narasimha Prasad Sil, *Journal of Asian History*, Vol. 19, published by Harrassowitz Verlag, 1985, pp. 109-110.

Hoederer firmly believes it is impossible to govern innocently; it is inevitable to dirty one's hands in the merciless world of politics. His predicament is revealed when he utters, "I have dirty hands right up to the elbows. I have plunged them in filth and blood. Do you think I could govern innocently?"⁷

Thus, the contention between absolutists and relativists concerning dirty hands politics *per se* points to the debate between deontology and consequentialism. The debate between relativists and absolutist brings their logical grounds to the surface. To defend their position, relativists would draw our attention to the complex reality of politics. Unlike private life, they argue, real politics is characterized by conflicts and pluralism. Here, the necessity to manipulate, lie, breach, steal, and even murder may arise frequently. The realm of politics is weighed with much more significant consequences than private life. For example, the administration of a state involves defeating internal aggressors and external enemies, resolving conflicting interests of different groups and communities, policy-making (internal and external), etc.; all these indicate the fact that concrete and intricate realities of politics are far different from private life.

To counter relativists' logic, absolutists come up with their reasoning and argue that, in most cases, politicians use expedient measures just for self-aggrandizement in the name of political necessity. As a result, it gives birth to corruption. For instance, in a party system democratic government, party representatives make false promises, fool ordinary people, and manipulate votes using unethical means. So, their use of unjust means is neither for the common good's sake nor the state's welfare. Nonetheless, they defend their position saying that it is an obligation to dirty their hands to stay in power for a political party. They are entrusted with administrative power to secure public welfare and serve the state's interest. However, their logic for using wrong methods to stay in power at the cost of public well-being does not make any sense. Deontologist Immanuel Kant absolutely rejected consequentialists' standpoint because, according to him, it exists in "the self-seeking tendencies of men which we cannot call their morality. He asserts that contemporary politicians (or any public or private figure) cannot evade the thrust of the Categorical Imperative: they cannot get away from the idea of right. Nor must they dare to base politics on expediency and refuse obedience to the idea of right. Concerning the issue of lying, the maxim honesty is the best policy, for Kant, is the necessary condition of politics."⁸

⁷ Source: <https://astrofella.wordpress.com/2017/10/24/dirty-hands-jean-paul-sartre/>

⁸ Cited in *Political Morality and the Problem of Dirty Hands: A Philosophical Critique and Re-interpretation*, a Ph. D thesis submitted by Demetris Tillyris to the University of Leeds, School of Politics and International Studies, December 2013, pp. 45-46.

Section-II

We find a vast body of normative literature on political ethics in India. Politics has never been separated from religion and morality in India since ancient times. Ancient Indian political thinking aligned with the aims and objectives of social life. As a result, political activity is seen as an aspect of spirituality that guides man towards self-actualization or self-realization. The distinctness of Indian political thinking can be expressed in the following words: Indian political thought cannot be isolated from the main body of Hindu philosophy. In the West, the science of government rests upon an empirical basis. But the great works of Indian polity are based upon metaphysics and ethics which pose and interpret the very problems of human existence.

Although the *Vedas*, *Upaniṣads* and philosophical systems fundamentally deal with theology and philosophy, some significant political ideas are scattered across these literary works. However, *Dharmaśāstras*, *Arthaśāstras* and *Nītisāras* more intensely and systematically deliberated upon political problems and the science of governance. “In the *Śāntiparva* of the *Mahābhārata* we find political realism and speculative idealism of an advance level.”⁹ *Śāntiparva* comprises of three sub-*parvas*: *Rājadharmānuśāsana*, *Āpadadharmā* and *Mokṣadharmā*. Prominent *Dharmaśāstras* like *Manu Samhitā*, *Yājñavalkya Samhitā* etc. consist of ethical and legal norms or codes for regulating social and political life. *Arthaśāstra* stands for the science of governance. Although Kauṭilya emerges as a political realist, essentially, he was a moralist. Kauṭilya’s moralism follows the precept of traditional *rājadharmā*. The *Śāstras* prescribed a balanced pursuit of all four ends necessary in human life. Excessive indulgence of any one of the four goals becomes a detrimental factor. Besides the *Arthaśāstra* tradition, the *Nītisāras* contain a moral overtone. Political treatises such as *Arthaśāstra* and *Nītisāras* seek to offer practical lessons on how best to govern the state and, hence, are very helpful to monarchs in preserving humanity.

In the Indo-Aryan political system, the king was deemed the head of the state, vested with executive, legislative, judicial and financial powers. Hence, *rājadharmā*, or the king's duties, is the central theme of Hindu political thought. *Rājadharmā* encompasses certain duties and obligations on the part of the king and his administrative assistants. At one point, the *Śāntiparva* in 63.25 declares that all the *dharmas* are either derived from or merged back into *rājadharmā*. Hence, *rājadharmā* is the fountain of all *dharmas*. The primary duty of a king is to protect the law-abiding citizens and punish the wrong-doers. The concept of protection in Hindu polity is a

⁹ Verma, V. P. *Studies in Hindu political Thought and its Metaphysical basis*, Motilal Banarasidas Publishers, Delhi, 1974, p. 56.

very comprehensive idea. It presupposes the ideal of social and economic justice for the total well-being and happiness of all the subjects and security of the orphan, the aged, the widow, the sick and the poor. In dispensing justice, impartiality and fairness were to be upheld. The king protects his people with the help of *daṇḍa* (the rod of chastisement). *Daṇḍa* is the principal instrument of a state. Bhiṣma describes *daṇḍa* as “*jāgrati*” or vigilance which keeps an eye even over the king. It has two-fold functions—restrain and punishment. It is necessary for bringing about order and discipline. The application of *daṇḍa* must follow certain *nīti*. *Daṇḍa*, according to Kauṭilya, should be proportionate, neither too heavy nor too low. A proper thoughtful chastisement that is based upon the scriptures will righteously engage the people (“*suvijñātapraṇīto hi daṇḍaḥ prajādharmārthakāmairyojayati*”¹⁰). *Apraṇītaḥ daṇḍaḥ* or absence of punishment will produce *mātsyanyāya* (lawlessness). *Daṇḍanīti*, the supreme governing principle, is, therefore, equated with dharma.

Concerning the interstate policy, the four expedients (*upāyas*) of royal power—conciliation (*sāma*), giving gifts (*dāna*), force (*daṇḍa*), and creating dissension (*bheda*)—were a standard part of political discourse. Besides, we come across three more *upāyas* such as *upekṣā*, *māyā* and *indrajalām* in *Viṣṇudharmottarapurāṇam*, *Agnipurāṇam* and *Kāmandaka Nītisāra*.¹¹ The early Indian political system also delineates the six measures governing the conduct of international relations—namely, peace or making a treaty (*sandhi*), war (*vigraha*), staying quiet (*āsana*), marching (*yāna*), seeking shelter (*saṁśraya*), and the dual policy (*dvaiddhibhāva*) of simultaneously pursuing peace with one ruler and waging war against another. And regarding the destruction of internal and external enemies, the *Kauṭilyan Arthaśāstra* devotes an entire *adhikaraṇa* to describe the secret means such as *pralambhanam* and *adbhutapādanam* (magical contrivances) or *bhaiṣajyamantrayogaḥ* (medicinal charms). Actually, he encourages active and passive aggression only against an enemy. Hence, he insists that even with very great losses and expenses, the destruction of the enemy must be brought about. If necessary, he is ready to promote adopting foul means in a strategic battle (*kuṭayuddha*). He approves a fair and open fight (*dharmayuddha*), but a *kuṭayuddha* is permissible in extreme circumstances.

Although at times the Kauṭilyan king is misconceived as a Machiavellian despot, from the above, it becomes explicit that Hindu political thought portrayed the

¹⁰ Kangle, R. P. (tr.) *The Kautilya Arthaśāstra Part I*, I ii, iv, 11, Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Pvt Ltd, Delhi, 1965, p. 6.

¹¹ Joshi, Lakshman Shastri (ed.) *Dharmakoṣa, Rājanītikāṇḍa*, Vol. IV, Part IV, Prajñā Pāṭhśālā Maṇḍala, 1977, p. 15.

ideal of *rājarsi* or sage-king who is envisaged as a dutiful fulfiller of *rājadharma*. Several discourses on *Rājadharma* sum up the royal obligations of a ruler as greater in measure than mere collecting taxes or dispensing excessive punishment. *Rājadharma*'s categorical imperative is that the king, like a father, is the universal protector of the people, not their destroyer. One of the greatest threats to good governance is his own personal weakness and temptations. That is why, the necessity for sense control (*indriyanigraha*) and self-discipline (*vinaya*) are the recurring features of a king's duties. If a ruler is self-disciplined, these characteristics will automatically permeate to the lower level of society. Barring that, in the *Śāntiparva* of the *Mahābhārata*, we find a list of thirty-six norms or codes for self-regulation, which the king is expected to follow with diligence. "One of the enduring features of ancient Indian political thought is the idea of a strong relationship between the inner mental and emotional state of the king and the health of the state,"¹² writes Prof. Upinder Singh. Hindu political philosophy visualized the ideal of *rājarsi* or a saintly ruler who has attained saintly qualities, conquering six inimical tendencies (lust, anger, greed, pride and over-joy) and also acquired abilities for ruler-ship. In addition, an extensive education and rigorous training process have been prescribed for ruler-ship training as an aspect of good governance. The *Kauṭilyan Arthaśāstra* mentions four *rājavidyās* – *ānvīkṣikī*, *trayī*, *vārtā* and *daṇḍanīti* that a prince must master to be eligible for kingship.

So, as can be seen, the tone of early Indian political precepts is primarily didactic. Although the imperatives are straightforward, at least in their articulation, their application may present specific challenges due to contingencies of human situations.

Section-III

Thus, both in Indian and Western political thought we encounter abundant discussion on political pragmatism. The exponents of political realists legitimize the need for flexibility in politics. They maintain that the autonomy of politics rests precisely upon its intrinsically conflictive nature. Accordingly, the proponents of realpolitik do not hesitate to endorse the judicious application of treacherous means. Expediency as a necessary aspect of realpolitik raises several questions. These questions can be divided into at least four categories: normative, meta-ethical, virtue ethical, and practical ethical. However, these questions are not mutually exclusive. They are intertwined with each other. Normative questions, for instance, "Do expedient means possess any value at all?" "Are these measures useful to fulfill a desirable end?" "Are we permitted to attain goods by whatever means we can?" "Should means also be

¹² Singh, Upinder, *Political Violence in Ancient India*, Harvard University Press, 2017, p. 465.

essentially good if a good end is to be realized?" "Is purity of means an essential aspect of the way of the realization of a good end?" Which doctrine is ethically acceptable: "Means justifies ends" or "End justifies means"? These are precisely the questions that engage our attention in the philosophy of means and end.

The Machiavellian epithet is "end justifies means". Being a political realist, he holds that unethical means are conducive to sustaining virtuous political life: They support practitioners of politics to satisfy some of the political ends of their practice. This is the ethical stance maintained by consequentialists. However, deontologists discard consequentialists' standpoint. For them, the word "good" even etymologically has a reference to "end". According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word "right" means "according to what is just". Being "in accordance with what is just" has a necessary reference to the ways of operation and behavior, and, therefore, to means. That is why it is suggested that means and ends have a necessary relationship with each other. It is interesting to note Gandhi's thoughts on this issue. These two concepts have been the central theme of his thought. He gives very great value to "means". He says, "(T)hey say "means are after all means". I would say "means are after all everything." As the means so the end; there is no wall of separation between means and end. Indeed the creator has given us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means."¹³ If we carefully examine Gandhi's doctrine, we shall find merit in his view. We find that the end of any project is always beyond our control. What we have at our discretion is the means. We can manoeuvre only means and never the ends. Goodness or badness of an act depends on how I do it. Therefore, it follows that the means has to be the right one.

Simultaneously, it invites meta-ethical questions like "What does it mean by "political necessity", "political responsibility" "accountability" and "desirability"? "Under what conditions is a politician obligated to use immoral ways?" "What are the things called politically desirable ends"? Value absolutists present logic to show that no political necessity can obligate a political figure or public servants to adopt evil means. This necessity solely springs from their self-beneficial tendencies. Concerning political responsibility, we think that administrative figures are primarily responsible for creating such a socio-politic milieu where everyone can fully develop their inner potencies. And whatever is led to this direction is suggested as the politically desirable end.

13

Source:<https://www.mkgandhi.org/voiceoftruth/meansandends.htm#:~:text=Young%20India%2C%2011%2D12%2D,every%20nation%20is%20complete%20independence>.

Machiavellian thinkers hold that an expedient politician, even after using wrong means, can be considered virtuous because according to them, we often fail to understand a subtle distinction: A significant difference exists between righteousness, conceived as the absence of wrongdoing, and righteousness, conceived as a disposition or character. Thus, the application of treacherous measures need not malign the upright character of a saintly ruler since these remain confined to the diplomacy part for securing a state's interest. However, this again raises virtue ethical questions like "in realpolitik is virtue limited to intent or disposition?" "What sort of virtue is fit for the political realm?"

Relativists further attempt to corroborate their view, pointing to the moral dilemmas that constitute inescapable characteristics of politics. However, value monists contend that moral conflict might seem *prima facie* possible. Such conflicts are mere chimaeras: a supreme moral value suggests that these can be perfectly resolved. "Like an ordinary mathematical puzzle, there is always a solution to every moral dilemma. What we need is a super mathematician to work it out,"¹⁴ held Matilal. So, according to them, "fair is foul and foul is fair" is a misconceived idea. The contention also demands practical ethical evaluation. For instance, how far are the unjust means adopted by political figures successful in attaining good governance? What sort of impact do these immoral means leave upon society? Besides, many philosophers and thinkers draw our attention towards the significance of defending political ethics by citing many value-loaded contemporary political quarries related to freedom of expression, the right to information, the use of nuclear weapons in war, etc. Thus, political ethics has become a highly relevant study in administration discourse.

Furthermore, if we carefully examine, we shall find that the tension between ethics and politics arises from exercising power. Historically, violence has been inherent in the exertion of power. As a matter of fact, intense conflicts, violence and war pervade the political world. The peculiarity of politics is, in fact, based on the necessity of harmonizing collective decisions under conditions of conflict. Hence, at some point of time, both Indian and Western political theorists more and less recognized the ideal of supremacy of politics. The goal of political paramountcy is implied in the idea that self-preservation is the fundamental duty of a state. Besides, political life is dynamic. Here, time and place factors play a significant role. So, it has to consistently consider constraints or contingencies of human situations and look beyond them. In scintillating situations, rules of morality must not act as hindrances. Hence, envisioning political morality in terms of abstract and universal action-guiding

¹⁴ Matilal, Bimal Krishna (ed.) *Moral Dilemmas in the Mahābhārata*, Motilal Banarasidas Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Delhi, 2014, p. 1.

rules and principles may sometimes not be helpful to the concrete realities and requirements of politics. As a result, it recognizes the necessity of malleability, although this is no justification for opportunism or self-aggrandizement. Flexibility does not mean an 'anything goes' kind of morality. This need not allow one to seek power only for the sake of power. Power, as several studies reveal, might have a malicious effect. In recent years, a large body of research has demonstrated that power has deep transformative effects on human psychology. A sense of feeling powerful can trigger behavioral disinhibition. Consequently, this disinhibiting effect of power can lead the powerful person to act immorally. In addition, it leads them to focus more on the self and one's own needs and activities.¹⁵ Interestingly, Max Weber in his essay "Politics as a Vocation" argues that striving for power for power's sake makes politics a meaningless activity. Hence, applying treacherous means as proponents of realpolitik sometimes endorse, might have slippery slope effects. This means any attempt to attain a political end by evil means might lead to a much longer chain of immoral deeds than was originally intended or anticipated.¹⁶ Bearing this in mind, ancient Indian political theorists stipulated strict self-regulatory norms both for the monarch and his administrative assistants. Thus, one can find in Hindu political thought a consistent endeavor to synchronize the governance of the state and the governance of self from ancient times.

¹⁵ Lammers, Joris, "Power and Morality", published by Elsevier, *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 2015, pp. 1-2.

¹⁶ Datta, Amlan, "Assorted Essay", Amio Puspo Prakashani, Kolkata, 2006, p.27.

“MEANING AIN’T JUST IN THE HEAD”: FROM MEANING TO REFERENCE

Jayanta Barman

Abstract

The concept of ‘Reference’ in Hilary Putnam’s works bears critical conceptual importance. It certainly comes to the forefront in the second phase of his career, when he shifts from being an avowed ‘Realist’ to becoming its critic. This criticism phase is generally termed the internalist phase, wherein he proposed ‘Internal Realism’, which argued against the Metaphysical realist worldview or Realism with a capital R. One such criticism that Putnam posed against Metaphysical Realism is that ‘meanings in our head do not determine reference’ or the extension of a term. Instead, reference is determined by environmental as well as social factors. The environmental factor predominantly implies ‘facts’ or objectivity involving the nature of things, whereas the social factor involves the division of linguistic labour. Putnam’s remarkability as a philosopher and thinker comes full swing with his groundbreaking concept of ‘reference’ in his works such as Reason, Truth and History (1981), Representation and Reality (1989) and several essays. This academic paper aims to present a detailed trajectory of the concept of "reference" as found in the works of philosopher Hilary Putnam. The paper will initially endeavour to identify the specific contexts in which the term "reference" appears, focusing on Putnam's critique of the traditional theory of meaning. Subsequently, the paper will explore the intricate connections between the social and environmental dimensions of meaning articulated by Putnam.

Keywords: *Reference, Meaning, Division of Linguistic Labour, Environment, Internal Realism*

Introduction

Hilary Whitehall Putnam (1926-2016) stands as an intellectual colossus, a seminal philosopher whose career spanned an impressive six decades. Born in Chicago, Illinois, Putnam studied philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University, where he was a student of the renowned philosopher W.V. Quine. After teaching at several universities, Putnam eventually settled at Harvard, becoming a University Professor. During this time, he embarked on a remarkable journey of critical engagement and rethinking, constantly challenging and evolving his philosophical positions and queries. Indeed, the question of realism and the connection between

language and the world has remained constant in his variegated philosophical enquiries.¹ Putnam relentlessly explored this intricate question, examining the various facets of realism and its implications for our understanding of the world.

The present paper is solely concerned with Putnam's theory of reference, as developed in his internalist phase. It begins by identifying the specific contexts in which Putnam employs the term 'reference,' particularly in his critique of the traditional theory of meaning. It will examine Putnam's arguments against the correspondence theory of reference and his rejection of the idea that meaning is determined solely by the speaker's intentions. Subsequently, the paper will explain that reference is determined by social and environmental factors rather than what goes inside our heads.

The Traditionalist Account

One can locate Putnam's concern regarding the nature of 'reference', particularly in his disillusionment with the traditional theory of meaning and his subsequent criticism of 'Metaphysical Realism' in the mid-1970s. Let us briefly explain what Putnam means by the traditional theory of meaning and its implication on reference. The traditional theory of meaning states that reference is determined by what happens 'inside' or within our heads. Philosophers like Aristotle, Bertrand Russell, Gottlob Frege, and Rudolf Carnap, among others, have been identified by Putnam as traditionalists who carried forward this view in different forms and ways. Putnam identifies a severe problem with this theory, according to which meaning possesses the extension/intention ambiguity.² In one sense, meaning is equivalent to extension; in the other, meaning is equal to the intention of the term. Traditionalists also argue that understanding the words or knowing their meaning is a matter of being in an individual psychological state, i.e., meaning is private.

However, philosophers like Frege and Carnap have strongly disagreed with this form of psychologism. Instead, they argued that meanings are public rather than private, as different individuals can grasp the exact meaning of a term at different times and places. They also argued that meanings are 'abstract' entities. However, Putnam states that Frege and Carnap do not fully recover from the idea that grasping these abstract entities was still an individual psychological act, not a public or social affair.³

¹ Ben-Menahem, Yemima. *Hilary Putnam*. Cambridge University Press, 2005. 5

² Putnam, Hilary. "The Meaning of 'Meaning.'" *The Meaning of "Meaning"*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1 Jan. 1975, <https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/185225>. 145

³ Hilary Putnam, "The Meaning of 'Meaning,'" *The Meaning of "Meaning,"* January 1, 1975, <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/185225>, 134.

According to Putnam, the other implication of the traditional theory is that two terms with the same extension can differ in their intentions. Still, the reverse is impossible: two terms cannot have different extensions and simultaneously have the same intention. But what does this mean? Let us use Putnam's example as expounded in his paper 'The Meaning of "Meaning"' (1975). He uses two compound words: 'creature with a heart' and 'creature with a kidney'. These compound words refer to the same object or entity in the actual world. Thus, words have the same extension, although these terms have two different intentions, according to the traditional account. It means that the meaning (in the sense of intention) of the compound words 'creature with a heart' and 'creature with a kidney' differ. But they refer to the same thing; hence, the extension is the same. Hence, the meaning of the words in the sense of extension is the same, assuming that every creature with a heart possesses a kidney and vice versa. We can find a similarity in the words 'the evening star' and 'the morning star,' which Frege elaborated on in his seminal paper 'Sense and Reference' (1948). In his paper, German philosopher Gottlob Frege suggested that the expressions "the evening star" and "the morning star" seem to refer to two distinct celestial objects visible in the sky at different times of the day. However, The compound words 'the evening star' and 'the morning star' have the same referent, i.e. the planet Venus, while they differ in their sense. 'Sense' is typically defined by Frege as the mode of presentation. He suggests that the sense of the term determines its reference. Putnam reads Frege's use of 'sense' as the intention of the term and 'reference' as its extension.

From the above discussion, Putnam poses two thoughts intrinsically associated with the traditionalist theory of meaning, which he thinks has yet to be adequately challenged prior to him. They are:

- (1) Firstly, they suggest that knowing the meaning of a term is being in a particular psychological state;
- (2) Secondly, they also maintain that the meaning of the word or the sign determines the extension of the term, suggesting that there is an equivalence or sameness between intention and extension.⁴

Going against the traditionalist account, Putnam provides a radical claim that meaning is not an individual psychological affair that determines the extension or

⁴ Putnam, Hilary. "Meaning and Reference - Volume 70, Issue 19, November 1973." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 9 Mar. 2021, https://www.pdcnet.org/jphil/content/jphil_1973_0070_0019_0699_0711.700.

reference of the term. Instead, reference (meaning in the sense of extension) is determined by myriad social, linguistic, cultural and environmental factors.⁵

Are Meanings Just in the Head?

Putnam provides us with the 'Twin Earth Hypothesis' to justify his criticism that the traditional concept of meaning and reference is false and has its basis in some sort of narrow psychologism. In this hypothesis, he asks us to suppose that somewhere there exists a Twin Earth, similar to Earth. Our twins or doppelgangers occupy Twin Earth. They speak the same English as we do on Earth and have similar mental or psychological states. The only difference between these two planets is that the substance they (Twin Eartheans) refer to as water has a different chemical composition. It is more complex than H₂O and hence abbreviated as XYZ. He maintains that under similar conditions of pressure and temperature, water in Twin Earth and Earth behave similarly.

Also, in Twin Earth, XYZ fills all the lakes, rivers and rains XYZ. Then he supposes that a spaceship from Earth visits the Twin Earth. Initially, the crew would assume that water on Twin Earth and Earth has the same meaning. But later, upon further investigation, it would have been made pretty clear that "On Twin Earth, the word 'water' means XYZ."⁶ Similarly, when a spaceship arrives from Twin Earth to visit Earth, they would assume that water on Earth bears the chemical composition 'XYZ', but eventually understand that "On Earth, the word 'water' means H₂O."⁷ From the above situation, we can conclude that the meaning of water in the sense of extension is different. Therefore, whenever Earthians and Twin Earthians utter 'water', they refer to two different substances.

In the above scenario, Putnam assumed that the entire action occurred in 1950. Now, he shifts the whole scenario to 1750, when the chemical composition of water was yet to be discovered on Earth; likewise, the Twin Eartheans were ignorant about the composition of their water as XYZ. He also introduces two characters, Oscar₁, who resides on Earth and Oscar₂, in Twin Earth. Furthermore, these two characters are doppelgangers with the same mental and physical qualities. They speak similarly and look precisely like copies. Putnam now asks if the utterance of 'water' refers to the same thing. Putnam states that no matter their psychological state, Oscar₁ and Oscar₂ refer to two different chemical compositions when they use or consider the term

⁵ Ben-Menahem, Y. (2005). *Hilary Putnam*. Cambridge University Press. 18.

⁶ Putnam, Hilary. "Meaning and Reference - Volume 70, Issue 19, November 1973." *The Journal of Philosophy*, 9 Mar. 2021, https://www.pdcnet.org/jphil/content/jphil_1973_0070_0019_0699_0711. 701.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 701.

‘water’. From this situation, Putnam infers that the extension of a term does not merely depend on the psychological state. To firmly ground his viewpoint against the traditionalists, he considers another instance.

Let us consider two different metals, aluminium and molybdenum, located quite disparately in the periodic table. These metals bear a strong resemblance; one cannot quickly tell them apart. Therefore, the chances of confusion are also high. We can correctly detect the difference between the two metals only with the help of an expert. Their major difference is that aluminium is a widely used and easily extracted metal found on the surface of Earth, while molybdenum is rare. Only a metallurgist can differentiate between them. On Twin Earth, however, the opposite situation prevails. Now, Putnam asks us to make two important assumptions. First, we must suppose that aluminium accessories and utensils are used on Earth, and the term ‘aluminium’ refers to the metal aluminium. Second, we must suppose that on Twin Earth, utensils are made of molybdenum, and the word ‘aluminium’ refers to the metal molybdenum. Thus, Putnam asks us to switch the reference/extension for the words ‘aluminium’ and ‘molybdenum’ on Twin Earth. When a spaceship visits Earth from Twin Earth, the Twin Earthians would presume that the metal pots are made of molybdenum, which they call ‘aluminium’.

On the other hand, upon reaching Twin Earth, Earthians would presume that the word ‘aluminium’ refers to utensils made of aluminium metal. However, this is not the case. Unlike the layman, an expert/metallurgist from Earth can easily prove that Twin Earth's ‘aluminium’ pots and pans are made of molybdenum and vice-versa. Similarly, if Oscar₁ and Oscar₂, who share similar psychological conditions, speak the same Earthian English, are neither expert chemically nor metallurgically, and are in a similar mental condition when they say the word ‘aluminium. But what becomes apparent once again is that the extension of the term ‘aluminium’ in the idiolect of Oscar₁ is aluminium, whereas, for Oscar₂, it is molybdenum. With the help of this example, Putnam makes it clear that the speaker’s psychological state does not and cannot determine the extension of the word uttered by the speaker. More importantly, it showcases that meaning is just not in the head.

The Division of Linguistic Labour

To justify that the extension of a term does not depend on an individual's psychological state, Putnam puts forward his sociolinguistic hypothesis that the meaning of a term is collectively determined through actual interaction and use. He also uses the phrase ‘the division of linguistic labour’ to suggest the same. But what does the hypothesis mean? Let us further de-entangle this with the help of an example. Putnam uses the metal ‘gold’ to explain this hypothesis.

First and foremost, Putnam assumes the sociolinguistic community to be a 'factory'. The factory is used as a metaphor. In this factory or community, 'gold' is considered a precious metal with financial and cultural significance. He then assumes that in this factory setup, one group's job is to wear gold, the other group sells the gold, and the third group determines whether the metal is gold. The first group possibly denotes the common man who wears gold, the second group are the jewellers, whereas the third could be referred to as the experts who can detect gold. Every group in this factory "acquires" the word gold in their vocabulary, but not everyone is liable to know the "method of recognising" gold⁸. These people who wear or sell gold can simply rely on the expert or the subset of speakers who have acquired the method to recognise gold.

From the above scenario, Putnam implies that each group acquires the word 'gold' and associates it with a contextual meaning depending on their use of the metal. They do not know the whole meaning of what gold stands for; they only know the 'meaning' in part, which is also true. Knowing 'part meaning' does not suggest these groups do not have any role to play in determining reference. This very division of meaning, or the labour employed by these groups, collectively helps us refer to the term 'gold', which Putnam terms 'the division of linguistic labour'. The division of labour means the labour given by these groups in knowing these features of gold through their interaction with gold. Hence, Putnam writes that the features that we consider present or contained in relation to a name, the necessary and sufficient conditions for the name 'gold' to be part of the extension, are present in the socio-linguistic community. This community is the body that collectively divides the labour of being able to know and employ different 'parts' or 'uses' of the "meaning" of the term 'gold'.

As such, according to Putnam's hypothesis, it becomes evident that, in a growing technologically advanced community, certain words carry relevant criteria that only a certain number of people can know, for example, steamship. This term is, therefore, subject to the division of linguistic labour, just like the term water or gold. The other speakers recognise these criteria only in a well-formulated, cooperative way. We can argue that the average speaker does not acquire the necessary methods to fix the extension of a term. Most importantly, Putnam states that individual psychological states do not determine the extension. Indeed, we come to understand that the speaker's community, which behaves as a collective linguistic body, determines or fixes the extension of a term. Let us consider the other factor involved in determining the reference of the term, namely, 'environment'.

⁸ Ibid., 705.

The Contribution of the Environment

The term 'environment' is used by Putnam in a specific way to denote the way things are or the raw facts of our nature, which plays a vital role in determining the reference. Putnam emphasises that the 'objective' reality exists independently of the thinking mind. This objectivity partly determines the reference. Take, for instance, the substance water. Ancient and mediaeval scholars believed water to be a pure substance of only one type of atom or molecule. This means that any bit of a pure substance will have the same chemical properties as any other. For instance, if we have a pure sample of water distributed in different containers, these samples will exhibit the same chemical properties.

Consequently, people two hundred years back and two thousand years ago expected the same behaviour from water as they expect now, after the development of modern science or the discovery of the molecular structure of water. People from different times or places will refer to the same substance, i.e., water when they talk about the word 'water' as it exhibits the same behaviour. Putnam writes, "The belief that any sample of a pure substance will exhibit the same behaviour as any other sample of the same substance is only one of the beliefs which help us to fix the reference of terms which refer to such substances..."⁹

If this is so, Putnam argues, we may suggest that in the Twin Earth thought experiment, the extension of the term 'water' in 1750 on Earth and Twin Earth was different even before the discovery of their microstructures, as water on both planets was made of different substances. Putnam writes, "Twin Earth water violates (and always violated) two conditions for being called "real" water: it neither has the same ultimate constitution as "our" water nor exhibits the same behaviour."¹⁰ We were simply unaware of water's extension as H₂O on Earth and XYZ on Twin Earth, prior to the discovery or presence of the experts. Therefore, without any inhibition, we may justifiably conclude that on both planets, the extension of the substance was different in 1750, and it was different in 1950 as well. The difference lies in the substance, i.e. water being a pure substance. This is the phenomenon that Putnam referred to as the contribution of the environment in his seminal work *Representation and Reality*.

We can similarly pick other natural kind terms to illustrate the same principle. Suppose the Earthians and Twin Earthians used the word 'cat' to refer to some sort of animal in 1750. Putnam writes that it could very well be possible that the mental representation of Twin Earthians when they utter the word 'cat' is similar to the mental

⁹ Putnam, Hilary. *Representation and Reality*. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 34.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 35.

representation of the Earthians when they talk about 'cat' although biologically they are different species. The mental representation is the same as that of the people who do not possess any knowledge about the biology of Earth and Twin Earth. But if we visit Twin Earth and realise that Earth cats cannot produce fertile offspring after mating with cats out there, then the average people, as well as experts, could easily identify that 'cat' does not have the same extension on both the planets. After scientific investigation, it can be more clearly demonstrated that Twin Earth cats and Earth cats do not have a standard line of ancestry, that perhaps the Twin Earth cats evolved from pandas whereas Earth cats are from felines. For Twin Earthians, cats found on Earth are not cats, and vice-versa.

We can also suppose that cats on Twin Earth are simply not any kind of animal, although they accurately resemble cats found on Earth. Their shape, behaviour and form are entirely the same. However, someone who is an expert confirms that Twin Earth cats are robots with artificial intelligence, being controlled by people from a different galaxy through sophisticated technology. Following this, we may satisfactorily confirm that the so-called 'cats' on Twin Earth are not cats that we Earthians recognise as cats. Neither can they be classified as what Earthians refer to as 'animals', as they are simply machines for us. However, Twin Earthians may argue that the term 'animal' refers to remotely controlled robots. Dogs, cats, lions, tigers, rabbits, and other animals are simply automatons without any intelligence of themselves or organic quality. Consequently, Earthians will realise that the term 'animal' does not mean the same species on both the Planets; on Earth, animals are natural inhabitants (biological species), whereas on Twin Earth 'animals' are non-living automatons.

In the preceding examples, it has been illustrated that the mental representation of the word 'cat' on Earth and Twin Earth can be qualitatively the same. Still, upon scientific investigation, it will be apparent that the extension is entirely different. This difference is brought about by the difference in substance itself and, in the case of biological species, the constituents of these species itself. Putnam writes,

The description given by both the Earthians and the Twin Earthians of X, where X is gold, or cats, or water, or milk, or whatever, maybe the same; the mental representations may be qualitatively the same; the description given by the experts at a given stage of scientific development may be the same; but it may turn out, because of the difference between the Earth and Twin Earth environments, that the referents are so different that Earth speakers would not regard the Twin Earth gold as gold at all, or regard the Twin Earth water as water at all, or regard the Twin Earth cats as cats at

all, etc. Meaning is interactional. The environment itself plays a role in determining what a speaker's words, or a community's words, refer to.¹¹

Thus, we can conclusively argue that Putnam through his various thought experiments and hypothesis has harboured a strong criticism against the traditionalist account of meaning and reference. Thus, stating, what goes on inside our head does not determine the reference of the term. Simply put, Putnam showcases, that intention does not fix the extension of the term.

Conclusion

It is clear from the following paper that Putnam privileges 'reference' which has a central part in understanding the world around us. Indeed, reference gains a critical conceptual importance in his internalist phase. And his later works subscribe to the view that reference quite substantially determines meaning (intention), rather than the other way round. Putnam's understanding of reference, in particular, supplements the theory of meaning, thus helping us to locate the importance of the other factors that contribute to the meaning of objects, such as the 'environment'. By reiterating that meanings are not 'just' in the head, Putnam undertakes an important task at hand, namely the criticism of the traditionalist theory, that has not been adequately challenged prior to Putnam. He suggests a ingenious way to overcome narrow mentalism. I end with the philosophical insights that Putnam not only finds an alternative theory of Frege's semantics by bringing the contexts of the division of linguistic labour and the relevance of the 'social', he even injects or brings back, I do also reckon, the insights of later Wittgenstein's philosophical concepts of forms of life in some sense or other.

¹¹ Ibid., 36.

ISLAMIC FEMINISTS' VIEW ON MUSLIM WOMEN'S EQUALITY AND EMPOWERMENT

Najmun Khatun

Abstract

This paper aims to focus on gender equality, especially on women's equal rights, opportunities and empowerment from Islamic feminists' point of view. The Qur'an is generally alleged as a main source of women's subordination or oppression. Islamic feminists argue that there is no single verse in the entire Qur'an that subordinates women. For them, the Qur'an is the main source of women's empowerment and gender equality. However, the patriarchal society has interpreted and represented the Qur'anic teaching in a wrong way throughout the centuries. Thus, Islamic feminists rise with contextual interpretation of the Qur'anic verses to substantiate their own view. They show that male and female both are equal in all respects. They both are moral individual agents, and for this, they earn equal recompense for their duties. Islamic feminists argue that women's empowerment is not possible if both male and female are not equally treated in rights and opportunities. Thus, they give importance to build gender equality in Islam.

Keywords: Muslim Women, Equality, Rights, Empowerment, Qur'an

Man and women both are equal not only to the eye of Islam but also to the eye of humanism. But this simple truth has not been accepted in the long history of patriarchy. Women are oppressed from the very beginning. Male are physically stronger than women. For this reason, they dominated women for their own benefit. The core identity of men and women does not depend on their physical body or on gender; first of all they both are the same human beings. Human nature and abilities are gender-neutral. But the patriarchal society does not accept it. Nowadays, many countries treat women as equal to men and give them equal opportunities. But unfortunately in Muslim societies, women are oppressed and neglected till now. Therefore, Islamic feminists build a revolution against the concept of inequality and unequal treatment of men and women. They believe that such a negative and heinous attitude towards women should be removed as early as possible. Thus, Islamic feminism focuses on empowering Muslim women in our society.

Empowering women is about recognizing their immense potential fostering an environment where they can prosper their all aspects of life. Empowering women means dismantling the barriers and creating a field where they can compete and succeed on their own merits. In a broad sense, empowerment refers to expanding freedom of choice and action. This includes addressing issues like gender pay gaps, education, access to healthcare, and representation in leadership positions. Empowering women is not just about the present; it's about building a more just and equitable future for all. When women are free to reach their full potential, it creates a ripple effect of positive change that benefits future generations. Empowering women can modify themselves, their families, communities, nations, and even for the whole world positively. Thus, they need equal rights in every field. Only equal rights and opportunities can empower women. Women's empowerment advocate fundamental ethical principles e.g. equal rights and opportunities, justice, human values and potentials. Islamic feminists refer to the Islamic holy text to establish gender equality.

A number of Islamic feminists trying to empower women not only seek to promote the rights and opportunities of Muslim women but also try to restore the actual positions of women inside the boundaries of Islamic law. Islamic feminists argue that Islam has granted equal opportunities to the women in its religious text. Women's empowerment or equality is possible only when we understand the actual meaning of the *Qur'an*. For this reason, many Islamic feminists have given more importance to reinterpret the *Qur'an*. There are various approaches to Muslim women's empowerment and equal rights. One approach is to focus on reinterpret Islamic texts in a way that affirms the equality of women. This approach often has been made by the scholars of Islamic feminism. They state that neither the *Qur'an* nor *Hādīth* support or promote the patriarchal interpretations that have been frequently used to justify the oppression of women. Another approach is to focus on changing the social and cultural practices that disadvantage women. This approach often involves challenging the stereotypes about women that are perpetuated in the media and in everyday life. It also encourages working to increase women's access to education, employment, and political representation. This approach has been meet up with both support and opposition. Some people argue that these approaches are a betrayal of Islam, while others state that they are essential to the preservation of Islam's core values. Despite the challenges, feminist approaches to the revival of women's position in Islam are gaining momentum. There are now a number of organizations and movements working to promote the rights and empowerment of women. These efforts are helping to create a more just and equitable society for all Muslims.

Fatima Mernissi argues that the subordination of women in Islam is a result of cultural, patriarchal interpretations of the *Qur'an*, not the religion itself. She calls for a secular revolution that would overthrow these interpretations and establish gender equality. She argues that Islam is a source of women's empowerment. She has pointed to the *Qur'anic* verses that promote gender equality and has called for a reinterpretation of these verses in light of contemporary understandings of human rights. Mernissi has become more critical on Western feminism. She thinks that western feminism is too individualistic and materialistic. She argues that Islamic feminists should focus on building a more just and equitable society for all rather than simply seeking individual rights. Mernissi in *Beyond the Veil*, suggests that *shari'a* is an uncompromising, rigid divine law.¹ She states that Islamic law has a legal and ideological impact on family structure.

Mernissi, in her book *The Veil and the Male Elite*, states that Muslim women have the rights to go through the modern world with honour and dignity. They have the rights to lives in a democratic era, where they feel absolute freedom just like a man did.² She focuses on the historical context when the *Qur'an* is revealed. She contextualises some *Qur'anic* verses in the light of historical, political and social conditions when the verses were revealed. The contextual analysis of the holy *Qur'an* can make a new path. Through this analysis, Islamic society gains a new ideology of the *Qur'an*. However, it is true that opposing or disagreeing with patriarchal understanding of Islamic text does not entail opposing Islam or Islamic ideology. Indeed, it creates a positive intellectual energy that helps us to reform Islam and eliminate the conservative aspects of Islam.

Here, Mernissi makes an attempt to investigate the revelation of the veil (in the Islamic context, it's called *hijāb*). The verse regarding *hijāb* was revealed in the wedding room after the marriage of the Prophet and Zaynab. It was suggested for the wedding guests, who had stayed in the wedding room to welcome newly married couples. She states, "The veil was to be God's answer to a community with boorish manners whose lack of delicacy offended a Prophet whose politeness bordered on timidity."³ The main purpose beyond the revelation of *hijāb* is to protecting from an ill-mannered community. The *Qur'anic* verse (33:53) regarding *hijāb* indicates a suggestion for its followers to understand the proper social and spiritual behaviour for

¹ Mernissi, F., *Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Muslim Society*, London, J. Wiley and Sons, New York, 1975, p 21

² Mernissi, F., *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, translated by Mary Jo Lakeland, Perseus Books Publishing, Great Britain, 1991, p. 16

³ *Ibid*, p. 85

its followers. Since, social and spiritual delicate considerations are considered as the highest virtues in Islam.

Mernissi argues that the *hijāb* was initially intended to protect women from harassment and allow them to participate in public life. However, due to male supremacy, strategy and the analysis of the *Qur'an*, the *hijāb* has come to be seen as a symbol of women's seclusion and oppression. She points out that the verse of the *hijāb* was revealed during a time of great political turmoil and social upheaval.⁴ *Hijāb* is not an Islamic obligation for every Muslim woman. The hypocrites had seized control of Medina and were inciting violence and discord. In this context, the *hijāb* is a protective measure for women, allowing them to move freely without fear of harassment. Mernissi also cites the case of post-liberation Kuwait as evidence in favour of *hijāb*. In Kuwait many Muslim women prefer to wear *hijāb* as a way to assert their identity and protect themselves from harassment.⁵ Mernissi acknowledges that due to the male manipulation and patriarchal interpretation, nowadays, *hijāb* has been used to oppress women and deny them their rights.⁶ For centuries, men have used *hijāb* to justify keeping women out of public life and denying them their freedoms. *Hijāb* has both positive and negative connotations. Islamic feminist scholars oppose veiling in one side. On the contrary, Margot Badron states that *hijāb* was proposed to protect them from violence in the outside of their house. Badron argues that *hijāb* is a symbol of women's liberation.⁷ She also states that the main purpose beyond the revelation of *hijāb* was to provide the right to participate independently in public places. And for this reason, some modern Muslim women choose to wear it.⁸

Mernissi believes that Muslim societies should embrace a liberating interpretation of Islam, even if it differs from the traditional views of the male elite. To secure gender equality in Muslim societies or in Islamic countries does not require rejecting Islamic laws. By Islamic laws, there is no hierarchy between male and female. We need to re-examine the ancient texts to distinguish between God's specific commands and the universal divine order. Her intellectual evolution represents a revolutionary message for Muslims to change the scenario of its people in social, cultural, political, educational and economic overhaul. Mernissi's work has been highly

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 80

⁵ Stowasser, B. F., *Women in the Qur'an, Traditions, and Interpretation*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1935, p. 91

⁶ Barlow, R., & Akbarzadeh, S., "Women's Rights in the Muslim World: Reform or Reconstruction?", *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 8, Taylor & Francis, 2006, p. 1488

⁷ Badran, M., 'Gender, Islam, and the State: Kuwaiti women in struggle, pre-invasion to postliberation', in Haddad & Esposito, *Islam, Gender and Social Change*, 1998, pp 202-203.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp 202-203.

influential in this regard, and she has helped to pave the way for a more egalitarian and just vision of Islam. Her ideas are particularly relevant in today's context; since, Muslim communities are faces various challenges, including political instability, economic inequality, and gender inequality. She claims that Muslim women are in a problematic position only for the patriarchal interpretation of the Islamic sacred texts. She constantly supports gender equality and women's rights. Mernissi states:

“The image of “his” woman will change when he feels the pressing need to root his future in a liberating memory. Perhaps the woman should help him do this through daily pressure for equality, thereby bringing him into a fabulous present. And the present is always fabulous, because there everything is possible - even the end of always looking to the past and the beginning of confidence, of enjoying in harmony the moment that we have.”⁹

Asma Barlas argues that the *Qur'an* contains many verses in support of women's equal rights, such as the right to education, marriage, divorce, employment, and property ownership. She also argues that the *Qur'an* teaches that men and women are equal in the eyes of God. The *Qur'an* should be read in its historical context when it was revealed. And its teaching should be interpreted in light of the social and political realities of that time. When the *Qur'an* was revealed, women had no rights (or only had a few rights for upper-class women). Barlas argues that the *Qur'an* is a text that promotes justice and equality for all people. For her, any interpretation of the *Qur'an* that leads to oppression or injustice is defective. Her approach has been influential in the field of Islamic feminism. In “*Believing Women*” in *Islam*, she challenges traditional patriarchal interpretations of the *Qur'an* and provides a framework for Muslim women to reclaim their rights and dignity in Islam.

In the very beginning of “*Believing Women*” in *Islam*, Barlas states that in a large number of the countries (e.g. Afghanistan to Algeria) Muslim women are oppressed. The degree of violence is being increased against women. She states that Muslim women are being oppressed from the past to present century only because of misunderstanding or lack of understanding of the teaching of Islam.¹⁰ For her, it is a worldwide tendency to blame Islam rather than blaming Muslims for their misunderstanding and misrepresentation of Islamic ideology.¹¹ She argues that Islam

⁹ Mernissi, F., *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, translated by Mary Jo Lakeland, Perseus Books Publishing, Great Britain, 1991, p. 195

¹⁰ Barlas, A., “*Believing Women*” in *Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, University of Texas Press, Austin, United States of America, 2002, p. 2

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 2

is not a text promoting patriarchy rather, it states about equal rights and women's liberation.¹² Using the interpretative (hermeneutics interpretation) methodology of the holy *Qur'an*, she states that the epistemological meaning is thoroughly liberal. It suggests for gender equality. She criticizes gender inequalities, violence and oppression against women in Muslim societies.

The reasons behind the gender discrimination or inequalities in Muslim societies are occurred mainly for the misogynistic reading or the misinterpretation of the *Qur'an*.¹³ For her, the history of Western civilization demonstrates that misogyny, inequality, and patriarchy are not Islamic teachings. However, Muslim states and clerics frequently justify these three concepts in the name of Islam. This use of sacred knowledge or more precisely, the knowledge that is claimed to be derived from religion to justify sexual oppression, is the outcome of mis-association of the sacred texts with misogyny. This issue motivates and influences her to engage with *Qur'anic* hermeneutics. She believes that this engagement is essential, even unavoidable, for any venture of Muslim women's (and men's) liberation.

Barlas argues that a *Qur'anic* hermeneutics is essential, even if it cannot by itself put an end to patriarchal, authoritarian, and undemocratic regimes and practices. There is a connection between how we interpret texts and treat real women. She believes that if we wish to ensure Muslim women for their privileges, liberties and equalities, we need to contest readings of the *Qur'an* that justify the maltreatment and degradation of women, and establish the legitimacy of liberal readings. Even if such readings fail to effect a fundamental change in Muslim societies, no meaningful change can occur in these societies. Muslim women directly experience the consequences of oppressive misinterpretations of the *Qur'an*. Only a little number of them put questions on the legitimacy of these interpretations. And fewer have explored the liberatory aspects of the *Qur'anic* teachings. She believes that without doing so, Muslim women cannot contest the association between the sacred and sexual oppression, which is falsely constructed by misreading Scripture.¹⁴ This association is the strongest argument for inequality and discrimination among Muslims. Since, many people either have not read the whole *Qur'an* properly or accept its patriarchal exegesis unquestioningly. However, it is noted that inequality and oppression are not deriving

¹² *Ibid*, p. 2

¹³ El-Sohl, C. F., & Mabro, J., *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief and Social Reality*, Berg Publishers, UK, 1994, p. 4

¹⁴ Barlas, A., "*Believing Women*" in *Islam: Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, University of Texas Press, Austin, United States of America, 2002, p. 3

from the teachings of the *Qur'an*, but from secondary religious texts – *Tafsīr* (*Qur'ānic* exegesis) and the *Ahādith*.

For Barlas, the *Qur'an* represents a role model for us that teaches equality, liberty and morality for both men and women. She believes that Muslim women need to take control of their religious interpretation. They need to study the *Qur'an* and develop their own understandings of its teachings. The traditional oppressive interpretations make them inferior to man. The only way to making Islam truly liberatory and egalitarian is reinterpretation of the holy text with its proper context. Fazlur Rahman is saying that Muslims need to have a more open and critical approach to interpreting the *Qur'an* in order to develop a theory of sexual equality. He argues that the traditional methods of *Qur'anic* interpretation are often too rigid and literal.¹⁵ Muslim women have the freedom to interpret the *Qur'an* in a way that is consistent with their own values and experiences. Muslims can develop a more progressive and egalitarian understanding of Islam by rereading the *Qur'an* from a liberationist perspective. Thus, for Barlas, a reinterpretation of the holy text is essential.

Riffat Hassan's work on human creation is most valuable in Islam. Through this work, she tries to establish gender equality in Islam. Her interpretation is the most extensive and referenced work for Islamic feminists. For her, all humans are created in an egalitarian way, followed by the *Qur'an*, i.e. from the single soul and at the same time.¹⁶ She states that "the first woman is neither created from nor for men; nor does she cause men's "fall" from grace."¹⁷ She explains the story of Adam and Eve with its moral aspects in an Islamic context. Hassan argues that there are various verses in the *Qur'an* where it is clearly stated that they both are created from the same single soul (and equal by nature), provoked by the Satan and committed the sin by eating from the tree of knowledge. She also argues that *Qur'an* does not mention even in a single verse that woman is the cause of this sin.¹⁸ Hassan writes in her work that "almost all Muslims believe that the first woman (Hawwa in Islamic context) was created from Adam's rib."¹⁹ The only reason is that they are very much influenced by the biblical

¹⁵ Rahman, F., *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1982, p. 2

¹⁶ Hidayatullah, A. A., *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*, Oxford university Press, New York, 2014, p. 90

¹⁷ Ali, A. Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an*, India, 1937, 25-26)

¹⁸ Hassan, R., "Muslim Women and Post-Patriarchal Islam", *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions*, Ed. Paula M. Cooley, William R. Eakin, and Jay B. McDaniel., Orbis Books, New York, 1991, p. 49-50

¹⁹ "The Issue of Woman-Man Equality in the Islamic Tradition", *Women's and Men's Liberation: Testimonies of Spirit*, Ed. Leonard Grob, Riffat Hassan, and Haim Gordon, Greenwood Press, New York, 1991, p. 80

texts Genesis 2 and 3. This understanding or misunderstanding of creation led Muslims to believe that women are inferior in creation and in righteousness. Hassan points out that *Qur'an* itself is the source of gender equality on the basis of human creation. Hassan further states, “Allah's original creation was undifferentiated humanity and not either man or woman”, and “both man and woman were made in the same manner of the same substance, at the same time”.²⁰ With this evidence, Islamic feminists argue that both women and men have the same equal capacity for moral agency, choice and individuality. Citing the *Qur'anic* verse 33:35, they state that both male and female are equally able to acquire moral personality. They can enhance their moral personality, making a partnership among themselves. They are fully responsible for their righteous actions and its recompense.²¹ Amina Wadud states, that recompense is acquired based on their actions.²² As a moral individual, everyone is judged for her/his actions. No one either male or female is responsible for another's actions. She further asserts that no one can destroy or increase the merits earned by another, even one can't share the merits or demerits of others.²³ Thus, the *Qur'an* does not make any inequalities between male and female in creation, as moral individual, care, reward or punishment. Hassan points out that both males and females have absolutely equal rights in the side of God; they are members and protectors of each other. They are created equally, justly and mercifully. There is no hierarchy between males and females.

Throughout the entire discussion, we have seen that Islamic feminists have tried to establish gender equality within the *Qur'anic* perspectives. So, they have tried to reinterpret the holy text in a new way. For them, the inequalities happen only because of the misunderstanding or the lack of understanding of the holy text. The *Qur'an* granted equal rights, opportunities, and even equal recompenses to both males and females. However, the androcentric society makes it difficult for women. Patriarchal interpretation of the *Qur'an* makes women oppressed and inferior. In several verses the *Qur'an* suggests explicitly about gender equality but a few verses are highly misinterpreted by Muslims. For example, we can say the *Qur'anic* verse 34 from *surā an- Nisā* as –

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women”.²⁴

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 80

²¹ Hidayatullah, A. A., *Feminist Edges of the Qur'an*, Oxford university Press, New York, 2014, p. 90

²² Wadud, A., *Qur'an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999. P. 63

²³ *Ibid*, P. 63

²⁴ Ali, A. Yusuf, *The Holy Qur'an*, India, 1937, p. 190

For the feminist scholars, this verse has been interpreted without its proper context. By this verse, God has not given them the authority over women; but has given some responsibilities and duties to protect the female from sexual harassment (since, at the time of *Qur'anic* revelation, women were frequently harassed physically, sexually and socially) or any kind of oppression. Thus, we see no gender inequity in the *Qur'an* but inequalities in its interpretation. I think the scenario of Muslim women can be changed if we follow the *Qur'anic* ethical or moral commandments. As we know the *Qur'an* acknowledges both male and female are individual moral agents. And thus, they are equal in all respects.

In conclusion it can be maintained that the observations made by the Islamic feminists discussed above are logically justified and therefore acceptable. Each and every verse of *Qur'an* is highly contextual. Patriarchy society and male biased interpretation of the *Qur'anic* verses are contextual and therefore it is misleading. Besides the arguments given by the feminists dealt so far, I think there is also another fundamental argument in favour of Islamic feminism. *Qur'an* is religious sacred text. Religion necessarily ensures justice. Justices presupposes equal treatment for all. This implies that *Qur'anic* verses never support unequal treatment for man and women.

WITTGENSTEIN ON MEANING OF LIFE

Avhijit Ghosh

Abstract

*The key contention of this paper is to explain the concept of the higher value and its role in realizing the meaning of life after Wittgenstein. Concerning value, Wittgenstein does not hold the position of classical ethicist; instead, he understands ethics based on the linguistic and logical analysis of the world. It is a debatable question about what type of book *Tractatus* is. Some would say that it is a book of logic. Others would say it is a book of ethics and religion, etc. However, such opinions regarding the book show its multifarious philosophical dimensions. This paper consciously tries to determine the profound significance of the concept of higher value (mystical). At the outset, Wittgenstein does not show his concern concerning ethical and religious values; rather, he is concerned with determining the sense of the world or reality through the language-reality relationship. However, it doesn't provide him with intellectual and philosophical satisfaction. Therefore, he turns his mind towards the limits of language and the world, which takes him into a realm of nonsense and mysticism. It also helps him realize higher values (mystical) and allows him to determine the meaning of life and the world. This also takes him to a certain ineffable truth about which he possesses silence. For him, ethics, aesthetics, and religion pertaining to value are interconnected as they are concerned with the same view about the world as *sub specie aeternitatis*. Wittgenstein distinguishes between absolute value and relative value. What is relative is accidental and related to the factual world. On the other hand, what is absolute is non-accidental lies beyond the limits of language and the world. Thus, what is non-accidental is transcendental. As it is transcendental, it is inexpressible. Thus, for Wittgenstein, value is deeply connected with happiness, i.e., the meaning of life and the world. Hence, the paper makes a conscious effort to show the philosophical significance of the concept of higher value by employing linguistic and logical analysis of the world and how it is deeply connected to the meaning of life and the world.*

Keywords: *Inexpressibility, value, absolute, transcendental, ethics, aesthetics, religion, meaning of life, accidental*

Introduction:

There is controversy among the philosophers regarding what type of book *Tractatus* is. Some philosophers believe that *Tractatus* is the book of logic and language, so they call it the treatise on language and logic. The reason is that *Tractatus*

impresses different philosophers like Logical Positivists, Russell, Moore, Anscombe, Stenius, Pitcher, and many others. The impression is made possible by applying language and logic, which is considered a powerful tool of analytic philosophy. On the other hand, other philosophers interpret the book as ethical and religious due to its deep ethical and religious significance. However, Wittgenstein considers the book ethical in his letter to his friend Ludwig von Ficker. He further writes, "I have divided my work into two parts. I put everything in detail regarding the first one, but I avoided writing about the second part, which is the most significant one. He again says I have adequately put the whole thing by remaining silent about it."¹ Therefore, the above remark says that Wittgenstein recognized the later part of the book as important as it is concerned with ethics, religion, and, thereby, value. In this regard, C. Barrett rightly observed, "It is not primarily a work on logic and language; rather, it is an ethical book."²

Logic and Value:

However, if the book's purpose is ethical for Wittgenstein, then the question is, how does Wittgenstein shift himself from logic to ethics and religion, which pertain to value? In reply, we can say that Wittgenstein, at the outset, took logic as the primary tool of the *Tractatus* because we know that the totality of facts is the world and logic draws the limits of the factual world as logic constitutes the structure of the world (my world). Thus, based on the limits of language and a logically constructed world, one can cross the boundaries of the factual domain and feel *das mystische*, a mystical (inexpressible) feeling that bears higher value. In other words, this ascertainment of the totality of facts is very important to transcend the factual domain to realize the temperament of the *Mystical*. Thus, logic helps the mystic transcend this logical space to understand what lies outside of the limits and where the value lies. That is why, in this regard, Wittgenstein says, "Ethics contain value...is to be considered as a condition of the world like logic."³ Therefore, mystics only have language for the factual world but not for the religious and ethical domains. So, for Wittgenstein, if a mystic wants to say something, he must either say it within factual discourse or remain silent. This is to be considered the best possible means to give dignity to the discourses of ethics and religion and thereby value that is higher. Therefore, we can say that Wittgenstein starts the book *Tractatus* based on the linguistic and logical analysis of the world and then takes it towards the realm of ethical and religious value. Therefore, Wittgenstein

¹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 'Letter to Ludwig von Ficker'.

² Barrett, C., *Wittgenstein on Ethics and Religious Belief*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1991, p. 96.

³ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Notebooks 1914-16*, G. H. Von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe (ed.), G. E. M. Anscombe (trans.), New York, Harper and Row, 1961, p. 77e.

suggests that we must remain silent regarding the things that contain higher values that really matter in our lives.

Wittgenstein on Inexpressibility of Value:

The inexpressibility of value in Wittgenstein's philosophy arises through the limits of language and world. He understands the notion of value from ethical, and religious perspectives. That is why Barrett says, "Wittgenstein possesses great interest in values, and whether ethical, religious, or aesthetic was not incidental to his thinking but central to it."⁴ His ideas on value are found in his writings, such as *Lectures on Ethics*, *Lectures on Religious Beliefs*, and *Tractatus* and *Culture and Value*. Now the question is, in what sense is the concept of value inexpressible? Wittgenstein is a linguistic philosopher who takes language as the means to know reality (world). For that, he developed the idea of 'my language and my world' to determine the sense of the world. That is why Wittgenstein says in *Tractatus*, "*The limits of my language imply the limits of my world.*"⁵ The remark says that Wittgenstein admits two sides (inside the world, i.e., my language and my world) and outside or another side of the world by drawing the boundary of it. Here, the term my language means Wittgenstein's understanding of propositional language, and my world covers the totality of facts. For Wittgenstein, everything can be spoken in terms of true and false within the boundary of the factual world, i.e., my world. True and false are the two senses of a proposition, also known as *bipolarity* or *ab-function*. Here, 'a' stands for 'truth pole' and 'b' stands for 'false pole'. Therefore, with the help of *ab-pole*, a proposition appears as *a-p-b*. This is called *ab-function* or bipolarity.

Now, the question may arise: what about the other side (i.e., outside my language and my world) of the world? According to Wittgenstein, the other side of his language and world cannot be put into language; hence, it is beyond truth and falsity. So, it is considered as ineffable. Therefore, any attempt to put them into language results in nonsense. What is nonsense is non-truth functional because it lacks factual sense. Nonsense, for Wittgenstein, is not unimportant or un-illuminating; instead, nonsense is important or illuminating. That means he understands nonsense as important or illuminating nonsense. Therefore, nonsense is significant to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein understands ethics and religion as nonfactual value concepts that are called nonsensical. They are nonsensical as they belong outside my language and my world. They are not plain or unimportant nonsense; they are important nonsense. The pertinent question is, in what sense are they called important or illuminating

⁴ Barrett, Cyril, Op. cit., P. ix.

⁵ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness (trans.), London, Newyork, Routledge Classics, 2001, p. 68.

nonsense? Or, how can that which is nonsensical also be important? According to Wittgenstein, ethics and religion are value concepts that have something in them that differentiates them from mere or plain nonsense. They deal with absolute value, i.e., an important discourse of human life. Ethics and religion, as illuminating nonsense, play significant roles in realizing the meaning of life. They help to lead a good life. They help to lead a happy life. They determine the eternal value of the world by way of determining the eternal value of life. That is why Wittgenstein says they are important or illuminating nonsense. Wittgenstein intends to protect ethics, religion, and aesthetics from intellectualism or philosophical theories, calling them nonsense (important). This would be the best way to provide dignity to the discourses of ethics and religion, thereby valuing them as illuminating nonsense. Therefore, regarding such discourse, one should remain silent. Wittgenstein says, "Propositions fail to express anything concerning the higher."⁶ For Wittgenstein, what gives us the meaning of life, or happy life, are values of ethics and religion, which are illuminating, nonfactual, transcendental, and consequently inexpressible. That is why, concerning the inexpressibility of value, Wittgenstein says those who still try to speak or put in writing regarding ethics, religion, and thereby value have to go against the realm of language.

Does it lead us to assume that what is ineffable in Wittgenstein's sense is ambiguous? I think that Wittgenstein and Wittgensteinians cognize the term ineffable with a background. What then is the background? Wittgenstein clearly specified what he meant by *the limits of language* and *the limits of the world*. So when he used the terms ineffable and nonsense, he used them with regard to sense, i.e. with the background of something cognized "to be the case" and "not to be the case". So I think that even though the term ineffable is ambiguous in a sense, we can get the sense of ambiguity in terms of other than sense. As far as the discourse of ineffability is concerned, how do we know that what is ineffable is divine, good, bad, or evil? Under the term ineffable, Wittgenstein includes ethics in particular and then makes it on par with religion and aesthetics. Of, course, ethics, religion, and aesthetics are integral parts of our lives, and the meaning of life cannot be determined by forgoing these. Perhaps that was the hidden reason for which Wittgenstein attributed these as important or illuminating nonsense. However, being a linguistic philosopher, Wittgenstein envisaged everything in language. That is why he was talking in favor of the grammar of language. So, to find out the answer to the question of whether what is ineffable is divine or good or bad or evil would be secondary at this juncture; rather, I intend to say that these are integral parts of language reflected and touch our steam of life.

⁶ Ibid., p. 86.

Value as Transcendental:

According to Wittgenstein's ethics, religion contains transcendental value. The question is, in what sense is value (ethics, religion) transcendental? Value (higher), for Wittgenstein, is considered as the real sense of the world, which lies beyond the world and is, hence, non-accidental. What lies inside the factual world is limited in space and time and, hence, is accidental. Therefore, it means that as value lies outside the world, so they transcend the world and are so-called transcendental. To me, Wittgenstein speaks about the transcendental of value almost in a Kantian manner. Kant says that we cannot know about the noumena or things-in-themselves, such as God, soul, immortality, etc., because what lies in the noumenal world is outside the factual world. Therefore, for Kant, transcendental transcends the categories that work as a medium to make the world intelligible. Likewise, Wittgenstein's understandings of the transcendental go outside the limits of language and world, hence being inexpressible. Therefore, Wittgenstein regards ethics and religious values as transcendental. Therefore, Wittgenstein accepts the absolutist's position of transcendence. That is why Prof. K.L. Das rightly said, "Just as Kant famously found it necessary to deny knowledge to make room for faith, similarly Wittgenstein draws a limit to what can be spoken to give respect the awesome power of the mystical bearer of higher value."⁷ For that, he distinguishes between saying and showing in *Tractatus*. He says what can be said can be said clearly in language, and what cannot be said in language can be shown. Namely, mystical contains a higher value that can only be shown, not said. It is to be shown in the way of living in which one lives one's life. Thus, ethics and religion as value concepts cannot be put into words, but still, they are worthy, not of ridicule but of the deepest respect. Similarly, Barrett writes, "They are nonsensical but in a special sense."⁸ Thus, Wittgenstein understands value as illuminating (important) nonsense that works like a ladder to reach enlightenment. In this regard, Wittgenstein perhaps said, "Ethics and religion do not only mean an inquiry into what is good, but it also includes the inquiry into what is really valuable or important. It is an inquiry into the meaning of life. Ethics and religion, therefore, play a significant role in the right way of living, which makes life worth living,"⁹ Thus, the remark says that Wittgenstein understands value as inexpressible, illuminating, and transcendental. Therefore, for Wittgenstein, the matter of value is inexpressible. In this regard, it has been said that "Wittgenstein does not abandon his view on ethical, religious beliefs

⁷ Das, K. L., Wittgenstein on Philosophy of Silence, *Manavayatan*, Vol. VIII, No. 1. 2019, P. 205.

⁸ Barrett, Cyril, Op. cit., p. 22.

⁹ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, Lectures on Ethics, *Philosophical Review*, Vol. 74, No. 1. 1965, p. 5.

with their attendant notions of the mystical, transcendental, inexpressible, viewing *sub specie aeternitatis*.”¹⁰

Two types of Values:

Wittgenstein distinguishes between Absolute value and Relative value in his Lectures on Ethics. Relative value concerns the factual world and relates to relative good, right, and so on. Therefore, what is called relative value is not considered ethical as it is accidental, instrumental, and cognitive in nature. So, that which is ethical and religious is absolute in nature, henceforth concerned with higher (absolute) value. Wittgenstein understands value as absolute or in a higher sense. In this regard, he gives three examples which bear absolute value. These are wondering or astonishment regarding the existence of the world, the feeling of being absolutely safe, and the feeling of guilt.

Wittgenstein confirms *wonderment regarding the existence of the world* in his book *Tractatus* by saying, “To see the world given *sub specie aeternitatis* means to understand it as a whole...”¹¹ In support of the above remark, Wittgenstein says in *Notebooks*, “The work of art is the object seen *sub specie aeternitatis*, and the good life is the world seen *sub specie aeternitatis*. The usual way of looking at things is to see objects from the midst of them; the view *sub specie aeternitatis from outside*. In such a way that they have the whole world as background. The thing seen *sub specie aeternitatis* is the thing seen together with the whole logical space.”¹² The remark says that it is an experience of amazement, astonishment, and a feeling of wonder concerning the world’s existence. It is so because viewing the world in terms of *sub specie aeternitatis* means viewing it from outside space and time, which is the view of the world from an eternal, absolute perspective. Hence, such experience of the world in view of *sub specie aeternitatis* is called ‘mystical’ and ‘marvel’ in *Notebooks*, and Anscombe translates it as a *miracle*. Second, Wittgenstein delivered lectures on ethics in 1929 at Cambridge, where he speaks about an experience of higher value, i.e., the *feeling of absolute safety*, which means we are in the safe hands of God (Mystical). Wittgenstein further says in his LE that “it is considered as the state of mind where one may feel completely safe. He feels safe because, in such a state of mind, one feels that no one can injure him, no matter what happens.”¹³ This feeling of being absolutely safe is beyond language, or any attempt to put them into language is futile. But we cannot deny the feeling of absolute safety that Wittgenstein had experienced while watching

¹⁰ Barrett, Cyril, Op. cit., p. xiii.

¹¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Op. cit., p. 88.

¹² Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Notebooks*, Op. cit., p. 83e.

¹³ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Lectures on Ethics*, Op. cit., p. 5.

the play *Die Kreuzelschreiber*. Concerning the third one, i.e., the *feeling of guilt*, Wittgenstein says it is very similar to the notion of absolutely safe and wonderment regarding the existence of the world. “The feeling of guilt makes sense; it is a feeling regarding one’s own mistakes and sins. However, it does not make any sense to say that one is in a permanent state of guilt without being guilty of anything.”¹⁴ In the words of Cyril Barrett, the above two types of feelings are related to absolute value and are as common as ethical and religious beliefs. It is further said that the feeling of guilt cannot be described in language as without being guilty, the feeling of guilt is considered a contradictory feeling. It is a feeling that lies beyond the boundaries of language. It is that feeling that every religious person has taken as a distinctive mark in their life. In this regard, Wittgenstein says, “People are religious to the extent that they believe themselves to be not so much *imperfect*, as sick. Any halfway decent man will think himself extremely imperfect, but a religious man thinks himself *wretched*.”¹⁵ Regarding the above remark, Cyril Barrett says that every religious person should remain humble. They should feel as if they are imperfect. He says that Wittgenstein interprets guilt as a mystical feeling, which helps us realize that we all are insignificant without having an inferiority complex. Hence, all these experiences have transcendental bearings. Thus, the absolute sense is also considered as ethical and religious. On the contrary, the relative sense, which is also known as the trivial sense, is accidental, as the language of *my world* determines it and, therefore, lies in the domain of facts. In this regard, Wittgenstein says in his Lectures on Ethics, “Every judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and therefore be put in such a form that it loses all the appearance of the judgment of value. He goes on to say that even though all judgments of relative value can be revealed to be mere statements of facts, no statement of fact can ever be a judgment of absolute or higher value. This means that what we can express in terms of facts and evidence cannot have any ethical value.”¹⁶ Therefore, as facts constitute the world, the world is accidental and thus concerned with relative value.

Therefore, from the above discussion, we can say that by the term value, Wittgenstein actually means the higher or absolute value is beyond language and, therefore, lies beyond the world. In this regard, Wittgenstein says, “If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the

¹⁴ Pandey, K. C., *Religious Beliefs, Superstitions and Wittgenstein*, New Delhi, Readworthy, 2009, p. 100.

¹⁵ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Culture and Value*, (ed.) by G.H. Von Wright and Heikki Nymnan, Oxford, Blackwell, 1980, p. 45e.

¹⁶ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Lectures and Ethics*, Op. cit., p. 5.

case. This is so because all that happens and is the case is accidental in nature.”¹⁷ That is why, for Wittgenstein, a judgment with absolute value lies in the fact that they are inexpressible. This inexplicability is their very essence. Concerning absolute or higher value, Wittgenstein writes, “The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world, everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: in it, no value exists; if it did exist, it would have no value...It must lie outside the world.”¹⁸ The nonsensicality is the essence of ethical values. So, making them sensible means they cease to be ethical or absolute. Any explanation about them is against domain of meaningful language and is a mistake in the ethical and absolute sense. For that, Wittgenstein writes in his Lectures on Ethics that ethics emerges out of our urge towards the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute value or good, which has no relation to science. Thus, for Wittgenstein, the realm of value has a higher or transcendental level, i.e., beyond the matters of fact. Therefore, Wittgenstein’s notion of value can be understood as man’s divine heritage.

The happy life or meaning of life:

After discussing the conception of value following Wittgenstein, I would like to show how higher value solves the problems of life and helps to live a happy or meaningful life. Now, the pertinent question is how to be happy. In *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein talks about our life’s problems; once they vanish, there will be no problem at all, and life will be meaningful and happy. So, our problems have to be solved to make our lives happy and meaningful. The solution to the problem of life and Wittgenstein’s conception of happiness or meaning of life is deeply rooted in the mystical observation of the world in the form of *sub specie aeterni*. This is the view of the world from the exterior of space and time, hence meaningful. So viewing the world as *sub specie aeternitatis* means understanding that within the world, no value exists. Therefore, finding the meaning of life inside *my world*, i.e., factual and accidental, would be completely meaningless and valueless.

That’s why Wittgenstein says that without changing anything in the world, we have to change its limits to make a completely different world. In this regard, it is said that “viewing the world in the form of *sub specie aeternitatis* changes its limits in a significant way, and thereby, the world turns to an absolutely joyful and meaningful world as a whole.”¹⁹ Therefore, the solution to life’s problems lies in the right view of the world, and thereby our life appears meaningful and happy. Understanding the world

¹⁷ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Op. cit., p. 86.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 86.

¹⁹ Jairhurst, Jordi, The Early Wittgenstein on Living a Good Ethical Life, *Philosophis*, vol. 50, 2022, p. 1763.

under the aspects of eternity is considered a good exercise of the will that leads to living a happy or meaningful life. Therefore, the good exercise of the will is known as ethical will. In this regard, Wittgenstein says, “If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts-not what can be expressed by means of language. In short, the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole.”²⁰ Such an understanding of the world is to apprehend it as timelessness. Living in timelessness is possible by living in the present, which makes seeing the world as *sub specie aeternitatis* possible. Such an exercise of the ethical will towards the world and life is the solution to the problems of life. Therefore, once the problem is solved, life becomes happy and meaningful. In this regard, it has been said that “A happy world must be an ethical and valuable world, and a happy life is an ethically meaningful and valuable life, i.e., a good ethical life.”²¹ On the contrary, the wrong exercise of the will leads to an unhappy life due to a lack of the right view of the world. So, for him, the world and life become unhappy and meaningless. That is why, in this regard, Wittgenstein rightly said, “The happy man’s world is a different one from that of the unhappy man.”²²

Therefore, the realisation of the mystical means having the feeling of *das mystiche*, which is an inexpressible feeling. It means that mystical is the sense of the world, bearer of absolute value. That is why Wittgenstein says in 6.41 of *Tractatus*, “The sense of the world must lie outside of the world.”²³ He further says, “Indeed, there are things, but putting them into language is totally impossible. However, they make themselves manifest and are known as mystical.”²⁴ Therefore, here, Wittgenstein suggests that to get the happiness or meaning of life we have to look not inside the world but outside of it. That means he is directing us towards the mystical. That is why Wittgenstein in 6.44 further says it is not how things are in the world that is mystical but that it exists. In this regard, perhaps Wittgenstein rightly said, “One cannot find the way out of the riddle of life within the space and time but outside of it.”²⁵ Wittgenstein further says the world and life are one, which means living in eternity and overcoming life’s problems. It also helps to adopt the alien will on which we appear dependent. That is why it is said that “specifically it lies in our ability to renounce influence on the

²⁰ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Op. cit., p. 87.

²¹ Jairhurst, Jordi, Op. cit., p. 1763.

²² Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Op. cit., p. 87.

²³ Ibid., p. 86.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 89.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 87.

world and align our phenomenal will with the alien will on which we appear dependent.”²⁶

Conclusion:

It thus reflects from the aforesaid discussion that Wittgenstein’s concept of value is indifferent to higher values of life. He says that value lacks temporal existence, meaning it belongs in the transcendental realm because that which is absolute or higher is lofty and eternal. Thus, it has to be taken as the eternal reality. This eternal reality is the basis of happiness or the meaning of life. Instead of talking regarding our ethical, religious life, Wittgenstein maintains silence in his early philosophy because they are transcendental. In this regard, I want to say that Wittgenstein’s concept of value has an affinity with the notion of value in Advaita Vedanta. To clarify this point, Rajendra Prasad remarks, “It has to be assumed that an accidental thing cannot bear an absolute value. Wittgenstein is not alone; Advaita Vedanta also favours this. He further said that there are metaphysicians who are of the view that that which is accidental, impermanent, and contingent lacks absolute value. This seems to be thinking behind the Advaita Vedanta claim that *Brahman* alone, being unbeatable in the past, present, and future, i.e., *trikalabadhita*, is the *absolute value*.”²⁷ It means that according to the Advaitin view of value, like Wittgenstein, lies at the transcendental level. That is why Wittgenstein rightly pointed out that *Man feels the urge to run up against the limits of language... and this running up against the limits of language is ethics*. This is so because a proposition can only express what is accidental, i.e., matters of fact. Hence, in the words of R. K. S. Choudhary, “Like Advaita Vedanta, Wittgenstein’s ethics is not primarily concerned with means value, but with the end value. From an axiological point of view, both are in favour of the theory of intrinsic value and equally against utilitarian and pragmatic theories of value.”²⁸ Therefore, regarding the ineffability of value, Wittgenstein shows a metaphysical matrix of value in light of Advaita Vedanta. In this regard, it has been said that “the fundamental idea between reality and value is that all things are dear after all for the sake of the self, i.e., *atmanastu kamaya*.”²⁹ Likewise, Wittgenstein said, “Things acquire significance only through their relation to my will.”³⁰ Thus, for Wittgenstein and Advaita Vedanta, the metaphysical self (*Atman*) is the bearer of higher value. This leads us to the good and bad exercise of the will. Good exercise of the will leads to the realisation of the higher value. Accordingly,

²⁶ Jairhurst, Jordi, Op. cit., p. 1763.

²⁷ Prasad, Rajendra, On Wittgenstein’s Transcendental Ethics, *JICPR*, vol. No. 1, 1989, p. 4.

²⁸ Choudhary, R. K. S., *Wittgensteinian Philosophy and Advaita Vedanta: A Survey of the Parallels*, New Delhi, D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd, p. 140.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

³⁰ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Notebooks*, Op. cit., p. 84e.

a happy life or meaning of life belongs to a good exercise of the will (ethical will), which solves the riddle of life through viewing the world as *sub specie aeterni*. Meanwhile, bad exercise of the will lead to an unhappy life and hence cannot solve the riddle of life due to the inability to view the world as *sub specie aeterni*. Thus, it cannot provide a happy or meaningful life. From this, it can be said that a happy or unhappy life is not to be found in the facts *in* the world; rather, it lies in our ability or inability to have the right ethical view of the world, which can alter the limits of the world in order to have an altogether different world.

Although I attempted a comparative study and brought the meaning of life of Advaita Vedanta, I certainly do not think that the development of the meaning of life of Vedanta is similar to the meaning of life of Wittgenstein. Their philosophical methodologies are not similar. Wittgenstein was a typical linguistic philosopher, but Advaita Vedanta was not. Wittgenstein, while drawing out the paradigm of the meaning of life, emphasized the grammar of language, which is not divine in nature, whereas Advaita Vedanta employed an ontological and metaphysical approach to inculcate the meaning of life. I think the comparison, though not amplified in the Tractarian sense, can be found to be relevant if we go outside the limits of language and the limits of the world Wittgenstein presumed in the Tractatus.

The discussion mentioned above thus reflects that the transcendental nature of value shows Wittgenstein's sympathy for the spiritual culture. He intends to share that it would be difficult for civilization to survive without pursuing eternal value. Hence, for Wittgenstein, it is the only culture that can pursue eternal value; civilization lacks eternal value. That is why perhaps Wittgenstein says that civilization is the thing that detaches humankind from what is lofty and eternal. For him, only culture can bring us what is good and valuable in life. That is why, in the words of R. C. Pradhan, it can be said that "only culture can lead us to the values enshrined in the inner life of the civilised man."³¹ The remark says that the essence of a culture is constituted only in eternal value. This is the relation between culture and value. Therefore, I can say that Wittgenstein's sympathy is for the spiritual culture that leads humankind in the right direction.

From the aforesaid discussion, I would like to conclude that Wittgenstein declared *Tractatus* as an ethical book that would possibly be called the book of *theological ethics*. This is because Wittgenstein's philosophy of mystical (mysticism) and his philosophy of silence may be conceived to be early philosophy of religion,

³¹ Pradhan, R. C., Wittgenstein and The Crisis in Modern Civilization, *Studies in Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. VII, No. 1, 2000, p. 111.

though he did not mention the word religion. However, by saying the word ethics, Wittgenstein certainly incorporated religion (theology) and aesthetics under ethics. This means that Wittgenstein understands ethics and religion similarly, as both run parallel in *Tractatus* in *in a typical sense*. According to Wittgenstein, religion is concerned with the view *sub specie aeternitatis*, i.e., mystical, which leads to the eternal view of the world. Likewise, he says ethics is something that belongs to action *viewed sub specie aeternitatis*. Thus, Wittgenstein's ethics come close to religion and can be titled theological ethics. That is why D. Z. Phillips says, "In ethics and religion, we are involved in making the absolute judgment of value."³² Other remarks are mentioned in TLP 6. 44, 6.5, 6.521, 6.522, which, I think, clearly speak in favor of theological ethics as such remarks connect mystical and ethics in his *Tractatus*; thus, they go parallel. Another remark from *Culture and Value* proves the same. There, he says, "What is good is divine too. That, strangely enough, sums my ethics."³³ He further says in *Lectures on Ethics* that ethics is something supernatural. Thus, the remarks make the connection between religion and ethics, which gives the test of *theological ethics* to his early philosophy. In the end, I would like to say that the insight of religious mentality was developed in the later part of the *Tractatus* in the name of ethics and values, and it was widely reflected in his later writings.

³² Phillips, D. Z., 'Ethics, Faith and what can be said' in *Wittgenstein: A Critical Reader*, H. J. Glock (ed.), Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2001, p. 348.

³³ Wittgenstein, Ludwig, *Culture and Value*, Op. cit., p. 5e.

ECOLOGICAL RIFT AND HUMAN ALIENATION FROM NATURE: A MATERIALISTIC UNDERSTANDING

M. P. Terence Samuel

Abstract

A deep chasm is felt in the relation between nature and human due to excessive depletion of nature with the aid of modern technological advances that coincide with the capitalist growth process. The chasm is described by John Bellamy Foster as 'ecological rift'. With the growing awareness about the ecological rift, the environmentalists try to address the issue in various ways –ranging from the advocacy of moralistic use of nature by humans to the minimal/austere use of nature, from gazing back on the conceptions and use of natural resources by the pre-modern and indigenous communities to the suggestions about transplanting them in the present epoch, and from the advocacy of preservation of natural resources to the consideration of nature as a separate entity that needs the positive intervention of humans to restore its pristine growth. However, what is lacking in such future-oriented prescriptive endeavours is the lack of scientific and materialistic understanding of the complex web of nature-human-society relationship. Hence natural history needs to be studied along with the social history, in spite of the fact that there is an active change within the nature itself. This paper attempts to propose that the ecological rift cannot be addressed through moralistic compass nor techno-capitalism, without addressing the contradictions that exist in the nature-human relationship in the capitalist mode of production and its social praxis.

Keywords: *Nature, Human, Society, Ecology, Capitalism*

Introduction

There is an increasing awareness about the environmental issues due to the massive depletion of nature with the aid of modern technological advances that coincide with the capitalist economic production. With such an awareness, the search for the proper theoretical understanding of the relationship between nature and human and the sustainable use of nature have become the focus of environmentalists, scientists, scholars of various disciplines and rulers and administrators. The relationship between nature and human is defined by environmentalists, economists

and scientists variously that ranges from the advocacy of moralistic use of nature by humans to the minimal/austere use of nature, from gazing back on the conceptions of nature and use of natural resources by the pre-modern societies and indigenous communities to the suggestions about transplanting them in the present epoch, and from the advocacy of preservation of natural resources to the consideration of nature as a separate entity that needs the positive intervention of humans to restore its pristine growth. Even the notion of sustainability also differs widely ranging from optimal use of natural resources to the moral responsibility towards preservation of natural resources for future generations, from 'green capitalism' to ecological modernisation and from regeneration of nature to eco-conscious techno-optimism to transcend the ecological crisis.

However, what is lacking in such futuristic and heuristic endeavours is the lack of scientific and materialistic understanding of the complex web of nature-human-society relationship. These endeavours to address the ecological concerns lapse into either epistemological materialism, or moralising the materialist concerns, or techno-optimist economic determinism, or eco-centrism, or anthropocentrism. A holistic understanding of nature and human relationship is missing in all these endeavours due to their non-dialectical approach to environmental issues.

This paper is an attempt at how different theories lack a proper theoretical understanding of the dialectical relationship between various elements of reality and what could offer us a better vantage point to look into the complex web of relationship between the nature and the human so that a possible theoretical solution to the environmental crisis and ecological rift can be found out. In this attempt at dealing with the theoretical questions related to the relationship of nature, human and environment, I rely mainly upon the works of John Bellamy Foster.

Environmental Theories and Fallacies

Though many philosophers have engaged in understanding the nature, its aspects and its relation to human and society from the ancient period, it is the German's Darwinian scientist, Ernst Haeckel, coined the term *ecology* in his book *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* in 1866. During the early part of the 20th century, the scientists took greater interest in organism's relation with its environment. Further, the first Earth Day, celebrated in 1970, brought the discussions about environmental issues and concerns of pollution to the fore and helped for their popular wide reach. This led to commercial interest in marketing the environmentally healthy products for eco-conscious consumers. Social scientists began to show their attention towards the ecological issues. The social scientists still consider the nature as an ideal form separated from the human society, as a passive source 'out there' on which human

existence depends for its survival or as a passive source that makes possible the industrial production. Not much effort was directed towards “understanding natural processes and patterns: how they operate on their own, how historical social systems interact with nature, how nature influences social conditions and how natural processes are transformed by social interactions”(Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 250 – 251)

With such lacunae, however, certain theoretical attempts are made to address the ecological questions that try to address the ecological imbalances from various fronts including economically, technologically, morally and politically. Without a proper understanding of the complex web of material and dialectical relationship between nature and human in a particular historical context, such attempts seem to be partial. In the following paragraphs, we shall try to analyse the problems in such theoretical attempts.

Economism: Brett Clark and Richard York, in *The Ecological Rift: Capitalism’s War on the Earth*, argue that the economists are of the view that the persisting barriers between human and environment can be solved through technological innovations. With their interests on accumulation of profit, nature is considered as a reservoir of resources that needs to be manipulated, transformed into marketable products and commodified. The environmental economists, by means of prioritising the market, are of the opinion that market oriented economic development will find its own levellers against the environmental degradation, if markets are allowed to function freely without interference. Theorists of “ecological modernisation”, partly drawing upon the environmental economists, do not accept the view that environmental degradation is due to the capitalist process of development; they believe that pushing the thresholds of modernisation will lead to ‘ecological/green rationality’ which would pave the way for “dematerialisation of society and the decoupling of the economy from energy and material consumption”, on the one hand and for the proper knowledge about the manipulation of nature, on the other hand, which would further lead to the transcendence of environmental issues. In this regard, one may cite how General Electric Company proposed to invest in “greener technologies” with a thrust on “ecomagination”; in such a venture, environmental problems become a source of market expansion and accumulation of profit through “ecologisation of economy” and “economisation of ecology”. Without considering the social conflict inherent in the ecological rift, they advocate for the maintenance of the existing unequal social order, by giving importance to ecological modernisation oriented market reforms (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 251 – 255).

Green Capitalism: According to Brett Clark and Richard York, the proponents of green capitalism, such as Paul Hawken, capitalist economy should be reformulated as

per the demands of environmental sustainability. Green capitalists propose that nature needs to be invested with the 'rational price structure' and hence, according to the contribution of commodified elements of environment, market value needs to be assigned to them; thorough commodification of nature by assigning market value to its elements would allow the market economy to take care of the sustainability of environment. It is "a matter of balancing account books and changing ethics" of the corporations and it is possible to dematerialise the economy "through innovative technological developments and appropriate reformist government policy... reducing the throughput of raw materials and energy that the system requires." Nature and its aspects seem to be mere inputs which could be sustained with technological ingenuity, according to Green Capitalists. Such a conception of environmental sustainability through commodification of elements of nature according to market has serious repercussions: 1) Exchange value of a product gains more important than its use value, following the tenets of capitalist economy; 2) Labour time becomes a commodity along with the commodification of nature; 3) the sustainability of environment is determined according to market, but the reproduction of nature has its own rules outside the diktats of market; 4) as the nature is organised according to the demands and values of market, it further reifies the capitalist economic system, rather than finding a way out of it; and 5) with the commodification of environment, the accumulation of profit is preferred to the relative independence of environment. With such an economic deterministic approach to nature, "the market is the measure of all things" and nature is reduced and subsumed under forces of market (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 256 – 258).

Deep Ecology and Shallow Ecology: Deep ecology infuses moralistic impulses into the nature-human relationship. Its opinion ranges from the consideration of humans as destroyers of ecological balance to the rectification of ecological imbalance with moralistic approach to nature. Deep ecologists consider the industrial civilisation as the main cause of ecological crisis and hence they advocate for the replacement of industrial civilisation with the idealisation of pre-modern traditional and indigenous communities. "Ideal nature is assumed to be a place of harmony. The real world is measured against this ideal world" by them, according to Brett Clark and Richard York (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 259). Apart from accepting the position of 'shallow ecology' with regard to pollution and environmental depletion, deep ecologists go ahead to propound the ecocentrism advocating human simplicity and equality of all species to transcend the environmental decadence. James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis considers earth as an organism with a pre-determined functional harmony through the invocation of the principles of teleology; thereby it lapses into a kind of spiritual religiosity, without offering place for scientific enquiry into the nature-human relationship. Further, the presumption that there is a pre-ordained harmony in nature

conveniently forbids the critical theoretical understanding of nature in the course of history. In such a conception, change is conceived as a development of eco-ethics and an adjustment to it, rather than structural changes (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 258 – 261).

Environmental Sociology: Environmental sociologists seem to address the environmental crisis through the invocation of notions such as social system with all of its structural and functional criteria. A schism is visible among environmental sociologists. Realists among environmental sociologists assign an ontological independence to the conception of nature. Though they emphasise human limitations with respect to nature, still they are of the view that the natural limits can be altered to a point with the knowledge of laws of nature and its proper employment. On the other hand, constructionists among the environmental sociologists give importance to epistemological limits of knowing the nature. They are sceptical about positivistic understanding of nature as much as nature is constructed through human intervention. While realism within environmental sociology abhors any mental and cultural influences in understanding nature, constructionism finds science as a construction out of a mental and cultural milieu. Without completely negating both the schisms within environmental sociology and by slightly revising Marx's materialist conception history, John Bellamy Foster advocates 'philosophy of praxis' by combining the elements within the division among environmental sociologists. He says, "human beings make their own history, not entirely under conditions of their choosing but rather on the basis of natural-environmental and social conditions inherited from the past" (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 289 – 296).

Double Transference: Above all the theoretical explications of environmental issues, as mentioned in the above paragraphs, certain theories of environment commit the fallacy of double transference. Double transference is a concept derived from the writings of Marx and Engels which means the uncritical, often metaphorical, superimposition/extrapolation of socially derived ideas on the aspects and processes of nature that is once again applied back on the social, to effect the reification of social ideas and the "erroneous naturalisation of social relations". Such a double transference amounts to "the overnaturalising of society" and/or "the oversocialising/overanthropomorphising of nature", according to Foster. Further quoting from the writings of Marx and Engels, Foster says that Marx and Engels found such a moment of double transference within social Darwinist thinking, though they were appreciative of the Darwin's theory of biological evolution. Marx (Marx & Engels, 1975b, 106) was of the opinion that "It is remarkable how Darwin recognises among beasts and plants his English society with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets,

‘inventions’, and the Malthusian ‘struggle for existence.’ It is Hobbes’ *bellum omnium contra omnes*.” (as cited in Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 309). Continuing the same vein, Engels (Marx, Engels, 1975a, 584) wrote that “The whole Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence is simply the transference from society to organic nature of Hobbes’s theory of *bellum omnium contra omnes* and of the economic theory of competition, as well as the Malthusian theory of population. When once this feat has been accomplished (the unconditional justification for which, especially as regards Malthusian theory, is still very questionable), it is very easy to transfer these theories back again from natural history to the history of society, and altogether too naïve to maintain that thereby these assertions have been proved as eternal natural laws of society” (as cited in Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 309). Such a double transference is identified, by Foster, in Richard Dawkins’ notion of “the selfish gene”, Frederic Clements’ notion of “superorganism” (nature-vegetation as having its own life history) and Jan Christian Smuts’ notion of “holism” to legitimise segregation and apartheid in South Africa where he worked as minister and prime minister (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 308 – 324).

Coevolutionary Relationship between Nature and Human

Analysing the problems in the prominent theories of ecology, Foster tries to locate the proper theoretical understanding of ecology in the works of Marx. Normally, a charge is brought against Marxism as economic determinism. If economical determinism itself is accepted as the defining element of Marx’s understanding of ecology, it might lead to similar criticisms of him, like the proposals of economists and green capitalists about sustainability of nature. Hence, there needs a clarification whether Marx was an economic determinist as the critiques would say.

A close reading of the works of Marx and Engels proves this criticism to be wrong. Engels in his letter to Joseph Bloch, written in 1890, states that “According to the materialist conception of history, the ultimately determining element in history is the production and reproduction of real life. More than this neither Marx nor I has ever asserted. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic element is the only determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, senseless phrase” (Feuer, 1989, 397 – 398). Further he continues that “Marx and I are ourselves partly to blame for the fact that the younger people sometimes lay more stress on the economic side than is due to it. We had to emphasize the main principle *vis-a-vis* our adversaries, who denied it, and we had not always the time, the place, or the opportunity to give their due to the other elements involved in the interaction. But when it came to presenting a section of history, that is, to making a practical application, it was a different matter and there no error was permissible. Unfortunately, however, it

happens only too often that people think they have fully understood a new theory and can apply it without more ado from the moment they have assimilated its main principles, and even those not always correctly” (Feuer, 1989, 399 – 400). What Engels points out here in his letter goes directly against the charge of the critics who try to reduce Marxism to economic determinism.

The importance given to socioeconomic relations of production in the thoughts of Marx and Engels has been neatly summarised by Engels in 1894, in response to the questions put forward by Heinz Starkenburg, thus: “Political, juridical, philosophical, religious, literary, artistic, etc., development is based on economic development. But all these react upon one another and also upon the economic basis. It is not that the economic situation is cause, solely active, while everything else is only passive effect. There is, rather, interaction on the basis of economic necessity, which ultimately asserts itself” (Feuer, 1989, 410 – 411). What is meant by the materialist conception of history by Marx and Engels is that the economic relations of production conditions (not determines) other factors of a particular social reality and that there is always a dialectical interaction among various moments of reality.

To illustrate this point of interaction of various moments of reality based on the socioeconomic conditions, one may consider the writing of Marx in *Rheinische Zeitung* on the “Proceedings of the Rhenish Parliament on Thefts of Wood”. In this article, he states the relation between the law and the economic relations and interests; later on he wrote about this piece of writing as having “caused me in the first instance to turn my attention to economic questions” (Marx, 1984, 20). In the Rhineland, it was customary that the gathering of wood by the people was unrestricted. However, due to the scarcity of wood in the context of agricultural crisis and the growing need for firewood for the unhindered operation of industries in the 1820s, a law was enacted in the Rhenish parliament; it proposed the law that the owner of the woods shall be sole arbiter to assess the value of wood within his woods (McLellan, 2000, 26 – 28; McLellan, 1992, 11 – 12). While the socioeconomic conditions necessitates the enactment of such a law, the law in turn abolishes the existing customary practice and reified the economic relations and interests of the owners of the woods and the common masses. What this instance suggests is that there is a mutual interaction, not economic determinism, between the customary practices, enactment of law, interests of the owners of the woods, and property relations within the socioeconomic conditions; the enactment of law asserts the economic reality and vice versa.

There are such numerous instances to exhibit that Marxism is not economical determinist in its approach to the problems of reality in general, and on the questions of ecology in particular. However, it is quite astonishing that such a charge is being

repeatedly brought against Marx by the critiques of Marxism as well as by Marxist orthodoxy, in spite of the clarification offered by Engels, one of the founding member of Marxism. Against such solipsistic understanding of Marxism, the materialist conception of history gives importance to the co-(r)evolutionary material interrelations and metabolic relations between human beings and nature.

Having clarified the misconceptions regarding the materialist conception of history, which is popularly known as historical materialism today, Foster says that the critics of Marxism hold certain arguments to deny the ecological concerns of Marxism. Critics are of the opinion that there is no systemic relation of ecological concern in the work of Marx, that the critique of alienation is less evident in his later works, that there is pro-technological (hence anti-capitalist) tenor in his works, and that the ‘speciesist’ explication gives preference or predominant position to human beings (hence anthropocentric!) than the non-humans aspects of reality. Such misconceptions about the ecological concerns of Marx and Engels are due to certain developments within Marxism after Marx. For example, within the Marxist traditions, Western Marxism focused on the historical-cultural materialism, following Georg Lukacs’ analysis, giving importance to human praxis leaving aside the non-human nature within the historical materialism (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 215 – 25). Repudiating such arguments, Foster says that “Marx’s notion of the alienation of human labour was connected to an understanding of the alienation of human beings from nature. It was this twofold alienation which, above all, needed to be explained historically” (Foster, 2000, 9 – 10).

In the oft-quoted fourth footnote to Chapter XV of *Capital*, Volume – I, Marx states that “Technology discloses man’s mode of dealing with nature, the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them” (Marx, 2014, 352). While discussing the critical history of technology in *Capital*, Marx identifies the dialectical linkages, inter-relations and metabolic exchanges among various moments of a reality. The relationship among various aspects/moments of reality is at the same time both dialectical and inter-related. While understanding nature’s technology as a product of empirical reality in the fashion of Darwin, Marx tries to comprehend the modern technology, along with its different moments, in the fashion of historical materialism. In this way, he predicts the identifiable linkages among at least six elements in a particular historical epoch, *viz*, technology, relation to nature, process/mode of production, production/reproduction of daily life, social relations and mental conceptions. These six elements are dialectically linked to one another as well as they are inter-related.

Hence, Marx was not in favour of technological determinism or economical determinism, but he posits the way how one aspect helps in revealing or disclosing or conditioning (not determining) the possibility of the other aspect dialectically and historically. All these six identifiable elements constitute the totality; they internalise the aspect of the other element through mutual interactions among them. These six elements hang together with their internal dynamics, their intense inter-relations and with contingencies limited by their interplay. Hence there is no mechanical relationship among them as they are socio-historically conditioned. “No one moment prevails over others, even as there exists within each moment the possibility of autonomous development (nature independently mutates, evolves, as do ideas, social relations, forms of daily life, etc.). All these elements co-evolve and are subject to perpetual renewal and transformation as dynamic moments within the totality. But it is not a Hegelian totality in which each moment tightly internalizes all the others. It is more like an ecological totality, what Lefebvre refers to as an “ensemble” or Deleuze as an “assemblage”, of moments co-evolving in an open, dialectical manner” (Harvey, 2010, 196).

Foster argues that Marx’s materialism is rooted in Epicurean materialism and Marx elaborated the role of senses and sensuous activity as part of relation between nature and humans. The nature-human relationship rooted in the senses “expresses an active and therefore changing relation to nature – and indeed of nature itself.” By quoting Marx’s statement, “In hearing, nature hears itself, in smelling it smells itself, in seeing it sees itself”, Foster brings out the dialectical relation between nature and human through the sensual operation (JBF, BC & RY 2011: 227).

This may be further understood in relation to the Marx’s first thesis of *Theses on Feuerbach*, where he differentiates the old materialism from new materialism, by invoking human sensuous activity as part of the materialist conception of history. Whereas the old materialism before Marx speculated and thought about the matter as if having no subjective sensual activities involved in the perception, the new materialism of Marx combined the elements of both materialism and idealism to understand matter as a praxis involving human sensuous activity. Andrew Feenberg (1981, 218) says that Marx’s materialism is a “meta-theoretical reconstruction of sense knowledge as a historically evolving dimension of human beings. Marx argues that the object of sensation contains a wealth of meaning available only to the trained and socially developed sense organ” (as cited in Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 230). Very interestingly one can find that Marx’s materialism includes the ontological materialism and epistemological materialism too, in the sense that nature, sense, labour, historical

development, social production and epistemology are intricately and dialectically connected as a totality of relation among many different aspects of reality.

Further, the tools that humans operate in order to transform nature are identified as “inorganic body of man” by Marx – “the social technology that extends the “natural technology” of the human organs and capacities. Labour and production constituted the active human transformation of nature, but also of human nature, the human relation to nature and human beings themselves... Human labour, according to Marx in *Capital*, was a metabolic exchange between nature and society without which human beings could not exist” (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 228). Human beings are part of the nature and the society acts as the environment of nature; thus, the dialectical and coevolutionary relationship of nature, human and society is explained succinctly by Marx.

Marx explains that “The fact that man is an *embodied*, living, real, sentient, objective being with natural powers means that he has *real, sensuous objects* as the objects of his being... Hunger is a natural *need*; it requires, therefore, a *nature* outside itself, an *object* outside itself, in order to be satisfied and stilled... A being which does not have its nature outside itself is not a *natural* being and does not share in the being of nature” (Marx, 1964, 217). Marx sees the relationship between human, nature and social production as interrelated. Though nature has independent existence away from human interventions, humans are dependent on nature for their subsistence and survival. It is through the mastery of nature that humans intervene in the natural processes to safeguard and sustain themselves. On the other hand, the obsessive dominance over nature through the massive capitalist technological means, in order to accumulate private property, that nature has been depleted beyond its redemptive utilisation by humans.

Hence, Foster says, “At every point in his analysis, therefore, Marx insisted on the complex material relation between human beings and nature. The relation was a dialectical one in that it was an internal relation within a single totality. Rather than positing a dualistic relation between human beings and nature, he suggested that the two opposing poles existed radically separated from one another only insofar as alienation in the realm of appearance separated human beings from their essential human capacities as both natural and social beings – beings actively constituting nature’s relation to itself through natural and social praxis” (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 229).

According to Marx, natural history needs to be studied along with the social history, in spite of the fact that there is an active change within the nature itself.

However, with the development of technology and the capitalist mode of production that thrives on the accumulation of private property, the organic relation between nature, human and society gets disturbed; the ecological rift becomes inevitable. In *Grundrisse*, Marx says, “it is not the *unity* of living and active humanity with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature, and hence their appropriation of nature, which requires explanation or is the result of historic process, but rather the *separation* between these inorganic conditions of human existence and this active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in the relation of wage labour and capital” (1973, 489). This alienation between human and nature through the capitalist mode of production has its ecological consequences, which Marx calls as “irreparable rift” (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 241). Such an ecological rift cannot be addressed through moralistic compass, without addressing the contradictions existing in the nature-human relationship in the capitalist mode of production and its social praxis. Hence, Foster says that this is “a possibility not open to capitalist society” (Foster, Clark & York, 2011, 240).

Conclusion

Marx provides a solution to this ecological rift through a structural change in the mode of production, in his *1844 Manuscripts*, thus: “Communism is the positive abolition of private property and thus of human self-alienation and therefore the real reappropriation of the human essence by and for man. This is communism as the complete and conscious return of man conserving all the riches of previous development for man himself as a social, *i.e.*, human being. Communism as completed naturalism is humanism and as completed humanism is naturalism. It is the genuine solution of the antagonism between man and nature and between man and man. It is the true solution of the struggle between existence and essence, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution to the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution” (as cited in McLellan, 1992,244).

Marx’s answer to the question of alienation between humans and nature is the abolition of private property and the coming of communistic mode of production. Marx never deviated from this point in his later writings, as against the critiques who opine that Marx abandoned the problem of alienation in his later writings. Starting from 1840s when he began to engage with the relations between the economic relations to the mode of existence, till the end of his life, he elaborated his point of human alienation from nature in the context of capitalist mode of production. He elaborated four different aspects of alienation in the capitalist mode of production in his *1844 Manuscripts*, that is, 1) alienation from the product of his own labour, 2) workers alienation from the

productive activity, 3) alienation from species-beings and 4) alienation from nature; but he continued his search for the reasons of alienation in the socioeconomic sphere till his end of life. And he was convinced that the human alienation cannot be solved through make-shift solutions offered by the techno-capitalism, but by the overthrow of capitalist mode of production.

Further, when one talks about human alienation from nature and its consequent massive depletion of nature for accumulation of private property, this cannot be solved through a moralistic compass as suggested by deep ecologists or anyone of that sort. The human alienation from nature is a question of class conflict also, apart from the other intervening factors, like, gender which is addressed by ecofeminism. Without addressing the social/class conflicts within the society that result in human alienation from nature, peripheral changes within individual psyche would not be able to solve the structural issues involved in the ecological rift. Trying to address the ecological rift without addressing the social conflicts (like gender, class, caste, regions, tribes, etc.) existing within a particular society, it is highly questionable that such efforts might yield to holistic solution to the ecological issues.

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ETHICAL ISSUES OF GLOBALIZATION: A KANTIAN SOLUTION

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Abstract

The outline of “Ethical Issues of Globalization: A Kantian Solution” is grounded on the idea that in the contemporary world, the wave of globalization comes with so many benefits. However, its adverse effects cannot be disregarded, especially when it comes to different ethical issues. In the era of globalization, everything is global in character, whether it is culture, religion, ethics, ideology, etc. However, in the case of globalization, the problem is that it is challenging to set an exact ethical or legal framework through which we can reduce its negative impacts. So, an ethical framework is needed for the process of globalization. In the present venture, I intend to give a Kantian solution to some global ethical problems by putting to use Immanuel Kant’s moral philosophy. To my mind, Kant’s idea of morality can be effectively utilized to find answers to contemporary ethical issues engendered by the process of globalization.

Keywords: *Globalization, Ethical Problems, Morality, Environmental Issues, Culture, Identity Crisis, Ethical Community*

I. Prelude

In the contemporary world, i.e., the era of globalization, everything is global in character, whether it is religion, ethics, economy, politics, society, or culture. Globalization is the procedure that promotes interaction, integration, interdependence, and interconnectedness among people of different regions, religions, and values worldwide. This process mainly gives prominence to the field of business and technology that connects other regions globally. However, the impacts of this new wave are not only confined to the socio-economical aspect but to the moral, religious and cultural aspects as well. As this era is bringing the entire world to the peak of progress, it also has introduced a new set of problems that mainly threaten the environmental resources and the existence of the human race. Due to this globalization paradigm, the human race is confronted with new problems. Among various issues, the most significant ethical issue is that different values and beliefs observed by human beings are immensely affected by the wave of globalization. People who belong to civil societies struggle to solve these issues set by the world community. Because, unlike other communities, the world community cannot be governed by a single set of policies or rules. Hence, the formation of the global community was not guided by any exact

“policy statement” or ethical code of conduct. This is because the idea of world community and globalization is an abstract method. The process of globalization is working to bring all 195 countries under a single umbrella of globalization. Nevertheless, it is very challenging to establish an ethical foundation for this abstract society. Setting moral or legal guidelines for this worldwide community is difficult because of the diversity of places, cultures, and religions, despite their efforts to strengthen their ties and gain exposure to other countries via trade, tourism and other activities. For instance, we can see that different countries maintain different constitutional rules, and different communities observe different moral or spiritual values. This causes a crisis or contradiction in the beliefs and values of the individuals of the global community.¹ However, if the world community can set a common goal, they can overcome these issues of the contemporary world. In this context, we can use the phrase of *Mahā Upaniṣad*, i.e., Vasudhaiva Kuṭumbakam (वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम्)², which means that “one world, one family” and it mainly emphasizes the collective well-being of the world community, instead of individual interest. This common goal can be achieved through the joint effort of each individual in the cross-border community to promote the idea that they are responsible and obliged to think about common ethical, religious and cultural values for the collective well-being. So, to overcome the issues set by the global community, we need to reflect on shared values or common faith that also help us to understand contemporary society’s ethical, religious and cultural dimensions. By reflecting on this idea, people can set the foundation of their beliefs and values for the emerging internationalised community. Hence, now the question is: How can we execute this plan of forming a common ethical framework to mitigate the negative impacts or ethical problems raised by the method of globalization? However, before delving into the solution to this question, we should first know what ethical issues we face in the contemporary world. For this, in the next section, I will discuss some significant ethical issues created due to globalization.

II. Major ethical concerns generated by globalization

In the 21st century, global proliferation has allowed people to connect with everyone. People can participate and represent themselves in front of the world community through different means such as trading, travelling, and sharing different cultures, ideas, lifestyles, etc. In this era, increased access to technology also helps people to connect with the world by breaking the barrier of space and time. Moreover, there are two benefits of globalization, i.e., free trading policies and easily accessible

¹ The Division of Human Sciences, Philosophy and the Ethics of Science and Technology. (2001). *Ethics for the 21st Century*. Paris: UNESCO Headquarters.

² Moses, J. (2002). *Oneness: Great Principles Shared by All Religions*. New York: Ballantine Books, p. 12.

transportation systems, which ensure the economic advancement of the countries, which is immensely required for maintaining international relationships among developed countries. From the very start of the 21st century, it is evident that this century brings a profound social, cultural, and ideological transformation in the name of globalization. In this era, due to the benison of the internet and social media, people can know and access everything, whether it is about the culture, religion, or ethics of different communities. This easy access to everything fosters cultural diversity, religious tolerance, access to diverse perspectives, and increased ideological and cultural exchange, but these benedictions come with many negative impacts. That means these social, cultural, and ideological changes cause instability in the modern world community.³ Even behind these worldwide progressions, many ethical issues need to be addressed. Now, the question is: What ethical issues is the world confronting due to the wave of globalization? In the following sub-sections, I will discuss some ethical issues engendered by globalization.

1. Value Crisis

In our society, morality and religion are essential factors for the person of the respective community to preserve their values and maintain their status in the global community. Maintaining moral, religious and cultural values is immensely important for a stable modern community. This is because moral and religious principles give people an understanding of society and customs and enable them to navigate different social and cultural phenomena, which is required for the positive development of the modern community. It is also evident that ethics and religion continually shape a person's values and behaviour in the respective community.⁴ When ethical and religious dimensions are affected by different external incentives, they also affect different values observed by the people of the respective community. Similarly, in one vain, in the era of worldwide progress, each society or community observes different cultural, ethical, and religious values, i.e., they possess a separate understanding to assess and monitor their values and customs. However, they have to account for their views to the international community because of their exposure to the world. So, the most problematic issue raised by globalization is the contradiction between local values and global accountability. Conversely, due to modernization and technological advancements, humans are becoming machines, examining and evaluating everything in their lives mechanically. This mechanical thinking of

³ Chernikova, V. (2019). "Interaction Of Religion and Morality in Global World." In D. Karim Sultanovich Bataev, S. Aidievich Gapurov, et al. (Eds.), *Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of Modern Globalism*. Vol. 76, European Proceedings of Social and Behavioural Sciences, pp. 597-606.

⁴ Ibid., p. 598.

themselves leads them toward the loss of moral values. That means it leads to the loss of humanity.

2. Identity Crisis

In this globalized world, technological advancements allow people to access everything easily. This easy access to everything leads to the possibility of an identity crisis among them. When the members of a specific community are acquainted with other communities' culture, ethics, and religion, they start to compare their culture, ethical and religious practices with other communities. Accordingly, they find contradictions between their and others' cultural, moral and religious conceptions. It is apparent that in many minor or tribal cultures, their moral and spiritual values come under the threat of modernization while they try to adapt themselves to the modern world.⁵ As a result, they strive to uphold their moral, religious, and cultural identities.

3. Erosion of Environmental Values

Undoubtedly, in the 21st century, globalization brings many positive impacts to the socio-economic sphere. However, to survive in the competition for mondial proliferation, the excessive amount of industrial development and transportation causes different environmental issues, such as climate change, deforestation, increased greenhouse gas emissions, and habitat destruction, which are immensely harmful to the environment. These negative impacts on our environment result in nothing but a short-lived and unstable ecosystem.⁶

Hence, this erosion of environmental and human values caused by globalization demands an ethical framework that can provide the solution to reduce these negative impacts. Now, having explained some crucial concerns, in the next section, I propose a solution to implementing the plan of establishing a common ethical framework for collective well-being in the age of globalization.

III. A Kantian Solution for the Ethical Issues Set by the Modern World

In the present venture, it is noteworthy that the wave of globalization does not have a precise ethical code of conduct that may assume accountability for any ethical difficulties. That is why globalization is beyond the scope of human navigation. In the 21st century, it is also evident that humans face different common problems in the world community, such as environmental and human issues caused by scientific and technological developments. However, these common issues can be overcome through

⁵ Islam, Md. S. (2020). "Cultural Identity Crisis in The Age of Globalization and Technology: An Indian Perspective." *Philosophical Papers: Journal of the Department of Philosophy*. Vol. XVI, University of North Bengal Press, p. 74.

⁶ Ehrenfeld, D. (2005). "The Environmental Limits to Globalization." *Conservation Biology*. Vol. 19, Wiley Publication, p. 323, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3591244> (12-12-2023, 03:53 PM).

a standard solution. This stock solution must be based on shared ethical values because traditional solutions cannot solve contemporary problems. However, a moot question in this regard is: Is maintaining a shared moral framework possible? This question arises because there is apparent diversity among ethical values. Different cultures or societies hold different ethical values. That means ethical values vary socially and culturally. Setting a common ethical framework for the world community is problematic in that case. However, a shared moral framework is needed for this century, so we must look for convergence among different values. We can pick common values from other societies or cultures to set a common ethical framework for the global community. Here, to find out the standard solution to various value-oriented problems of the 21st century, I want to go back to the 18th-century philosophy of Immanuel Kant. It is evident that Immanuel Kant was a philosopher whose philosophical ideas were very influential, and the significance of his philosophy was far-reaching. Hence, here I shall find a solution for the worldwide ethical and religious problems through the help of Immanuel Kant's moral philosophy.

As I have mentioned, different ethical problems set by the 21st century are common in that everyone struggles with these issues. For this, a standard solution is required. However, before explaining the solution to the common problem, I want to illustrate Kant's conception of morality, which will help us to understand the nature of the solution. Through his entire transcendental critical philosophy, Kant highlights that humans are the only species in this cosmos capable of the extraordinary power of reason. This faculty of Reason governs our knowledge system—i. e., ability to judge actions and behaviour. That means the faculty of Reason possessed by humans helps them to constitute their nature by improving their values. Kant, in his moral philosophy, intends to show us that human beings are not merely rational; instead, they are moral beings, as well. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788)⁷ and the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785)⁸, Kant explains the moral nature of human beings. There, he is immensely concerned about human actions because this is the parameter through which we can evaluate the moral worth of human beings. According to him, an action can only be moral if it is carried out only out of obligation or duty, without falling under any sense of inclination, desire, happiness, etc. This sense of duty comes from our inner goodwill prescribed by our practical reasoning capacity. Our goodwill stimulates the reverence for moral laws by making us aware of our duties to ourselves and others. But now the question is: What kind of moral laws are prescribed by our

⁷ Gregor, M. (2015). *Immanuel Kant: Critique of Practical Reason*. Cambridge University Press.

⁸ Paton, H. J. (1964). *Immanuel Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Harper & Row Publishers.

reasoning faculty that make human beings worthwhile? In this context, Kant introduces his conception of the Categorical Imperative.

Through the idea of the Categorical Imperative, Kant intends to show us that when humans act solely for the sake of duty, then on that note, their actions will be moral. These duties or obligations must be categorical by nature. That means humans should perform their duties without falling under any conditions. To clarify this conception of Kant, I can give an instance:

- (A) If you want to become a popular political leader, then never commit corruption.
- (B) As a political leader, it is your duty not to commit corruption.

In example (A), it is apparent that the maxim or rule used behind that action is an “if-then” maxim, which means the rule behind this action is not categorical or unconditional. This action will be done out of the hypothetical imperative where someone will act out of the intention of gaining popularity. Kant considers such actions as immoral. However, in example (B), the maxim behind this action is purely categorical because that action can be performed without falling under any condition. This action will be done solely out of the sense of duty and nothing else. Here, Kant highlights his idea of the Categorical Imperative as the “supreme principle” of morality.⁹

Now, I would like to illuminate the three expressions of the idea of the Categorical Imperative, which are immensely important for our present venture. Through his moral philosophy, Kant highlights three expressions of the concept of the Categorical Imperative through which we can evaluate the moral worth of human actions. These expressions are:

- A. “Act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become a universal law” (4:421).¹⁰
- B. “So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means” (4:429).¹¹
- C. “Act only so that the will could regard itself as at the same time giving universal law through its maxim” (4:434).¹²

⁹ Gregor, M. J. (1996). *Immanuel Kant: Practical Philosophy*. Cambridge University Press, p. xxiii.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 73.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 80.

¹² Ibid., p. 84.

In these expressions mentioned above, the initial expression of the idea of the Categorical Imperative is called the “Formula of Universal Law.” According to this formula, an action will be moral when the agent of that action wishes that action to be a universal law. For instance, if someone steals and wants the stealing to become a universal law. In that case, it will be considered moral, but that is never possible because stealing can never become a universal law, and hence, it can never be a moral act.

Now, the second expression is called the “Formula of Humanity.” By providing this formulation, Kant intends to mean that humans as rational beings are end in themselves. That means humans are the sole creatures of this world who possess a reasoning faculty that prescribes laws for their actions and also to the faculty itself so that it can evaluate and update itself for different situations. Due to this self-legislative feature, Kant considers human beings as an end in themselves. And just because humans are end in themselves, they are valuable. This is the cause humans should respect themselves and each other and never use others or themselves as a tool to achieve a certain objective or for personal advantage. Through this formulation, Kant mainly intends to highlight the idea of reverence for humanity.

Lastly, the third expression is called the “Formula of Autonomy.” Through this formulation, Kant shows us that our reasoning capacity prescribes laws to us. However, ultimately, we have free will through which we can choose the maxims for our actions. That means the choice (which maxim is suitable for our action) is up to us. The rightness and wrongness of every action mainly depended on the doer's intention behind that action. Some actions may be performed under the intention of inclination and some of intention of duty. However, it is entirely up to human beings which one they choose. Due to this, Kant also considers humans to be autonomous beings. Here, through the third formulation, Kant intends to mean that autonomous human beings should consider the maxims repeatedly before willing any law as universal.

After illustrating all these expressions of the “supreme principle,” i.e., the idea of the Categorical Imperative, Kant introduces his conception of the “Kingdom of Ends” or “Ethical Community.” In this context, Kant states that:

“By “kingdom” I mean the orderly community of different rational beings under a common law.”¹³

¹³ Liddell, B. E. A. (1970). Kant on the Foundation of Morality: A Modern Version of the Grundlegung. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, p. 167.

After a detailed explanation of the Kantian concept of morality, it seems a little easier to understand what Kant meant by the terms “Kingdom of Ends” or “Ethical Community.” A kingdom of ends or an ethical community should be a kingdom of rational human beings or the ethical community of rational human beings. However, the question is, is this ethical community accessible to all human beings? In my opinion, the response is no. The next question is: Why is this kingdom or this community not for all human beings? To find the answer to this question, we should first know what Kant meant by the idea of the kingdom of ends or ethical community. In Book III of the *Religion Within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1792)¹⁴, Kant intends to show us that the primary goal of morality is to attain the highest good. Here, by the term “highest good,” Kant wants to mean the equitable distribution of happiness based on the moral value of human beings. Thus, the degree of happiness is determined by the moral standard. What you do is what you get. So, for the achievement of the highest good, you should be moral at first. However, it is noteworthy that by the term “highest good,” Kant never meant individual happiness; rather, he intended to mean collective happiness. Achieving the highest good is the collective endeavour of the people of the ethical community, i.e., the unity of all rational moral beings striving towards the same goal. That means the highest good cannot be achieved by a single individual working alone to improve themselves morally. Instead, people can accomplish this through the collective endeavour of all human beings by improving their moral worth. This collaborative endeavour for the highest good is necessary to erode the social origins of evil and the formation of the ethical community. Moreover, Kant suggests that this ideal ethical community is governed by a set of public moral laws that are universally valid. In the ethical community, every individual comes under and must obey these universally valid general laws. So, the response to the question mentioned above is clear, i.e., by working collectively to improve the moral worth of each individual of the respective community, they can get access to or can build the ethical community or the “kingdom of ends.”¹⁵ And I think from Kant’s idea of ethical community, we can find a standard remedy to the common problem raised in the modern world.

Now, the question is, how can Kant’s idea of an ethical community help us find the solution to the problems caused by the age of globalization? In this context, we can say that different ethical issues set by the style of internationalization are common by

¹⁴ Pasternack, L. R. (2014). *Kant on Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*. London and New York: Routledge Publication.

¹⁵ Lott, M. (2020). “Moral Duties and Divine Commands: Is Kantian Religion Coherent?” *Faith and Philosophy: Journal of the Society of Christian Philosophers*. Vol. 37: Issue: 1, pp. 57-76. DOI: 10.37977/faithphil.2020.37.1.3 (10-12-2023, 08:18 PM).

nature, and to overcome these issues, we have to develop a common ethical framework for the age of globalization. As we have seen, Immanuel Kant also suggests a moral community where each individual works collectively for the betterment of themselves and the community. Similarly, in the age of globalization, if different members think about each other's dignity and respect each other's cultural, ethical, and religious values, we believe that through this means, we can overcome these global issues collectively. In a different vein, in the case of environmental problems, we should think about our environment, our home where we live. The progress of the nation and the world is necessary, but not by harming natural resources, destroying our habitats, or destroying humanity. Hence, if we consider Kant's idea of ethical community, we can find that by applying their rational ability, human beings can enhance their moral nature, which helps them find unity among diversity. If we can strengthen our rational ability, then this will allow us to build our moral thinking so that we can feel obligated to ourselves and other organisms around us. Suppose we can enhance our moral nature with a sense of duty or obligation. In that case, it will be easy for us to overcome different ethical issues that emerged through the method of globalization. That means, before changing the world, we have to change ourselves. We have to strengthen our intrinsic rational and moral nature. By doing this, we can constitute that ideal world community with no scope for ethical problems.

IV. CONCLUSION

Thus, as a concluding remark, it can be said that the wave of globalization may be profitable for some but not for all. Worldwide progression may benefit economically developed countries, information technology (IT) sectors, etc.; however, its negative impacts also affect traditional livelihoods in agriculture, rural-urban inequalities, economic inequality between rich and poor, rural unemployment, and many more. Though the positive impacts of global proliferation are huge, but its detrimental effects cannot be disregarded. As mentioned, the globalizing process lacks a formalized "policy statement" or ethical foundation. But being a part of the global community, it is our duty to set a common ethical framework collaboratively by keeping the dignity of the entire human race and the intrinsic value of our environment in mind. Hence, the moral of the story is: If we go with Kant's view, we can say that development is okay when it is universal, but particular development always comes with negative impacts. For instance, it is evident that globalization is always more beneficial for developed countries rather than developing countries. That means we should set our goal for universal good over particular gains. So, worldwide growth is required to survive in the contemporary world, but we must deal with this progression cautiously. We need to reduce the negative impacts of globalization by setting this common ethical policy. This common ethical framework is nothing but to enhance the sense of unconditional

reverence for morality in each human being in order to handle all the direct and indirect predicaments given by the modern world. This common ethical framework will help us to mitigate the negative impacts of globalization by finding an alternative way. This solution will work effectively solely when we can utilize our reasoning capacity properly and enhance our unconditional moral nature by working on it collectively. After enhancing the sense of obligation in each human being, they will definitely think rationally about every species, which promotes positive universal growth and improvement of the global society. Hence, if we follow this common Kantian ethical framework, we can mitigate different ethical issues caused by globalization. That means we must collectively strengthen our inner moral qualities to implement a common ethical framework like “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,” or collective well-being.

A TRANSITION FROM SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT TO SOCIAL ACTION: A SURVEY ON BUDDHISM

Kirtika Das

Abstract

This paper intends to discuss how Buddhist ethical guidelines lead to practical engagement. There is discord regarding Buddhism's activeness towards society in the beginning. Here, we would know how individual awareness leads to social welfare in Buddhism. Buddhism has evolved, starting from Pratyekabuddhas up to Engaged Buddhism. The main point of contention is- Whether theravadins were socially active before the nineteenth century. An awakening mind tends to be congenial with humans and other living creatures. As we know, a Bodhisattva always wants to alleviate the sufferings of others. The Bodhisattva tradition also evolved with time. How do contemporary Buddhists respond to current issues? A theravadin is patently socially and politically active, but what about in the pre-contemporary period? Here, we would know about the shift from self-liberation to liberation for all.

Keywords: *Pratyekabuddhas, Sravakas, Engaged Buddhism, Secularism, Self-revelation, Samyojana*

Introduction:

Not only do all religions emphasize the worship of Gods and Goddesses, but Buddhism is a religion where spiritual awakening is the sine qua non for every mind. Life is a notebook of happiness and trouble. Buddha diffused his realization with the help of the Four Noble Truths. We can experience suffering until we become Enlightened. The path to Enlightenment needs the knowledge of Buddha's ontological doctrines and Buddhist Ethics. Spiritual transition is not about detaching people from society. Instead, it raises an interest to forward our hands towards the sufferers.

Buddha always advised his adherents to be their own refuge and not to ask others for help. One can do everything with effort and intellectuality. Buddha realized the true nature of oneself and the world. But, his intellectuality made the way for Dharma or spiritual teachings. His ontological deliberation and moral reflection are complemented on a serious note. The historical Buddha or Gautama Buddha urged people's emancipation from the notion of self. Many scholars have negative thoughts about this religion. They criticized that Buddha only promoted the world as full of suffering and we should come out of *samsaric* existence. Our foremost priority is to

attain *Nirvana*. Buddha's message is to cure the fundamental disease, i.e. Dukkha, which ceases our mental purification.

Let us first understand the interconnection between philosophical doctrines and *Dharmavinaya*. Then, it would be quite straightforward to sort out how Buddhism is engaged in various aspects. A practical mind needs theoretical motivation as much as one can. We can admit one thing: the world is changing day-by-day in phenomenon. So, our minds always go through various incidents now and then. Our responses also vary depending on multiple factors. Buddhism involvement might affect our minds when it comes to the earlier stage of Buddhism. However, a consensus remains about the engagement of Buddhists in different regions. Buddha taught one thing: how to realize one's true nature. This thought never urges an indifferent attitude towards others. Instead, *Nirvana* is the state where we are free from the notion of self and other, good person and bad person, one and many.

Buddha's notion about this world and its impact on life:

After experiencing the world as it is, Buddha thought about how to share his insight. He also knew that having actual knowledge from an ordinary standpoint is difficult. Buddha found a way to preach the truth embellished with '*Dharma Mudra*' or *Seals*. We know Buddha's teaching is known as The Heart of the Dharma, and to realize the Dharma, Buddha found three seals. One is Impermanence, the other is Nonself, and the third is Enlightenment. In verse 126 of the *Dhammapada*, Buddha states-

“Some are born again. Those caught in evil ways go
to a state of intense suffering; those who have done
good go to a state of joy. But the pure in heart enter nirvana.”¹

Buddha, by his first Dharma Seal, i.e. Impermanence or *Anityavada*, conveyed that everything in this world is impermanent. Impermanence does not only remain within physical objects. Even our consciousness is passing through changes. It does not imply we should cling to our parents, relatives, associates and favourite things. This adherence provides us suffering. Everything comes, changes and passes on. A thought might come to our mind: What do we do if everything is impermanent? Should we not do our duty towards this society? In this respect, Buddha never said not to love our parents, relatives and other people. Cherish them with this insight: nobody or nothing remains in this world forever. What about the change? If everything changes, our positive and helpful attitude becomes lousy. Yes, it quite happens with most of us. It is natural; as ordinary beings, our insight could be more developed at a higher level. But,

¹ Easwaran, Eknath, *The Dhammapada*, USA: Nilgiri Press, 2007, p. 142

the path of meditation leads to the evolution of consciousness. We realize the continuous flux of everything, and this thought can generate a change in our minds. We should be much more careful and responsible towards every living being.

Another Dharma Seal is the Nonself or *Anatmavada* theory. Buddha preached this insight to his disciples. They were not firstly unanimous with Buddha. But Buddha explicitly explained the matter. Nonself means nothing in this world lives independently and without changing. We are not made up of a single entity. Different elements aggregate us. We all are dependent on something else for our existence. This thinking might make us mentally weak. But, in a true sense, when we realize we are interconnected in this world. This awareness changes our minds, i.e. from selfishness to altruism. The term 'Self' leads to minimizing our thinking about others. We are earnest about our happiness, health and dignity. But Buddha's conviction urges a fraternal feeling towards every living and non-living being. The word self comes with a separate attitude, but the reality is entirely different. We are within this nature, and nature is within us. Then why do we use the term 'self' to distinguish ourselves from this blissful world?

Nirvana, this Dharma Seal, seeks more intellectuality to attain it. We must be completely aware of the prior two seals before conceiving the notion of *Nirvana*. The state of *Nirvana* allows us to free our minds from all negativities. An Enlightened being can actuate the truth as it is. This state does not entail detachment from this society. Moreover, we can overcome all the dualistic phenomena. We can realise the truth, and the truth is we all are interconnected. Tranquillity exists after attaining the truth, which remains veiled by our negative dispositions. One kind of internal peace will be within one's mind, and that inner peace urges into outer peace.

Three fundamental ways of spiritual awakening in Early Buddhism:

Buddhism has different schools of thought, and their ways of attaining Enlightenment are also different. But, there remains a progressive nature of spiritual growth with the eons. This knowledge came just like a ray of the sun in different discourses. Buddha had in his mind only 'one vehicle' or 'eka-yana', the Buddhahood. But, he intuited every person could not have that much potential to spiritualize their minds on a higher level. So he used three ways to reach the ultimate, i.e., *Sravakayana*, *Pratyekabuddhayana* and *Bodhisattvayana*. Now, we should make sense of each way to become a conscious being (in a real sense).

- First is 'the yana of *Pratyekabuddha*' or Solitary Buddha. Pratyekabuddhas were found in the pre-Buddhist period. From the *Vimalakirtinirdesa Sutra* and *Ekottarika Agama*, we can learn about the *Pratyekabuddhas*. Many great

scholars of the early Mahayana tradition knew around five hundred *Pratyekabuddhas* existed at the same eon as the Buddha. They passed away just some years before his birth. By name, we understand a kind of Buddha. But they are separated from the other schism—an individual who has attained Enlightenment independently without the guidance of any prior Buddha. *Pratyekabuddha* should be revered, and their nature of attributes needs appreciation. They maintained a harsh asceticism and became enlightened with their rigorous meditative way and moral discipline. However, Buddha attained his Perfect Enlightenment, while those solitary Buddhists did not proceed to this state. Many Buddhist schools have made a hierarchy of self-revelation. Early Theravadins believed they were the real followers of Buddha's teaching, and other schools modified it in their own ways. But Buddha never exclaimed. *Bodhisattvas* were placed at the top below the *Sravakas* and at the bottom, *Pratyekabuddhas*. In an inclusive sense, *Pratyekabuddhas* were not the original Buddhas, as 'Buddha' means the Awakened One. But the question is- Did they really awaken? They had an insight into the ultimate truth. But how can one awakened mind remain indifferent towards others suffering? *Pratyekabuddhas* lived an isolated life that a true Buddha could not do. They should be revered for their self-guidance and high level of intellectuality.

- Another group of people existed since the time of the Buddha's age. They are known as *Sravakas* or the 'vehicle of Disciples' or the listeners. They were the first group of members to accept the three refuges, i.e., *Buddha*, *Dhamma*, and *Sangha*. They attained Enlightenment by listening to the Buddha's preaching directly or indirectly. The names of ten veterans and main disciples of Buddha enlisted in the Mahayana text *Vimalakirti-nirdesa*. They are- Sariputra, Maudgalyayana, Mahakasyapa, Subhuti, Purna Maitrayaniputra, Katyayana, Anuruddha, Upali (compiled the Vinaya Pitaka), Rahula and Ananda (compiled the *Sutta Pitaka*). Here, we find progress regarding a responsible attitude towards this society. They promoted the Buddha's teachings in various regions. The disciples also maintained a fraternal relationship with other community members.
- The most advanced vehicle for understanding the real motive of Buddha lies in *Bodhisattvayana*. This is the ultimate stage where we would not only realize the distinction between 'I' and other is relative. Furthermore, we have insight and feelings about living for others, which gives us immense happiness. A *Bodhisattva* has *Bodhicitta* with wisdom and compassion for all sentient beings. They delay attaining the state of nirvana till others become enlightened.

Mahayana tradition believes the *Bodhisattva* path is for all. However, there is a shift from *Sravakayana* to Engaged Buddhism (in the contemporary era). *Pratyekabuddha* has yet to be found or heard in the modern period. But, another group of members can practise the path of *Bodhisattva*. This thought depends on which vehicle the individual is part of. Spiritual revelation is the ultimate in Buddhism.

Pratyekabuddhas: Before the historical Buddha or Gautama Buddha's emergence, there was also a desire to become enlightened. Now, some questions come- how was the state of enlightenment achieved? Who guided the aspirants? Was there any Buddha in pre- Buddhist period? We know that Gautama Buddha was the first enlightened being to achieve the title Buddha. Then, who were the *pratyekabuddhas*? A response is that some male individuals attained a state of liberation or awareness with their own ideas. Those individuals did not receive any specific moral guidelines or belong to any religious school. They became enlightened but never came forward to preach the way to others to become enlightened. Now, a question comes- Did they attain Buddhahood or perfect enlightenment? A pertinent response is that they lived their life with incomplete enlightenment. Absolute enlightenment is possible when a noble person decides to preach the path of enlightenment to others. Then, Buddhahood can be attained by that compassionate mind. A person attains Buddhahood when they want to alleviate the suffering of others. *Pratyekabuddhas* lived their lives with partial enlightenment. They never urged to direct others to reach the state of enlightenment. In one of the early Buddhist texts, the life of *Pratyekabuddhas* is intensified by *Rhinoceros sutta* or Khaggavisana Sutta, where deep respect is conveyed to *Pratyekabuddhas* for their self-guidance and self-sufficient nature. Just like a rhino wanders alone, the *Pratyekabuddhas* tradition shows solitariness rather than unification. They lived as solitary ascetics, so they constituted no Sangha to restore their teachings in the form of *Dhamma*.

What about *Arahat*:

When we hear the term '*Arahat*', most of us generalize the being who has become Enlightened and emancipated oneself from the endless cycle of rebirth. But this group never comes forward to help others overcome their sufferings. They do not propagate the moral guidelines to live a wholesome life as the *Pratyekabuddhas* may have done by providing ethical principles known from traditional sources. If we read the original Buddhist text, we understand there is a distortion regarding the concept of *Arahat*. In Jainism, the term '*Arahat*' is also ascribed to one group of spiritual teachers. Various schools and their division of thought lead us to lose the original characteristics of every state. Buddha, in his first sermon, introduced himself as an *Arahat*. *Arahatship*

was the only goal in the ancient period of Buddhism. A question arises: Why do we not find the name of this way in early Buddhism? If we read the *Mahavagga Pali*, their *sravakas* are those persons who attain the state of *Arahat*. However, there is a hierarchy found at the level of spiritual Enlightenment. After listening to their teacher about Dharma, they became *Arahats* named Kolita and Upatissa.

However, the noble disciples of Buddha who became *Arahat* differed in number and in different traditions (16, 18 and 500). The most important thing is Buddha did not accept any gender inequality. Three members of a group of renowned *arahats* are nuns. Buddha introduced both the men's and women's orders. At the time of spiritual awakening, they are free from all ten fetters (*samyojana*)² and cankers (*asava*)³. They engaged themselves by delivering the Buddha's *Dhamma* in a precise manner. An *Arahat* is also kind and responsible, just like a *Bodhisattva*.

Development of the idea of *Arahat* in the Theravada tradition:

Theravada tradition is one of the oldest influential schools in Southeast Asia. This tradition's ultimate goal is *Arahat*, the highest stage of Enlightenment. The former renowned thinker of the Theravada school found a way to categorize the *sravakas*. Though all of them are enlightened, a difference is observed in the qualities of Enlightenment among them. Most of them could not reach the highest state, i.e., *Arahat*. The different kinds of *Sravakas*- Agga Savaka, Maha Savaka, and Pakatisavaka- have been mentioned in the Theravada tradition.

The Theravadins thought that the propagation of Buddha's *Dhamma* should not be entangled within the monastics. The lay Buddhist practitioner should know how to become spiritually awakened by one's effort. So, they explicated it with the four stages of Enlightenment. They are Stream Enterer or *Sotapanna*, Once-Returner or *Sakadagami*, Non-Returner or *Anagami*, and the final step, named The Perfected One or *Arahat*.

Can we recognize Theravadins for Humanitarian:

It is unequivocal for early Mahayanists to recall them for human welfare. A *bodhisattva*, monastics, and lay practitioners of this school live with the thought of

² There are ten constraints as follows: personal identity (*sakkaya ditthi*), sceptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), attached to rites and rituals (*silabbataparamasa*), sensual desire (*kamaraga*), ill-will (*patigha*), craving for material realms (*ruparaga*), craving for formless realms (*aruparaga*), conceit (*mana*), restlessness (*uddacca*) and ignorance (*avijja*)

³ Three types of cankers are mentioned in the *Suttanta Pitaka*: the canker of sensual desire (*kamasava*), the canker of becoming (*bhavasava*) and the canker of ignorance (*avijjasava*). One more name of a canker is found in the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, the canker of wrong view (*ditthasava*), along with the former three cankers.

helping others. Regarding Theravadins, the former Theravadins mainly lived in the monastery and remained inactive in social affairs. Suppose we remember the story of the eighteen *arahats* who were asked to spread the *Dharma* until the next Buddha appeared. *Arahats* are not selfish and carefree about others. If a practitioner desires to reach the highest state of Enlightenment or *Arahat*, they must culture their mind by ten perfections.⁴

A gross misinterpretation of facts arose due to depending only on secondary pieces of literature. Classical Theravadins mainly focused on self-liberation. Buddhist philosophy primarily focuses on the cultivation of the human mind. Individuals are the central pillar of a society. If individuals change their outlook from egoism to altruism, societal welfare would be possible. In the *Madhupindika Sutta*, Buddha intended to change the mental outlook of the individuals first, and then society could automatically be in a better place. *Arahat* is a state that many monks and nuns desire to attain. However, an *Arahat* can also be a *Bodhisattva*, which can be known during Buddha's existence. Buddha himself was an *Arahat* as well as a *Bodhisattva*.

For further concern, two types of Theravada Buddhists have been found: The forest dweller monastics and the village dweller monastics. There is a tradition found in the Southeast Asian regions (nowadays, it is not so convenient). The lay Buddhist practitioners wanted monastics to stay in the monastery only rather than being engaged with social welfare. Those laypersons wanted it so that they could offer alms-giving to earn merit. But Buddha never promoted this kind of attitude one should be with. As has already been stated, village monastics remain engaged with society as teachers, doctors, advisors and saviours. On the other side, the forest dweller monastics lived isolated to attain Enlightenment. But, it depends on the practitioner whether to live in isolation or return to society.

The ultimate goal of Mahayana Buddhism:

Theravada and Mahayana schools both have the same admiration for the Buddha's *Dhamma*. Even both of these schools have the same standpoint on metaphysical doctrines. But, they differed in one point. Mahayana Buddhists, whether ordained monastics or lay practitioners, have a vocation to help others. Theravadins also have a benign attitude towards the sufferer. But, they delivered the teachings of Buddha in the Pali language, which is unintelligible to the local people. The teachings of Mahayana Buddhism after its emergence became more influential than Theravadins

⁴ Ten perfections or *Dasa* are- *Paramita* namely, generosity (*dana parami*), morality (*sila parami*), renunciation (*nekkhamma parami*), wisdom (*panna parami*), effort (*viriya parami*), forbearance (*khanti parami*), truth (*sacca parami*), determination (*aditthana parami*), loving-kindness (*metta parami*), and equanimity (*upekkha parami*).

for two reasons: One is that they propagated the Buddha's Dhamma in local languages, and the other is that they gave more importance to the well-being of others. There are two ways to the path of Bodhisattva: One who is reincarnated in this world as a representative of former Bodhisattvas such as the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso of *Bodhisattva* Avalokitesvara (embodied with compassion). The other type of *Bodhisattva* is categorized as the aspirant who follows ten perfections and, through intensive meditation, cultivates wisdom, i.e., *Bodhicitta* and compassion. The latter type of *Bodhisattva* is accessible from the subject and object duality. In every path from the historical period up to the Bodhisattva path, there is a gradual modification found among the Buddhist practitioners. In the path of Bodhisattva, spiritual awakening about the true nature of existence arises, but Mahayana school prompted social welfare as the essence of this schism.

According to Mahayana Buddhism, Bodhisattva is the highest state that everyone desires to attain. Unlike Theravadins, we need help finding two groups of Mahayana followers: forest dweller monks and village dweller monks. Whether a novice or a veteran monk, each section of monks attains the state of Bodhisattva, and there is no lower and higher realm of Bodhisattvas. Each Bodhisattva, with their rigorous meditation and high intellectuality, became an embodiment of great qualities such as wisdom, compassion, meditation, willpower and others. When they became the models of specific attributes, they tried to become much more attentive towards the sufferers. When a mental outlook becomes qualified with wisdom and compassion, our actions will definitely shift from one's happiness to everyone's happiness.

Theravadins or Mahayanists: A Comparative Outlook

The Theravada and Mahayana schools are categorised as mainstream Buddhist schools. As far as we know, Theravada school is popularly known as the 'School of Elders' and is the oldest existing school. Mahayana school is popularly known as the 'Great Vehicle'. Compared to the Theravada school, people from different sides are urged to be a part of the Mahayana tradition. If we are concerned with knowing the origin of the Theravada school, then it might be the third century BCE. In the case of the Mahayana tradition, it emerged in the land of India maybe in the First millennium. The primary difference between these two schools lies in their language of propagation of Buddhist *Dhamma*. Theravada tradition promulgates the Buddhist Dhamma in Pali, and Mahayana teachings are found in Sanskrit. In Theravada culture, individual, self-effort, wisdom, and meditation are the centre of discussion. The Mahayana tradition emphasises society, grace, compassion, and laypeople. Theravadins' goal is to become an Arahant and Mahayanists wish to become a *Bodhisattva*. Both of these two cultures endeavour to attain the state of Enlightenment. But Mahayanists took one step further

to come forward and guide others to be enlightened. We have to accept one thing: an evolution of thinking came forth in response to Buddhist culture.

Religion and Secularism:

Generally, the terms 'secularism' and 'religion' are incompatible with each other. But, in Buddhism, we can perceive how these terms complement one another. Firstly, a thought arises: How did Buddhism respond to secular matters? Remember that religion allows people to deal with personal issues with faith in a personal God. But, in Secularism, there is nothing to take personally. It is about discussion of social, political and economic matters. Buddhism is such a religion that its pioneer discussed secular issues. Buddha, while preaching about human suffering, either physical or mental, said that the immense lack of material things is one of the causes of it. Buddha, when he realized everything in this world is interconnected, means a political or economic issue must affect social life.

Buddha's *Dhamma* does not support any disparity. In the pre-modern period, material and financial crises were also significant concerns. Buddha stated that one crucial thing is scarcity. If it comes to our mind- Why do we face a crisis? A crisis is present all over the world. Buddha promoted a thought to overcome the situation to some extent. When we understand the difference between need and desire, then poverty cannot be allowed to exist. The label of affluent and indigent people is conventional. Buddha, through his self-revelation, came up with this thought: when we demarcate our needs and desires, the question of poverty would not arise. Many people have too many material possessions but never make a charity of it in a minimal amount. One who has an immense amount of food to eat, that person still wants more and more. However, Buddha only proposed distributing some of his wealth among others and wanted to get more. A balanced life is good for oneself and also for others. Poverty, this term makes the sense that one group of people is availing too much of wealth and another group of people does not have the least amount for survival.

Buddha taught us how to live an ethical life, but that moral life turns unethical. When poverty arises, people can do everything to fulfil their needs. Robbery, murder, and illegal trade of any material products become the means of livelihood. But, the right livelihood never urges these types of work. In the *Cakkavatti Sihanada Sutta*, Buddha recommended that a ruler rule the nation with watchful eyes and helpful hands for every person. We cannot remove crisis entirely from our society, but poverty can be assuaged by fulfilling their needs. Otherwise, a social disorder would appear on a large scale. We can adequately grasp Buddha's teachings if we take every portion of his teachings in a chain manner. His metaphysical view about *Karma* and Rebirth prompted the Noble Eightfold Path, followed by *Pancasila* and *Brahmavihara*, which

are completely practical. His religious doctrines support Secularism. A responsible person lives an ethical life while remaining in the Middle Way. In the ancient period, monastics were teachers, doctors, and advisors. They played all these roles with an attitude of being secular.

The term 'religion' derives from the Latin word "Religare", which means to bind together. In a denotative sense, Religion makes sense within the followers of the particular Religion that God and ordinary beings have an internal connection, which we need to realize. From the Buddhist context, a religion does urge a sense of unification with God. Instead, the canon of Religion is to cultivate a sense of inseparability in the human realm. Everyone does not need to formally attain the state of Enlightenment (formally) to realize what humanity means. In this reference, we can promote the name of the Great Chakravartin Samrat Ashoka. His spiritual awakening became the epitome for lay Buddhist practitioners and even non-Buddhists. Ashoka's Kalinga war had an effect of remorse in his mind, causing him to cultivate a compassionate mind. We can call him a *Bodhisattva* because his *bodhicitta* urged him to live for society. He understood the Buddha's *Dhamma* precisely as it is. He is always endeared to us as a lay Buddhist practitioner for his remarkable contribution. He is a religious person as much as a secular one. He built many *stupas* to propagate and preserve the Buddha's teachings. He was a Buddhist and also remained tolerant of other religions in his empire. He was always out there for social welfare. He contributed wealth and possessions to people in need for their standard survival. He did not think about Nirvana's ultimate goal but became a *Bodhisattva*. This approach does not entail that one who attains this state is superior to a lay practitioner. Here, nothing comes in a hierarchy. The ultimate is to cultivate oneself in a manner where one cries out for help. Helping hands would be there to take them out of the dark.

Engaged Buddhism: A Contemporary Movement

The term 'Engaged ' upholds whether Buddhism has engaged since its inception. There are various senses of the term 'engagement'- religious, ontological, social, political, environmental and economic. Buddhism has such characteristics that are pertinent in any of the stated forms. However, some critics have considered Buddhism a socially engaged religion. In the twentieth century, we became familiar with a revised edition of Buddhism named Engaged Buddhism or Socially Engaged Buddhism. This vehicle could be more innovative, but what makes it different from other existing schools? The adherents of the Theravada tradition also entitled themselves to the group of Engaged Buddhism. Mahayana tradition has always been intended for social welfare. Then, a question arises: Why is this vehicle named Engaged Buddhism? It means that Buddhism was not engaged socially in ancient and medieval

periods. But we do not need to think like this. If Impermanence is the nature of the world, then if the way of looking towards the world modifies, there would be nothing wrong. But, there is a difference in the clarification of suffering- in tradition, people are advised to get rid of suffering, and one can be free from this *samsara*. However, the scholars of Engaged Buddhism recommend being in this world while eradicating suffering.

Buddha's message is for all. It is imperative to make society better before that individual's spiritual awakening. Some Engaged Buddhists frequently face one question- Whether this form of Buddhism denies the traditional one. In response, they say Buddhism is engaged now and then by following Buddha's teachings. However, we can notice a shift, which is not a significant issue. In *Pratyekabuddha's* time with the Bodhisattvas, spiritual awakening was the prime goal; after that, social engagement was meaningful. The metaphysical doctrines are the reason for enhancing one's karma and society. According to many renowned Buddhists in the twentieth century, the fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet was named Tenzin Gyatso, a living Bodhisattva and an engaged Buddhist. But, there is no other Engaged Buddhist who is an *Arahat* or a *Bodhisattva*. It should not be a point of criticism. If the modern Engaged Buddhists desire to become an *Arahat* or a *Bodhisattva*, they can. But, if they do not think they should be on that level, it is okay because it is their choice. Nevertheless, every Buddhist practitioner can choose which way to go. Buddha never asked his followers to accept everything under his authority.

Health issues, economic crisis, and racism were also present to mitigate about as much as today. The traditional Buddhists knew how to handle those phenomena. The Buddhist pieces of literature are not only conducive to secular matters but also to medical issues. But, social disparity, political adversaries, racism, and civil war are the causes of changing attitudes. Engaged Buddhists grouped themselves with a thought to seize the turbulence by Buddha's ethical principles. If we explicitly know Buddhist ethics, it is all about social reawakening with courageous minds. Buddhist ethics can be as credible as social ethics.

Many Western scholars believe engaging with socio-political affairs is Westernized in nature. If so, what is wrong with it? Many venerable Asian Engaged Buddhists took education and spent some years there. They learned how to control those vulnerable situations delicately. Engaged Buddhists came forward with a canon to remain involved in any adverse situation but in a non-violent way. Violence cannot be a solution to any danger. Non-violence is the best tactic to make a peaceful land as much as possible. An illustrious Indian Engaged Buddhist is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, admired in eastern and western regions, especially by the Dalit class, for his upright

voice against caste discrimination. Some Asian Engaged Buddhists are- Aan Sung Suu Kyi of Myanmar, Dr. A. T. Ariyaratne of Sri Lanka, and Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia. Some notable Western Engaged Buddhists are- Joanna Macy, Bernie Glassman, Gary Snyder and others. Everyone's contribution as environmental, political, and peace activists is remarkable. They aim only to make a society where everyone, including humans, plants, and animals, lives in harmony and peace. Individuals should act righteously by modifying themselves and be.

Conclusion:

In the third millennium, science and technology make everything possible. We are so advanced in education, travel, food and many other things. What about our actions towards this society? Would we find ourselves responsible for any vicious act? A scrupulous mind must say yes. Societal inconsistency, political-economic conjuncture and environmental degradation are the causes of our infirmities. We should sustain the environment and make a corruption-free society. For this outlook, spiritual awakening is imperative; otherwise, we could not overcome it. Buddha, during his preaching, never devalued other religious doctrines. We can follow anyone as we wish, but our prime concern is realising inner contentment, one's real jewel. Living for others leads to real happiness, which is possible when our minds really incline it. A paradigmatic shift remains from the state of *Pratyekabuddha* to the state of Engaged Buddhists. Those who desired to attain the state of *Arahat* (remained indifferent about social affairs), but the Theravadin monastics remained engaged with social matters. If a question arises- Who are the predecessors of Engaged Buddhists? Then, the answer is Mahayanists. Engaged Buddhism is an updated form of Mahayana Buddhism. However, engaged Buddhism is the course that every follower of Buddhist schism desires to follow towards the goal, i.e., peace and harmony.

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CONSUMERISM ON THE RISE AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIAN TRADITIONAL VALUES: A PERSPECTIVE FOR CHANGE

Ankita Sharma

Abstract

The Industrial Revolution ushered in an era of unprecedented production and consumption, giving rise to a global culture of consumerism closely tied to the dominance of capitalism. While capitalism has significantly enriched state economies, it also challenged the ethical and moral standards of living. This present paper explores the significance of the ancient Indian texts and their potential synergy for individual and state welfare. Focusing on the value of artha (material prosperity) within Indian classics, this paper emphasizes that wealth is viewed only as a means to live a good life, never as an end. The exploration includes insights from Purusharthas, the four goals of human life, the significance of Karmayoga in the Bhagavad Gita, and the moral teachings found in the Eightfold Path of Buddhism and Upanishadic wisdom. In analyzing capitalism's role in creating economic inequality, the paper advocates for a holistic approach guided by the principle of loka-samgraha (welfare of everyone) from the Bhagavad Gita. The present paper is an attempt to contribute to the discourse on fostering individual, state, and societal well-being.

Keywords: Consumerism, Purusharthas, Karmayoga, Eightfold Path, Loka-samgraha

Introduction:

Consumption is an enduring and inseparable facet of existence, transcending temporal boundaries and historical contexts. It represents a fundamental element of biological sustenance, a shared attribute among humans and all living organisms. When distilled to its archetypal manifestation in the metabolic cycle—comprising ingestion, digestion, and excretion—consumption emerges as a timeless phenomenon intrinsic to the very essence of life. From the dawn of living entities, this act of taking in, processing, and releasing has persisted, unquestionably ingrained in every form of existence chronicled in historical narratives and ethnographic investigation¹

Over time, the significance of consumption has evolved beyond being solely a survival imperative or a basic aspect of existence. In the contemporary context, it wields transformative influence over the dynamics of human life. Presently,

¹ Bauman. Z. *Consuming Life*. Polity Press, 2007, p. 25

consumption extends beyond the biological imperative and has become a pivotal force shaping how individuals navigate the world. It establishes patterns in interhuman relations and exerts influence over elements of style and social life, contributing to the intricate tapestry of modern societal dynamics. As Colin Campbell² notes, in the modern era, consumption has transcended its traditional role, becoming a daily pursuit that imbues purpose into the lives of the majority. This transformation is notably marked by the rise of consumerism, a phenomenon that gained prominence during the expansive reach of the Industrial Revolution, it emphasizes the notion that continuous consumption of goods and services is always a desirable goal. With the evolution of our innate ability to "want" into a more nuanced capacity to "desire" and "long for," consumption has assumed a profound significance. The allure of experiencing heightened emotions associated with desire has, at times, exerted a compelling influence, overpowering our sensibilities and shaping the fabric of contemporary existence.

In an era marked by escalating consumerism, there is a pressing need to counteract its effects on our daily lives. Redirecting our focus towards Indian traditional values becomes imperative, given that Indian literature and philosophy are not merely theoretical but deeply intertwined with practical life. The Vedas, Upanishads, and revered scriptures like the Ramayana, Mahabharata, and *BhagavadGita* abound with social, ethical, economic, and political principles that have served as guiding beacons for humanity, fostering a better world for all.

The Vedas, as the oldest scriptures, serve as primary sources of moral ideas and beliefs. Subsequently, the *Smritis* imparts wisdom and sets moral standards for living, necessitating a re-evaluation in the contemporary world. Central to these teachings are two essential concepts: *kartavya* (duty or what is to be done) and *akartavya* (avoidance or what is not to be done).

Indian values, deeply rooted in ancient wisdom, aim to make an individual's life easier and ethical. Concepts such as *Purusharthas*, *Varna ashram dharma*, *nishkama karma*, and the *lokasamgraha* principle originated within this value system, emphasizing social welfare. This focus on societal well-being is not confined to Hindu texts but extends to Buddhist ones as well. The overarching theme is that actions performed without attachment to outcomes benefit both society and the individual.

² Colin Campbell is an Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the University of York, UK. One of his most notable works related to consumerism is "Consumption and Consumer Society: The Craft Consumer and other Essays"

The Indian tradition underscores that moral standards should be set by those who have conquered passions, harbor no selfish interests, and work exclusively for the preservation and welfare of society (*lokasamgraha* and *lokakalyana*). Indian literature, steeped in these principles, paves the way for a life characterized by virtue. This study seeks to explore and integrate such concepts into our daily lives, fostering a joyful and peaceful environment for all.

Consumer Values and the Wisdom of *Purusharthas*:

In the contemporary world, our surroundings are inundated with a plethora of auspicious objects for consumption. The landscape is characterized by a proliferation of goods, services, and commodities, offering a diverse array of options for enjoyment and fulfillment. It is not an exaggeration to assert that present-day humans find themselves more surrounded by tangible objects than by fellow human beings.

This prevalence of objects, ranging from material possessions to various services, underscores the intricate tapestry of consumer culture that has become a defining feature of modern life. The abundance and diversity of these items contribute to a society where individuals can indulge in a wide spectrum of experiences, each with its unique appeal and purpose.

In this context, the emphasis on material acquisition and consumption has become a notable aspect of contemporary living, shaping both individual lifestyles and societal norms. The sheer abundance of objects vying for attention reflects the complexity of choices individuals face in their quest for satisfaction and meaning in a world characterized by conspicuous consumption³.

In the modern world, prioritizing the accumulation of possessions has surged to the forefront, disrupting the equilibrium between wealth and life. Globally, wealth has taken precedence, necessitating an evaluation of the importance of '*purusharthas*' to restore a balance between financial pursuits and the essence of life.

According to Indian ethics, '*purusharthas*' encompasses the overarching life goals that individuals are expected to achieve throughout their lifetimes. These fourfold pursuits are *artha* (wealth and power), *kāma* (sensual pleasure), *dharma* (righteousness or religious duties), and *moksha* (liberation).

In the pursuit of *artha*, the accumulation of wealth and power is acknowledged, but it needs to be harmonized with the other dimensions of '*purusharthas*'. *Dharma* emphasizes righteous conduct and religious duties, providing a moral compass for

³ Baudrillard. J. *The Consumer Society- Myths and Structure*, Sage Publications, 1998, p.25

navigating life's complexities. Simultaneously, *kāma* encourages the enjoyment of sensual pleasures in moderation, fostering a balanced approach to life.

The ultimate aim, *moksha*, seeks liberation from the materialistic aspects of existence, guiding individuals towards spiritual fulfillment. By comprehensively understanding and incorporating these '*purusharthas*,' individuals can strive for a more harmonious and purposeful life. This holistic framework offers a nuanced perspective on achieving a balance between the allure of wealth and the deeper essence of life, presenting a pathway towards a more meaningful existence⁴.

In an era dominated by the voracity of capitalism, where money exerts unparalleled influence, the wisdom embedded in *purusharthas* assumes paramount importance. Jean Baudrillard contends that capitalism's rapid evolution has propelled the world into an insatiable machine of production and consumption, an assertion made in 1988 that continues to resonate today. This relentless cycle of production and consumption has, for many, become the primary and ultimate pursuit.

However, in stark contrast to this prevailing ethos, Hindu ethical values diverge, asserting that *artha*, or the accumulation of wealth, should not be the central objective for an individual. The teachings embedded in *purusharthas* provide an alternative perspective, urging a more nuanced approach to life that transcends the relentless pursuit of material gain. In a world consumed by the capitalist machinery, these ancient ethical values offer a counterbalance, encouraging individuals to consider a broader spectrum of life goals beyond the relentless drive for production and consumption. Indeed, wealth and power, encapsulated by the term *Artha*, stands as one of the initial objectives emphasized in Indian ethics, an achievement deemed essential for an individual. However, it is crucial to understand that while *Artha* encompasses wealth, property, and health in Hindu scriptures, it does not claim the status of the ultimate or primary goal.

Artha is presented as an objective that a householder (*grihastha*) must accomplish, underscoring the responsibilities and duties associated with the material aspects of life. The pursuit of wealth and power is acknowledged as a vital facet of an individual's journey, especially during the householding stage. Devoid of *artha*, the attainment of subsequent goals becomes unattainable; even the pursuit of *kāmais* contingent on it. For the destitute, harboring aspirations for *moksha* is implausible, as their primary and ultimate objective is securing financial resources to fulfill basic needs, such as meals. This suggests that Indian ethical ideals do not prohibit the

⁴ Lochtefeld. J. *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia Of Hinduism*, Vol 1, Rosen Publication Group, 2001, p. 19

possession of wealth; however, there is a limit to acquiring wealth solely to enhance one's own life.

In his book "The Hindu View of Life," Dr. S. Radhakrishnan elucidates that *artha* is an inherent drive in human existence, fueling the innate human will to amass property for the sake of wealth and power. According to Radhakrishnan, this urge is fundamental to human nature. Furthermore, he asserts that the desire for accumulation cannot be eradicated unless there is a transformation in the mindset of individuals⁵. Hence, Indian ethics underscores the importance of acquiring money for survival. However, possessing and accumulating wealth are not deemed illegitimate in Indian literature, recognizing it as a prerequisite for pleasure. The understanding is that happiness is contingent on having the means to procure necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. Nevertheless, this pursuit of wealth is expected to align with the righteous path outlined in Indian texts, following *Dharma* principles, which constitute the third *purushartha*.

Dharma serves as the binding force that aligns an individual with the moral life, emphasizing ethical disciplines. While the initial two aims, *artha*, and *kāma*, facilitate the attainment of worldly prosperity and sensual pleasure, the third goal, *dharma*, introduces disciplined control over the limitless and unrestrained satisfaction of the senses⁶. Inherent in human nature is a propensity towards greed and an attraction to sensual pleasure. However, it is crucial to recognize that the gratification of the senses is not the ultimate goal of human life. *Dharma* acts as a check on these innate tendencies, making it the primary goal that each individual should strive for. Whether or not an individual aspires to attain salvation, *dharma* remains essential for leading a life rooted in morality and ethics.

Dharma stands not as an independent *purushartha* like *artha* and *kāma*, but as a guiding principle that must be diligently followed to regulate these two pursuits effectively. Only those endeavors related to wealth and pleasure that align with *dharma*, or righteous actions, are considered legitimate. Beyond personal pursuits, *dharma* plays a vital role in upholding the social fabric by ensuring stability and harmony. It provides a set of norms that guide society, facilitating a disciplined and harmonious collective existence.

Dharma forms the bedrock of Indian texts, where it is perceived as the obligatory path that must be followed to attain salvation. Within the *Smritis*, *Sadharana dharma*, *Varna dharma*, and *Ashrama dharma* are three distinct types of *dharma*

⁵ Radhakrishnan. S., *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 55

⁶ Op, cit., Tiwari, *Classical Indian Thought*, p.203

delineated. *Varna dharma* assigns specific duties to the castes of *Brahman*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, and *Shudra*, while *Ashrama dharma* delineates tasks to be undertaken at various life stages – from *brahmacharya* to *grihastha*, *vanaprastha*, and finally *sanyas ashram*.

In contrast, *Sadharana dharma* encompasses values and obligations that are meant to be practiced by everyone, transcending distinctions of varna or ashram. Manu outlines ten *svadharma* within *Sadharana dharma*: *dhriti* (patience), *kshama* (forgiveness), *dama* (self-discipline), *asteya* (non-stealing), *sauca* (cleanliness), *indriyanigraha* (control of senses), *dhi* (intellect or wisdom), *vidya* (learning), *satya* (honesty), and *ākrodha* (absence of rage). While virtues like honesty, *asteya*, and *kshama* contribute to social harmony, the other virtues focus on fostering personal morality, intended to be pure at an individual level⁷.

The ultimate objective or value of life for an individual is the attainment of *Moksha*. All individuals are encouraged to strive towards this transcendent goal, considering it as the pinnacle of their life's purpose. While *kāma* and *artha* are acknowledged as pursuits of value, they do not constitute the ultimate objectives. An individual is advised to focus on the paramount goal of *moksha*, ensuring a sound mind and body to achieve the necessary attainments for a balanced and regular life.

From a spiritual perspective, *moksha* is defined as a state that, once reached, liberates an individual from all forms of pain. It is characterized by positive thinking, representing an uninterrupted state of tranquility, contentment, and joy. This spiritual quest towards *moksha* underscores the holistic well-being of an individual, transcending the temporal pursuits of pleasure and material prosperity.

Buddhist Ethics: Guiding Principles for Moral Living in a Consumer Society

Buddhism transcends mere religious practice; it is a profound way of life. To navigate life's challenges with greater ease, adherence to the teachings of Buddha is paramount. The core of Buddhist ethical guidance lies in the elevation of virtues, which hold a pivotal role in shaping one's conduct. Within the realm of social morality, Buddhism places significant emphasis on humility, generosity, love, gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, honesty, and justice. These virtues form the bedrock of a morally upright societal framework. Simultaneously, individual morality is cultivated through the virtues of self-control, temperance, contentment, kindness, celibacy, patience, and purity. In essence, Buddhism provides a comprehensive framework for ethical living, intertwining principles that nurture both social harmony and personal integrity. Beyond individual virtues, Buddhism expounds its greatest ethical discipline

⁷ Ibid., pp. 83,84

through the Eightfold Path, a guiding framework identified by Buddha himself as the route to the ultimate goal of *Nirvana*.

Buddha's foundational insight revolves around the pervasive nature of suffering in all facets of existence. He contends that the alleviation of suffering can only be achieved by comprehending its underlying causes. According to Buddha's teachings, the three fundamental sources of suffering are greed (*lobha*), aversion (*dosha*), and delusion (*moha*). These three mental states are identified as the roots of human suffering, and the Eightfold Path serves as a transformative journey to overcome them⁸. Indeed, according to Buddhist teachings, greed represents the self-centered craving for pleasure and material possessions, often accompanied by an intense desire for prestige, power, and status. This insatiable thirst for accumulation can become a central focus, leading individuals away from a path of contentment and spiritual fulfillment.

Aversion, another root cause of suffering, manifests in various forms such as negation, irritability, hostility, fury, and even violence. It is the rejection or strong aversion to certain experiences, people, or circumstances, which can breed negativity and hinder one's path to inner peace.

Delusion, characterized as the evil side of the mind in this context, refers to a state of confusion, misperception, or ignorance. It clouds one's understanding of reality and perpetuates a distorted view of the world. Overcoming delusion is a crucial aspect of the spiritual journey in Buddhism, as it paves the way for clarity, wisdom, and a deeper connection with the true nature of existence.

By acknowledging and addressing these three fundamental causes of suffering—greed, aversion, and delusion—individuals can undertake the transformative journey of the Eightfold Path, working towards liberation from the cycle of suffering and the realization of *Nirvana*⁹.

The three roots of suffering—greed, aversion, and delusion—spawn various causes of pain and sorrow. In a consumer society, these roots prominently influence human behavior. Greed propels an intense pursuit of status and prestige, triggering a fervent desire for societal recognition. Yet, greed rarely exists in isolation; the yearning for status often arises from aversion, accompanied by negation and jealousy. These emotional responses ultimately redirect focus towards material possessions.

⁸ These three states are collectively called as '*Kilesas*' in the Pali language usually translated as 'defilements'.

⁹ Bodhi. B. *The Noble Eightfold Path_ Way to End of Suffering*, 1999_2009, p.7

Ignorance is the underlying force behind these dynamics, as individuals perceive the transient aspects of the world as enduring realities. Buddhism, in contrast, asserts the momentary nature of the world, emphasizing impermanence. This perspective challenges prevalent societal norms, where the quest for material wealth and social standing is often based on a misunderstanding of the impermanent nature of existence. By comprehending and addressing these fundamental causes of suffering, individuals can gradually liberate themselves from the entanglements of greed, aversion, and delusion, embracing a path that transcends transient pursuits and aligns with the impermanent reality of the world¹⁰.

In a consumer society, objects serve as symbols of prestige and comfort. However, their acquisition is not solely based on their practical utility but also on the sign value they represent. This emphasis on the symbolic aspect of possessions is a primary cause of suffering in contemporary consumer culture¹¹. According to Baudrillard, objects have lost their clear connection to a specific purpose or necessity. He characterizes consumption as a contemporary tribal myth, having transformed into a new moral landscape where individuals experience heightened psychological and social pressures related to mobility, status, and competition across various domains such as finance, prestige, culture, and more.

The Buddha's teachings on embracing life with minimal material pleasures hold particular relevance in the present context. The Eightfold Path, encompassing principles such as right view, right intention, right action, right effort, right livelihood, and right mindfulness, serves as a foundational guide for leading a life governed by moral values. In a society dominated by capitalism, these teachings advocate for a mindful and ethical approach to one's actions and choices, urging individuals to prioritize spiritual and moral well-being over excessive material pursuits. Hence, certain aspects of the eightfold paths require our specific attention, and they are elaborated upon below.

Right View

The right view stands as the precursor to the entire path, guiding all other factors within it. Its importance lies in its ability to offer an understanding of our starting point, our destination, and the paths leading to that destination. Without the right view, embarking on any endeavor carries the risk of veering into aimless and undirected efforts. It serves as the compass, ensuring a clear understanding of the

¹⁰ Buswell. E. R., *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. Volume 1,2, Macmillan Reference, USA, 2004, p. 330

¹¹ Op, Cit, Baudrillard, *The Consumer Society*.

context and purpose, thus preventing the pitfalls of unguided action¹². Exactly, the importance of the right view becomes evident in practical scenarios like starting a business. When the goal is to earn money for a better living, having a clear and morally directed understanding of the path to take is crucial. The right view guides the entrepreneur in making ethical choices, ensuring that the pursuit of financial success aligns with moral principles. It sets the foundation for making informed decisions that not only contribute to personal success but also adhere to a framework of ethical conduct, promoting a harmonious and virtuous approach in the pursuit of one's goals.

Right Intention

The next step in the Eightfold Path is the right intention or right thought, which serves as the cognitive counterpart to the right view. Right intention involves using the mind in a manner aligned with the goals set by the right view. This aspect consists of three components: the intention to give up, the intention to be kind, and the intention of harmlessness. These three intentions stand in contrast to three types of wrong intentions that share similarities: intentions driven by desire, bad will, and harm.

Each positive intention counteracts the negative intention associated with it. The intention of renunciation opposes the intention of desire, the intention of goodwill counters the intention of bad will, and the intention of being harmless stands in opposition to harmful intentions. By cultivating these positive intentions, individuals can navigate away from harmful mental states and foster a mindset that contributes to personal well-being and the well-being of others.

Right Speech

Following the right intention, the next step in the Eightfold Path is right speech, which emphasizes the commitment to never speak falsehood and consistently convey the truth. Right speech involves refraining from engaging in lying, backbiting, using harsh words, and indulging in idle chatter. Moreover, it advocates for ensuring that our discourse is free from ill will and self-interest. This ethical foundation in communication aligns with the broader principles of the Eightfold Path, promoting honesty, kindness, and mindfulness in the way we express ourselves. Indeed, the act of lying can be driven by various emotions, such as greed, hatred, or delusion. When greed is the motivating factor behind telling a lie, the intention is typically to gain personal benefits for oneself or for those closely associated, such as acquiring money, power, respect, or admiration. Buddha's teachings explicitly discourage such deceptive practices driven by selfish desires.

¹² Op, Cit., Bodhi. B. *The Noble Eightfold Path*, p. 10

The ethical framework of Buddhism emphasizes the importance of truthfulness and discourages actions that arise from harmful motivations. By understanding the root causes of dishonesty and cultivating right intention and right speech, individuals can strive to align their actions with principles that contribute to personal and societal well-being, rather than seeking personal gain at the expense of truth and integrity.

Right Action

Proceeding from the right effort, the subsequent aspect is the right action, encompassing the five precepts known as *Panchsheela*. These ethical guidelines serve as principles for upright conduct:

Not to kill but to practice harmlessness and compassion (*ahimsa*): This precept underscores a commitment to non-violence and the cultivation of compassion towards all living beings.

Not to steal but to exercise charity and generosity (*asteya*): This precept encourages honesty and generosity, discouraging theft and promoting acts of giving.

Not to commit sexual misconduct but to maintain chastity and self-control (*brahmacharya*): Emphasizing ethical and responsible behavior in matters of sexuality, this precept advocates for chastity and self-discipline.

Not to engage in deception but to practice sincerity and honesty (*satya*): This precept promotes truthful and sincere communication, discouraging deceit and falsehood.

Not to consume intoxicating beverages or substances but to exercise temperance and mindfulness: Encouraging moderation, sobriety, and mindfulness in lifestyle choices, this precept promotes mental clarity and overall well-being. Adhering to these precepts facilitates the cultivation of a lifestyle grounded in ethical conduct, compassion, and mindfulness, aligning one's actions with the principles of the Eightfold Path. Buddha prohibits intentional killing, recognizing it as an act driven by the negative forces of greed, hatred, and delusion. The guidance extends to the prohibition of taking what is not given, encompassing acts of stealing, robbery, snatching, fraudulence, and deceitfulness. Moreover, Buddha's teachings emphasize the prohibition of sexual misconduct, particularly with close family members such as mother or sister, and stress the importance of obtaining consent from others before engaging in any intimate or sexual acts. These ethical guidelines underscore the principles of compassion, honesty, and respect for others within the framework of the Eightfold Path.

Right Livelihood

The concept of appropriate livelihood, as expounded by Buddha, holds paramount importance within the framework of earning wealth. This aspect is considered crucial within the context of the Four Noble Truths. Buddha's guidance emphasizes ethical considerations in wealth acquisition, discouraging illegal and violent methods and advocating for a peaceful and just means of obtaining wealth. The teachings explicitly forbid five types of livelihood: the sale of weapons, commerce in living beings (including breeding animals for slaughter, the slave trade, and prostitution), the manufacture and butchery of meat, trade in poisons, and trade in intoxicants.

Buddha goes on to highlight various dishonest means of earning money, categorizing them as immoral livelihoods. These include lying, betrayal, soothsaying, fraud, and usury. A wrong way of living, according to Buddha, involves actions that violate one's moral principles, both in speech and behavior. This ethical framework encourages individuals to consider the impact of their livelihood on themselves and others, promoting a path of integrity, compassion, and adherence to moral principles.

The Thai treatise emphasizes the concept of "rightness" in the realms of actions, persons, and objects within the context of business ethics. Righteousness in action entails employees performing their tasks diligently without degrading the company or its products, while owners are urged to treat their workforce fairly and avoid exploitative practices. Rightness regarding persons underscores the importance of respecting and caring for individuals, extending to customers, co-workers, and superiors. Employers are encouraged to organize tasks based on merit, provide fair compensation, and foster a positive work environment. "Rightness towards objects" necessitates honesty and accuracy in business dealings, discouraging deceptive practices, misleading advertising, and false claims about the quality or quantity of products. This holistic approach reflects a commitment to ethical conduct, aligning with broader Buddhist principles of right action, compassion, and truthfulness.

The intertwining of enlightenment and morality within religious teachings, such as the Eightfold Path, serves as a guide for individuals aspiring to lead not only spiritually fulfilling lives but also morally upright and healthier lives in the broader sense.

Philosophy of *Karmayoga* in *Bhagavad Gita*:

Man's fundamental nature is intricately tied to action, known as karma. From the moment of birth, a human is inherently engaged in various activities, whether it be speaking, moving, eating, or excreting – all considered as forms of action. However,

the driving force behind many human actions is often rooted in the desire for material gain, particularly driven by greed for monetary wealth.

Throughout history, humans have practiced various forms of worship, appealing to a diverse array of deities with the hope of receiving tangible benefits. These benefits range from a bountiful harvest and healthy livestock to timely rains. The underlying motivations behind these requests, whether in the past or present, primarily revolve around the pursuit of a comfortable life and the attainment of pleasure. Even the aspiration for heavenly realms, as seen in diverse religious traditions, is often fueled by the anticipation of experiencing joy and pleasure.

In the Vedic traditions, these conditions were considered mandatory, and ethical principles were applied to the pursuit of pleasure and avoidance of discomfort. It reflects a fundamental aspect of human nature – the perpetual seeking of pleasure and the instinctive aversion to discomfort – both of which drive the actions and aspirations of individuals throughout their lives¹³.

Additionally, within the realm of human action, there exists a dual nature comprising both exterior and internal components, referred to as purpose and intention, respectively. In this framework, the internal aspect, or intention, is considered superior. Indian tradition places a profound emphasis on the underlying motive behind any action, recognizing that the motivation is paramount.

The philosophical underpinnings of Indian thought delve into the delicate analysis of *rāga* and *dvesha*, identified as the two fundamental causes influencing human conduct. It is the interplay of these two factors that occasionally lead individuals to engage in actions that may be perceived as morally or ethically questionable. The guiding principle within Indian traditions is to steer actions away from being dictated solely by attachments (*rāga*) and aversions (*dvesha*). Instead, the emphasis is placed on cultivating a sense of non-attachment, known as *anāsakti*, or the practice of selfless action, referred to as *nishkāmata*. This perspective encourages individuals to act without being unduly swayed by personal desires or aversions, fostering a state of equilibrium and ethical conduct in all endeavors¹⁴.

Lord Krishna elucidates the true essence of Karma in the *BhagavadGita*, terming it as Karma yoga. Arjuna queries Shri Krishna, questioning, "If knowledge is superior to action, why have you instructed me to undertake certain actions?"¹⁵ In response, Krishna clarifies that there are essentially two main paths in the world: the

¹³ Singh. B. *The Essence of Bhagwad-Gita*, Arnold-Heinemam, 1981, pp. 61,62

¹⁴ Op, Cit, Tiwari, *Classical Indian Thought*, Introduction.

¹⁵ Yati. N.C. *Bhagwad Gita*, chapter three, verse I

unitive way of wisdom followed by the Sāṁkhya, and the unitive way of conduct practiced by the Yogis. Moreover, since these two paths are interdependent, abstaining from action even momentarily is impossible. The inherent modalities established by nature compel everyone to act involuntarily. Krishna, however, asserts that individuals who solely pursue the gratification of sensual desires and mental pleasures are considered lost souls. On the contrary, those who exercise control over their senses with the assistance of their minds and perform actions without attachment are the ones who achieve success in life. Avoiding action to escape its consequences is not the path to follow; instead, one should engage in necessary activities as they are essential for progress and a contented life in this world. However, each action should be undertaken without attachment. The cultivation of various virtues for ethical well-being is endorsed by Indian traditional beliefs. For instance, fostering qualities like *indriyanigraha* (control of senses), *anāsakti* (lack of attachment to objects), *niṣkāmata* (control of desires), and *cittashuddhi* (purity of mind) is deemed equally crucial for the development of moral character. These virtues stand alongside qualities such as love, compassion, forgiveness, friendship, and brotherhood, collectively contributing to the holistic and ethical growth of an individual¹⁶. Behaviours driven by attachment inevitably lead to sorrow, not only for the individual but also for others. This pattern is starkly evident in societies where actions are intertwined with prestige and status, often resulting in the suffering of the working class.

Karl Marx also critiques such capitalist societies, where the pursuit of wealth and prosperity becomes synonymous with exploitation. A prime example of capitalist society as given by Marx is colonialization, which he says is a unique instance in human history. Countries like Britain, France, and Portugal expanded their colonies across various regions worldwide with the primary goal of amassing wealth. These colonies provided a market for burgeoning industries and, through monopolistic control, facilitated greater capital accumulation. The riches obtained through looting, enslavement, and exploitation in these colonies were transported back to the mother nations, where they were transformed into capital. This historical narrative encapsulates the consequences of attached behavior, illustrating its impact on both local and global scales¹⁷. Marx argued that even in contemporary times, the majority of wealth is concentrated in the hands of capitalists. He maintained that capitalists continue to retain the lion's share of the profits generated through production, perpetuating economic inequality and class disparities in society. According to Marx's critique of capitalism, this unequal distribution of wealth and the exploitation of labor

¹⁶ Op, Cit., Tiwari, *Classical Indian Thought*, p. 2

¹⁷ Marx. K. *Capital*, Progress Publishers, 1977, p. 478

remain persistent issues, contributing to the ongoing challenges of economic and social inequality.

The current dominance of capitalists is attributed to their affiliative behavior, according to the perspective presented. While the accumulation of wealth itself is not inherently condemned, the moral stance centers on the immorality of exploiting others and hoarding resources exclusively for personal gain. The narrative emphasizes that abstaining from action or giving up on responsibilities is not the optimal strategy for societal improvement.

Instead, the advocated approach is to actively engage in actions that contribute to the preservation and enhancement of social order. This is encapsulated in the concept of *loka-saṃgraha*, underscoring the belief that genuine societal progress occurs through actions that uphold and strengthen the collective well-being of the community.

The *BhagavadGita* advocates a set of virtues and responsibilities for individuals. These include practicing *ahimsa* (non-injury), *satya* (truthfulness), *akrodha* (avoidance of anger), *priyavacana* (speaking in a kind and pleasant manner), *dayā* (compassion and love for all creatures), *svarthatyaga* (avoidance of egoism), and *paranindatyaga* (refraining from speaking ill of others). Additionally, the *Gita* proposes that individuals contribute to societal well-being by fulfilling responsibilities such as *lokasthiti* (maintenance of social order), *lokasiddhi* (preservation of social customs), *lokasaṃgraha* (upholding social equilibrium), *lokakalyāna* (advocating for social welfare), and *lokayātra* (contributing to social growth). These principles guide individuals toward a path of ethical conduct and active participation in fostering a harmonious and progressive society.

Wisdom Beyond Wealth: Narratives on Self-Realization and True Happiness

The Upanishads are revered as knowledge treatises, offering profound insights into spiritual and philosophical concepts. In contrast to the Vedas, the Upanishads extensively develop ideas such as *karma*, *samsara*, and *Moksha*. They particularly emphasize the paramount importance of knowledge. Ignorance is identified as the greatest obstacle in human life by the Upanishads, and it is deemed crucial to eradicate this ignorance through the wisdom imparted by the Upanishads themselves. The pursuit of knowledge is recognized as a transformative path leading to a deeper understanding of fundamental truths and the ultimate goal of liberation (*Moksha*).

According to the Upanishads, *Brahman* is recognized as the ultimate reality of the universe, and *Atman* is considered an integral aspect of this ultimate reality. The primary objective for individuals is to attain *Moksha*, the liberation from the cycle of birth and death, which is achieved through understanding one's essential self in union

with *Brahman*. This knowledge, however, is not solely acquired through intellectual means; it requires purity of character and conduct.

The *Katha* Upanishad underscores this notion, asserting that true knowledge of *Brahman* is not accessible to those who have not abandoned unethical conduct. The pursuit of *Moksha*, therefore, is intricately linked with moral and ethical refinement, emphasizing the holistic development of an individual's character and conduct on the path to spiritual realization¹⁸. Indeed, the *Brihadaranyaka* Upanishad supports the idea that attaining oneness with *Brahman* is not possible for individuals who have not cultivated qualities of peace, self-discipline, tranquility, endurance, and inner composure. These virtues are seen as prerequisites for the spiritual journey, emphasizing the significance of mental and emotional equilibrium in the pursuit of a deeper understanding of the ultimate reality, *Brahman*. The Upanishads consistently underscore the interconnectedness of ethical conduct, mental discipline, and spiritual realization on the path to self-discovery and the realization of oneness with the cosmic reality¹⁹.

The Upanishads, revered as repositories of profound wisdom, offer many facets that contribute to a more meaningful existence. Within these sacred texts, one encounters the compelling stories of Nachiketa, a young child, and *Maitreyi*, the wife of the rishi *Yajnavalkya*, both choosing the wealth of supreme knowledge over material possessions.

The story of Nachiketa, found in the *Katha* Upanishad, unfolds with his father performing a religious sacrifice and offering various gifts. Curious about the nature of these offerings,²⁰ Nachiketa questions his father, who, in a moment of frustration, responds by saying that he would be sacrificed to the God of Death, *Yama*. True to his commitment, Nachiketa arrives at the gates of *Yama*, where he is granted three boons. Intrigued by the mysteries of death, Nachiketa, for his third boon, seeks knowledge about its purpose and aftermath.

Yama, attempting to divert him from worldly temptations, offers riches, a long life, and dominion over the entire planet. However, Nachiketa, recognizing the transient nature of material wealth, remains steadfast in his quest for supreme knowledge. He asserts that worldly pleasures are fleeting, and material possessions cannot provide lasting satisfaction. Nachiketa resolutely chooses the wealth of wisdom and understanding, refusing to be swayed by temporary allurements.

¹⁸ *Katha* Upanishad., 1.2.24

¹⁹ *Brihadaranyaka* Upanishad, 4.4.23

²⁰ *Katha* Upanishad, Chapter 1, phrase I

In this narrative, the Upanishads impart timeless lessons on the value of prioritizing spiritual knowledge and enlightenment over ephemeral material wealth, showcasing the enduring pursuit of truth and the profound significance of choosing the path of supreme wisdom. Even the longest life is short with all of these things. I do not need any of those. When it comes to money, a man can never be pleased since he always wants more, and money won't aid him after he passes away. So please enlighten me with the utmost wealth in the world, the one I asked for.

In another profound tale featuring the sage *Yajnavalkya* and his wife *Maitreyi*, a noteworthy discussion unfolded²¹. As *Yajnavalkya* prepared for his life in the Sanyas ashram, he decided to divide his property between his two wives, *Katayani* and *Maitreyi*, and asked them to choose their respective shares²². However, *Maitreyi*, known for her wisdom, expressed dissatisfaction with the material possessions offered.

Intriguingly, *Maitreyi* questioned the true source of happiness, pondering whether wealth and possessions could provide lasting comfort and joy. She raised profound inquiries about the potential of riches to grant immortality or perpetual happiness. She questioned whether ownership of the entire planet and all the wealth in the world could make her the happiest person. *Yajnavalkya*, acknowledging the limitations of material wealth, responded that while money can offer comfort, it cannot ensure true and enduring happiness. He affirmed that self-knowledge and understanding oneself lead to genuine contentment.

Recognizing *Maitreyi's* profound inquiry and determination to seek true happiness, *Yajnavalkya* blessed her with the highest level of self-knowledge. This knowledge, he conveyed, would bring her happiness at every stage of life, emphasizing the transcendent value of inner wisdom over external possessions.

Indeed, these narratives from the Upanishads serve as powerful illustrations of the teachings that material success is not the ultimate goal and that lasting happiness cannot be found in external possessions. The Upanishads emphasize the transient nature of material wealth, highlighting the impermanence of ownership and the cyclical nature of worldly pursuits.

The profound wisdom conveyed in these stories reinforces the central idea that everything, including the concept of wealth, is inherently rooted in a person's thoughts and understanding. The inevitability of succession in ownership, as exemplified by the

²¹ Krishnananda. S. *The Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, Fourth Brahman.

²² Ibid., Chapter 2, verse I

transfer of property upon one's death, underscores the ephemeral nature of external possessions.

The Upanishads, through these narratives, guide individuals toward the realization that the ultimate objective is to know oneself. The pursuit of self-knowledge is presented as the pathway to enduring satisfaction and true happiness, contrasting with the fleeting and transitory nature of wealth. These timeless teachings continue to inspire contemplation on the deeper dimensions of life and the quest for inner fulfillment beyond the material realm.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, the examination of Indian ideals presents a profound contrast to contemporary life manipulated by the relentless desire for more goods and commodities, commonly known as consumerism. The Indian value system, rooted in the balance of *Purusharthas*, the Eight-fold paths, and the principles of *Karmayoga*, underscores that a good life is not solely dependent on material wealth. The traditional Indian perspective treats wealth as a means to live life, emphasizing its role as a first step towards individual and collective well-being.

The conflict between the money/consumption-oriented value system and the non-materialistic-based ideals prompts individuals to make a choice. However, the complexities of societal structures, influenced by politics and the economy, pose challenges in striking a balance between these two systems. Yet, the essence lies in understanding the pragmatic ideas inherent in traditional systems, particularly those of Indian origin. Embracing our duties with a sense of responsibility and contributing to the well-being of others can lead to a more fulfilling and harmonious world, transcending the confines of self-centered pursuits. Ultimately, the quest for a meaningful life and happiness requires aligning with values that prioritize collective welfare and the enduring principles of humanity.

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(THE) MAPPING OF POSTHUMANISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY¹

Akoijam Thoibisana

Abstract

*Posthumanism designates a series of reactions to the idea of the study of man in terms of humanism. The studies of posthumanism, like any other studies with the same prefix 'post' namely postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism, etc. include in itself the studies of humanism, modernism, structuralism, colonialism, and the like. The term 'post' has also been often used in two senses, one in terms of time frame, that is historically, and the other, as a style of thought. Posthumanism also includes within itself the studies of man's relation to machines or technology on the one hand, and animals or non-human on the other hand. Lyotard for example used the term 'inhuman' in his essay *Postmodern Fable* to discuss the nature of posthumanism. Posthumanism has also been approached from many different aspects from literature to art to science-fiction. The paper, however, confines its discussion on the philosophical discussion of the same.*

Accordingly, the paper is divided into three sections. First, give a brief overview of the philosophy of (hu)man, the question of Being, and humanism. Second, is an attempt to present the postmodernist (or rather the poststructuralism) account of understanding man or rather the end of man. The crux of the paper is the mapping of the philosophy of posthumanism through the lens of deconstructing humanism. This will be explicitly discussed in the third section of the paper.

Keywords: *posthumanism, man, human, inhuman, Dasein, Derrida, deconstruction*

I

Philosophy of (hu)man, Question of Being and Humanism

The Greek philosopher Aristotle asserted that man is a rational animal. This definition of man by virtue of the quality of rationality (is said to) provide us with an account, nothing less than a featherless biped or fragmented man. If one goes back to Plato, one can recall Plato's definition of man as a political animal; furthermore, we find Socrates' understanding of man as too much of a mystery. God remained at the

¹ The paper “(The) Mapping of Posthumanism: A Philosophical Study” was presented for the World Philosophy Day on the theme ‘Post Humanism’ organised by the Department of Philosophy, North Bengal University, on 11th January, 2022.

center, and the divine message exhorted to the Athenians was to take care of their souls and not to ruin their lives by letting care of the body and of the various possessions that precede the good of the soul. Hence, the focus was always more on the moral qualities of man, and the cultivation of moral qualities of man, like justice, goodness, courage, and temperance.

Descartes gave fresh air to the truth of (hu)man and what it means to be (hu)man when he provided us with an account of 'the rational mind,' or 'soul' which is entirely distinct from the body. In his *Second Meditation*, Descartes raised the question 'But, what is man?' in order to consider the nature of the human mind and arrive at the notion that *I am a thing which thinks*. And thereafter follows the famous dictum of 'I think, therefore I exist' or *Cogito, Ergo Sum*. The issues and problems surrounding the *Cogito* has fascinated philosophers for many centuries. Husserl took up Descartes' *Cogito* to give the form of transcendental; Heidegger directly assaulted it as an isolated subject that even failed to address the metaphysical question of the subject itself; Sartre's existential philosophy was however founded on a different version of the *Cogito* whose certainty was never clear and distinct; Lacan on the other hand gave an obsessional psychoanalytical reading of the modern subject in terms of Descartes' *Cogito*. And there is also the (in)famous debate between Foucault and Derrida on the idea of *Cogito and Madness*, at the end of the twentieth century, that drifts apart the two thinkers. The *Cogito* has also been a topic of interest among other thinkers, like Ryle, Wittgenstein, Russell, Bernard Williams, and many more. It has become the most complicated debate in the history of Western philosophy, which otherwise is also taken to be one of the most simple, clear, and distinct. The point of putting forward Descartes' *Cogito* is because the preamble to the *Cogito* in terms of 'a thinking thing' opens the question of the modern subject, or the Cartesian subject, which is most often read as the founding principle of humanism. In other words, the genealogical studies of humanism can be traced back to the idea of Descartes' *Cogito*.

Descartes has also given us some account of the inhuman, when in his *Discourse* he told us a story about a monkey, that was actually a machine. He argues that if there were a machine that looked like a monkey, both figures are, for Descartes, ultimately inhuman as both lack the exercise of rational thought; by the same token, there is no essential difference between them. For Descartes (hu)man therefore is absolutely distinct from the inhuman (be it animal or machine). Following which Badmington rephrases Descartes 'I think, therefore I am' to include *I think, therefore I*

*cannot possibly be an automaton.*² (18) This is the anthropocentrism of Descartes humanism.³

The matrix of Cartesian dualism and its humanism that privileges the mind over the body (to such an extent that the essence of the human depends in no way upon its embodiment) is carried on by contemporary science fiction theories and movies of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The essential distinction between the human and inhuman has moved from the physical to the metaphysical (in which humans have feelings, whereas aliens do not, or even have some feelings). This has given us a metaphysics of humanism that operates on the binary opposition of human and inhuman. That is, it is also a metaphysics of absolute difference between the two that operates around *the principle of hierarchy*. The primacy of hierarchy here refers to the study of humanism that takes a central role in the history of Western philosophy. This was subsequently followed up in the work of many other modern and contemporary philosophers. For example, Kant's idea of Man as an end in itself; Hegel's notion of Self and Other, etc. There is also Marx's idea of man in terms of labor and production; Freud's psychoanalytical understanding of man; Darwin's evolutionary idea of man etc.

Heidegger's Humanism and the Question of Being: the New Humanism

Humanism and its crisis, however, were inevitably marked by the catastrophes created by the horror of the holocaust and the two-world war. Many thinkers and philosophers of the late twentieth century made different attempts to revitalize humanism in different forms. In continental philosophy, mention may be made of three main essays specifically addressed to humanism. They are Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*, (1946/1947) Sartre's, *Is Existentialism a Humanism* (or *Existentialism and Humanism*), (1945/1946) Levinas's *Humanism of the Other*, (1972) and Merleau-Ponty's *Humanism and Terror*. (1947/1969) Not to forget is Nietzsche's attack on humanism. The focus of the essay, however, is specifically restricted to Heidegger's account of humanism.

² Badmington, N. "Theorizing Posthumanism" in *Cultural Critique*. No. 53, Posthumanism Winter, 2003, pp.10-27

³ The anthropocentrism of Descartes humanism collapsed if it became impossible to maintain a clear distinction between the human and the inhuman; that is if a machine for example is given enough organ that would be capable of responding in a manner that is utterly indistinguishable from the human. In such case, reason would no longer be capable to distinguish humans from any nonhuman or inhuman as such.

Heidegger's essay *Letter on Humanism*, written in the fall of 1946 (published in 1947) is not merely a philosophical meditation on the 'hubris of subjectivity' in the blinding light of Being. It was a careful reformulation and restructuring of a narrative concerning the events with which Heidegger is most profoundly concerned. The *Letter* was initially a response to questions put to Heidegger by a young French philosopher Jean Beaufret concerning the meaning of humanism (in the wake of the Second World War). The *Letter* includes aspects of the 'humanism problem' in National Socialist ideology. It was also a direct response of Heidegger to Sartre's lectures *Existentialism is a Humanism*, which was just published. Heidegger's *Letter* provides an extended statement concerning his philosophical position that explains why he is not a 'humanist,' particularly in Sartre's sense of the term.⁴

Heidegger begins the *Letter* with his famous distinction between the 'essence of man' and the 'essence of truth'. He argues that it is only 'thought' that is concerned with Being that can reveal the 'essence of truth'. That is, neither man's existence nor his will, but Being itself is the source of action. Heidegger argues that whereas the Western 'logic' and 'grammar' and 'metaphysic' have seized control of the interpretation of language' and posited subject and object as appropriate terms to define the human condition; Heidegger's *Letter* is an attempt to liberate language from the grammar of Western metaphysic and return to the essence of truth, which is the truth of Being.

Heidegger argues that the grammar of Western metaphysics is entirely responsible for what he calls, the 'homelessness' of modern man. It is also the root cause of the 'forgetting of Being'. This 'homelessness' for Heidegger is manifested in many forms, like in communication, technology, cultural industry, and also in illusory notions such as public and private. It is here that Heidegger defines humanism as any conception which places 'man' at the center and 'privileges man's essence' (as implicated in this forgetting). According to Heidegger, all humanism has as its ground, the projection of some essential characteristic onto man. Heidegger writes that,

“However different these forms of humanism may be in purpose and in principle, in the mode and means of their respective realizations, and in the form of their teaching, they nonetheless all agree that the *humanitas* of *homo humnus* is determined with regard to an already established

⁴ Infact a substantial theme of the *Letter* is read as the dissociation of his philosophical position from that of Sartre's existential humanism (in Sartre's sense of the existential and humanism). Heidegger moreover felt it necessary because of the fact that Sartre had explicitly associated him with his own position in his lecture on *Existentialism is a Humanism*.

interpretation of nature, history, world, and the ground of the world.”
(LH:202)

Heidegger also refers to the apparent difference thoughts - the examples of Greeks, Romans, Christians, Marxism, and modern Sartre, as ultimately without distinction. He noted that the history of metaphysics is the history of a decline, the devolution of this anthropocentric and foundational hubris in which ‘man’s essence or existence’ is always prior to Being. Heidegger concluded that humanism (including even the most radical completion in Nietzsche) was a fatal error in the philosophical historical constitution of the West.

He redefines ‘humanism as the inclusive process’ that is bound up with ‘the beginning, the unfolding, and the end of metaphysics,’ and which, in accord with any one of several differing perspectives, but each time knowingly, the ‘human being is placed in the center of Being without therefore becoming the highest beings.’ He also carefully includes the typical Nazi’s definition of ‘man’ among universalist, individualist, national, and ethnic ‘humanism’ in terms of the ‘human being that is first a humanity or mankind,’ then an individual or a community, and a people or group of peoples.⁵

The *Letter* concludes with an appeal to Being’s guardian and shepherds to an ‘open resistance to humanism.’ (LH: 225) The *Letter* was also a gesture of defiance in the cloak of humility. It complains of the peculiar dictatorship of the public sphere, the conflict of ‘isms,’ and also his tilt towards Marxism. And the victory of the American and Soviet armies constituted a descent into the metaphysics of the machine. Or in Marxist terms, the ‘power of the technical’, whose first victim is Germany. In other words, the German catastrophe is globalized, insofar as ‘homelessness is coming to be the destiny of the world.’ (LH:219) The *Letter* in short was a missive from ‘Being to man,’ absolving its author of all responsibility. Heidegger’s *Dasein* has become Being’s act that is also directed as ‘a revelation of Being to man.’⁶

⁵ Rabinback. A. “Heidegger’s Letter in Humanism as Text and Event” in *New German Critique*, No. 62, 1994, pp 3-38 .

⁶ Heidegger in the work, *The Question of Technology* (1954) gives an account of the readiness-to-hand that he already discusses in *Being and Time*. He analyses technology not in terms of any tools that make our life easier; or that which can be taken to be an instrument for manipulation of human ends. He argues that the essence of technology relates not to the production practice, but to the particular way of revealing the world. He reveals that humans do not control technology; human is rather determined by the revealing technology. His arguments aimed at calling into question ‘the instrumental and anthropological definition of technology.’ The point of the argument is that human beings are defined by activities that are dependent on the realization of a number of projects that are dependent on humans non-thematically ‘using’ tools to achieve. That is, while human uses tools to

Heidegger ends the *Letter* with a brief statement of the thesis that ‘the beginning of metaphysics in the thought of Plato is at the same time the beginning of ‘humanism.’ The *Letter* calls for our capacity to realize the possibility of truth, ‘*ek-sistence*’. He takes it that it is only ‘*ek-sistence*’ which is truly essential to humanity. In other words, the answer to the question ‘what the human being is’ (as it is called in the traditional language of metaphysics, or the essence of the human being) lies in his *ek-sistence*. Heidegger furthermore elaborated on the key to humanity’s *ek-sistence* as language, that is ‘the house of Being’. It is also ‘the home of human being.’⁷

When it comes to existential philosopher Sartre, his existentialism as a humanism is distinguished from the essentialist humanism of the Enlightenment. At the core of Sartre’s work was the interpretation of Nietzsche’s notion of ‘God is dead’ and ‘man killed him’. And since, for Sartre, there is nothing before being, ‘existence precedes essence’. So, whereas the philosophy of enlightenment projects a universal idea onto human beings and asserts that every one possesses the same basic qualities; existentialism, particularly of Sartre argues that ‘man first exists’ and ‘he materialized in the world; encounters himself’ and ‘only afterward defines himself. Human life for Sartre is abandoned and can no longer be build on any religious guidance. This also implies that man must bear the full consequences. Humanism thereby is formulated on the basis that everything is permissible, there are no fixed values inscribed anywhere. And since ‘man is condemned to be free; man is not only that which he conceives himself to be but also that which ‘he makes of himself.’ Man’s existence therefore consists of ‘nothing else’ than the ‘sets of man’s actions, nothing else than his life.’ What we see in Sartre is an attempt to transform ‘existentialism’ into a form of ‘humanism’ and his existential humanism pursues an integration of phenomenology and Marxism through the concept of ‘subjectivity’ that is predicated on ‘individual agency’ of free beings. In other words, Sartre’s humanism rests on a phenomenology which conceives of authenticity as the transcendental being of subjectivity. And, the subject is authentic to the extent to which it is free, and it is free to the extent to which it acts responsibly. Concerning Sartre’s understanding of Marxism, it may be noted that Sartre does not consider ‘labor’ as a historical subject. The historical subject, for Sartre’s existentialist humanism is tantamount to the individual signifier, who qualifies for agency, in the more existentialist sense of the term.

achieve projects, this ‘use’ is non-thematic; and meaning is simply taken up by humans without any of the reflective calculation inherent to instrumental utility.

⁷ And it is not the case that ‘human being is at home in their language’ such that language becomes a mere container for their preoccupation; rather language is at once *the house of Being* and *the home of human being*.

So, whereas for Sartre, man's freedom to act is rooted in subjectivity, which alone can grant man his dignity; wherein the Cartesian cogito becomes not only a possible point for existentialism; it is also the only possible basis for humanism. Heidegger on the contrary insisted that *Dasein* or existence is and remains beyond the pale of mere Cartesian subjectivism. To this extent, Heidegger rejected the humanistic tradition because it remains stamped in the mold of metaphysics, engrossed in beings and oblivious to Being.

The next section is an exposition of the antihumanistic or critique of humanism in terms of the politics of (human) subject, as developed by the poststructuralist account of thinkers like Lacan, Althusser, and Foucault.

II

Antihumanism and the Politics of (the) Subject

The legacy of the 1960s antihumanism emerged with the fall of humanism that also marked the collapse of the existential humanism of Sartre and the social humanism of Merleau-Ponty; or Marxist humanism. The corresponding antihumanist project of Lacan, Althusser and Foucault provided the philosophical landscape for posthumanism in contemporary philosophy.

Althusser's Theoretical Anti-Humanism:

So, whereas, Heidegger opposes the Sartrean humanism because it not only testifies to the 'forgetfulness of Being,' but also does not set 'the *humanitas* of man high enough; 'Althusser, often referred to as the French Marxist philosopher also performs a similar move in criticizing humanism, (although in many respect different from Heidegger). Althusser's reading of Marx in his essay '*Marxism and Humanism*'⁸ gives an account of what he calls the mature writing of Marx that articulated his 'theoretical anti-humanism'. It challenges the existential humanism of Sartre for essentializing man in general. It also criticizes the centralization of 'labor' as the historical subject which can fulfill humanity based on its transcendental attributes of being. Althusser argues that what was radically new in Marx's contribution was not only the awareness of the novelty of the concept of historical materialism but also 'the depth of the theoretical revolution (that) they imply and inaugurate.' The latter was a radical critique of the *theoretical* pretensions of every philosophical humanism. Following Marx, Althusser rejected all recourse to human essence and the justification of specific conceptions of man as ultimately ideological.

⁸ Althusser. L. (1965) For Marx, trans. Brewster. B. Verso. London. New York. 1969/2005 P. 219-248.

He argues that such a notion of man forms an illusion which can be demystified on the grounds of a materialist critique of societal struggles.

According to Althusser, the humanism of Sartre (as well as the social-humanism of Merleau-Ponty) shows 'an imposter ideological makeshift' that is in fact 'an ideal wish' and also 'dangerous.' In an attempt to rescue Marxism from Sartre (and Merleau-Ponty) Althusser's reading of Marx seeks to separate the early 'anthropological Marx' from the late 'theoretical Marx.' Althusser noted that after 1845, Marx distanced himself from the notion that there is a universal human essence. Althusser reads the early Marx as ideological and strongly invested in anthropological; whereas he views the later Marx as more sophisticated and advanced, that [he] is even capable of countering Hegel by providing on his own ground, a dialectic materialism. So, whereas Sartre essentializes individual agency as human essence, Althusser presented a Marxist's theoretical anti-humanism that essentializes the *matter* of History, its *real* object and conceives science as the only possibility of effective social critique. The theoretical anti-humanism of Althusser seeks to demystify the particular ideology in play as 'the site of class struggle' and develop a different ideology of history that is essentially a never-ending process of class struggle. It is an ongoing struggle between the material base and the ideologically disguised superstructure. Althusser's theoretical Marxist anti-humanism is the recognition and knowledge of humanism itself that is as an *ideology* that never falls into the idealist illusion of believing that knowledge of an object is ultimately replaceable by the object or dissipates its existence. Hence, for Althusser, Marx never believed that knowledge of the nature of *money* (as a social relation) could ever destroy its appearance, or its form of existence as a thing. This is because, this appearance was its very being, that is as much necessary as the existing mode of production. Althusser historicizes specific ideologies as false-consciousness and proposes 'a theory of ideology in general' that is transhistorical and unexceptional. In other words, Althusser's theoretical anti-humanism has given a structural analysis of the social relations of capitalist production against the background of the 'death of individual agency.'

Thus, when Althusser reads Marx's *The German Ideology* (1845) as determined to overturn the traditional ways of thinking about the human subject, the principal target of work was the humanist belief in a natural human essence which exists outside history, politics, and social relation. So, whereas, the philosophical climate within (and against) which Marx writes followed the idealist account of Hegel (who believed that an authentic consciousness was the point from which everything else processed); Marx overturned Hegel's idea of consciousness and insisted that consciousness does not determine a person's social life. Rather, Marx would argue that

it is social life that determines consciousness. Hereupon, idealism was replaced by materialism. Subjectivity, in the Marxist account, is not the cause but the effect of an individual's material conditions of existence. The subject thus is not given; and eternal man is no more; he is replaced by a history and a contingency, denied by humanism. It is in this sense that Marx makes possible a theoretical anti-humanism. It provided the radically different awareness that different material conditions produce incompatible subjectivities. The crux of Althusser's argument is that the Marxist policy of humanism is a precondition for a theoretical anti-humanism. As he writes at the end of his essay on '*Marxism and Humanism*,' that :

“When (eventually) a Marxist policy of humanist ideology, that is, a political attitude to humanism, is achieved- a policy which may be either a rejection or an critique, or a use, or a support, or a development, or a humanist renewal of contemporary forms of ideology in the *ethico-political* domain- this policy will only have been possible on the absolute condition that it is based on Marxist philosophy, and a precondition for this is theoretical anti-humanism.” (231)

Foucault and the Order of (Hu)man(ism):

The legacy of (anti)humanism has touched every aspect of Western thought, and the idea of the image of the figure of 'man' being erased from the sand by the incoming tide of change that finds itself beached, for every new order of things harbors traces of the old. This is what Foucault, in the final paragraph of his book *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*,⁹ writes,

“ ..without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises-were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea.” (2005:422)

Foucault also says that “Man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end.” (422)

He also adds that,

“Man had been a figure occurring between two modes of language; or, rather, he was constituted only when language, having been situated within representation and, as it were, dissolved in it, freed itself from that

⁹ Foucault.M. (1966). *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Routledge. London and New York. 2005.

situation at the cost of its own fragmentation: man composed his own figure in the interstices of that fragmented language.” (421)

To quote him again,

“One thing in any case is certain: man is neither the oldest nor the most constant problem that has been posed for human knowledge... man is a recent invention within it.....in short, in the midst of all the episodes of that profound history of the Same- only one that which began a century and a half and is now perhaps drawing to a close, has made it possible for the figure of man to appear.” (421-122)

Foucault’s *The Order of Things* gives an account of the humanist figure of Man that constituted a certain historical moment. His work proceeds to suggest that Man must be understood as a recent invention (and not pace humanism) that is not an eternal, naturally occurring phenomenon. His study of the archaeology of human science marks a certain reorganization of knowledge in which Man could therefore disappear if a further epistemic shift were to take place. He writes,

“ Strangely enough, man – the study of whom is supposed by the naïve to be the oldest investigation since Socrates- is probably no more than a kind of rift in the order of things, or, in any case, a configuration whose outlines are determined by the new position he has so recently taken up in the field of knowledge.” (xxv)

He also added that,

“It is confronting, however, and a source of profound relief to think that man is only a recent invention, a figure not yet two centuries old, a new wrinkle in our knowledge, and that he will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form.” (xxv)

The central theme of Foucault’s archaeology of anti-humanism is the anti-fundamentalist account of human nature. He elaborated on the varying forms of human subjectivity that are centered on different epistemic paradigms, constituted by different cultural practices. For instance, Foucault’s works on the history of sexuality illustrate the constitution of ‘moral’ subjectivity in the context of sexual behaviour.¹⁰

¹⁰ Also, contrary to both Sartre and Althusser, Foucault’s genealogy focuses on the ‘power-relation’ that constitutes the formation of historically hardened material realities that position and subjective human activity. Unlike Althusser, Foucault, however, does not believe in the materialist ground of class contradictions as manifested in historically specific times.

Lacan's Psychoanalysis of the (hu)man Subject:

Lacan's psychosis also provided us with an alternative contemporary in the study of antihumanism. His antihumanism is a powerful and attractive critique of the excesses of earlier humanism that relied heavily on transparent self-knowledge and freedom. Lacan precisely contests the idea of a natural or spiritual identity of 'man' on which ethical discourse could be founded in the name of human. By placing unconsciousness as the forefront of human experience, Lacan dissolves 'the subject,' as the 'knower.' The insight of Lacan's subject *per se* follows 'the logic of the signifier' as well as 'the structural law of lack.' The human subject for Lacan is 'the subject of the unconsciousness'. It is also (once) referred to as 'a-human'.¹¹

Lacan's psychoanalysis was no friend to humanism. In his work, *The Psychoses*¹² Lacan writes that,

“To be a psychoanalyst is imply to open your eyes to the evident fact that nothing malfunctions more than human reality. If you believe that you have a well-adapted, reasonable ego, which knows its way around, how to recognize what is to be done and not to be done, and how to take reality into account, then there is nothing left to do but send you packing.”¹³ (82)

He continues that,

“ psychoanalysis.....shows you that nothing is more stupid than human destiny, that is, that one is always being fooled.” (82)

Lacan's psychoanalysis took the challenges to humanism in proposing that human activity is governed in part by unconscious motives. Whereas, Freud for example problematized the Cartesian model of being as rational and fully-conscious though; Lacan as one of the most compelling interpreters of Freud, reformulated the words of Descartes from ' I think therefore I am' to ' I think when I am not, therefore I am where I do not think.'

In other words, Lacan's psychoanalysis of the notion of subject is the displacement of the traditional human subject. Unlike Western traditional subjects. Lacanian subject resists any algorithmic governing regimes of human subjects as central. It focuses on what he would rather call *the split subject* or *the divided self*. The self or subject for Lacan is always in *separation* and alienated from the self, subject, or

¹¹ Lacan at the endnote of his collected work *Ecrits: A Selection* uses the term 'a-human' as something that did not cause him the least distress. (324)

¹² The work is published as *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses*.

¹³ Lacan. J. *Book III The Psychoses* (1955-56) trans. Grigg R. W.W Norton & Company New York. London.

ego. He reads the human subject as the subject of the unconsciousness that lies beyond the ego. It is in this context that the relevance of Lacan's work in understanding (anti) humanism cannot be delimited. It continues to demonstrate an understanding of human subjects that shifts our thinking to unconsciousness that elucidates the condition within which posthumanist thoughts arise. It reveals symptoms of its flaws, the blindness to anthropomorphization, and projection that not only provides the ground for the study of posthumanism but produces a whole posthumanism, than any philosophical displacement of human centrality could.

III

Posthumanism as Deconstruction of Humanism

It would not be an exaggeration to say that posthumanism inherits something of its 'post' from poststructuralism, a philosophical movement that emerged in the 1960s with the work of Derrida. Whereas antihumanism (at the same point of time) was declaring a departure from the legacy of humanism, Derrida patiently make a break from this point. His deconstruction deliberately observed that 'the end of Man' is bound to be written in 'the language of Man.' His essay 'The Ends of Man' turns away from the philosophy of the post-war generation (for example Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Beauvoir) towards the radical thinking of a new generation. He gives a close reading of Hegel and Husserl, and Heidegger in particular, who were placed under the heading of humanism by the post-war thinkers.

Derrida took to heart Heidegger's critique of humanism and re-articulated the post-war 'question of man'. His essay on 'The End of Man' expounded the main theme of Heidegger's *Letter*, to the effect that Derrida projected the humanism propounded by Sartre as 'metaphysical' in a pejorative sense. Derrida furthermore argues that Sartre's idea of humanism and his interpretation of the same has infected the work of German philosopher Heidegger (and also Hegel and Husserl's notion of humanism) whose work, has set the intellectual context for mid-twentieth century French philosophy. It even gives rise to the translation and association of these thinkers with the 'metaphysical humanism' which they criticize or de-limit. (119) Derrida thereafter puts forward the effort of these three thinkers (Hegel, Husserl and Heidegger) to move beyond humanism.

Derrida moved on to provide a deconstruction of Heidegger's (new) humanism. Derrida, in his footnote to 'The End of Man' quoted Heidegger's notion of reducing humanism to metaphysics. He writes from Heidegger's *Letter*:

“Every humanism is either grounded in a metaphysics or is itself made to be the ground of one. Every determination of the essence of man that

already presupposes an interpretation of being without asking about the truth of Being, whether knowingly or not, is metaphysical. The result is that what is peculiar to all metaphysics, specifically with respect to the way the essence of man is determined, is that it is ‘humanistic.’ Accordingly, every humanism remains metaphysical.”(118)

Derrida’s argument permits a rethinking of the notion of humanism as well as the position of antihumanism. Derrida’s critique of humanism takes the form of deconstruction.¹⁴ As for deconstruction, Derrida in an interview with John D. Caputo states that his deconstructive reading of Plato or Aristotle ‘is an analysis which tries to find out how their thinking works or does not work, to find the tensions, the contradictions, the heterogeneity within their own corpus.’ (Caputo, 1997:9) Derrida also added that ‘deconstruction.....insisted not on multiplicity for itself but on the heterogeneity, the difference, the disassociation, which is absolutely necessary for the relation to the other.’ (1997:13)

Derrida’s reading of Heidegger’s *Letter on Humanism*, recalls the latter ‘destruction’ of metaphysics or classical ontology (of anthropology and humanism of Sartre and Sartre’s reading of Heidegger as philosophically anthropocentric) is indeed, directed against humanism (or even existential humanism of Sartrian type). In other words, according to Derrida, Sartre had misread Heidegger (and also Hegel and Husserl) because Sartre (and the others in French) were using a humanist perspective . The essay provides a substantial analysis of Heidegger, in particular of his critical perspective of humanism, which was also nevertheless deconstructed by Derrida. So, how did Derrida deconstruct Heidegger’s account of humanism? Derrida’s deconstruction of Heidegger’s humanism includes in itself Derrida’s philosophy of posthumanism.

It may be recalled that in *Of Grammatology*¹⁵ Derrida sees ‘man’ primarily as a limit that excludes particular characteristics, ostracizing them from man’s essence. That is, ‘man’ is far from an innocuous or self-evident concept. He writes, ‘

“Man calls himself man only by drawing limits and excluding his other from the play of supplementarity: the purity of nature, of animality, primitivism, childhood, madness’ divinity.”(1976: 244)

¹⁴ Derrida’s deconstruction of humanism is also found in his two other works namely *Politics of Friendship* (1997) and *The Animal there therefore I am* (2008)

¹⁵ Derrida. *J. Of Grammatology*, trans. Spivak. G.C. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976.

Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* noted Derrida 'pursues the question of Being' in such a way that, "the *Da* of *Dasein*" and "the *Da* of *Sein*" will signify 'as much the near as the far.' Heidegger, therefore, is guided by the two motifs of Being, what Derrida calls 'the *motif of Being* as presence' and 'the motif of the proximity of Being' to the 'essence of man.' (128)

From this, it follows that although Heidegger rejects the traditional notions of man, and unlike Sartre, does not 'presuppose' a particular 'concept of man.' However, noted Derrida, that Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* on his *Letter* in terms of the 'thinking of Being' (as the thinking of the truth of Being) that Heidegger uses to delimits humanism and metaphysics (that also furthermore provides the unity of metaphysics and humanism) remains a 'thinking of man.' (127) So, Derrida writes,

"Man and the name of man are not displaced (even) in *the question of Being* such as it is put to metaphysics. Even less do they disappear." (128)

Hence, according to Derrida, Heidegger's overthrowing of the traditional notion of (Sartre) existential humanism, could not avoid (or deconstruct) the 'presence' or the 'proximity' of man. And, it is this 'play of proximity' Derrida claims that makes *Dasein* remain ontically closest to being; yet ontologically furthest. In other words, the 'essence of man' is beings' own proximity to *Dasein*. The truth of being, as 'the proper end of man' is thereby determined only by its proximity, that is, but a form of presence.

The deconstructing reading of Heidegger's *Dasein* in terms of the analysis of proximity and presence is for Derrida 'a thinking of Being' which has "all the characteristic of a relève of humanism.' (134) In other words, Derrida claims that whereas Heidegger has radically deconstructed the domination of the metaphysics of *present*; Heidegger's 'thinking of this presence' can only metaphorize, by means of 'a profound necessity from which one cannot simply decide to escape, the language that it deconstructs.'" (131)

Hence, the deconstruction of Heidegger's Being involves a 'series of infinite now' that involves a heavy chain of metaphors, etymology, and double -meaning that Heidegger cannot escape. So, although Heidegger deconstructed metaphysical-humanism, for Derrida, Heidegger inscribed his *Dasein* within the Western tradition of Being and metaphysics. It is therefore what Derrida calls 'a change transgression into 'false exists'.' (135)

What we see in Derrida is a call for critics to repeat, what is implicit in the founding concepts, and the original problem is by no means a demand for a simple, straightforward repletion of the same concept; but a repetition is a certain way; in order to expose the overwhelming uncertainty of the certain discourse. In other words,

Derrida's deconstruction of humanism is not a repetition of humanism, but a certain way to deconstruct the anthropocentric thought of the same. The deconstruction of this metaphysical- anthropocentric humanism is to reveal the internal conflict, and the internal instabilities' fatal contradictions. In doing so, it exposes the rewriting and working through the legacy of humanism itself as posthumanism.¹⁶

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¹⁶ In the words of Badmington posthumanism thereby is not an absolute break of humanism. It is what remains of humanism. It is far more exciting, and far sexier than humans. It is the ghost of humanism. it is therefore not a complete change of terrain, a pure outside; but complemented by works that speak to humanism's ghost. (*Theorizing Posthumanism*: 15)

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DECONSTRUCTING THE ARISTOTELIAN CONCEPT OF AKRASIA IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Arun Garg

Abstract

If there can be an agreement amongst all humans on one thing, it would definitely be on the issue of Good Life. Without exception, all beings on this planet aspire to achieve a Good Life, even though; the very nature of Good Life being aspired may vary immensely across the board. A great deal of analysis on the issue has happened since antiquity and philosophers and thinkers of different traditions and orientations have come forth with their conceptualizations on the matter but we are still far away from any universal definition of the idea of Good Life. Aristotle is one such philosopher of Greek Tradition who has undertaken the analysis of this question and attempted to offer a rational explanation of its form and nature. However, more than Aristotle's conception of Good Life, it is his views on the obstructions that prevent us from achieving this goal, that are more important to understanding his ethical theory. The Greek term for this phenomenon is 'Akrasia', which may be translated as 'Weakness of the Will' or 'Lack of Self-Control'. In this paper, this Aristotelian concept of 'Akrasia' will be deconstructed to understand its meaning as well its implications in the contemporary perspective.

Keywords: *Good Life, Akrasia, Eudaimonia, Highest Good, Aristotle*

Introduction:

Aristotle wrote two major ethical treatises i.e. Nichomachian Ethics and Eudemian Ethics. The titles were not assigned by Aristotle himself but are taken from the names of the persons who edited these works. In the first case, it was Aristotle's son, Nicomachus while in the second case, it was his friend, Eudemus who was the editor of these books. In either case, the treatise starts with the discussion on the issue of 'Eudaimonia' which is the Greek term for Happiness. Aristotle realized and understood the fact that all human beings at their very core aspires for some kind of Happiness in life and that it formed the fundamental principle which determined their concept of Good Life. However, Aristotle is not merely interested in forming a purely theoretical model of the Good Life because a theory can be formulated simply by listing the items which are called as Good by people namely; being healthy, having friends and family, having money and means etc. For him, the bigger problem is to find the

highest form of good, a good that is not desired with the purpose of achieving other goods; rather all other forms of good are desired for the sake of this good.

In his attempt to determine and define the highest form of good for human beings, Aristotle delves deeper into understanding the essence of being human. Aristotle looks for the essential characteristics that separate humanity from other species and enable and empower us to live a more organized and more ethical life. He believes this essential feature separating us from other animals is our capacity to use reason to guide our lives. Whereas the lower beings have a nutritive soul responsible for growth and reproduction, a locomotive soul for motion, and a perceptive soul for perception, human beings as a species alone have a rational soul for speculation. This leads Aristotle to make a distinction in the case of humans that, unlike animals, we have an additional aspect of our soul which is rational in nature and which enables us to function in accordance with virtue. This is what forms the foundation of Aristotle's Virtue ethics and also the answer to the question of the 'Good Life'. Humans are expected to use their faculty of reasoning to lead a virtuous life and a life lived in this manner may be termed as 'Good Life', a life that is well-favored by Gods.

The focus on rationality and its role and significance in living a virtuous life is not unique to Aristotle. The discussion on these issues began with Socrates himself who gave the famous dictum of 'Knowledge is Virtue'. Socrates believed that true knowledge leads to ultimate good. Plato was the first to mention the Rational and Irrational aspects of the soul and he established a hierarchy of these aspects with the rational soul reigning supreme over other elements. Aristotle also followed a similar approach and believed that good lies in the dominance of reason. However, due to his pragmatic approach to ethics, he was confounded with a problem that could not be resolved within an existing theoretical framework. Aristotle could not ignore the fact that there were people in society who acted against common reason and with complete knowledge of the adverse consequences of their actions. This apparent inconsistency in the functioning of reasoning which is supposed to help us lead a virtuous life, made Aristotle think of the issue from a different perspective than his predecessors. Finally, Aristotle determined that the root of this problem lies in the phenomenon of 'Akrasia', a concept which is first described by Plato in his dialogue, *Protagoras*.

In this dialogue, Socrates says that Akrasia is impossible as 'No one willingly goes towards the bad'.¹ According to him, no one can intend an action to be better or worse than the other and still go for the bad one. In other words, if a man reasons well that a certain action is good then he will certainly and actively pursue that action and

¹ Plato, *Protagoras*, 352c 4-7 and 358d 1-2. NE 1146 24---26.

if a person still does something bad for him, then he is either ignorant of the facts or his knowledge is faulty. On the other hand, Plato believes in the possibility of Akrasia and attributes it to be the outcome of the victory of the irrational part of soul over the rational part.² However, in the case of both Socrates and Plato, the basic assumption that reason leads to ultimate good is not challenged and the emphasis is laid on application of reason rather than on understanding the causes of its breakdown.

Aristotle takes a different and more practical approach by attempting to define rather than deny the problem. He accepts the phenomenon as an empirical fact of life that cannot be ignored or overlooked by any amount of theorization to the contrary. ‘Weakness of the will’ or ‘Lack of Self Control’ are only one of the two ways in which this phenomenon is translated but there are suggestive enough to make everyone realize their vulnerability to them. Even the most enlightened and accomplished amongst our race have succumbed to Akrasia at some point in their lives. Evidence to this effect is too numerous to quote and can be easily found scattered in the pages of any Autobiography. It, therefore, becomes all the more important that we understand the concept and accept its effect on our lives so that we can rise above the problem. Here again, Aristotle can show us the way through his deliberations on the issue.

The account of Akrasia and the classification of its different forms as given by Aristotle can be found majorly in Nicomachian Ethics. It seems that Aristotle believes Akrasia lies in the middle ground between Virtue and Vice and thus plays a vital role in the process of ethical reasoning. He begins by distinguishing between impetuous and weak Akrasia and between Akrasia that is caused by ‘Thumos’ and the Akrasia that is caused by bodily desires. He says,

*“Akrasia about Thumos is less shameful than the Akrasia about bodily desires, for "Thumos appears to hear reason a bit, but to mishear it. It is like those overhasty servants who tend to run out before they have even heard all their instructions and thus carry them out wrongly.”*³

Regarding the second distinction, he says,

*“One type of Akrasia is impetuosity and the type is weakness. For the weak person deliberates but his own feelings make him abandon the result of his deliberations.”*⁴

² Plato, *Republic* 439a-440b.

³ NE 1149a 25-30.

⁴ NE 1150b 20-23.

These distinctions need to be unpacked and understood from a wider perspective. For this purpose, a reference to other quotes from Aristotle on this very issue is warranted. In the same book, *Nicomachian Ethics*, at one place Aristotle says,

*“In the Akratic i.e. weak-willed and Enkrates i.e. self-controlled, we tend to praise the reason, because he exhorts these correctly and towards that which is best; but they also have in them something else that is by nature apart from reason, clashing and struggling with reason.”*⁵

Here Aristotle appears to be attributing *Akrasia* to some element in our being, our soul which influences our reasoning and leads us away from the Good. Some scholars have referred to this kind of argumentation by Aristotle as the ‘motivational conflict account’ which appears to be derived from Plato’s theory of conflict between irrational and rational aspects of our soul. Sometimes irrational impulses overcome and move rational thinking, as one sphere tends to move another sphere or as desire influences another desire which is the case when *Akrasia* occurs. This can be further explained through the example of an Alcoholic. There is no apparent reason to doubt that an Alcoholic is unaware of ill effects of his drinking habits. The rational thinking part of an Alcoholic is convinced of the benefits of not drinking. However, the desire or the urge of the body for alcohol motivates an alcoholic person to drink again and again, overpowering all rational thinking and creating a conflict in their being.

A different account for this phenomenon is given by Aristotle in another place in same book where he attributes the reason for *Akrasia* to ignorance rather than motivation. He says,

*“We should say that Akratic people have the knowledge in a same kind of way to these people like the mad and the drunken etc. Saying the words that arise from knowledge is clearly no sign of fully understanding those words. For those people who are affected in this way even recite verses and demonstrations of Empedocles, and those people who have just begun to learn do not yet know it even though they string the words together. So we must assume that those who are acting Akratically can also say the words in the way that actors do.”*⁶

This explanation of *Akrasia* by Aristotle has been termed as the Ignorance account by scholars and is believed to be closer to the Socratic understanding of the concept. As per the explanation of this account, an Akratic person seems to possess knowledge

⁵ NE 1102b 15-19.

⁶ NE 1147a 20-25.

while it is actually not the case. The knowledge that an Akritic person supposedly has is only superficial or verbally acquired just as an actor learns their lines before a performance. There seems to be no real understanding of the words being spoken by an Akritic because if that was the case, there was no possibility of acting against one's rational judgment. Another example will make the distinction more clear. Let us consider the case of a person who indulges in overeating. The said person may be considered eating a second and then third helping of cake while simultaneously saying that they should not be doing so as it is not good for their health. This person seems to suffer from cognitive failure as there is no correlation between their actions and words. They are saying one thing and doing something totally opposite as if they are not even aware of what they are saying but simply repeating the things as part of a social habit.

The above two accounts given by Aristotle as reasons for Akrasia may seem contradictory to each other on the surface. Whether it is the desires which make a person go against their better judgment or is it this judgment that is at fault because it arises out of ignorance. A person may get confused about the root cause for their Akritic behavior which may prevent them from overcoming the problem. This dilemma needs to be resolved or at least better understood for a long-lasting resolution of the issue. Both the Ancient as well as the contemporary commentators on Aristotle have worked on many different strategies to overcome the difficulty. Some of these thinkers, who are more influenced by the Socratic Method and Aristotelian formulation of Practical Syllogism, have tried to undermine the motivational conflict account by downplaying the role desires play in the process of decision-making.⁷ It is generally expected that a person makes their decision after a rational and logical evaluation of all consequences and if there is any error in the final outcome, it must be due to the breakdown in the process for lack of knowledge or ignorance.

This kind of reasoning has been more popular in the past when rationality played a dominant role in all intellectual discourse. The narrative has however changed in recent years with the focus shifting to the cognitive aspect of our behavior. The computational model of cognitive functioning has once again highlighted the role played by desires in our decision-making process. Thinkers favoring Aristotle's desire-based explanation of practical reasoning tend to believe that differences in the valuational judgments between an Akritic and virtuous person can be explained by the differences in their desires.⁸ Many such models are being presented by contemporary thinkers and philosophers who have tried to present a modern-day perspective of the

⁷ Cf. Moss 2009 and Lorenz 2006.

⁸ Wiggins 1980 and Charles 1984.

problem. In this paper, two such models shall be briefly examined to give a glimpse of the thought process involved in the building up of the current narrative.

First is George Ainslie's concept of hyperbolic discounting. George Ainslie was a psychologist and behavioral economist who developed the theory of hyperbolic discounting where he argues that we make different judgments when we are close to achieving reward than when we are further away from it. In his book 'Breakdown of Will', Ainslie presents many examples of self-defeating activities and also uses the term Akrasia to define this self-defeating behavior. He observes that "people indeed maximize their prospective rewards, but they discount their prospects using a different formula from the one that is obviously rational."⁹ Ainslie terms this phenomenon as Hyperbolic Discounting with emphasis on the fact that it is empirically verifiable. He further observes, "There is extensive evidence that both people and lower animals spontaneously value future events in inverse proportion to their expected delays." So, Ainslie claims that all animals including humans are psychologically programmed to go for immediate rewards even if they are less in quantity rather than long-term benefits of much larger proportion. This can explain the behavior of a smoker or alcoholic who prefer immediate gratification over future health benefits.

Next is Donald Davidson's treatment of the problem. He expands the scope of Akrasia to include any judgment that is reached but not fulfilled, whether it is on account of an opinion, a real or imagined good, or a moral belief. According to him, Akrasia occurs when an agent seeks to fulfill a desire but ends up making a choice that was not their preferred decision. Davidson frames the problem as that of reconciling an inconsistent triad with the following premises.

1. If the agent believes A to be better than B, then they want to do A more than B.
2. If the agent wants to do A more than B, then the agent will do A rather than B.
3. Sometimes an agent acts against their better judgment.

Davidson solves the problem by suggesting "when people act in this manner, they believe that the worse course of action is better because they have not made an all-things-considered decision but only a decision based on a subset of possible outcomes."¹⁰ This may appear to be a conflict between reason and emotion, where emotion overpowers reason so that a person may believe that they should do A rather than B but still end up wanting to do B more than A. Thus there are different kinds of motivation at play which are in conflict with each other and a person is left to make a

⁹ Ainslie, George, *Breakdown of Will*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p.28

¹⁰ Davidson, Donald, *How is Weakness of Will Possible*, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.21-42

choice. And more often than not, we discover that the choices made by us are on the basis of emotion rather than reason.

Conclusion:

A lot has been written on the Aristotelian concept of Akrasia and the present paper is a small attempt to deconstruct the issue in a contemporary perspective. As mentioned in the beginning itself, a good life is a life lived happily. Happiness is the ultimate goal to aspire for but the means to achieve this goal shall be carefully chosen. Aristotle has laid the yardstick of reason, both as a tool and the method to reach this goal in life. While he establishes reason to be the highest virtue, he also acknowledges that this virtue may not be directly attainable for all. The old definition of men being rational, social, animals need a modification. The emotional aspect of our being should find a suitable place and expression. Today, there is a much wider realization and acceptance of this aspect as can be seen from emphasis on measuring EQ or Emotional Quotient along with IQ or Intelligence quotient of aspiring candidates to a job. Therefore Aristotle accepts and in fact advocates the need for other virtues in life. Friendship, courage, and empathy are some of the virtues that will definitely enrich a person's life. It is true that at every step in life, a person would be facing Akrasia, a temptation to make a shortcut, a desire to take an easier option, a lure of immediate gratification but there is hope in that fact that with knowledge and with reason, the will can be made stronger and the self-control can be regained.

BRAHMAN AS THE PRINCIPLE OF INTERCONNECTEDNESS: THE GROUND OF THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF THE UPANIṢADS

Kheya Roy

Abstract

This paper seeks to offer a logical answer to the question: 'Why should we be moral?' The answer is derived from the philosophy of Interconnectedness as expounded in the ethics of the Upaniṣads. It also highlights how this theory can be practised in our daily lives by following some ethical codes of conduct as suggested in the Upaniṣads.

Keywords: *Upaniṣads, Upaniṣadic Ethics, Brahman, Ātman, interconnectedness, unity*

We often find that when children play, they create their own world. The curious part is that while dwelling in that imaginary world, they forget everything about their reality or real world. Now, if the mother asks in between, 'Children, have you noticed the time?' they can't grasp it immediately since they are so engrossed and lost in their own world. Mother understands and gives them a call, 'It is time to go to school, now get up. Stop playing.' Isn't it the same with us? Haven't we lost sight of truth or reality while battling with each other daily? If we have, in that case, what is the truth and how can we follow it? In this paper, following the ethics of the *Upaniṣads*, we will try to find the answer to these intriguing questions.

Human existence is unavoidably inseparable from ethics. In our day-to-day lives, we make moral decisions. We choose between right and wrong, just and unjust, good and evil, which are called moral values. It will be easy for us to make this choice if we have a clear standard or criterion of morality. But, before proceeding, we need to have a clear understanding of the concepts like 'ethics' (*nītiśāstra*), 'morality' (*naitikatā*) and 'values' (*mūlyavodha*). In Indian philosophy these concepts are interconnected with one another. The Sanskrit term for morality is '*naitikatā*', which comes from the term '*nīti*' [*ni + tin (suffix)*], meaning that which takes us to the right path –

“niyante iti nyāya vā nīti”

The human values (*mūlyavodha*) like justice, forgiveness, kindness, etc. take us to a destination. They are like the milestones in the long path of morality. Ethics or *nītiśāstra* is the treatise that determines what is moral and what is not.

The ethics of the Upaniṣads are not otherwise. But there is an important point of difference between Western ethics and that of the Upaniṣads. Modern ethical theories are mainly divided into two broad categories: deontological and teleological. According to Deontological theory, actions are intrinsically right or wrong, regardless of the consequences that they produce. Immanuel Kant holds that one's moral duty is simple and singular – to follow the moral law expressed in the categorical imperative – to always act according to a maxim that is simultaneously valid as a universal moral law. But I can't agree with Kant on this point, since, we find that the moral bent of an individual, and that of a community, is mainly shaped by its culture. An action (e.g. widow remarriage) that is worthy of universalization to one culture may be opposed in another culture.

Teleological ethics, on the other hand, is of the view that actions are not intrinsically right or wrong. But the rightness of actions or their moral value depends on the ends they bring about. Jeremy Bentham, one of the important utilitarianists, holds:

*'It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong.'*¹

The *Upaniṣadic* ethics has a tinge of teleological ethics, no doubt. But while addressing the problem: 'What is the measure of right and wrong?', it proves to be more comprehensive and logical in nature. The *Upaniṣads* are usually associated with specific ideas of spirituality. That the *Upaniṣads* made important contributions to ethics is known to very few people. For the first time, it was Swami Vivekananda who brought the *Upaniṣadic* ethics to the fore. According to Vivekananda:

*'Ethics is unity, its basis is love. It will not look at variation. The one aim of ethics is this unity, this sameness.'*²

So, the action which leads to that unity is right, from the *Upaniṣadic* perspective. And that which leads to division is wrong. The Chāndogya Upaniṣad substantiates this truth in the following verse:

'Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ brahman' [3.14.1]

Everything is the manifestation of one and the same *Brahman*.

¹ Roth, John K. *Ethics Revised Edition*, p. 1531. INC. Pasadena, California Hackensack, New Jersey: Salem Press, 2005.

² Vivekananda, Swami. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol.1, p.430. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2000.

But why should we be moral? Why should we not be selfish and fulfil only our own interests? Why should we care for others at all? To my mind, both the deontological and teleological theories have not pondered over this moot point. Rather, they have focused on the point of when an action can be considered morally right. The ethics of the *Upaniṣads*, on the other hand, has excavated much deeper in both of the cases. The answer to the question of when an action can be considered morally right, according to the *Upaniṣadic* ethics, has already been discussed above. Now, let us proceed to find out the answer to the second question: why should we be moral, following the same? We find a profound answer to this question from the Upaniṣadic doctrine of the oneness and unity of *Ātman* or *Brahman*. It shows how each flower in a garland, though unique in its colour and fragrance, is not separate from one another; likewise every existing particle in this world, being interwoven by one underlying principle – Brahman, is not different. The *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* states:

‘*Sarvavyāpinamātmānam kṣīre sarpirivārpitam*’³ [1.16]

The *Upaniṣad* gives the example of butter in curd. In which layer of the curd is the butter? Is it on the surface? No, the butter is everywhere (*sarvavyāpinam*), in every drop of the curd. It is pervaded in it. Similarly, the one and the same *Brahman* is *sarvavyāpinam*— it is everywhere. The Self (*Ātman*) is all-pervasive. But we do not recognize the Self because of our ignorance. *Upaniṣadic* ethics is like churning out butter from curd wherein it lies hidden. It aims to see the Self both within and without. The *Īśa Upaniṣada* reads:

‘*Īśā vāsyamidam sarvam yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*’⁴ [1]

All this – whatever exists in this changing universe – is covered by the Lord.

In the *Bhagavad Gītā* Lord Krishna tells to Arjuna:

‘*Mattaḥ parataram nānyat kiñcidasti dhananjaya* |

Mayi sarvamidam protam sūtre mañigaṇā iva’⁵ [7.7]

Hey Dhananjaya, nothing is greater than me. The whole universe is united by me as each and every gem is interwoven by a thread.

This is the philosophy of Interconnectedness.

³ Lokeshwarananda, Swami. *Upaniṣad*, Vol.1, p.588. 95 Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 026: Ananda Publishers, 2023.

⁴ *Ibid.* p.4.

⁵ Apurbananda, Swami. *Śrimadbhagavadgītā*, p.170. Kolkata: Udbodhan Karyalaya, 2013.

But what is the proof that we are interconnected and not separate from each other? Taking *śabda pramāṇa* as granted without reasoning no longer fits with our scientific bent of mind. So, let us try to find the answer by applying indirect proof (*tarka*). An indirect proof is a roundabout way of proving a theory is true. When we use the indirect proof method, we assume the opposite of our theory to be true for the time being. Here we are trying to prove the *Upaniṣadic* theory: ‘We are interconnected with each other’, i.e. ‘*p*’. If this statement ‘*p*’ is false, then its opposite ‘ $\neg p$ ’, i.e. ‘We are not interconnected with each other’, must be true. But is it so? Let’s dwell on it.

Our moral values are the ones that mainly count in shaping our actions. It affects everything we do — from how we spend our money to the interests that our nations defend. Generally, it has been accepted that we human beings are superior to and separate from all other species. This material world is nothing but an instrument of our luxury and entertainment! And we have been doing so. There is a famous saying in Bengal, ‘A tree is known by its fruit.’ Similarly, the truth value of ‘ $\neg p$ ’, i.e., ‘we are not interconnected with each other’, can be ascertained by looking at the consequences it produces. Among its various consequences, one is the pollution issue, which is a crucial problem right now. Pollutants produced by factories, smoke from cars, pesticides, chemical poisons, and garbage are damaging the purity of air, water, and land at an alarming rate. All creatures survive on the supply of Earth’s air, water and food. When these resources are polluted, the survival of all living species gets difficult. The so-called ‘Superior’ human beings are not spared from this threat either. Human beings are getting affected by dangerous diseases like cancer, tumours, depression etc.

Secondly, human activities, such as the unmeasurable use of fossil fuels and deforestation, have increased the quantity of greenhouse gases in the air. As a result, the average temperature of our planet is rising. Global warming, the rise of sea levels, floods, and earthquakes are increasing global stress day by day.

Thirdly, a leading daily (the *Times of India*, Oct. 25, 2011) reports, that electromagnetic radiation (EMR) from mobile communication towers is largely responsible for birds’ declining numbers. Sparrows, once the most common birds in India, have almost vanished due to its effect. A Ministry of Environment and Forests expert committee says the EMR has also hit honey bee numbers. The loss of honey bees will dramatically shift the human food system in the long run.

If we were not interconnected, one species’ activities wouldn’t have hampered another. However, the aforesaid consequences amply prove that here, the activity of one affects the other, whether we intend it or not.

Moreover, true knowledge should save us, not kill us. Hence, the theory: ‘we are not inter-connected with each other’, i.e. ‘ $\neg p$ ’ is incorrect—it is false. The truth value of ‘ $\neg p$ ’ being false, indirectly proves that ‘ p ’ is true. Thus, the *Upaniṣadic* theory: ‘we all are inter-connected with one another,’ is proved to be true factually and logically. Swami Vivekananda correctly said,

‘The way the law of gravity was ever existing everywhere prior to its discovery, and will continue to exist even if human society forgets about it...The ethical and spiritual relation between one soul with another...was ever existing prior to its discovery, and will continue to exist even if everyone forgets it.’⁶

One point to be noted here is that *Upaniṣadic* ethics is not purely distinct from its Spirituality. Instead, Spirituality has always been at the heart of *Upaniṣadic* ethics or the ethics of the *Upaniṣads*. Swami Vivekananda, for the first time, made the idea of *Brahman* the basis of Hindu ethics:

‘My idea is to show that the highest ideal of morality and unselfishness goes hand in hand with the highest metaphysical conception, and that you need not lower your conception to get ethics and morality...Human knowledge is not antagonistic to human wellbeing. On the contrary, it is knowledge alone that will save us in every department of life.’⁷

‘Nṛṣad varasadṛtasad vyomasadabjā gojā

ṛtajā adrijā ṛtam bṛhat’⁸ [2.ii.2]

The *Kaṭha Upaniṣada* states that the *Brahman* is everywhere. He is in human beings, in all good things, and space. He is in water as fish and other aquatic animals, and He grows as paddy, wheat, and other plants on the earth's surface. He is *ṛtajā* because He is the item used in sacrifices (*ṛta*). Coming down from the mountains, He is the streams and rivers. This *Brahman* is the highest of all things and is the Self in all. He is the essence of everything, the warp and woof of the whole universe, thereby interconnecting it all.

⁶ *Vedantagranthamala (Bengali Translation)*, Vol. 19, p.1. Golpark, Kolkata-700 029: Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2015.

⁷ Vivekananda, Swami. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 2, p.355. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2000.

⁸ Lokeswarananda, Swami. *Upaniṣad*, Vol.1, p.125. 95 Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 026: Ananda Publishers, 2023.

Sri Sri Ravishankar, a leading yoga guru in India, beautifully said in one of his dialogues:

‘The main thing of spirituality is to make you feel at home everywhere. The whole planet belongs to the divine. So, you feel at home anywhere, everywhere, with everyone.’

The ethics of the *Upaniṣads*, I find, is strictly acting according to it.

With this discussion, we pass from meta-ethics to normative ethics of the *Upaniṣads*. Each of us being interwoven or interconnected in one fabric, we must keep in mind that the health of our earth depends on our actions. So, from now on, we must be careful and responsible about our actions, before it gets too late. Mother Earth has never been mean to us. Whenever we needed food, it satisfied our appetite; whenever we were thirsty, it was there with cold streams of blessings; in need of shelter, it provided all necessary equipment and whatnot. Now, it is our turn to repay our debt. Swamiji said:

*‘Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern.
Society has to pay homage to Truth or die.’⁹*

Now, the question is, how do we repay our debt? The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣada* explains it simply with a story. Once, a god, a man, and a demon – the three offsprings of Brahmā – sought his advice for self-improvement. To them, Brahmā said: ‘*Da*’. The syllable ‘*da*’ is the first letter of three Sanskrit words, meaning respectively, self-control (*dama*), charity (*dāna*) and compassion (*dayā*). Brahmā was, in effect, asking the god to practise self-control, the man charity, and the demon compassion. Swami Nikhilananda points out that there exist three kinds of people – aristocrats, average men, and demoniacal men in human society. The aristocrats (e.g. scientists, political leaders, etc.), with their talents and education, have immense power to create artificial things, machines, etc. They can hinder the natural way of wildlife and jeopardize natural resources wickedly if they want. The *Upaniṣads* remind us that with huge power comes huge responsibilities. Persons with more extraordinary powers may feel a strong allurements to apply it everywhere. Here, the *Upaniṣads* warn us. We have already seen how powers, when used without any control, ultimately destroy us. So, self-control (*dama*) is very important. One must practise self-control. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣada* states –

‘Yastu vijñānavān bhavati yuktena manasā sadā|

⁹ Vivekananda, Swami. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. 2, pp.84-85. Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2000.

Tasyendriyāṇi vaśyāni sadaśvā iva sārathēḥ||¹⁰ [1.iii.6]

Just as ploughing land is necessary to have good crops, the *Upaniṣads* teach us that self-training and self-discipline are necessary pre-conditions of refined enjoyment.

Next, the average man, despite of his many human qualities, is often greedy; he wants to take what belongs to others. Liberality or charity (*dāna*) is his discipline for self-improvement.

*‘Tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā mā grdhaḥ kasyasvid dhanam’*¹¹ [1]

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore,

*‘My desires are many and intense, by detaching myself from them, you saved me.’*¹²

The demoniacal person takes delight in treating others with cruelty and ruthlessness. Practising compassion (*dayā*) is his only medicine.

‘Yastu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmanyeva anupaśyati/

*Sarvabhūteṣu cātmānam tato na vijugupsate’*¹³ [6]

He who sees all beings in the Self (*Ātman*), who does not see any being as separate or distinct from the Self, and the Self in all beings, for that reason, he does not hate anyone or does not shrink from anyone (*na vijugupsate*).

We can treat someone cruelly only if we believe that we are separate beings. But if we know he and me are the same, the one *Ātman*, by hurting him, I’m actually hurting none but me, then can we do the same? In ‘Macbeth’, the famous novel of Shakespeare, if before killing the king, Macbeth knew what damage he was going to do to himself, then would he have done the murder is a moot point.

‘Tvaṁ strī tvaṁ pumānasi tvaṁ kumāra uta vā kumārī/

*Tvaṁ jīrṇo danḍena vañcasi tvaṁ jāto bhavasi viśvatomukhaḥ’*¹⁴ [4.3]

¹⁰ Lokeswarananda, Swami. *Upaniṣad*, Vol.1, p.102. 95 Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 026: Ananda Publishers, 2023.

¹¹ *Ibid.* p.4.

¹² Tagore, Rabindranath. *Rabindra-Racanabali*, Vol.7, p.96. 1/1 Acarya Jagadish Chandra Basu Road, Kolkata 700 020: Pascimbanga Bangla Academy, Tathya o Sanskrit Bibhag, West Bengal Govt., 2013.

¹³ Lokeswarananda, Swami. *Upaniṣad*, Vol.1, p.8. 95 Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 026: Ananda Publishers, 2023.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* p.635.

Brahman is everything. He is woman, man, youth and maiden too, He as an old man totters along on a staff; it is He alone who, when born assumes diverse forms.

Tagore puts it thus:

'And suddenly, at the end of the play, what do I see today?

The sky is stunned – silent are the sun and the moon.

*In solitude, the world stands at your feet with eyes lowered.'*¹⁵

In this practical (*Vyāvahārika*) world, all that matters is a respectful life, a life of dignity. The *Upaniṣadic* ethics aims to ensure a dignified life for all of us.

The theory of our Interconnectedness gives us the answer to the moot question that why we should be moral. This ground is not only spiritual but also aptly scientific as explained above. Being interwoven in one fabric, we owe to each other, whether we accept it or not. So, let's be humble and practice the Truth through our moral codes of conduct.

Our mother *Upaniṣad* gives us a gentle pat on our back and reminds us, enough of playing children. It's time to get up. Truth is calling you. Don't be late. Arise, awake in truth.

*'Uttiṣṭhata jāgrata'*¹⁶[1.iii.14]

The law of *karma* is a fundamental concept of Hindu ethics. It holds that fear of karmic consequences is the reason why we are moral. On the contrary, the philosophy of our Interconnectedness believes that it is love and respect that drive us to be moral. Now the question is, how can fear and love, these two contradictory properties, co-exist in one system? Since, in love, there is freedom, not fear.

Rules and regulations are necessary preconditions to bring something in order initially, no doubt. For example, a kid is first sent to school, even if he doesn't want to. If the kid doesn't fear his parents and teachers and doesn't listen to them, this will ultimately affect his future. So, fear at a stage is necessary. After growing up, when he understands the importance of study and starts to love it, there is no longer any role for rules and regulations by parents or teachers. He studies on his own. Similarly, at

¹⁵ Tagore, Rabindranath. *Rabindra-Racanabali*, Vol.7, p.34. 1/1 Acarya Jagadish Chandra Basu Road, Kolkata 700 020: Pascimbanga Bangla Academy, Tathya o Sanskrit Bibhag, West Bengal Govt., 2013.

¹⁶ Lokeshwarananda, Swami. *Upaniṣad*, Vol.1, p.108. 95 Sarat Bose Road, Kolkata 700 026: Ananda Publishers, 2023.

the beginning of our journey towards truth, fear of the law of karma has a vital role to play. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* puts it thus:

*'Mahadbhayam vajramudyatam'*¹⁷ [2.iii.2]

The *Brahman*, as the *ṛtam* (the necessary law of nature), is like a thunderbolt about to strike. He is a great terror.

'Bhayādasyāgnistapati bhayātapati sūryaḥ|

*Bhayāndraśca vāyuśca mṛtyurdhāvati pañcamah||'*¹⁸ [2.iii.3]

From fear of It (Brahman), fire gives heat. Out of terror, the sun shines. Afraid of It, Indra, Vāyu, and the fifth, Death, rush to perform their respective duties.

It is worthy to note that, fear has a role in the initial stage. A fresher first remains afraid of his senior, but gradually, when he comes to know his senior well, they become very good friends. In like manner, the moment when the agent comes to know the true nature of himself, his oneness with Brahman, all his fears evaporate. Instead, only love and respect remain, which in turn regulates his moral activities. Hence, Rabindranath Tagore says:

*'To preside over my heart, despite of being the King of Kings,
You come in various guises of captivating manifestations.'*¹⁹

¹⁷ *Ibid.* p.136.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 136-137.

¹⁹ Tagore, Rabindranath. *Rabindra-Racanabali*, Vol.7, p.119. 1/1 Acarya Jagadish Chandra Basu Road, Kolkata 700 020: Pascimbanga Bangla Academy, Tathya o Sanskrit Bibhag, West Bengal Govt., 2013.

THE CONCEPT OF *PRAMĀ* AND *PRAMĀṆA*: AN ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF *PRAMĀṆASĀSTRA*

V. Sujata Raju

Abstract

The present paper enunciates the meaning, definition and nature of “pramā-pramāṇa” among the diverse schools of Indian philosophy. An attempt is made to represent the nature, form and method of valid knowledge enriched with the commentaries, sub-commentaries of original sources/literature of epistemological traditions in Indian philosophy (Pramāṇasāstra). An overview of various issues, views, and comparative exposition of any system of epistemology deals with the following disputational questions: “What is knowledge?”, “What is valid knowledge?”, “How to distinguish valid knowledge from invalid knowledge?”, “What are the instruments/means of arriving at valid knowledge?”. To these ends, the paper attempts to synthesize the divergent views of all the concerned schools of Indian epistemology.

Keywords: *pramā, pramāṇa, prāmāṇya, pramātā, pramāṇasāstra*

Introduction

In the annals of history of epistemological tradition in India several attempts have been made to define *pramā-pramāṇa* in different schools of philosophical thought. The manner in which knowledge originates is the most crucial topic of discussion in Indian philosophy. The doctrine of *pramāṇa* has got the most authentic value, which provides, that, for each piece of knowledge there is some accredited means. The *pramāṇa* is regarded as "cause" of cognition because it is from the *pramāṇa* that the cognition proceeds. It is regarded as an "instrument" because the cognition of an object is accomplished through the use of *pramāṇas*. The instruments of right cognition must be regarded as rightly effective, because it is only when a thing is recognised through means of an instrument of right cognition that there exists a possibility of its giving rise to fruitful and effective exertion. As a matter of fact, nothing can be known except through an instrument of cognitions nor can fruitful exertion be aroused, except when things have been known.

Every branch of Indian philosophy generally admits that *pramāṇa* is what gives *pramā* and that *pramā* is true knowledge. *Pramā* designates a true cognition which is attended with a belief in its truthfulness, The English word knowledge, in its strict sense

stands for a cognition which is true and un-falsified. The concept of *pramā* thus stands for a cognition which is necessarily true and assured. But there is much difference of opinion among them as to the nature of the truth, which each of them claims for its *pramāṇa*. The realist schools hold that the means of cognition and its result are altogether two different entities. It is a well-known fact, according to them, that an instrument is always different from its result. The Buddhists, on the other hand, discard the soul and hold that cognition itself is the cognizer (*pramātā*), the cognisable object (*prameya*), the means of cognition (*pramāṇa*), and the result (*pramīti*).

The Definition and Nature of Veridical Cognition (*Pramā*)

‘Knowledge is what leads to attainment of the highest good¹’. Now the English word ‘knowledge’ means true or veridical cognition. It being understood that, whereas cognition may be either true or false, knowledge qua knowledge is true, although its inherent truth-value is in no need of indication by means of the addition to it of the adjective ‘true’, nor does the distinction between truth and falsity hold good in its case. Knowledge thus understood is the same as what is called *pramā* or *yathārthajñāna* (veridical cognition) in Indian Philosophy.

Gautama, Vātsyāyana, Uddyotakara, Vācaspatimiśra and Jayanta refer to knowledge as *buddhi*, *upalabdhi* and *jñāna*, regardless of whether a particular form of understanding is valid or not. Old Naiyāyikas used *pramā* as valid knowledge. Moreover, whatever terms might have been used by the different philosophers and systems in different times, it is evident that all have tried to approach in their unique manner to analyse valid knowledge (*pramā*) and the means of arriving at it. A detailed analysis of valid knowledge is to be taken in the ensuing pages.

Various Indian Philosophical systems possess contrasting viewpoints concerning the essence of nature of *pramā*. According to Prof. D.M. Datta, “*pramā* is generally defined as a cognition having the two-fold characteristics of the truth and novelty (*abādhitatva* or *yathārthatatva* and *anadhigatatva*), and that as regards the first characteristic - truth - all schools of Indian Philosophy are unanimous”.² Knowledge, in its precise interpretation, signifies a true belief that inherently assures its truthfulness. Even individuals who consider truth as a fundamental standard of knowledge differ among themselves regarding the significance of truth.

First, let us consider the Naiyāyika’s view. According to Nyāya, *pramā* refers to a definite and assured knowledge of an object that is true and presentational in

¹ *Tattvajñānānīḥśreyasādhigamaḥ, Nyāya-Sutra*, 1.1.1

² D.M. Dutta, *The Six-ways of Knowing*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1997), 17-18.

character.³ Jayanta defines *pramā* as that knowledge of objects which is free from doubt and illusion.⁴ Hence, it is that *pramā* excludes all kinds of non-valid knowledge, such as memory, doubt, error, hypothetical argument (*tarka*), etc. Gaṅgeṣa maintains that *pramā* is that which informs us of the existence of something in a place where it really exists (*Yatra-yad asti tat ratasyānuvahbah*).⁵

Memory is not considered valid knowledge because lacks direct presentation (*anubhava*). Doubt, error, illusion and others are excluded as they are neither true nor definite and assured cognitions. Thus, for the Naiyāyikas the presentativeness, the non-contradictoriness (i.e., the correspondence between a cognition and its object) and the coherence between the cognitive and conative activities are the essential defining characteristics of knowledge that is considered valid. We can conclude that *pramā* has three primary attributes, namely, assuredness, truth and presentativeness.⁶

As to the first, *pramā* or valid knowledge is firm and explicit assertion, separate from uncertain, ambiguous or hypothetical understanding. In *pramā* there exists a sense of feeling of assurance or conviction in what is known. Valid knowledge is consistently associated with a firm belief. All assurances or firm beliefs, however, are not *pramā*, *pramā* implies something beyond simply a subjective certainty.⁷

The second characteristic of *pramā* is its truthfulness or unerring (*yathārtha*) knowledge. Every philosopher holds that truth should be the differentia of knowledge or *pramā*. Knowledge is true when it reveals its object with that nature and attribute which abide in it despite all changes of time, place and other conditions. Knowing something truly means understanding it in a way that aligns with a characteristic of knowledge (*tadvātitatprakāraka*), which remains true without contradiction (*arthāvyabhicāri*).⁸ In the view point of Naiyāyikas, the truth of knowledge lies within its correspondence to facts.

The third characteristic of *pramā* is that, it represents a presentational cognition. Otherwise, memory will have to be considered as *pramā*. Memory does not fall under *pramā*, because it is does not involve direct presentative. A valid piece of knowledge should be distinguished from ones that are imagined or supplied by the mind.⁹

³ S. C. Chatterjee, *The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge*, (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1978), 50

⁴ *Nyāyamañjari*, 1-20.

⁵ *Tattvacintāmañī*, 401/3.

⁶ *The Nyāya Theory of Knowledge*, 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

Vātsyāyana defines valid knowledge as the cognition of an object in something in which it is, that is, the cognition of an object as it really is. Uddyotkara accepts the same definition. According to later Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika *pramā* is the knowledge of the generic nature as abiding in its own subject (*tadvati tat-prakāraḥ jñānam pramāatadvati tat-prakāraḥ jñānamapramā*). *Pramā* represents experiencing the true essence of things. Viśvanātha agrees with the same position. Udayana defines *pramā* as the true ascertainment of an object.

Diñnāga was possibly the first to highlight that valid cognition is self-revelatory. He noted that valid cognition should represent the object's form concerned (*viśayākāra*) by true knowledge, the Buddhists mean the identity of content between the cognition and the cognitum. According to Diñnāga, "such mental faculties as recollection (*smṛti*), desire (*icchā*), anger (*dveṣa*), doubt, error etc., are not independent means of valid cognition, since they operate upon an object already cognised".¹⁰ This idea has been indicated by Diñnāga in his *Pramāṇa-Samuccaya-Vṛtti*. Again, this idea has been supported by Dharmakīrti in his *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*¹¹ and also by Dharmottara in his *Nyāya-Bindu-Tikā*.¹² Dharmottara characterises valid knowledge as comprehending things that were previously unknown.

Dharmakīrti defines "true knowledge as harmonious or non-discrepant (*avisamvādi*) in the sense that there is no conflict between the cognition of an object and the practical activity meant to obtain it (*pramāṇamavisamvādi-jñānamarthakriyāsthitiḥ/ avisamvādanam...*).¹³ Moreover, for Dharmakīrti "valid cognition is a new cognition, the cognition of an object not yet cognised" (*ajñātārthaprakāśo vā...*).¹⁴ It might be urged that on this definition even the cognition of the universal (*sāmānyavi-jñāna*) arising in the wake of the cognition of the unique particular would become valid because the former cognises an object not yet cognised by a previous cognition. Inasmuch as things, according to Buddhism, are momentary, two cognitions can never arise with regard to one and the same object. Therefore to be consistent with the prime doctrine of momentariness, Dharmakīrti deems it proper to put down 'grasping the hitherto ungrasped object' as a differentiating mark of valid cognition.

Akalaṅka has also introduced in his definition of valid cognition the adjectival phrase 'grasping the hitherto ungrasped' in order to qualify valid cognition. (*pramāṇam*

¹⁰ *Pramāṇa-Samuccaya-Vṛtti*, 1.2

¹¹ *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, 1.7.

¹² *Nyāya-Bindu Tikā*, p.11, line 2-5.

¹³ *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, 1.3.

¹⁴ *Pramāṇa-Vārtika*, 1.7.

avi samvādi jñānam anādhigatārthādhigamalakṣaṇatvāt).¹⁵ He also considers harmony or non-discrepancy (*avisamvāda*) to be the true mark of valid cognition. By non-discrepancy he means the correspondence of cognition with the nature of its object. Apart from non-discrepancy, definiteness/determinateness is regarded by him as one among essential characteristics of valid cognition (*vyavasāyātmakam jñamātm ātmarthagrahakam matam/ grahaṇam nirṇayas tena mukhyaṁ prāmāṇyam aśnute*).¹⁶ Here we can say that for the Buddhists who are momentarists it is alright to consider valid cognition to be a cognition pertaining to quite a new object. According to Jaina teachings reality is relatively permanent. Akalaṅka says, since it is relatively permanent, it possesses innumerable modes. So, when Akalaṅka uses the phrase ‘grasping the hitherto ungrasped’ he means determining ‘the hitherto undetermined mode’. The influence of Dharmakīrti is evident here. Thus, the essential characteristics of valid knowledge, according to Akalaṅka, are its non- discrepancy, its ability to enable us to attain the object capable of purposive activity and its determinate nature.

Prabhākara defines valid knowledge as direct and immediate apprehension, is different from recollection (*smṛti*), as latter cannot be valid as it necessitates a preceding cognition. **Kumārila** defines “valid knowledge as a firm or assured cognition of objects, which does not stand in need of confirmation by other cognitions”. Pārthasarathi specifies knowledge to be valid as “a true cognition which relates to something previously uncognised”. He characterises it as grasping that which has not been previously grasped, that which truthfully portrays the object and is unaffected by faulty causes and which remains devoid of contradiction. Sucarita Mīśra states that valid knowledge is definite, true and informative cognition. Thus, according to Mīmāṃsakas, a valid knowledge must fulfil these four conditions. Firstly, it should not originate from faulty causes (*kāraṇadoṣarahita*). Second, it needs to be devoid of contradiction. It has to be self-consistent, and it should not be invalidated by later knowledge (*bādhaka jñāna rahita*). Third, it needs to grasp an object that has not previously been apprehended. Novelty is an essential feature of knowledge (*agr̥hita gr̥hi*). Therefore, memory is excluded from valid knowledge. Fourth, it must truly represent the object (*yathārtha*).

Here, the Buddhist definition of valid knowledge is also similar to that of Kumārila's view. They agree on this point that a valid knowledge apprehends an object hitherto unknown (*anadhigatārthagantṛ pramāṇamiti*).¹⁷ Both agree on this point that novelty and non-contradiction are the essential features of knowledge that is considered

¹⁵ *Aṣṭasati*, p.175.

¹⁶ *Akalaṅkagranthatraya*, p.20.

¹⁷ *Tarkabhāṣā*. p.39.

valid. Prabhākara also means by *pramāṇa* that valid cognition is not regarded as the means of valid knowledge. He identifies the *pramāṇa* with *pramā* like the Buddhists. As per his perspective all cognitions are inherently valid and any invalidity arises from inconsistency with the real essence of their objects.

Advaita Vedānta also upholds that *pramā* is commonly characterised as a cognition possessing the dual attributes of truth and novelty (*abādhitatva / yathārthatva and anadhigatatva*).¹⁸ The main difference here is that the Advaita Vedantin does not necessarily exclude recollection (*smṛti*) from valid knowledge, though they agree on this point that novelty is a key feature of knowledge.

According to Śāṅkara, Brahman alone is the ontological Reality, and the other objects are super-imposed on the eternal consciousness by nescience, and have only an empirical existence (*vyavahārika sattā*) as set apart from ontological existence (*pāramārthika sattā*). The knowledge pertaining to one undifferentiated consciousness, Brahman has ontological validity, and the understanding of empirical objects/ the world of appearance has empirical validity. As per their perspective the knowledge is empirically valid if it represents the essence of its object, and remains unchallenged by any other method of cognition (*pramā dvividhā, pāramārthika vyavahārika ceti. smṛtivyāvṛttaṁ pramātvamanadhigatā bādhitārthaviṣaya jñānatyamsmṛti sādharānantu abādhitārthaviṣayajñānatvam*).¹⁹

For Advaitins, the truth of valid knowledge lies in its essence, which includes the content of knowledge being uncontradicted (*abādhitārthaviṣeyakatva*) and the content of knowledge should be new or previously unacquired (*anadhigata*). The experience which reveals the new (i.e., knowledge proper) is called *anubhūti*, whereas reproduced knowledge is called *smṛti*. Thus, novelty comes to be considered as essential quality of knowledge. Every moment we possess knowledge about an object that is distinct from the object of the previous moment and is, therefore, as good as a new object.

In memory, novelty is described as being absent, in the context that memory is wholly a replication of a past knowledge; it is solely induced by the impression of a past experience (*saṁsakāramātrajanya*). In a persistent knowledge, the cognition of the subsequent moment does not replicate the cognition of the prior moment; it is brought about not by the impression of the previous experience, but by the very objective conditions which cause the first knowledge. So, memory by its very nature falls back on a past experience. It is in this important respect that memory has to be

¹⁸ *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*, p. 19f.

¹⁹ *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*, p. 19-20.

excluded from the definition of knowledge and the other has to be included therein. This is the Nyāya resolution regarding the issue.

But the Advaitins maintain that ‘knowledge persists so long as fresh knowledge does not come to replace it.’²⁰ Whether knowledge changes or remains the same can solely be determined by whether the logical activity of the self, i.e., the judgement affirming the knowledge, changes or remains the same. They admit that even if novelty be considered as crucial aspect of knowledge, any real case of knowledge, such as persistent perception, or repeated perception, is not excluded from the definition of knowledge. The meaning of knowledge (*pramā*), therefore, applies to the case of a persistent cognition as well, the quality of novelty being present also in that case. A *pramā* or knowledge, therefore, can be accurately regarded as a form of cognition, the object in focus is neither contradicted nor previously recognised as an object (*anadhigatā-bādhitārtha-viṣayam jñānan*).²¹

Definition and Nature of the Instruments/Mean of Veridical Cognition (*Pramāṇa*)

We have explored the definitions of valid knowledge. But what is the means/source of valid knowledge? Among the orthodox *sūtrakāras*, Jaimini is credited as one of the first to provide a definition of *pramāṇa* as different from *pramā*. Now, let us consider the Naiyayika's view first. The Nyāya Philosophy is nothing if not a defence of *pramāṇa*. In the *Nyāya-Sutra*, it stands the foremost position in the enumeration of major philosophies. The comprehensive definition of *pramāṇa* is implied by the etymological meaning of the word itself.

The word *pramāṇa* is derived by adding the suffix “lyuṭ” in the instrumental (*karaṇa*) to the root *mā*, with prefix *pra* (*pra+mā+lyuṭ*). The root *mā*, with prefix *pra* i.e., (*pra+mā*) means to know rightly. The suffix ‘lyuṭ’, being in the instrumental, *pramāṇa* means the instrument by which something is rightly known. According to Vātsyāyana, “That the *pramāṇa*-s are the instruments of right knowledge is to be understood by the etymological analysis (*nirvaçana*) of the epithet (i.e., *pramāṇa* itself). The word *pramāṇa* signifies the instrument because 'by this is rightly known' (*pramiyate anena*).²²

The theory of *pramāṇa* is the pivot of the Nyāya-System. *Pramāṇa* heads the list of Gautama's sixteen categories and the categories of *pramāṇa* and *prameya* (object of cognition) have a pre-eminent position in the scheme. Gautama has not defined

²⁰ *Six Ways of Knowing*, p. 24.

²¹ *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, p.20.

²² *Pramāṇa in Nyāya-Sutra and Vatsyāyana's Bhāṣya*, p.17

pramāṇa in any of his aphorisms (*sūtras*). According to Vātsyāyana, the *pramāṇa* is a means of cognizing things, and this is quite evident from the etymology of the word itself. The *pramāṇa*-s must be regarded as rightly effective, because comprehension happens solely only when something is acknowledged by means of a *pramāṇa* that it has the power to arouse fruitful and effective activity (*pramāṇataharthapratipattaupravṛtti sāmāthyāt arthavatpramāṇan*).²³

The **Buddhist** philosophers exhibit differences in their perspectives concerning the definition of *pramāṇa*. The Sautrāntika and the Vaibhāṣika, the two realistic schools of Buddhist philosophy, upholds that *pramāṇa* is that which gives us true knowledge of objects.²⁴ By true knowledge (*pramā*) they refer to the coherence between the content of cognition and the object being cognised. The idealist school of Buddhism, namely Vijñānavāda, which is also referred to as Yogācāra, maintains that *pramā* is practically beneficial knowledge, and *pramāṇa* is that which facilitates the attainment of such knowledge.²⁵

Diñnāga incorporates in his definition of *pramāṇa* the characteristic ‘*svasamvitti*’ implying that the consequence of a *pramāṇa* should involve self-cognition.²⁶ So, we can say the essence of a *pramāṇa* according to Diñnāga, consists of comprehending an object (*viṣayādhigama*) and in self-cognition (*svasamvitti*). According to Dharmakīrti, *pramāṇa* is an experience that remains unchallenged / uncontradicted.²⁷ He also discusses *arthasārūpya* as the essence of *pramāṇa* in his *Nyāya-Bindu*.²⁸ Śāntarakṣita attempts to integrate the definitions of *pramāṇa* by Diñnāga and Dharmakīrti.

As per the realists (Bāhyārthavādins) the similarity (*sārūpya*) between cognition and its object is to be regarded as *pramāṇa* and the cognition of the object as *pramītī* but according to the idealists (Vijñānavādins), self-cognition is *pramītī* and the ability to obtain such a cognition is *pramāṇa*. The Buddhists maintain that a method of valid cognitive understanding (*pramāṇa*) has two characteristics, viz, *avisamvādatva* (non-contradiction) and *anadhigantatva* (hitherto unknown). An uncontradicted cognition is that which is capable of producing the efficient action, indicated by the

²³ *Nyāyabhāṣya*, p.1

²⁴ C.D. Bijalwan, *Indian Theory of knowledge based upon Jayanta's Nyāyamañjari*, (New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1977), p. 42.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Pramāṇasamuccaya*, 1-10.

²⁷ *Pramāṇa-Vārttika*, II-I

²⁸ *Nyāyamañjari*, 1-20.

object. Anyway, to the Buddhists *pramāṇa* and *pramītī* are non-distinct, since, according to them, they are not different entities.²⁹

The **Prabhākara**s define *pramāṇa* as immediate experience (*anubhūti*). Śālikanātha states that valid knowledge is an encounter, distinct from mere memory (*anubhūtiḥ, pramāṇam sasmrteranyāsmṛtiḥpunah*).³⁰ Prabhākara also defines *pramāṇa* as direct and immediate experience which is different from mere recollection (*smṛti*). Recollection is invalid as it depends upon the subconscious impression left by past experience. All cognitions per se are valid. Prabhākara says, “It is strange indeed how a cognition can be said to apprehend an object, and yet be invalid”.³¹ Here Prabhākara means by *pramāṇa* valid cognition, not the means of valid cognition. He identifies the *pramāṇa* with *pramā*. Siddhasena, though a Jaina logician, accepts the same view.

Kumārila asserts that *pramāṇa* constitute a conclusive and assured perception of objects that does not necessitate validation from other cognitive perception (*Tasmād dṛḍhamyadutapannam nāpi Sambāḍmṛchhati jñānāntarenaviññānatatpramāṇampramiyatām*).³² Umbeka claims that the expression '*dṛḍha*' and *avisamvāda* exclude doubt and error as its components from valid knowledge. Pārthasārathi says, “*pramāṇa* is that which apprehends an object hitherto unknown which is free from the defects of its causes and which is uncontradicted”. Therefore, according to Bhāṭṭa's standpoint, a *pramāṇa* is a means of comprehending an unspecified object, that is not susceptible to be sublated by subsequent experience.

Kaṇāda in *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, says that the general definition of *pramāṇa* should adhere to the principle that the source/origin of knowledge must be devoid of any imperfections/defects (*aduṣṭamvidyā*).³³ *Upaskāra* on the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, affirms that a *pramāṇa* is that which yields true knowledge.³⁴

Siddhasena Divakara, the Jaina logician describes “*pramāṇa* is the knowledge which illumines itself and also other objects (*svaparābhāsi*), without any obstruction”.³⁵ It should be pointed out that the term ‘*bādhavivarjita*’ is the same as ‘*bādhavarjita*’ of the Mimāṃsakas and ‘*avisamvādi*’ of Dharmakīrti. Samantabhadra

²⁹ C.D. Bijalwan, *Indian Theory of knowledge...*, p.42.

³⁰ *Prakaraṇapañcikā*., p.127.

³¹ C.D. Bijalwan, *Indian Theory of knowledge...*, p.45.

³² *Ślokavārtika*, 11-80.

³³ *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*, IX, 2.12.

³⁴ *Vaiśeṣikabhāṣya*, p.224.

³⁵ *Nyāyāvtāra*, 1.

pointed out that its nature is to reveal itself as well as the object it pertains to and remains unaffected/unchanged.

The Jainas also take *pramāṇa* in a general sense, in a manner it is applicable to both immediate presentational knowledge (*pratyakṣa*) and mediate knowledge (*parokṣa*), so far as they are true. Under mediate knowledge they include sense-perception, inference, memory and recognition.

The Sāṅkhya defines *pramāṇa* as a modification of ‘*buddhi*’ which apprehends an object, undoubted, real and not known before. Kapila claims that *pramā* is a determinate knowledge of an object not known before and *pramāṇa* is that which is most conducive to such a knowledge. Īśvarakṛṣṇa maintains that *pramāṇa* is that which brings about the cognition of objects (*pramāṇam svaparābhāsi jñānam bādhavivarjitam*).³⁶ Vācaspati explains as a modification of the *citta* it has a content free from all that is doubtful and erroneous. Vijñānabhikṣu holds that it constitutes the role of the intellect (*buddhivṛtti*) that is regarded as *pramāṇa* or the specific cause of true knowledge, *pramāṇa* is that mental function which leads to correct knowledge; to achieve this object, it should be free from doubt and error and should relate to what is not already known. The *Yoga Sūtra* by Patanjali do not provide a direct definition of *pramāṇa*, but *Bhāṣyakāra* Vyāsa has indicated in the *bhāṣya* that *pramāṇa* is that which perceived a real object.³⁷

As per Advaita Vedānta, the special origin of a particular *pramā* or knowledge is called *pramāṇa*. *Prāmāṇa*as defined is the *kaṛaṇa* of a *pramā*. The instrument of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is the consciousness determined by the mental mode or function of the internal organ. *Apramāṇa* is then, such an active and unique cause (*kāraṇa*) of a *pramā* or knowledge. Here, the Advaita Vedānta also regards cognition as, the *pramāṇa*. In fact, according to the Śāṅkara, the fourfold distinction of *pramāṇa*, *pramātā*, *pramiti* and *prameya* is within the eternal consciousness modalized by different determinants. One and the same eternal consciousness or Brahman is differentiated into four kinds of consciousness by four different determinants or limiting conditions (*upādhi*). The cognizing self (*pramātā*) is the consciousness determined by the internal organ (*antahkaraṇa*) which is a modification of nescience. The instrument of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) is the consciousness determined by the mental mode or function of the internal organ. The object of valid knowledge (*prameya*) is the consciousness determined by an empirical object. And the

³⁶ *Prameyasiddhiḥ pramānādi/ sāmṅhyakārika.*, p.4.

³⁷ *Yoga-bhāṣya.*, 1.8/bhutartha-*viṣayattvāt Prāmāṇayasya.*

consequence of engaging in valid knowledge (*pramiti*) is the consciousness manifested by the apprehending mental mode or function of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*).

The Comparative Analysis of Nyāya and Buddhism

The difference between Buddhist and Nyāya view is primarily relies on their primary differences stem from their contrasting evaluation of the *pramāṇa-pramiti* relationship. As per the perspective of Buddhist, a *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge) is always in the manifestation of knowledge, and in the absence of difference between a *pramāṇa* and its resultant *pramāṇa-phala*) called *pramā* (knowledge), they are identical. They discard the soul and hold that cognition itself is the cogniser, the cognisable object, the methods by which cognition, and the result. Dharmakīrti declares that cognition serves as the method for acquiring valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*); that which does not represent cognition (*ajñāna-jñāna-bhinna*) such as the sense-object contact, is not the method to obtaining valid knowledge (*jñānampramāṇamna-jñānamindriyārtha-sannikarṣādi*).³⁸ It is held by Dharmottara that "one and the same cognition is the means of valid knowledge and also the result (*pramāṇaphala*). (*tadevajñānampramāṇamtadevapramāṇa-phalam*).³⁹ According to them knowledge only is *pramāṇa* and not non-knowledge like sense object contact. We call the cognition itself, *pramāṇa* a means of cognising, because it is usually conceived to include the act of cognising, although primarily it is a result. Diñnāga, Sautrāntika and several representatives of Yogācāra tradition maintained that the form (*ākāra*) of the object which is possessed by the cognition within itself, is the means of valid knowledge (*pramāṇa*) and the cognition serving as the manifestation of the perception of the object (*viśayādhigati*) is the outcome/result (*pramāṇa-phala*).⁴⁰ This fact is true in case of perception along with that of inference.

As for the question of identity/difference between the resultant cognition and its instrument, the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣikas consider the two to be absolutely different. This view of theirs seems to be a corollary of their fundamental position according to which an effect is quite different from its cause (*ārambhavāda*). They perceive each phase within the process of cognition as an instrument and resultant cognition i.e., an instrument with regard to the succeeding stage that is generated by it and a resultant cognition with respect to the preceding stage whose result is this (*yadāsannikarṣas tadājñānampramitiḥ, yadājñānamtadā hānopādānopekṣābuddhayaḥphalam*).⁴¹ Thus, the instrument of perception is *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa* while the resultant perceptive

³⁸ *Pramana-vārtika*, 1.3

³⁹ *Nyāyabindu-Tikā...*, p.86.

⁴⁰ *Śloka-vārtika*, p. 55.

⁴¹ *Nyāyabhāṣya*.. I, 1.3.

knowledge is *pratyakṣa pramā*. Similarly, the means of inference is different from the resultant inferential cognition. The initial one is designated as *anumāna*, the suffix *ana* denoting instrumentality. The second one is called as *anumīti*, the suffix *ti* denoting the resultant state.

Here, Jayanta emphasises that the term ‘*pramāṇa*’ etymologically signifies the instrument. Only by *pramāṇa* something is correctly known with precision i.e., a truthful understanding of objects. In common parlance when we say, we know through the use of *pramāṇa*, this tends to support the standpoint that *pramāṇa* and *pramiti* are two distinct entities. The Naiyāyika as argue that a piece of knowledge, if it is other than doubt and illusion, produces another piece of knowledge, then the first one will be regarded as *pramāṇa* and in this case *pramāṇa* and *pramā* are identical. Again, in the sphere of knowledge, which produces another aspect of knowledge is encompassed within the collocation of conditions and it is to be called *pramāṇa* and not *pramā*. (Jayanta’s view). He refutes the Buddhist view, and expresses that *pramāṇa* perhaps in the context of knowledge as well as non-knowledge. The subsequent logicians within the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika tradition also endorse the views of Jayanta on this important and vital-issue.

The second point of difference is that of *Pramāṇa-saṃplava* vs. *Pramāṇa-vyavasthā*. According to the perspective of Buddhism, each of the two *pramāṇas*, specifically, perception and inference, has its exclusive and distinctive sphere. A unique particular can only be grasped by perception, and never by inference; and vice-versa, a universal (which is merely a mental entity) can be grasped only by intellect (inference) and never by perception. This restriction between these two *pramāṇas* to its own sphere is precisely referred to as *Pramāṇa-Vyavasthā*. They hold that perception and inference have their own special fields of action to the former grasps the particular only and the latter universals only (*syān matireṣā viśiṣṭaviśayāṇipramāṇāni/viśeṣaviśayampratyakṣam sāmānyaviśayamanumānamiti*).⁴² And there is no third type of object that might be supposed to be common to both. So, perception can never grasp what is grasped by inference. The co-operation of different organs of our knowledge is present within the process of perceiving of one and the same object is impossible.

This is opposed to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika theory of *Pramāṇa-saṃplava*, which means that the same object can be comprehended by perception, inference or any other means of knowledge. Uddyotkara, Vācaspatimiṣra and other Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika writers argue this point against the Buddhist. The Buddhist contention is that it is futile to

⁴² *Nyāyavārtika*, p.4.

comprehend by another *pramāṇa* an object that has previously been comprehended by one of those *pramāṇas*. Uddyotkara says that we do not hold that an object is comprehended by inference and other *pramāṇas* in the same way as it is comprehended by perception. By perception it is comprehended in a different way, i.e., through sense-contact. By inference it is comprehended without sense-contact (through inferential mark). By *upamāna pramāṇa* the relation of a word with the object (denoted by the word) is comprehended, and by *Śabdapramāṇa* the comprehension is by using words/language.

Vātsyāyana clearly states that there are objects that could be grasped by all the organs of knowledge while there are other objects that could be grasped by someone organ only. As instances of the objects of the first type are cited *Ātman* and fire they are cognised by the verbal authority, inference and perception successively. Then he gives instances of the objects in whose case only one organ can operate. The knowledge of Heaven could be acquired through verbal testimony only, the knowledge of clouds, after having heard the rumbling sound could be had through inference only and the knowledge of one's own hand could be had through perception only.⁴³

Uddyotkara too accepts both *Pramāṇa-Vyavasthā* and *Pramāṇa-Samplava*. To give an illustration, he says that only visual sense-organ grasps the quality colour, only auditory sense-organ grasps the quality of sound and so on yet all the sense-organs grasp the universal Being and the universal Quality. Again, he observes that though only visual sense-organ cognises colour and only tactual organ cognises touch, yet both these organs cognise the solid body pot.⁴⁴

However, it seems that the debate between these two schools of thought is due to their different metaphysical theories. To the Buddhist, the external reality is of an undivided unitary nature. It has not many aspects which may be comprehended by different *pramāṇas*. The Buddhist asks: "when once the nature of a unitary object has been directly perceived, what other aspect of it remains which are to be perceived by other means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*)? (*ekasyārthasvabhāvasyapratyakṣyasatasvayam, ko 'nyanadr̥ṣṭobhāgaḥsyād yaḥpramāṇaiḥparikṣyate.*)"⁴⁵ To this question, we have already discussed the Nyāya presentation of *Pramāṇa-samplava*. The Mimāṃsakas also hold the same view that one and the same object can be cognised by different *pramāṇas*.

⁴³ *Nyāyabhāṣya*, 1.1.3

⁴⁴ *Nyāyavārtika*, p.5

⁴⁵ *Nyāyamañjari*, Vol. I. p.87.

The third point of difference is that for the Buddhist, the external objective reality is in the form of isolated, discrete point-instants called moments (*kṣaṇas*) which are unique particulars (*svalakṣanas*). There are only two *pramāṇas* corresponding to two kinds of objects i.e., *svalakṣana* (unique particular) and *Sāmānya-lakṣaṇa* (generic form). They hold that the world of appearance is only a construction of our intellect, and consists of generalized images (*Sāmānya-lakṣaṇa*) which are negative as they are purely mental and objectively unreal. Thus, there being two kinds of objects, the *pramāṇas* are also only two, each having its separate and distinct sphere.

But the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika is opposed to this view. Uddyotakara says: “we do not accept that there are only two *pramāṇas*, or that there are only two kinds of objects, nor do we accept the view that there is not any intermixture of *pramāṇas*” (*na tāvat-pramāṇadvayaṃ pratipadyām ahenaviṣayadvayam nāpyasamkara*).⁴⁶

The Nature of *Pramāṇa*

According to Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, *pramāṇa* derivatively means the instrument of valid knowledge (*pramāyāḥ karaṇam*). “*Pramāṇa* is that which is invariably related to *pramā*, or, to be *pramāṇa* is never to be disconnected from a lower possessing right knowledge”.⁴⁷ There cannot be any right understanding of things except by means of *pramāṇa*. A subject arrives at the valid knowledge of objects by means of *pramāṇa*, for the existence and nature of objects are to be ascertained only by such cognitions as are based on *pramāṇa*. So, we can say that, “*pramāṇa* is the cause of valid cognition of objects, inasmuch as it gives us a knowledge of objects as they really are and exist in themselves”.⁴⁸ *Pramāṇa* has a real correspondence with objects, in the context of the inherent characteristics and attributes of objects, as revealed by *pramāṇa* are uncontradictory true of them, despite all variations in time, place and other conditions. All this means only that *pramāṇa* is the *karaṇa* or means of *pramā* or valid knowledge. Let us discuss what then is a *karaṇa* and how is it constituted?

It is said by Vātsyāyana that the cause of valid cognition (*upalabdhi-hetu*) is its instrument (*upalabdhi sādhanāni pramāṇāniti*).⁴⁹ The instrument (*karaṇa*) is a form of cause (*karaṇa*). But any and every cause is not an instrument. Only the most-efficacious (*sādhakatama*) of the causes is called the *karaṇa*. Thus, though the knower (*pramātā*) and the object known (*prameya*) too are causes of valid knowledge (*pramā*),

⁴⁶ *Nyāyavārtika*, p.13.

⁴⁷ *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, p. 228.

⁴⁸ *Nyāyabhāṣya*, I.I.I., 4.2.29.

⁴⁹ *Nyāyabhāṣya*, 1.13.

these are not considered *aspramāṇa*, because these are not instruments or the most efficacious ones of the causes of valid knowledge.

Jayanta Bhaṭṭa holds that the totality (*sāmagri*) of all the causes producing the effect, rather than any one of these by itself, is to be considered as the *karaṇa*. But Jayanta's view of *karaṇa* as the totality of all the causes producing the effect is rejected by others. Paṇḍitī defines *karaṇa* as 'the most efficient one' (*sādhakatama*) of the causes. In fact, only the 'special' (*asādhārana*) cause is to be considered as the *karaṇa*. This 'speciality' (*asādhāranatva*) or 'being the most efficient one' (*sādhakatamatva*) consists, according to Gaṅgeśa and other representatives of Navya-Nyāya, in "the production of the effect through some functional intermediary." As Gadādhara explains, *karaṇa* is not a mere cause it is only that cause which is possessed of the function (*vyāpāra*) which invariably and immediately produces the effect.

According to Advaitins 'a *karaṇa* is conceived as the unique or the special cause through the action to which a particular effect is produced'.⁵⁰ (*vyāpārvad asādhāraṇam kāraṇam karaṇam*). A cause, to be called a *karaṇa*, must not be merely unique (*asādhārana*), it must also possess some active function (*vyāpāra*).

Dharmakīrti maintains that nothing but cognition (*jñāna*) deserves to be called an instrument of valid cognition because it is the most efficient cause required to generate valid cognition. This is so for two reasons:

- (1) Sense organs being non-conscious, it is impossible for them to generate cognition, and
- (2) It is mainly cognition that can enable us to attain the desirable and to avoid the undesirable.⁵¹

From this it can be deduced that out of the four causal conditions (*pratyaya*) it is the *samānantarapratyaya* (the immediately preceding cognition-moment) which is considered by him to be the main or the most efficient cause of valid cognition. He observes that the capacity of cognition to cognise itself is the instrument and its actual cognition of itself (*svasañvedanā*) is the resultant cognition.⁵²

Even **Akalanka** agrees with Dharmakīrti in so far as he holds that it is a cognition that should be regarded as *pramāṇa*(instrument). He, like Dharmakīrti, observes that because a particular piece of knowledge is determined to be knowledge of the blue, on the basis of the form it bears, it is this for that should be regarded as

⁵⁰ *Vedānta-paribhāṣā*,

⁵¹ *Pramāṇavārtika*, 1.5.

⁵² *Pramāṇavārtika*, II, 366.

pramāṇa (an instrument). (*artha sārūpyam asyapramāṇam tadvasadarthapratiti siddheriti*).⁵³ And a particular piece of knowledge and its form being absolutely identical. Dharmakīrti regards the resultant cognition and its instrument as identical.

According to Hemachandra (the Jaina logician), because knowledge is determined to be “knowledge of the blue” or “knowledge of the yellow” on the basis of its mode, it is this mode that should be regarded as the *pramāṇa* and the knowledge as a whole of that particular time as the resultant cognition. Here the word *pramāṇa* means the determinant of a particular piece of valid cognition. The influence of Dharmakīrti is evident here also.

Conclusion

The function of the *Pramāṇaśāstra* in Indian epistemological tradition investigates and evaluates evidence, justified true belief, method of reasoning, criteria upon which knowledge claims are grounded. All the schools of Indian philosophy have generally admitted that *pramāṇa* is what gives *pramā* and that *pramā* is true knowledge. *Pramā* designates a true cognition which is attended with a belief in its truthfulness. But there is much difference of opinion among them as to the nature of the truth, which each of them claims for its *pramāṇa*. A *pramāṇa* gives rise to a cognition that is veridical and *pramā* is *yathārtijñāna*. Each school regarded its own method of obtaining valid cognition as indispensable for fulfilling human goals. The right knowledge (*yathārtijñāna*) of an object can lead to successful activity (*saphal*) and *pramāṇa* alone gives right knowledge.

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Book Review

Ratna Dutta Sharma: *Theory of Argumentation: Tradition and Modern*, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, in collaboration with Maha Bodhi Book Agency, 2015, pp.xii+256, Price:550/-

I

The book under review is divided in to six parts- Preface, Different Chapters, Note and Reference, Bibliography, Index and Corrigendum. In the Preface the author justifies the title of the book: *Theory of Argumentation: Traditional and Modern* following the line of *Carakasamhitā* based on Indian medical sciences (*Āyurveda*). Earlier I had an idea that only the texts based on logic are grounded on arguments and critical thinking. This is the first time I came to know that even the book on medical science called *Carakasamhitā* in the portion of *vimānasthāna* which is the eighth chapter of the same. It is necessary for the physicians, as Caraka observes, to know the list of *padārtha*-s to make a successful and argumentative dialogue with the patients. To him argumentation is needed not only for argument's sake but to save the life of someone and to do well-being of others.

II

In the first chapter i.e., Introduction the author tries to explain that argumentation or dialogue may happen between a physician and a patient and also among fellow-physicians. This argumentation may be of sweetest way (friendly way) or in a hostile way. Former is called *sambhāṣā* meaning *sandhyāya sambhāṣā* (friendly argumentation or dialogue) while the second one is called *vigṛhya sambhāṣā* i.e., dialogue depending on hostility. First one, according to Caraka, is obviously preferable. To him all are not eligible for involving in argumentation, but an individual physician becomes eligible to participate in the discussions if he attains efficiency in the following like *vāda*, *pratijñā*, *sthāpana*, *pratisthāpana*, *hetu*, *dṛṣṭānta*, *upanaya*, *nigamana*, *anumāna*, *saṁśaya*, *prayojana*, *savybhicāra*, *jijñāsā*, *nigrahasthāna* etc., which have got much affinities with the Nyāya Logic. Professor Dutta Sharma has made a comparative study between Caraka and Gautama regarding these tools of argumentation and has shown the specific method adopted by Caraka, which is highly praiseworthy and appreciable.

The second chapter is the result of her concentration to the two types of debate as told earlier called *sandhyāya sambhāṣā* i.e., friendly debate and *vigṛhya sambhāṣā* i.e., hostile debate. The process of argumentation involved in these two types of debate is discussed in a very analytic manner. Like Nyāya system Caraka also discussed on the methods of argumentation in two types of debates (*kathā*) called *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā*

apart from *vāda*. It is interesting to note that Caraka is very much clear with whom and when the friendly debate can be undertaken. 1. A) Friendly debate may be undertaken with an inferior opponent in a friendly learned or ignorant body. B) Friendly discussion with an equal opponent in a learned or ignorant body. C) Friendly debate with a superior opponent in a friendly or ignorant body. 2. A) Friendly debate with equal opponent in a neutral learned or ignorant assembly. B and C) Friendly interaction with a superior opponent in a neutral learned or ignorant assembly. 3. A) Friendly interaction with an inferior opponent in a prejudiced or ignorant body. B) Friendly argumentative encounter with an equal opponent in a prejudiced or ignorant body. C) Friendly argumentation with a superior opponent in a prejudiced or ignorant body. In the like manner, other steps we shall get if there is an argumentation with the opponent in a hostile manner.

The third chapter is concentrated to the language of argumentation as found in *Āyurveda* particularly in *Carakasamhitā*. In this context the author has made a comparative estimate between the language adopted by Caraka at the time argumentation and also the Nyaya language of argumentation. Afterwards, the similarities and dissimilarities have been shown between two traditions. The modern theory like Pragma-Dialectic theory on the nature of language in Argumentation has been taken into account for consideration. In this chapter what the author wants to establish is, according to Caraka, the language of argumentation is nothing but the syllogistic language like *parāthānumāna* and its different constituents. That is why, Caraka says that to him *anumāna* is *yuktyapekṣastarkaḥ* (p.95) i.e., attainment of right cognition being corroborated by reasoning.

The conclusive chapter gives us a detailed analysis of the essence of argumentation through which a physician interacts with another physician or with patient. Caraka thinks that such argumentation should be error-free or free from *pseudo*-probans (*hetvābhāsa*). If an argument is vitiated by *hetvābhāsa* then it prevents the goal of discussion. Fallacies are the violation of the corresponding rules of discussion leading to the humiliation of the discussant. These are called *nigrahassthāna*-s (points of defeat) and Caraka calls it *nigrahaprāpti*. The author has given a detailed account of *hetvābhāsa*-s and *nigrahassthāna*-s according to Caraka, Gautama, Vātsyāyana, Śaṅkara Miśra, Varadarāja etc. Defect involves in a word called *padadoṣa* and in a sentence called *vākyadoṣa*. Caraka has offered one *nigrahassthāna* called *ahetu* which is three types- *prakaraṇasama*, *saṁśayasama* and *varṇyasama* discussed latter in details. The author has concentrated to the rules of critical discussion admitted in the Pragma-Dialectic theory of argumentation and their violation. The rules are a follows- Freedom rule, Burden of proof rule, Standpoint rule, Relevant rule, Unexpressed

premise rule, Starting point rule, Argument-scheme rule, Validity rule, Closure rule, Usage rule etc. and the situations under which they are violated. Professor Dutta Sharma is of the opinion that most of the realistic schools in India refuse to accept interpretation of the scripture that goes against *lokānubhava* (experience of the public) (p.107). In this context, I personally cannot agree with the author. For, even the non-realistic or idealistic schools sometimes admit the usage or experience of the public (*lokānubhava* or *lokavyavahāra*) as evidence of certain *pramāṇa*. It may be argued whether *arthāpatti* can be reduced to inference or *anumāna* or not. The followers of *arthāpatti* as *pramāṇa* like Advaita Vedānta etc. admit the non-reducibility of *arthāpatti* to *anumāna* and hence it is considered as a different source of knowing valid cognition. The Advaitins have already forwarded a few arguments in favour of non-reducibility of *arthāpatti* to *anumāna*. In spite of this, there is a custom to quote public usage (*lokavyavahāra*) in favour of justifying certain conclusion. In this context evidence is given from the public usage. The process involved in inferring fire on the mountain from smoke is completely different from that involved in assuming the consumption of food at night so far as Devadatta is concerned in the case – ‘*pīno devadattaḥ divā na bhūṅkte*’ (i.e., the strong and stout Devadatta does take food at the day time). When it is assumed, it is customarily described as ‘assuming’ (*‘kalpayāmi*’), but not ‘inferring’ (*‘anuminomi*’). Had it been the same, the usage would have been as ‘inferring’ instead of ‘assuming’. Such *lokānubhava*, even if goes against the interpretation of scripture, can be accepted as a *pramāṇa* (*Vedāntaparibhāṣā*, *Arthāpatti Parichheda*).

III

So far as the credit side of the book is concerned, it may be said that the book is written basing on the original texts without distorting their appropriate meaning. Secondly, a successful comparative study has been made between Caraka in one side and Gautama, Vātsyāyana, Śaṅkara Mīśra, Varadarāja etc. on the other and pointed out the value of Caraka’s argumentation in the context of the science of medical treatment. Thirdly, the analysis and elucidation of the texts are very much faithful and intelligible. Fourthly, the English-rendering of the Sanskrit texts in a lucid and precise language is not an easy task, which has been easily accomplished by Professor Dutta Sharma. Fifthly, while substantiating her own standpoint, she has respectfully reviewed the views of the modern scholars like Jonardon Ganeri (p.96), Prodeep P Gokhale (p.98), Ernest Prets (p.94), Piotr Balcerowicz and Marck (p.94) etc., which is the generosity of a great scholar. Lastly, the book has got a lot of methodological value. For any type of research, theoretical, practical, medical or scientific, such method of argumentation is of great value.

IV

On the debit side of the book, I would like to point out some mistakes or inconsistencies so that it is corrected in the next edition. First, the author says in p.95- “According to Caraka, *anumāna* is ‘*yuktapekṣa tarka*’”. The correct text should be ‘*yuktyapekṣastarkaḥ*’ or ‘*yuktyapekṣaḥ. tarkaḥ*’ by virtue of the fact that the term *yukti* is conjoined with *apekṣaḥ*. Secondly, the term ‘*avijñāte opi*’ (p.95) is incorrect, as the correct form should be ‘*avijñāte’pi*’. Thirdly, the third step A and B, the fourth step A and B are printed **as the same** (p.81), which are incorrect. The third step A would be – ‘Friendly discussion with inferior opponent in a prejudiced /ignored assembly’ and B would be- ‘Friendly discussion with **equal** opponent in a prejudiced /ignorant assembly’. In the same manner, the fourth step B should be- ‘Friendly discussion with **equal (not inferior)** opponent in a friendly learned assembly. Lastly, the book contains many typographical mistakes and errors in diacritical marks, viz, ‘joutnal’ p.197 (instead of **Journal**), Pitor Balcerowicz p.94 (instead of **Poitr** Balcerowicz), ‘śravanādīpātavaḥ’ p.34 (instead of *śravaṇādīpātavaḥ*), ‘drṣtānta’p.100 (instead of ‘*drṣṭānta*’), Jonerdon p. 96 (instead of **Jonardan**), Varadrāja p.136 (instead of **Varadarāja**) etc.

V

In spite of these the book is a pioneer one in so far as the methods of argumentation in Indian Philosophy are concerned. There are subtle differences among *vāda*, *jalpa* and *vitaṇḍā*, among *uddeśa*, *lakṣaṇa* and *parīkṣā*, and among different types of fallacies (*hetvābhāsa*) etc., which are analytically, critically and logically highlighted by the author in a simple and lucid English language. The job is very difficult due to the intricacies of the technical terms. If it is at all possible, it needs Herculean labour which has been undertaken by her. I hope our future generation and present scholars will highly be benefitted from the book. In philosophical research methodology is very much important in classical and modern philosophical research. The author has undertaken both the traditions and the methods are beautifully shown in this book. Methodology is a kind of radar which serves as a guide to take us in proper or right path of research. That is why, the theory of argumentation is very much important in each and every field of research.

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Book Review

Living Together: Rethinking Identity and Difference in Modern Context, by Alok Tandon, published by Akshaya Prakashan, New Delhi, first published in 2023, Rs. 300/-p.152.

The concept of Identity was the central theme of cultural studies throughout the 1990s. Driven by the cultural politics of feminism, gay rights and multiculturalism, as well by philosophical and linguistic concerns, there has been a new mode of thinking, though it has been subjected to criticism. Identities are not universal, fixed or essential entities, but contingent on historically and culturally special construction of language. This means that identities are wholly cultural and cannot exist outside of representations. Identities are discursive constructions, i.e. descriptions of ourselves with which we identify and in which we have emotionally connected. While identities are matters of culture rather than nature, this does not mean that one can easily replace those ethnic or sexual identities into which one has been acculturated. While identities are social constructions, they are the ones that constitute us through the impositions of power and the identifications of the psyche.

The main objective of the book under review is to study and evaluate the different claims of various theoretical models available both in India and outside with regard to the notion of identity and difference. The author, Alok Tandon argues that his purpose is to develop a theoretical framework and also to examine the concept of identity and difference in the contemporary perspective. The question that is raised in this context is to examine whether identity is a matter of choice or discovery, and also how and why identity crisis is related to fundamentalism, revivalism and terrorism. Tandon, is able to do this by keeping thinkers like, Charles Taylor, Axel Honneth, Nancy Fraser and others at the background. The book examines the above issues from Indian standpoint also though briefly, tries to work out a practical solution to be problem of identity and difference.

Though we have been talking about identity and difference from the philosophical perspectives in the past, it is essential for us to study it in the modern and postmodern context. Hence the book is the need of the hour where human society is facing a crisis in the name of caste, religion and politics. Is there a place for others in our search for identity, and whether identity a matter of choice or discovery is discussed at length.

The book contains eight chapters including Introduction and conclusion. In the introductory chapter, the author explains different characteristics of identity and how identities are multiple in nature. Here questions like, whether we need an identity and whether there exists a relation between community and identity is seen the light of modern society. By quoting Rajeev Bhargava and Charles Taylor, it is said that there is a connection between community and identity and identity is a social construct based on the collective social practices. Two aspects of identity, namely, subjective and objective are mentioned here and it is also shown how there lies a asymmetrical relation between them. Some of the characteristics of identity are worth mentioning here. The author is of the view that each and every identity is always with some labels or other and serves as the link between “I” and “we”. In India, the dominant identity is the caste identity which subjugates the other. It is also shown that our identities are multiple in nature and identity is not something which is imposed upon someone.

In the second chapter, the concept of recognition or distribution is discussed in the discourse of Taylor, Axel Honneth and Nancy Fraser. All the above thinkers have dealt with the idea of recognition which is highlighted by the author. Also, their approach is seen from the critical standpoint to see whether it can solve the problem or not. The main focus here is study the idea of recognition of one’s identity. It is important, says Tandon, that we must have a proper understanding of the concept of recognition. There are two forms of politics of recognition: politics of universalism and politics of difference. While discussing Axel Honneth’s theory of recognition, Tandon makes a distinction between love, respect and esteem, as three modes of recognition. Similarly, in Nancy Fraser, one can see how she rejects the above position of Taylor and Honneth and suggests that there is need to develop “status model” which does not accept institutionalized patterns of cultural value as the only obstacles to participatory parity. It considers social justice as encompassing two dimensions of recognition and distribution. For her, emancipation can only exist on the basis of equal participation in all spheres of life and can only be understood in terms of social struggles. The benefits of status model which is explained by Fraser, is elaborated further by Tandon. Also, we find a critical evaluation of the above three thinkers and by quoting some of critics of Taylor, Tandon argues that Taylor’s politics of recognition would lead to the oppression of marginalized individuals. The critics like Stephen Rockefeller and Appiah clearly show the limitation of Taylor in the cross-cultural exchange. Similarly, thinkers like Marion Young and Judith Butler criticized Fraser for her understanding of dualistic account of capitalist society. Both the critics are of the view that it is not possible to separate political economy from culture, as they are

intermingled. The author concludes this chapter by saying that among these positions, Fraser's bifocal thought of economic and cultural injustice have more advantages than that of the others and Tandon tries to apply this in Dalit discourse in Indian context in the later chapter. No doubt, Fraser's theory of social justice is very much relevant in Indian context.

In the third chapter, the concept of modernity, culture and identity are discussed briefly. Tandon explains the relationship between modernity, culture and identity to show that modernity has both advantages and disadvantages. Reason and autonomy are the two major aspects of modernity. It is true that in modernity, there was political, social and cultural transformation. In fact, modernity emerged as a reaction to traditional society and was characterized by innovation, novelty and dynamism. Since premodern has not contributed much to the development of human race, we consider the modern and postmodern period as more important than the premodern period. In modern period, reason was considered as the source of progress in knowledge. Some modernists went to the extent of believing that reason was the only source of knowledge. It is the foundation of knowledge according to them. No doubt, modernity has produced many welcoming changes in the human society. One such change was the industrial transformation. Modernity also called for cultural transformation. New technologies and new modes of transformation and communication—all there are important features of modernism. It allowed urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization, industrialization etc., which definitely have moved the human progress many steps further. It is true that in modernity, there was political, social and cultural transformation. It allowed urbanization, rationalization, bureaucratization, industrialization etc., which definitely have moved the human progress many steps further.

But the evil effects or ill effects of modernization are too many. The industrialization has alienated the common man and woman from the society. They were removed from the public sphere. The colonialization reduced man to a machine. Man's values were lost. Modernity was the rule of domination and control. Horkheimer and Adorno very rightly defined it as a process whereby reason turned into its opposite and modernity's promises of liberation masked form of oppressive and domination. These aspects are important when we are evaluating modernity. Tandon claims that globalization is a logical consequence of modernity because of the fact that modernity is inherently universalizing in nature.

In the fourth chapter, an attempt is made to explain the concept of identity and violence, mainly from the perspective of Amartya Sen. Tandon starts with the

assumption that it is difficult for us to avoid identity. Some questions like, “Why do we need identity?”, “Is it a matter of choice or aspective”? “What is the crisis of identity”? are discussed. Three conceptions of identity, namely, enlightenment subject, sociological subject and post-modern subject are highlighted. Stuart Hall identifies three different ways of understanding identity: the ‘enlightenment subject’, the ‘sociological subject’, and the fractured (de-centred) or ‘postmodern subject’. The enlightenment or Cartesian conception of the subject pictures a conscious and unified individual marked by inherently rational capacities that allow her/him to experience and make sense of the world according to the actual properties of that world. In the ‘sociological subject’ the social and the individual are mutually constituting. Thus, the internalization of social values and roles acquired through the process of acculturation stabilizes the individual and ensures that they fit with the social structure. The fragmented or ‘de-centred’ self is, according to Hall, composed not of one, but of several shifting, sometimes contradictory, identities. It is argued that there is a need for us to transcend the essentialist and postmodern conception of identity. With regard to the postmodern conception of identity, Tandon says that “we cannot evaluate the claims made on the basis of identities cause identities behave in anarchist manner, cut off from socio-economic structure”. This position of Tandon is not acceptable because we know how the “socio-economic structure” has been playing an important role in the postmodern conception of identity. Foucault is a good example for this.

In the fifth chapter, the problems of identity politics are seen from the perspective of thinkers like Nathan Glazer and Judith Butler and from here the author moves towards Indian context, especially, how Dalit identity politics challenges varna system. Also, the feminist identity politics, Gay and Lesbian identity politics, race and ethnicity identity politics are some of the ideas which are evaluated in this chapter. The advantages as well as disadvantages of identity politics are also examined. Here the identity politics is discussed wherein one can include the blacks, the women and caste and other liberation movements. For the author, identity politics has certain advantages. For example, it gives scope for a “new social subject”. There is solidarity involved in them. But the fact is that identity politics would create “false antinomies between closed wholes”. Tandon points out some of the dangers of identity politics. “Women, Blacks and Dalits, etc., cannot liberate themselves by some kind of unilateral declaration of independent, others (men, whites, upper class etc.) must change their views and attitudes too” (p.70). This is unacceptable for the main reason that only “sufferers” know their pain and the “outsiders” cannot penetrate into their problems. So, what is needed is the unity among the suppressed. The micro-cultural politics must be properly

connected to the “macro politics”, which means the different Dalit movements must be connected to each other so that it would be easy for them to fight for their rights. The micro-political dimensions should be properly united to develop it into a macro-politics.

In chapter six, the above issues are seen from Indian perspective. In Indian situation, the notion of identity as well as difference has been playing an important role from the ancient time onwards, though in premodernity, identities were ascriptive in nature. Different conflicts like, religious as well as caste are examined. Religious conflicts are the conflict between communities on the basis of religion. One way solving the problem is to encourage the “inter-religious dialogue” so that one respects the other. While discussing the caste conflict in India, Tandon, explains the importance of recognition and redistribution. He develops the critique of Dalit politics in post-independence India by his interesting study on E.M.S. Namboodiripad, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Kanshi Ram. The seventh chapter attempts to propose some models for integration. The significance of multiculturalism is suggested here. This is largely seen from Western perspective especially in the context of Taylor and Will Kymlicka. Here the author could have highlighted the significance of Indian approach to multiculturalism during the colonial and post-colonial periods. It is very much essential to show how Indian tradition always has a concern for multicultural and multiethnic society from the ancient time onwards. This approach would have strengthened the book by showing the practical approach to some of the issues raised.

The book of Alok Tandon raises many philosophical issues in context of Identity and difference. The book is well written and argued in a logical way. This book is a contribution to knowledge and I am sure that teachers and scholars would be benefited by the approach of Alok Tandon.

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समानो मन्तः समितिः समानी

दर्शन विभाग

उत्तुवरञ्ज विश्वविद्यालय

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