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Editor: Daya Krishna

Contents

From the Editor's Desk

The *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* has completed ten years and is entering the second decade of its publication with this issue. Ten years is not a very long time in the life history of a journal but considering the mortality rate among academic journals in India and the proverbial irregularity in their publication, we can justly be proud not only of having survived all these years but also of having brought out the Journal fairly regularly and on schedule most of the time.

I hope you have been reading at least some of the articles in each issue and have noted the new section entitled 'Notes and Queries' which was started recently. Also, I hope you have noticed the attempt at establishing a dialogue through the pages of the Journal between well-known western scholars in the field of Indian philosophy and outstanding traditional pandits on some of the new interpretations that they have given to well-known concepts of Indian philosophy. Professor Frits Staal's theory of *Dravya Tyāga* was commented upon by such eminent scholars as the late Pt. Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī, Professor K.T. Pandurangi, Professor Rāmānuja Tattācārya and Pandit Remella Sūryaprakāśa Śāstrī, in Vol. VIII, No. 3; and Professor Karl Potter's theory about the stages of development in Advaita Vedānta was subjected to critical evaluation by such well-known scholars as Professor Ram Murti Sharma, Professor G.C. Pande, Professor Sangam Lal Pandey, Professor V. Venkatachalam and Professor Sibajiban Bhattacharyya. Professor Potter's reply has already been published in Vol. IX, No. 2 and Professor Staal's reply is being published in this issue. I hope you have enjoyed the 'Discussion and Comments' section wherein a lot of lively debate on the articles written in the Journal has been going on in almost every issue.

We have also tried to bring out some survey articles such as 'Studies on Indian Philosophy in Japan, 1963–87', published in Vol. X, No. 2, just as we have tried to highlight the contributions of outstanding Indian philosophers of the recent past, as exemplified by the article on Professor R.D. Ranade in Vol. X, No. 2. We propose to publish more such articles in the forthcoming issues of the Journal.

However, this is only as we see it from our end. As they say, 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating and not what the cook says about it.' So, ultimately it is you, dear reader, who is the best judge in the matter, as the Journal is meant for you. We would like to have your response to what we have been publishing up till now. It will be helpful to us to know whether you are satisfied with the quality of the articles published in each issue and the philosophical areas that we have tried to cover. We would also like to have your suggestions for improving the Journal so that it may be of greater use and service to its readers in India and abroad.

During the last ten years the cost of production has increased considerably and we are constrained to raise the subscription rates of the Journal. We hope that our subscribers will continue to extend their whole-hearted support to it.

Daya Krishna

The Human Right to Know and the Reality of Knowledge

Practical-philosophical consequences of epistemological realism

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Most people today, being asked the question 'is subjectivity a waning standard?', would tend to answer in the affirmative, without giving the matter a second thought. How, then, is subjectivity to provide a central perspective for philosophical thought and for living one's life—after Nietzsche's critique of humanism, Marx's analysis of the conditions under which any free association between free human beings is not possible, and under the impact of the postmodernist veto on this central category of the tradition of European Enlightenment? Without doubt the Romantic notion of *subjectivity* is no longer an issue today. And yet, I shall be defending the thesis that the age of subjectivity ushered in by Kant only now come into existence. Modernity, in other words, has only just begun.

The subject I am dealing with is the relationship between *knowledge* and *democracy*. This is a political theme, but I shall be treating it in epistemological terms. Modern societies are *knowledge-based*; they open up space for individual action to the extent that subjectivity is *knowledge-based*.

I shall begin, under the heading 'crisis of knowledge', by briefly outlining the age we live in, an age in which nothing will be changed if people lack the *capacity to judge*. Following this, I shall make an excursion into the realm of philosophical epistemology in order to determine which concept of knowledge we need to have if we are to assert a claim for *knowledge as the precondition for democracy*. The third part of my argument will be a remembrance of the pre-history of the human right to know. Fourthly and finally, I shall plead for a world-image of individual freedom, in which democracy provides the fundamental order on which all knowledge is based.

The programme I should like to propose can be summarised as follows: Epistemologies[1] are implicates of self-images and world-images, *and* are systems on which such world-images and those universes of meanings (i.e. semantic systems for world-images) in which an individual designs *his possible world* are grounded. Anyone who reflects on the relationship between being and knowledge defines as a subject—in

historically relative autonomy—a self-relationship. Epistemologies are framework theories in which decisions are made as to the choice of ontologies. This is widely acknowledged today. It is often forgotten, however, that *at the same time* they are the foundation for the historical-philosophical modes of self-understanding of human beings and give rise to practical-philosophical consequences. My objective here is to show the manner in which agreement and understanding with regard to any realism are able to bring in its train a practical philosophy of knowledge and the idea of the *democracy of knowledge*.[2] I should like to substantiate the following thesis, namely that *epistemological realism is the foundation for the human right to know*. From this is derived my answer to the question posed at the outset, namely that subjectivity is not a 'waning standard'.

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THE CRISIS OF KNOWLEDGE AS A GLOBAL PROBLEM AND
THE FIRST REASON FOR THE HUMAN RIGHT TO KNOW

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I know of no document that is more deeply impressing in its evidence for this process than H. Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. In the Foreword to the German translation, she renews the emphasis on her fundamental assumption that 'it is in the essence of the total apparatus of domination and perhaps in the nature of any bureaucracy that it turns human beings into functionaries, mere wheels in the administrative machine, thus dehumanizing them'. She analyses the tendency that is bound up with this, 'to make the responsibility of the agent for his deeds vanish away by explaining it in terms of the one or the other determinism'. This leads her to the core of the problem of the capacity of individuals to action, self-determination and guilt; the issue is the 'essence and the functioning of the human faculty of judgement'.[3] What interests Arendt in Eichmann is the type of human that gains personal identity through obedience within the 'banality of evil', at the same time as losing it through the incapacity to judge, to speak and to remember. In Arendt's words, 'his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*, namely, to think from the standpoint of somebody else'. Eichmann, the reader of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* who was capable of thinking only the thought of 'duty', explained 'that from the moment he was charged with carrying out the Final Solution he had ceased to live according to Kantian principles, that he had known it, and that he had consoled himself with the thought that he was no longer "master of his own deeds", that he was unable "to change anything".'

It is the balance of the 'terrifying normality' that Arendt draws—'that this new type of criminal, who is in actual fact *hostis generis humani*, commits his crimes under circumstances that make it well-nigh impossible for him to know or to feel that he is doing wrong'[4]—that must be remembered in my context. Freedom is the precondition for responsibility and the ability on the part of the individual to feel guilt; freedom is dependent

on a certain knowledge in which a self-image, an image of the other and a world-image coherently coexist because in total it represents the criteria for human purposes.

Our age, in which the epochal understanding of itself is bound up with the revolution in and through science and technology, could be termed the age of knowledge. When has knowledge ever been so very much a measure of possible humanity? Is the process whereby mental activity assumes priority over material labour not something that is significantly new in history? Something that was at first only a tendency within modernity, but now an objective possibility? Do the aims and objectives of humanity not derive their rationale from this point onwards from the concrete understanding of concrete knowledge? Reason, or understanding, is the human capacity to subjectively shape history according to humanist criteria. Reason is the cognitive alliance between the consciousness of historical origins and that of the possible future, and desires reality to be progress that is in accordance with its own criteria. Reason mediates between the three dimensions of knowledgeability: *memory* of the origins that continue to affect our present time, *knowledge* of reality, and *anticipation*, the anticipatory future shape of what we wish to be because we *can* be it. The great concept of *reason* in the speculative philosophy of history is nowadays considered to be antiquated. To what extent can and do individuals wish to assign to themselves a pluralistically more modest reason, an as yet constrained freedom from which a new, free historical world must arise?

The present day status of consciousness is such that this capacity to reason determines action *in reverse*: distorted memory of history transfigures the past as a better other reality than the present one, or denounces origins as a history of decline by employing a critique of rationality, enlightenment or science; *ignorance* of the relevant causes of famine, war and any social, economic and political praxis that violates human rights represents a paralysis of that possible self-determination which is the precondition for knowing these causes and the reasons for such violations; the anticipation, free of fear, of a free, equal and solidaristic human race of the future is thus subverted by a reversal to angst and the despondent fear of the uncertainty that the next day represents. One consequence of this reversal of reason is collective and individual irrationalism: politics perceives the movement for peace and against war as the destabilization of domination; individual consciousness is oriented towards enemy images, in which fear of uncomprehended political beliefs or religions is projected onto races, nations or peoples; *enemy images* are reversed self-images that constitute ideologies and in which the alien 'Other' is no longer perceived and acknowledged as the 'Other Self'.

This brief diagnosis can be summarized by saying that the rights of humans are violated not least because ignorance about precisely those

legitimate claims to the universality and the indivisibility of social, economic, political and cultural human rights compels people into a defensive, angst-ridden stance as opposed to an offensive one. Where do the causes for this unconsciousness lie? Should they be assigned to subjective immatureness and the refusal to think? Do people withdraw from the rational obligation to know as an escape from responsibility? Such causes cannot be rejected in total, but it would be short-sighted to believe that they suffice as an explanation. One significant cause can be discovered in the objective process that largely determines social time, commencing with the political-economic and cultural constitution of the technologically highly developed society, radiating out over the globe with all its might.

This revolution contains within it—besides what are certainly positive aspects—the counter-revolution that leads to a *global crisis of knowledge.* And in this crisis it is necessary to redefine the field of rationality. This revolution provokes with a paradox, not despite but because it is in essence an *epistemic* revolution, a revolution of knowledge—it objectively expands the knowledge of the species—while signifying for the subjects a lack of knowledge. The notion that the species knows more is followed by the question as to the extent of individual *participation in* and *isolation from* knowledge, the question as to the freedom of knowledge. Freedom can only mean the autonomy of individuals to knowingly shape the world and themselves and to found their action in knowledge of self and the world. The crisis of the epistemic revolution does not consist of the fact that the individual cannot be a physics expert, a historian and a technologist all at the same time. It is much rather the case that *rational world images,* in which knowledge is totalised to become a unity, are suffocated in a chaotic process of increasing fragmentation in the cognitive system. This is what constitutes the crisis of knowledge.

The abyss that is opening up between the expanded potency of knowledge and subjective deficiencies is nothing new. What is new in character are the forms by which this dialectic is socialised, a socialisation in which economised technology and political domination take possession of knowledge. Of course, it is not 'the revolution' that expands any body of knowledge that the individual withdraws from; the question concerns who it is that controls this process and with this result. Information technology is accompanied—if it is not controlled according to rational criteria—by new forms of immatureness and imposed denial of self-determination; information technology is the site at which the consensus is organised between the forces of domination and those individuals who allow themselves to be oppressed without having consciousness of it. Division of labour and specialisation, disintegration of the sciences and their separation from the everyday culture, segmentation of social experience and resignation in the face of a mass of data that in itself has no significance—this all deepens alienation from knowledge, which

becomes a fiction to individuals to an extent never previously known.

In what is today obviously the *deconstruction* of the epistemic-semantic whole, and separated from the self-reflexive experience of the individual, knowledge becomes an abstract possibility without a subject, a sense or an aim. Knowledge is thus no longer the subjective ability on the part of individual reason to *construct reality.* In societies with 'knowledge-based infrastructures'[5] the threat of destruction hangs over those *universes of meaning,* those semantical systems for world images that must be available to us if we are to understand ourselves as *constructors of the possible world governed by reason.*

This touches on the root of the problem and the beginning of a humanist solution to it. *We must know what we can know; only through knowledge are we able to describe ourselves; our self-descriptions, however, are the foundation of world-knowledge.* What the human being is, what hopes he may entertain and what he is permitted to do, these questions always lead us back to knowledge—Kant supplied the rationale for this. An adequate definition of humanism cannot dispense with the stating of epistemological reasons: as long as we base our assumptions on the fallacy of naive ontological (metaphysical) realism, namely that we are confronted within the process of knowledge acquisition with an external world that is somehow developing itself and which we have only to discern, then we will misconceive ourselves as helper's helpers within what are seemingly objective necessities. Or, another variation, we are only able to shape our world because we can construct it in our body of knowledge according to the laws of our mental powers; or, put another way, only through the *reality of knowledge*[6] is a world suited to humans made possible.

How is the semantics of a humanist self-description by the *citoyen* enabled, in what way is the design of a democratic civil society made possible? The humanist world image may appear for the present as being idealist on account of its epistemological foundations. But it is realistic, because it is to epistemological realism that we owe the fact that the mind and reason are the constructors of that reality in which only we are able to live as human beings. The world image and its concentric circles—*from* knowledge *to* rational praxis—in which the right and the duty to know form the centrepoint, arise in the epistemic crisis from oppositional thought. This is oppositional knowledge against widespread anthropological, natural philosophical and historical-philosophical determinism and fatalism. This has practical consequences. The decisive conclusion to be drawn is the extension of human rights to include the *human right to know.* This legal entitlement must be provided with a philosophical foundation, and is prior to any political claims that may be pressed.

This thesis is a controversial one among philosophers. I cannot agree with R. Rorty's plea for *The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy* as long as

'democracy' is defined only by means of the formal guarantees provided by liberalism. Rorty challenges Rawls' claim, that 'philosophy as the search for truth about an independent metaphysical and moral order cannot [...] provide a workable and shared basis for a political conception of justice in a democratic society'[7]; he also concedes that 'it is not clear how to argue for the claim that human beings ought to be liberals rather than fanatic without being driven back on a theory of human nature, on philosophy'.[8] Rorty's critically distanced agreement with Rawls' dispensing with the concept of truth and replacing it with what is a qualitatively undefined 'intersubjective reflective equilibrium' of similarly undefined 'subjects' of democracy must necessarily be followed by the admission that 'so philosophy, as the explanation of the relation between such an order and human nature, is not relevant either. When the two come into conflict, democracy takes precedence over philosophy.'[9] The decisive question is not being asked, however, namely which subjects constituted in what way possess the aptitude for a democracy whose constitution is the freedom and the happiness of all?

To pose this question and provide a reasoned answer to it presumes a sufficient understanding of the relationship between 'reality' and 'knowledge'. This means, firstly, that the guarantee promised by metaphysical, realistic ontologies—of the *representation*, through perception, of a Reality[A10] external to consciousness—does not exist; the *adaequatio rei et intellectus* consists much rather of the fact that intellect adapts the reality about which statements can be made and in which people can make judgments and take action, as the *other-of-itself*. This principle of an epistemological, an internal realism, is the only possible alternative to a 'God's Eye' view. The latter is not only terroristic in terms of the theory of truth, but is a rationale for domination over the incapacitated.

EPISTEMOLOGICAL REALISM, NATURALISM AND RATIONALITY ACCORDING TO THE CRITERION OF HUMANITY

The epistemological realism I am talking about is that non-metaphysical and non-commonsensical realism that does not derive from an ontology of representation, but instead one which demands *ontology in the form of a philosophy of mind.* Such a realism can refer to Kant's Copernican turn—granted of course that Kant is not misunderstood as a founder of the Idealist tradition, but instead as representing the logical and critical conclusion of the rational empirical tradition initiated by Galileo and Bacon and continued by Locke and Hume (i.e. the theory of the 'twin pillars' of perception, according to which there cannot be any experience or induction that is not also interpreted by the faculty of reason). The core of this epistemological tradition comprises, firstly, the insight into the *theory innate in all experience* and in the constitution of data in the external world as *res facti*, i.e. as the transformation of sense data into

mental notions in a manner corresponding to the nature of mind. N. Goodman has produced the following variation of this idea: 'Facts [...] are theory-laden; they are as theory-laden as we hope our theories are fact-laden. Or in other words, facts are small theories, and true theories are big facts.'[11] The second constitutive element for Kant's empirical realism must not be forgotten here either, of course, namely that the synthesis of experience and knowledge is assured by the *a priori*-ness of mind's nature.[12]

These are questions that are dealt with by philosophy today. But there is generally no awareness in the realism debate of the fact that analytic philosophy is not at all the sole descendant of the rational-empirical tradition. There is a second manner of thinking, one that has developed independently of analytic philosophy, that I wish to remind you of, because it has made a significant contribution to the philosophy of knowledge and science. I am referring to the Ep*istémologie* of Gaston Bachelard.

Conscious of the radical transformations in the natural sciences, above all by relativity theory, and seeking grounds for a non-Cartesian philosophy of science, Bachelard argues—in *La Philosophie du non* (1940), for example—an express rejection of any inductivist empiricism or of any positivism of pure facticity, as well as of any evolutionist conception of a linear and cumulative history of science; his *Epistémoloige* is an affirmation of the dialectic and discontinuity in the development of knowledge and science, a call to analyse spontaneous empirical obstacles to understanding and to respond to them with a rational critique. The essential core of the *Epistémologie*, however, is the assumed necessity for the dynamic and objectivity of science of a *coupure épistémologique* (an epistemological incisive split in experience) between everyday and scientific knowledge.

Again and again, Bachelard provides various grounds supporting the proposition made in *La formation de l'esprit scientifique*, that '*scientific experience* is [...] an experience that *contradicts habitual experience*'.[13] What appears to positivism as 'fact' is seen by epistemology first of all as an *obstacle épistémologique* (obstacle to knowledge)[14], in order to understand that 'the primary experience or, more precisely, the first observation is always an obstacle for scientific education [...] it is picturesque, concrete, natural, simple [...] we will show that there is a rift and not a continuity between observation and experience'.[15] The central thesis, that

> in the formation and development of the scientific intellect the first obstacle is the first experience, the experience that exists before and above critique that of necessity forms an integrating element of the scientific mind [...]. For us it is important [...] to clearly oppose any simple philosophy that is based on a more or less open, more or less romantic sensualism, and which pretends to draw its knowledge directly from some clear, sharp, certain and constant given, that

permanently presents itself to the open mind. The philosophical thesis that we advocate is this: the scientific intellect must form itself *against* nature, against the impulse and directive of nature in us and external to ourselves, against the monopolisation through nature, against the brightly coloouredness and multivariance of facts. The scientific mind must shape itself by reshaping itself.[16]

Le nouvel esprit scientifique is a response to the phenomenon of the 'new' that is constructively created by the modern natural sciences. In taking what is 'new' into consideration, scientific experience can no longer be understood to be a representation of what is naturally and materially given. The epistemological revolution mediates a rational empiricism and principles from Kant's transcendental philosophy. In *Le rationalisme appliqué* (1949) it is stated that 'in the labour of making scientifically precise, elements of a Copernican turn in objectivity can be recognised. It is not the object that defines precision, but the method.'[17]

This is precisely one of the relevant points at which analytic philosophical thought and theory of science is brought to bear, not without contradictions of course. The toughest veto is that of naturalism. What is now acknowledged as the classical opponent of epistemological realism and philosophy of mind has been well known at least since Quine's *Word and Object*; here, the problems of ontological relativity and the indeterminacy of translation have moved to the centre of a strategy that naturalises epistemology:

> epistemology [. . .] falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science. It studies a natural phenomenon, viz. a physical human subject. This human subject is accorded a certain experimentally controlled input [. . .] and in the fullness of time the subject delivers as output a description of the three-dimensional external world and its history.[18]

Here, just as in the deterministic *'eliminative' scientific materialism,* there is no longer any epistemological foundation for a human self-description that proceeds from the (historically relative) autonomy of the cognitive constitution of reality, allowing practical-philosophical demands for freedom and the human rights to knowledge. Naturalism has fortunately stumbled on the contradiction inherent in Putnam's work, for example.

The aporia of hard realism come to light in the forms of naturalised cognitive theory especially, since the Reality[A] that it strives to define through naturalisation is itself, *as* stated reality, nothing other than *theory*. Merit must be accorded to H. Putnam for the turn he was already making in the mid-70s—which became explicit in *Reason, Truth and History*—towards a transcendentally oriented 'internal realism', in that he reopened the philosophical dimensions of the theory of knowledge by coming out against any widely held naturalist[19] features in it. He strives 'to break the stranglehold which a number of dichotomies appear to

have on the thinking of both philosophers and laymen. Chief among these is the dichotomy between objective and subjective views of truth and reason'; he argues first and foremost against any 'copy' theory of truth.[20] He asserts that 'the only criterion for what is a fact is what is *rational* to accept' and that, correspondingly, '*value facts*' must be admissible. Putnam, by agreeing with the 'subjectivist philosophers' 'that our conceptions of reason evolve in history', and opposing any acceptance of the 'positivist' notion 'that the scientific world is in some way constructed out of "sense data"', but also by arguing that 'the mind *makes up* the world',[21] takes an opposing stance with respect to 'metaphysical realism' and for an *'internalist'* perspective, because it is characteristic of this view to hold that "*what objects does the world consist of?*" is a question that it only makes sense to ask *within* a theory of description'.[22] While there are no 'inputs *which are not themselves to some extent shaped by our concepts*', Putnam challenges the idea—as in P. Feyerabend's *Anything goes*—that this could justify any 'facile relativism'. 'Our conceptions of coherence and acceptability [. . .] define a kind of objectivity, *objectivity for us,* even if it is not the metaphysical objectivity of the God's Eye view, objectivity and rationality, humanly speaking, are what we have; they are better than nothing.'[23]

Paths lead from here to the epistemological, practical-philosophically expressed foundation for the human right to know; the concept of knowledge is centred around that concept of *reality*B (by which is meant reality in the sense of the phenomenal world) which we can have as constructors of the world 'according to human criteria'.

HISTORICAL TRACES OF THE HUMAN RIGHT TO KNOW

As early as Comenius, for example, the humanist demand was 'to teach all people all things'. Little now remains of such optimism. Public life in bourgeois society has sought to do justice to this postulate in the codification of education within the social contract, or, in the case of Condorcet, in the idea of the democratisation of knowledge. Kant, in his cosmopolitan and republican answer to the question *What is Enlightenment?*, expressed a similar aim—the idea of the duty to know. 'A person can choose to defer his own enlightenment with regard to that which he has a duty to know, although only for a limited time; but to dispense with this duty, whether individually or for his descendants, is tantamount to violating and trampling under foot the sacred rights of Man.'[24] Fichte's concept of culture as self-activity,[25] or Hegel's risky and speculative elevation of knowledge in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* or *The Science of Logic* to a moment in the self-determination and self-manifestation of the Absolute in a manner that violates the rights of the subject, or, finally, Humboldt's educational reform, signify that philosophical Idealism and New Humanism in Germany went further towards founding reality in knowledge: 'The structure of the "general education of humanity"

results from the problem as to how scientific knowledge can become real as subjectivity, or as the general in the individual.'[26]

Such ideas were soon to be contradicted by the sobering and disillusioning materialist critique. Taking up the insights of French materialists such as Helvétius, that if the human being is formed by circumstances, then the precondition for any progress towards reason is the humanisation of those same circumstances, Marx posited the great adversative—social being is prior to social consciousness. The cultural revolution can only follow in the train of socioeconomic revolution. In turn, the liberal reformist answer to the 'social question' under capitalism was to regard 'education' as the precondition for any fundamental transformation. The scientification of knowledge (with the accent placed on the natural sciences) and the democratization of knowledge were the 'signature of the age' during the bourgeois revolutions of 1848. Diesterweg, the educational reformer, was the first to seek as wider audience for the demand that knowledge must become a *general human right.*

Supranational codifications of human rights now manifest a tendency towards recognition of the human right to know. The *General Declaration* of December 10, 1984 takes up the classical enlightenment topos of the relationship between 'human dignity' and 'reason', extending freedom of opinion to the right 'to seek, obtain and disseminate information and ideas with all available means for communication, without regard for national borders' (Article 19). Article 27 is of particular importance for extending human rights to encompass the right to knowledge—here, cultural human rights are specified for the first time in such a way that 'every human being has the right to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to take part in scientific progress and the benefits it produces'.

The memory of historical developments to date thus do not lead into no-man's-land. But how can the diagnosis of a global crisis of knowledge—and therefore of behaviour—be reconciled with a non-Utopian hope for an *actual* right to knowledge? Understanding that there is no simple cause-effect relationship between social relations and knowledge provides an initial answer to this question; the humanisation of relations is no less dependent on the materialisation of the right to know than is this right dependent on the humanness of the respective social relations.

Where are there signs for a path towards human beings gaining a world-image and self-image, the measure and norms for which are determined by reason? P*luralism,*[27] legitimated through the differences between cultures, world-images and life goals and indispensible for any free constitution of life, contains its dialectic reverse: '"public life" is reduced to the space in which disparate truths coexist indifferently, the space occupied by understanding and its manipulation by commercial or political interests, and not the sphere of conscious shaping of social and

cultural relations.'[28] The pluralist uncertainty of world images and forms of praxis is one form taken by the crisis of knowledge, one that the following arguments seek to oppose.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE DEMOCRACY OF KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge and ignorance determine increasingly whether or not liberation for self-determination in the reality of knowledge is possible. This is the foundation for an offensive to achieve the human right to know, and reason enough for the demand that 'a constitution of scientific and technological progress can and must enable the moral reflection of progress'. But I see only pragmatic grounds, and no categoric reasons for the conclusion that such a constitution 'cannot, however, refer to any universal principles that give rise to the prospect of consensual judgement in society. *The moment that the moral ambivalence of progress becomes manifest, human rights, too, will lose their normative clearness'.*[29]

Philosophy represents *one* path for finding a *critique* of knowledge and arriving at a holistic self-description[30]—philosophy is a form of participation in the integral of knowledge. Its function as a rational theory of the political, of human rights and democracy shall only be mentioned indirectly here. I am concerned rather to analyse the dimensions of understanding and knowledge in which democracy—epistemically and politically—appears to be the precondition and the result.

Knowledge is a result of individual behaviour, that of the *construction of reality.* Our concept of knowledge must therefore be so designed as to already contain the idea of the autonomy of the subject within the determination of the conditions and criteria for *truth.*[31] Only on the basis of this subjectively constituted truth, for which responsibility can be rationally assumed, is a rational praxis possible, since knowledge is a mode of freedom, depending on its possibility. Knowledge is a result of the self-realisation of individuals, and thus of successful individuation. Subjectivity is successful epistemic and moral individuation. The subject must be aware of his function, namely to constitute the data obtained from perception of the world as objects of knowledge within the framework of a semantical world-image system, by assigning his own meanings to them.

Knowledge is thus *translation.* As such it is relative with respect to world-images, self-images and theoretical frameworks. Possible worlds are determined within constellations of knowledge, although not arbitrarily, of course. Even N. Goodman, who opts for a 'radical relativism under rigorous constraints' in *Ways of Worldmaking,*[32] protests against the assumption 'that right versions can be arrived at casually, or that worlds are built from scratch:'[33] 'Willingness to accept countless alternative true or right world-versions does not mean that everything goes [. . .], that truths are no longer distinguished from falsehoods, but only that truth

must be otherwise conceived than as correspondence with a ready-made world.'[34]

Being is *intentionally* translated into that subjectively acquired and construed *reality*[B]. As *reality of knowledge* this is not simply some dependent variable of material Reality[A]. Knowledge constitutes phenomenal reality not simply *in* the subject, but *through* the subject, in whose activity *experience* and *construction* are united in such a way that translations arise within the framework of universes of meanings. Only through this union of world-experience and world-creation does knowledge lead to norms for praxis. The precondition for these norms to be complied with is the *individual, free* possession of knowledge and the competency to translate. This is the epistemological basis for the ethical dimension of the right to know.

D. Henrich, in his important essay 'On some preconditions for the understandability of human rights', asserted that reasons for the authority and acceptability of human rights are not dependent solely on historical-social contexts.[35] Once again, it is from knowledge, theories, and world-images that human rights gain their *meaning* and *significance.* Ideal conditions must be met in addition to the practical, if norms 'are to be accepted and become effective in actual action'. D. Henrich distinguishes terminologically between 'the three conditions [. . .] which are those of relevance, applicability, and acceptance of norms'. Human rights can only be considered relevant if they are understood within the context of 'thoughts on the correct order for our relations to the world'. The conditions for their applicability depend strongly on the 'variability of self-descriptions on the part of human beings'; 'norm types' and 'self-description types' form a single unit, with differences in self-description on the part of the agent arising

depending on whether he

(a) views the world as the intentional content of his active behaviour, or
(b) sees in it only an ordering framework for his action, or
(c) perceives the world only as the area that is to be structured according to norms, and within which norms are to be asserted. The third form of relationship to the world is constitutive for the idea of the rights of Man.[36]

Only world-image (c), and this form of self-description, offer appropriate conditions for the acceptance of norms motivating behaviour. This raises the question as to the 'world orientation of the person presuming to comprehend human rights as a fundamental norm'. This is the context within which epistemological reasons become central to establishing the grounds for the human right to know.

These grounds are made up of three components. Firstly, a world-image[37] constituted in such a way that reality is not conceived of as a world 'ready-made' and given for subjectivity, independent of consciousness, a

world-image that opposes any form of fatalism in the philosophy of history; this is a world-image of Man that defines him as the *constructor of reality.* Secondly, a world-image that contains a concept of knowledge in which the subjectivity of knowledge is linked to transcendental conditions for the equality of subjects,[38] thus requiring a priori conditions enabling knowledge; *internal realism* as a reasonable philosophy of mind, with its concept of the epistemic-semantic constitution of 'reality' and by means of general and necessary conditions, thus guards rational understanding and the knowledge arising through it from any relativism of knowledge and norms. Thirdly, a subjective self-description of the human being, one that attributes to itself a competency for the epistemic construction of reality and therefore the human right to know as a *precondition* for the realisation of human rights in their totality.

There is a need today to grasp philosophically that, in the age following the scientific revolutions of the 17th century and the Enlightenment, as well as in the epoch of the scientific technological revolution, relationships of knowledge in which freedom arises from having access to the entire body of knowledge and in which democracy arises from self-determined knowledge—i.e. a *logic of intellectual anticipation of the new*—is able to supercede the old logic comprising the mere repetitive representation of the existing.[39] In this sense it is true to say that the age of subjectivity, i.e. Modernity, has only just begun. In the normative concept of self-determined rationality there can be a reunification of the moments of *knowledge* and *responsibility*[40] that were separated to the detriment of any rationality of cognitive behaviour. Within the scope of the epistemology and ethics of knowledge, the centre of which is the subject liberated for knowledge of the whole, knowledge of the historical possibilities in the future enters an alliance with the moral '*judgement*' of that for which responsibility can be taken. This is precisely the issue that Hannah Arendt was addressing. I am not prevented from taking up this same issue, despite the fact that my epistemological, transcendental argumentation takes a different route than the one she chose to take.

The origin on which the right to know can be universally based is the *equal nature of mind,* the possibility of reason in accordance with human criteria. Inherent in the world-image of the autonomy and the epistemic-semantic construction of reality is the idea of the difference of possible historical-cultural worlds in accordance with which conditions for relevance, applicability and acceptance are determined. At the same time, it also contains the idea of the possible transcultural identity of the world of the human race, a concept of *humanity.* Individuals who are denied autonomy in the epistemic constitution of reality—which in turn requires participation in the entire body of knowledge within a semantical system of world-image—cannot be historical subjects nor associate themselves with humanity. An epistemology that grasps this fact will be able to

contribute to establishing the grounds for *democracy as a rational order of knowledge.*

The freedom and the variety of knowledge, in addition to the right to all knowledge, are constituents of the very essence of human knowledge. Any knowledge is relative, depending on the ontic and epistemic constitution of subjectivity, to that *third world of objective knowledge*[41] in which the objective epistemic foundations of the world-image and human self-description exist within universes of meaning. Individuals can only comply with practical norms of truthfulness to the extent that they have access to coherent semantic worlds. In our reality, such access leads increasingly to *theoretically formulated worlds,* mainly, but not only, those of the sciences. Living in the reality of knowledge, human beings are also living in possible worlds in which the coherence or non-coherence of the self-description of knowledge and the description of the world determine the extent to which that world complies with the criteria of reason.

Human dignity is violated as long as the subject does not know in what sense it is a *constructor* of reality, and that it must assert, as a creator of human reality, its right to freedom and to the democracy of knowledge. This is a rarely found perspective in the realism debate and in analytical philosophy too. It is within this perspective that epistemological realism gains its practical philosophical significance: Knowledge must be interpreted in order to be changed. There is a widespread fear of change; the courage to interpret has lost its potency in the postmodern world-image. It would surely be illusory to claim that self-determination is only possible on the basis of thought and knowledge. But nothing at all would be possible if self-determination of subjectivity is not founded on knowledge.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. The term 'epistemology' is used here to refer to the systemic unity of the philosophy and the history of knowledge and science. See Sandkühler, 1990a, on the historical development.
2. See my book with the same title, Sandkühler, 1991b.
3. Arendt, 1990, pp. 59, 65.
4. Arendt, 1963, pp. 44, 121, 253.
5. See the theoretical deliberations on constitutional aspects in Preuss, 1990, p. 80, as well as pp. 73–89.
6. See my book with the same title, Sandkühler, 1990.
7. Rawls, 1985, p. 225, quoted in Rorty, 1990, p. 284.
8. Rorty, 1990, p. 290.
9. Ibid., p. 291.
10. 'Reality[A]': Tokens of most current observable common-sense types objectively exist independently of the mental.
    'Reality[B]': Only through the theory-laden reality of knowledge is a world suited to humans made possible.
11. Goodman, 1978, p. 96–97.

12. Putnam, (1990, p. 117) argues against this presumption of a 'transcendental nature'.
13. Bachelard, 1984, p. 44.
14. Ibid., p. 50ff.
15. Ibid., p. 54.
16. Ibid., p. 59.
17. Ibid., p. 138.
18. Quine, 1971, p. 97.
19. See Putnam, 1981 on the mind-body problematic and his anti-naturalist argumentation.
20. Ibid., p. IX.
21. Ibid., pp. X–XI.
22. Ibid., p. 49.
23. Ibid., pp. 54–55.
24. I. Kant, in answer to the question, 'What is Enlightenment,' in *Kant's Werke, Akademie Textausgabe,* Vol. VIII, p. 39.
25. This concept of culture is valuable for solving the aporia that is apparently given by the universality of human rights, namely that European thought is forced upon other historical cultures, i.e. that universality and plurality form a contradiction.
26. Bracht et. al., 1990, p. 925.
27. If pluralism of socio-cultural identities and political democracy is defined as indispensible, this does not signify a recognition of a pluralism of cognitive theories and relativism of truth, such as that of W. James.
28. Bracht et. al., 1990, p. 935.
29. Preuss, 1990, p. 86.
30. This holistic concept, referring back to semantic universals, takes up Kant's concept of the synthesis of all multifariousness within thought.
31. Here, 'Truth' assumes the concept of rational acceptibility, but not the strongly metaphysical-realistic assumption of agreement between statement and facts that are independent of consciousness, not the extremely opposing radical constructivist replacement of 'truth' by the evolutionary-pragmatic concept of 'viability'.
32. Goodman 1978, p. X.
33. Ibid., p. 97.
34. Ibid., p. 94.
35. Cf. Henrich 1990, p. 277.
36. Ibid., p. 282ff.
37. See Whitehead, 1925, on the significance of world images for the sciences in modernity.
38. Equality of subjects in Kant's sense is a much more powerful concept than that of mere discursive or hermeneutic intersubjectivity; it is founded in a concept of the 'equal nature of mind'.
39. This logic of the repetitive corresponds to a theoretical model of representation as reproduction, as is frequently encountered in Marxist theory under the name 'reflection'.
40. Cf. Sève, 1985.
41. Cf. Lektorski, 1985.

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Text and World in Ricoeur: A Study in Ricoeur's Rule of Metaphor

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INTRODUCTION

The polysemy which is the very basis of Ricoeur's theory of symbolism and metaphor is displayed in the title of his study of metaphor; 'rule' in Ricoeur's *The Rule of Metaphor* simultaneously moves in three semantic registers. The book deals with the rule of metaphor in the sense of the logical analysis of metaphorical discourse. It is on this plane that Ricoeur develops the analysis of sense and reference of metaphor from a rhetorical to a semantic level, culminating in the extension of the logical distinction of Frege, between sense and reference to the hermeneutics of poetic discourses. But in this extension, we also come across the important role played by metaphor in understanding the human condition; as *Time and Narrative* would put it, symbols generally and metaphors in particular, serve in the refiguration of our place in the world, leading to a newer and enlarged understanding of both the self and the world in which, and for which, it is the self. It is along these lines that *Time and Narrative* continues the story of world disclosure begun in the *Rule of Metaphor*; in these two texts, Ricoeur shows us how the fictional uses of language paradoxically lead us to a truer understanding of reality, of how the ontic compulsions of primary reference are suspended in such poetic forms so as to make way for the ontological disclosure of our being in the world. And lastly in implicit critique of Derridean deconstruction, *The Rule of Metaphor* is also concerned with the mastery of symbolic constructions and other poetic devices by philosophical reflection; in fact, it is the achievement of this mastery that makes possible the other two senses of the rule of metaphor. It is at the level of a philosophical hermeneutics of metaphor that a proper understanding of the logical and semantic functions of metaphor becomes possible. As such, the fundamental movement of *The Rule of Metaphor* is, in fact, a double movement, from a rhetorical to a semantic analysis and from a semantic to a hermeneutical level of reflection. It is therefore necessary to have a proper placement of *The Rule of Metaphor* within the context of Ricoeur's hermeneutical theory, as delineated in his *Interpretation Theory*.

THE HERMENEUTIC BACKGROUND

Prior to *Interpretation Theory,* already in *Symbolism of Evil* and *Freud and Philosophy,* the turn towards hermeneutics had been initiated but the hermeneutical concerns of these two texts were more in the sense of an anticipatory predilineation. *Symbolism of Evil* was a point of entry into hermeneutics from phenomenology and *Freud and Philosophy* had made us aware of the need for a total philosophy of language.

> Today we are in search of a comprehensive philosophy of language to account for the multiple functions of the human act of signifying and for their interrelationships. We have at our disposal a symbolic logic, an exegetical science, an anthropology and a psychoanalysis and perhaps for the first time, we are able to encompass in a single question the problem of the unification of human discourse. The very progress of the aforementioned disparate disciplines has both revealed and intensified the dismemberment of that discourse. Today, the unity of human language poses a problem.[1]

To this project of a total philosophy of language, *Freud and Philosophy* had contributed something more of a problem than a step towards a solution—the idea of two types of understanding and inter-pretation—the regressive archaeological and the progressive teleolo-gical hermeneutics. The discussion of the conflict of these two modes of interpretation had brought us to the issue of prospective symbols which promise a new hermeneutical beginning—what Ricoeur called symbols with a future. It is this idea of semantic creativity that is the central concern of *The Rule of Metaphor* but understanding this creative potency of language requires an enlarged conception of language as its background. It is this background that is provided by *Interpretation Theory.*

Ricoeur inaugurates his theory of interpretation by means of a parallel description of two perspectives on language—language as *structure,* and language as event or *performance;* the first he calls *Semiotics,* and the second, *Semantics.* In these terms, Ricoeur's subsequent argumentation takes shape as a search for the proper relationship between the two.[2] This search implicates us in a certain dialectical opposition to structuralism, since as Ricoeur points out, in the contemporary period, the other perspective on the communicative and performative aspects has been marginalized by the structuralist and systemic imagination. It is, therefore, necessary to recover a sense for the hermeneutic moment, without however regressing from the achievements of structuralism.[3]

Ricoeur describes structuralism under the rule of four postulates.[4] The first, the synchronic assumption, regards the system as more intelligible and also the precondition of the study of changes of the system. The postulate of finitism looks upon the system as a set of finite discrete entities with combinatory possibilities, while the postulate of relational order holds that in such a system, no entity has a meaning of its own—the

meaning of a word is the function of all its oppositions to other lexical units in the system. The postulate of closure, finally, conceptualizes semantic systems as closed, without any relation to non-semantic reality. The convergent effect of these four postulational prescriptions is to predelineate language as without a *subject, addressee* and *reference.*

As distinguished from language as system or structure, there is the perspective of language as discursive performance, of language in the event of speech and communication. At the level of discourse, the basic unit is a sentence; for Ricoeur, the sentence is itself not a sign, although composed of signs. Its unity is functional and not compositional; it is an integration of two functions—identification and predication. For Ricoeur, the subject is the instrument of identification and the predicate, the vehicle of characterization; the integration of these two functions makes the sentence the saying of something about something.[5]

Just as he projected his understanding of language as a system against the background of the structuralist perspective so also Ricoeur's theory of discourse moves in the light of the Speech Act theory of Austin and Searle. Indeed, it is one of his major intentions to connect the linguistic and philosophical reflections on language and in that context, he recognizes the fact that the communicative and intentional nature of language is marginalized in the structuralist projection and that it is to the credit of the Anglo-Saxon philosophy of language to have brought the aspect into focus. Following Austin's lead, Ricoeur recognizes the three types or aspects of *speech acts*—the locutionary (the saying of something), the illocutionary (the doing of something *in* saying), and the perlocutionary (the effecting of something *by* saying something). To this three-fold description, Ricoeur adds a fourth—the *interlocutionary* dimension of addressing someone in saying something. Since speech is always addressed to some subject, the interlocutionary aspect is as pervasive as the rest.[6]

But unlike Austin and other speech act theorists, Ricoeur is concerned with the transformation of these dimensionalities of discourse brought about by writing. Like Derrida, Ricoeur also looks upon writing as a veritable force which alters the perspective of self and the world as pre-delineated in speech. Writing is no more only a notational or inscriptional device but brings about a new sense of the self and the world. But unlike Derrida, Ricoeur does not oppose writing to speech but rather looks upon writing as actualizing certain tendencies already latently prefigured in speech.[7]

Ricoeur describes these transformations as both external and internal. External transformations would be changes involved in the adoption of large-scale institutional practices such as extensive market relations, bureaucratic and administrative agencies of governance and formal legal codes. These societal constructions would be unthinkable without writing and they bring about a profound transformation of individual

and collective life. But the internal parameters of change are more subtle; Ricoeur attends to these transformations under the heads of the dimensions of speech acts. The locutionary aspect (what is said or the propositional context) is preserved intact in writing but the illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects are preserved to a lesser degree and with more difficulty.[8]

An even more fundamental type of transformation consequent upon writing is the changes in the modalities of subject, addressee and reference. Speech or oral communication is characterized by these three in a straightforward manner. Thus, it has a *subject* in the sense of a specific individual with a communicative intent, an *addressee* in the sense of a concrete other, to whom the communication is made and r*eference* in the sense of that about which the communication is made.

As Ricoeur points out, the most obvious and palpable change that writing brings about is the fixation of the message in some relatively permanent medium; the spoken word is evanescent—it disappears as soon as it appears but in writing the message is encoded in a material medium, stone, papyrus or paper. What writing does is to preserve what is said—the propositional content of the communicative event.[9]

But the inscriptional effect is the most external and superficial of the effects of writing; beyond this inscriptional effect, Ricoeur notices more subtle levels of transformation produced by writing. The relation between the message and the speaker and the relation between the message and the addressee as well as the relation between the message and the object are transformed. To consider the relation between the message and the author—Ricoeur studies this aspect of change under the theme of *textual autonomy*. Relative to the personal intentions of the author, the text has a certain autonomy of its own, to ignore which is to commit what literary critics call 'the intentionalist fallacy'. But Ricoeur points out that while avoiding the intentionalist fallacy, we should not fall into the opposite fallacy which may be called the fallacy of the absolute text—the fallacy of hypothesizing the text as an authorless entity.[10]

The semantic autonomy of the text, namely, that what it means is more than what the author meant when he wrote it, restores the proper object to hermeneutics and at the same time, de-psychologizes it. Interpretation now can no longer be taken as the attempt to coincide with authorial meanings; nor can it aim at the placement of the interpreter with the original addressee. Interpretation now has the task of unfolding the meaning in the text and although this is not a simple process of reception, it does not involve the idea of empathy with the intentions of the author or the original hearer.

Just as writing fundamentally transforms the relationship between message and speaker, liberating the meaning from the intentions of the author, so also it fundamentally transforms the relation of the message to the addressee. Unlike a living oral communication, the text has a

certain 'impersonality' of address. The text transcends the spatio-temporal restrictions of dialogue but this is made possible precisely because now the meaning possibilities of the discourse get a dimension of universality. With regard to this enlargement of address, we must note that this universality is only potential and is grounded in the semantic autonomy of the text. Because the meaning of the text is freed from authorial intentions, it can enlarge the circle of communication and in a sense, create its own public. But it is in the reception of meaning by the extended audience that this potentiality is realized. Hence we must see the interaction between semantic autonomy and extended communication as a dialectical process mutually constituting each other. Ricoeur writes

> On the one hand, it is the semantic autonomy of the text which opens up the range of potential readers and so to speak, creates the audience of the text. On the other hand, it is the response of the audience which makes the text important and significant . . . it is part of the meaning of a text to be open to an indefinite number of readers and therefore of interpreta-tions. This opportunity for multiple readings is the dialectical counterpart of the semantic autonomy of the text.[11]

Since the meaning of the text cannot be reduced to authorial intentions, the aim of interpretation cannot be seen as the recovery of the intention behind the text, but, as Ricoeur puts it, it is now the understanding of the *world before it.*

It is this idea of the *world in the text* that leads us to a consideration of Ricoeur's conception of the referential dimension of the text. The notion of the referential function of discourse is crucial to the programme of Ricoeur in a number of ways. It is in terms of reference that he institutes the demarcation between the structuralist and the hermeneutical approaches to language; as distinguished from other structuralist perspectives, the semantical approach takes language in its primary intention of saying something about something; this intention to characterize reality is what opens up language onto the world and this openness of discourse is due to the referential power of discourse. In terms of his theory of symbolism also, Ricoeur had argued for a complementarity between symbolism and interpretation. Symbols are essentially plurivocal and hence require an interpretation of what they mean and interpretation conversely is the act of decipherment of the levels of meaning of such plurivocal symbols. Wherever there are symbols there is need for interpretation and interpretation is addressed to the domain of the symbolic.[12] Every interpretation of a symbol is also a moment of self-disclosure. To understand a symbol is to understand oneself in a certain way. Indeed, for Ricoeur there is no other access to the self except by way of its works, by way of what and how it represents.

Now, since there are alternative understandings of the symbol, there are also alternative understandings of the subject. Given this plurality of modes of understanding and the ever present possibility of conflict inherent in this plurality, we need an idea or conception of the truth of inter-pretation and Ricoeur believes that the notion of a true or correct interpretation cannot be formulated without presupposing a theory of reference of discourse.

But what is uniquely Ricoeurian is the further development of the idea of a unique mode of reference proper to textual discourse. Although it appears to be merely a physical or material artefact, a text has a spiritual function, for it liberates meaning from authorial intentions. The aim of interpretation is not to recover the author behind the text but the world before it. It is this idea of the world that now figures as the term of textual reference; this representation of the world has a negative moment, since it is based on a transcendence of the specificity and contextuality of oral discourse. Ricoeur writes 'the effacement of the ostensive and descriptive reference liberates a power of reference to aspects of our being in the world that cannot be said in a direct descriptive way but only alluded to, thanks to the referential values of the metaphoric and in general, symbolic expressions;'[13] if we call the reference of oral speech primary reference, textual discourse abolished this primary reference, in order to open up in its place a secondary reference; a concrete situation or context is lost in the representation of the world. The world as the reference of texts, is neither the world by it-self, nor the self by itself but the reference now is to our mode of being in the world.

In the above formulation, there is a crossing of themes from Frege and Heidegger; on the one hand, in acceptance of Frege's distinction between sense and reference, Ricoeur raises the problematic of reference, not merely at the level of sentences but at the level of discourse. He also appropriates the Fregean idea that we are not satisfied with sense but also demand reference and that in fact, sense is the mode of presentation of reference. To this, Ricoeur adds the Heideggerian theme of Being in the world but in so connecting Frege and Heidegger, Ricoeur transforms both. On the one hand, Ricoeur, unlike Frege, would make a distinction between the mode of reference of oral and textual discourse in terms of the dialectics of contextualization and decontextualization. On the other hand, Ricoeur also holds, against Heidegger, that it is in discourse that we can appropriate our being in the world. Ricoeur writes 'the understanding which is the result of the Analytic of Dasein is precisely the understanding through which and in which this being understands itself as being. Is it not once again within language itself that we must seek the indication that understanding is a mode of being?'[14]

In introducing the idea of the disclosure of the world as the reference of the text, Ricoeur also has said that this disclosure is not a direct description effected by univocal expressions, but rather an indirect and

oblique showing by way of plurivocal symbols of which metaphors are an important type. It is in this way that the general contours of Ricoeur's theory of interpretation prepares the way for the reflection on metaphor, in *The Rule of Metaphor*.

METAPHOR: FROM RHETORICS TO HERMENEUTICS

Ricoeur's study of metaphor in *The Rule of Metaphor* has a complex structure, organized however, by a fundamental movement from Rhetorics to Semantics and from Semantics to Hermeneutics. At each of these levels, metaphor is considered at its appropriate sphere of analysis; thus the rhetorical level of analysis takes metaphor as focussed on words and changes of meaning at the level of words. Thus, Aristotle's definition of metaphor focuses on the word or the name.

'Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else, the transference being either from genus to species or from species to genus, or from species to species or on the grounds of analogy.'[15] It is this narrow conception of metaphor that Ricoeur names the substitution theory, since it looks upon metaphor as an expression substituted in place of another. The first stage of Ricoeur's argumentation is addressed to the displacement of the rhetorical conception in favour of the semantical conception, which locates the genesis of meaning at the level of a statement. The location of metaphoric meaning at the level of the statement in fact opens up the motivating concern of the text as a whole—the problem of metaphoric truth. Since it is at the level of a statement that the question of truth or falsity arises, since as Ricoeur, following Strawson holds that strictly speaking we can speak of the reference of expressions in the context of their use in formulating statements, locating metaphor at the statement level immediately allows us to raise the question of not only metaphoric sense but also of metaphoric reference. But this shifting of levels from rhetorics to semantics does not, however, mean a simple elimination or cancellation of the surpassed level, for Ricoeur preserves the fundamental intention of the rhetorical analysis in seeing the word or the name as the site or locus of metaphor, for even at the level of a statement as in 'Alexander was a lion among men', not every word in the metaphorical statement is itself a metaphor; on the contrary, only the word 'lion' is a metaphor and while it is true that it achieves metaphoricity only in the context of the statement as a whole, yet it is equally true that such metaphoricity is focussed on the name. Thus, the semantic level or analysis cannot simply dispense with the rhetorical level; rather, the rhetorical focus on the *name* must somehow be preserved in the semantic analysis of the metaphoric statement. It is when this point is seen that we can also see the need for moving on to a hermeneutical level for it is when a statement is subject to interpretation that we have the beginning of a metaphor. To

be more precise: it is when a literal interpretation leads to absurdity that we invest a particular word within the sentential frame as a metaphoric expression in order to preserve the meaning and truth of the statement as a whole. In other words, the milieu of the birth of a metaphor is a situation of hermeneutic conflict; metaphor is the avenue of a resolution of a threat to intelligibility and it resolves it by investing the trouble giving name with an enlarged sense. It is this movement from semantics to hermeneutics that is the climactic crescendo of the symphony that is the argumentation of *The Rule of Metaphor*.

But this climactic achievement is visible only if we traverse the vast stretches of argument and follow the thrust of his ideas which wend their way through almost the whole history of rhetorics and semantics of language. The long march across the arid and barren landscape of Renaissance and post-Renaissance rhetorics and stylistics may be summarised in the form of a critique of the substitution theory. Ricoeur believes that although the rhetorical conception of metaphor as the epiphora of the name began with Aristotle, yet in Aristotle, there is implicitly a larger conception of metaphorical discourse; but these potentially more philosophical possibilities of classical rhetorics were lost sight of in the later period and as a result, metaphor was reduced to a mere figure of speech, an ornament of discourse. It is this impoverished conception of metaphor that Ricoeur calls the substitution theory. But merely to argue against the aridity and sterility of thought which follows from the idea of substitution would not be effective; a theory cannot be convincingly refuted merely by pointing out its unwelcome consequences. Hence the assault upon the substitution theory must be directed at its premises rather than its conclusions. Ricoeur identifies the presuppositions of the substitution theory succinctly in the form of six major propositions.

1. Metaphor is a figure of speech concerned with the word or the name.
2. It represents the extension of the meaning of a word through deviation from its literal meaning.
3. The reason for this deviation is resemblance.
4. We can translate or paraphrase a metaphor without loss of cognitive content, i.e. we can replace the figurative meaning with the literal meaning.
5. Hence a metaphor does not furnish any new information.
6. Its function is only emotive.

The basic objection of Ricoeur to the substitution theory is that it misunderstands the formation of metaphoric meaning as if only words are involved. On the contrary, metaphoric meaning arises, as we have seen, only on the basis of the eclipse of the literal or ordinary sense—the customary sense is seen to be absurd or impossible. This absurdity is seen only when an assertion is made; it is at the level of the statement that we

must look for the emergence of metaphoric meaning. The absurdity of the customary sense is avoided by interpreting the statement according to another sense; metaphoric meaning is constituted at the level of statements subjected to interpretation. The transition is from a rhetorical to a semantic analysis. But the semantic stage is only a way-station, as it were, preparing the way for a hermeneutical re-formulation of the conditions of possibility of metaphoric sense. From the hermeneutical point of view, metaphor is the result of a conflict of interpretations. Aside from pointing towards a hermeneutical perspective on metaphor, the semantic conceptualization of metaphor has another functionality also, for it is at the level of sentences that the issue of reference arises. One of the important results of Fregean semantics is the close bond between sense and reference; for Frege, although sense and reference are distinct, yet they are also closely related; in fact, one could even hold that for Frege, sense is the mode of grasping the reference. The intimate relationship between sense and reference gives rise to a question in the context of a theory of metaphor. Since sense and reference are so closely bound up, we may expect the specific structures of metaphoric sense to also influence the reference of metaphor. More specifically, we may ask what is the relation of the two-level structure of sense (literal and metaphorical) of metaphors to their reference? Since metaphorical sense arises only on the basis of the destruction of the literal sense, does this process affect the reference also and if so, how? The reference of metaphor and hence its truth is recoverable on the basis of the destruction of customary or literal reference. The death of one is the life of the other. The eclipse and suspension of reference is a moment of reserve but it does not mean that referentiality as such vanishes. Ricoeur's guideline here is again Frege. It is Frege who formulates so clearly and powerfully what we may call the postulate of the demand for reference.

> We are not satisfied with sense alone. We presuppose besides a reference. It is precisely this presupposition that causes us to err. But if we are wrong, it is demanded by our intention in speaking or thinking. This intention is striving for truth which drives us always from sense to reference.[16]

I believe Ricoeur would wholeheartedly endorse the above but it is precisely at this point that the issue for Ricoeur arises; is this demand for reference, the intention for striving for truth, of which Frege speaks—is this demand to be denied to literary and poetic texts? Are we, in such cases, to be satisfied with sense alone without asking for reference? In their case, is it meaning that matters and not truth?

For Frege, the demand for reference is confined to scientific statements only. With regard to poetry, Frege writes 'we are interested only in the sense of the sentences and the images and feelings aroused'.[17] It is thus that Ricoeur's engagement with non-referential theories of literature is

announced. These theories, on the one hand, evoke the old persuasion of the merely ornamental value of metaphors but unlike the ancient theories of tropes and figures of speech, contemporary non-cognitivism is a highly articulate and sophisticated body of arguments drawing from different fields—philosophical semantics, theory of poetic discourse, certain schools and styles of literary criticism and certain paradigms in analytic epistemology. In so far as all currents of thought converge with Frege's view that the demand for reference is intelligible and proper only to scientific discourse, the case against the cognitive value of the symbolic usages of poetry and literature is a formidable one and Ricoeur picks his way across the minefield of non-referential theories of poetic and literary texts. Before we follow him into the thick folds of this debate, we may keep certain broad presuppositions of his argument in mind.

1. The issue of reference arises at the level of interpretation. It is by way of interpretation that the two levels of the structure of sense, literal and metaphorical, are identified.
2. Metaphoric sense is made possible by way of the elimination of literal sense.
3. Since sense and reference are closely bound up with each other, this process affects reference also.
4. Literal reference has to be negated in reading the text as an aesthetic one.
5. But this does not eliminate all reference.
6. A secondary reference emerges in the context of interpretation.
7. The secondary reference is the world in the text.
8. The world is not a mere factuality or a state of affairs.
9. It is our mode of being *vis-à-vis* the world.
10. Hence in secondary reference, there is also a presentation of the self.
11. But this representation of the self in relation to the world is bound up with interpretation.
12. Hence both the world and the self are functions of the hermeneutic process.

Before measuring up to it, Ricoeur takes stock of the non-referential theory by way of a close consideration of the manifold forms in which the closure and self-sufficiency of a work of art has been advanced. As he points out, this conviction of the transcendence of reference in a literary text is not an isolated belief or attitude of a particular group of scholars but on the contrary, a number of different trends of thought and argument, converge on this point; it is a nodal point of intersection of logical, epistemological, linguistic and literary critical reflection such that to take a stand against it involves a total transformation of our philosophical presuppositions and norms of intelligibility and value.[18]

The argument starts with the philosophers; for Frege, only scientific statements have both sense and reference; in poetry, we are interested only in its sense, in the evocation of images and feelings.[19] For Carnap also, the aim of a lyrical poem is not to inform but to express certain feelings.[20] In a similar vein, Roman Jacobson talks of the poetic function, when the message draws attention to itself; it is in itself and for itself and we contemplate it for its own sake and not for anything beyond it.[21] Roman Jacobson's idea of the poetic function is developed by Hester in the context of an aesthetics of reception. Hester's intervention in the debate is significant for, his background presuppositions belong to the phenomenological tradition; hence his reaching the conclusion of non-referentiality of literary texts is indicative of the convergence, on this point, of different philosophical and intellectual orientations.[22] Hester institutes a comparison of reading with the phenomenological epoché; Husserl, Hester holds, has shown how the true nature of consciousness as intentionality is seen only when the taken-for-granted assumptions and compulsions of the natural standpoint are suspended in the operation of the epoché. It is with this suspension or reserve that the phenomenological attitude and with it the phenomenological experience are accessible. For Hester, reading a text as a literary work is a functional analogue to the phenomenological suspension for in reading the natural and ordinary referential nisus of language is parenthesized and the 'literariness' of the literary work is realized only in and through this parenthesizing of customary reference. The aesthetic attitude and experience, like the phenomenological, is supervenient upon overcoming of reference. If, at the philosophical level, the natural standpoint is overcome in the phenomenological epoché, at the literary–theoretical level, the order of the natural language, its Fregean propensity to go from sense to reference is to be overcome. Thus, for Hester, the non-referential character of a work of art, its artistic self-sufficiency and autotelic nature is realized in the reading and it is this which invests the work with literariness.[23]

Ricoeur does accept the distinctiveness of the experience made possible by reading of the work as literary and in further agreement with the non-cognitivists he would further endorse the important role of emotions and feelings in this aesthetic experience; in fact in the context of his discussion of the theorists of the non referential school, an important place and consideration is given to Northrop Frye's *The Anatomy of Criticism.*[24]

In *The Anatomy of Criticism* Frye opposes literary discourse to informative or didactic discourse in terms of two types of signification—centrifugal or outward signification and centripetal or inner signification.[25] In didactic discourse the symbol functions as a sign that stands for or 'points to' or represents something. As against this, the literary symbol represents nothing outside of itself. Frye writes 'verbal elements understood inwardly or centripetally as parts of a verbal element or units of a verbal structure'.[26] This may appear to place Frye in the company of structuralists but Frye

moves away from a pure structuralism when, in formulating the concept
of the unity of a poem, he sees this in terms of the unity of a mood. He
writes 'The unity of the poem is the unity of mood. Poetic images express
or articulate the mood. The mood is the poem not something else behind
it.'[27]

At this point we seem to be in the vicinity of emotive theories according
to which literary discourse is sense without reference. Ricoeur does not
take issue with the idea of the emotive valence of poetic and literary texts
as such; the reference to moods and feelings in the analysis of literature
as developed by emotive theorists is not itself without value for us, but
what we have to note at this point is that in a work of art, emotions and
feelings are intentional. A mood is a disclosure of a way of being in the
world; the disclosure is neither purely subjective nor purely objective but
a certain form of involvement of the subject in the world.

But this existential disclosure is revealed and clarified in the
interpretative work carried out on the text. Hence, just as the sense,
reference also is bound up with the work of interpretation.

In so far as a symbol has within it a moment of the self, since it is
conditioned by two vectors—one towards the world that is presented in
it and the other, the noetic vector which is oriented towards the self or
the subject which is the subject of the world, the noesis of the noema,
every interpretation actualizes this moment of the presentation of the
self also. It is in this sense that hermeneutics includes within it a reflective
dimension. Ricoeur would call it reflective for there is no immediate
seizure, no presentational certainty of the self but the subject is known
only by way of its works, by way of the symbols it has created and with
which it surrounds itself.

Ricoeur organizes the plurality of these modes of self-understanding
into three broad hermeneutic genres, which he calls the archaeological,
the teleological and the eschatological modes of interpretation.[28] The
archaeological hermeneutics is regressive, seeking to understand the
subject in terms of its roots (desire as in Freud, will to power as in
Nietzsche or the modes of production as in Marx). As against the
regressive orientation of archaeological hermeneutics, a teleological
mode of interpretation would seek to understand each symbol or
symbolic complex in terms of what follows; for such a style of interpretation,
understanding has a forward nisus seeking the sense as ahead of the
symbol, as revealed in that which is a fuller expression of the earlier.
Compared with both the archaeological and the teleological modes, the
eschatological hermeneutics seeks the understanding of the symbolic
against the notion of a final end, a terminus beyond the symbolic and the
humanly discursive altogether.

While the first two are manifestly humanistic, it may appear that the
eschatological hermeneutics removes altogether to a new level—a
theological rather than philosophical level. But Ricoeur would claim that

even against the background of eternity, what we are still seeking is an
image of the human. The dimension of theology, of faith, occurs as a
hermeneutic device, as making possible a way of interpreting the worlds
and works of the subject. It is this that brings an element of
commensuration between all the three.

It is this conversion to the hermeneutic level that enables Ricoeur to
give expression to a principle of tolerance in understanding. This
principle states that the type of meaning that we find in a particular way
of interpretation is predelineated in the theoretical framework in which
strategies of interpretation are used.[29] This principle functions not only
as a principle of limitation but also as a principle of tolerance, for it
legitimizes the type of interpretation, given, for example, in psychoanalysis,
as being in some sense *necessary*. A regressive archaeological mode of
understanding is an interpretation, a hermeneutics and not a causal
objective explanation. Ricoeur, in other words, is claiming that
psychoanalysis, is a hermeneutics and as such commensurable with
others. Similarly with regard to the progressive teleological mode of
understanding also, he first seeks its transformation into a hermeneutics.
Just as the original context of archaeological hermeneutics was
psychoanalytic psychology presenting itself as an objective science, so
also here, the original context of teleological hermeneutics is the
metaphysics of the spirit of Hegelian idealism. With regard to the third
hermeneutic way, the eschatological, Ricoeur locates its original setting
in the studies of comparative religion and theology as in Mircea Eliade.
In all these cases, what Ricoeur does is to extract, the hermeneutic
correlates, as it were of each of these metaphysical or ontological
frameworks. Thus, all of them are in a sense, converted into hermeneutics;
in his own formulation, ontologies are possible only as hermeneutics.
This reduction to the hermeneutical level allows us a common framework
to study different types of signification. At the same time, in the light of
his earlier argument that all interpretations of symbols are reflexively
also interpretations of the subject, we now reach the view that the three
hermeneutic strategies are modes of understanding the self; while using
these ways of interpretation, the subject understands itself in these ways.
It is this reflexivity imposed on the understanding of the subject that
expresses Ricoeur's reservation against the Cartesian and Kantian
programmes. With regard to Descartes, Ricoeur does not so much as
dispute the possibility of the cogito as its point or significance. In one
sense, the being or existence of the ego, of myself cannot be denied; in
that sense, Descartes is fully assured of his certainty. But as to what is this
self that cannot be denied, as to the content of this knowing, Ricoeur
would hold that we can understand it only by way of its works in the
world;[30] the self or the subject is to be appropriated in terms of the many
forms of signification that it has produced, in terms of its symbolic
energy. It is, as reflected in these symbols that we come to know it. And

this is also Ricoeur's response to Kant, which now he understands as the invitation to a second Copernican turn. If the first Copernican turn has sent from the world to the self as the transcendental condition of its possibility, the second Copernican turn is a return to the world, not to deny the subject but to understand it precisely in terms of its constitutive energies. In terms of the pre-suppositions of Husserlian phenomenology, we can say that what Ricoeur is suggesting here is the hermeneutical transform of the Husserlian principle of noetic–noematic correspondence. Within the philosophy of consciousness, Husserl had argued that the object meant or the noema is the clue to the understanding of the complex and hidden world of mental acts. Even in the apprehension of a simple object, there are various types of *syntheses* of acts and to understand this inner complexity of the acts, the clue is always what they have led up to, what they apprehend as the object meant. It is this principle of the phenomenological method that Ricoeur is now formulating as a hermeneutical thesis.

It is on the basis of this principle of the two-fold tension of understanding that he develops his theory of reading. Ricoeur begins with the observation that a presuppositionless reading, a mere encounter with the text, without any projection or anticipation is not possible primarily because both the interpreter and the text have a situation in history. It is this situationality of the reader that invests all reading as reading from a point of view, a selective and guided reading. It is in the light of these presuppositions and prejudgments that we approach the text and the text appears as such only within this horizon of taken-for-granted validities. Even its generic identity as a poetic or philosophical or moralistic or ironical discourse, even its identity as a form of address is determined by these assumptions of style and significance. And within its own morphology, what is to count as its central thematic focus and what is to be taken as its periphery and how to make this distinction between core and periphery within the world of significations unfolded by the text, this opening up of the text also is guided by the anticipatory assumptions that are encoded in a way of reading. And lastly what is to count as the point of the text and how it is to be taken by us, these also are the results of a certain way of positioning ourselves in relation to the text. It is on the basis of these preunderstandings that the happening of reading takes place and since interpretation is the actualization of what is implicit in reading, all interpretation radiates out from these preunderstandings. It is within the horizon of the predelineated that both the understanding, of the world and that of the self is unfolded.

In the disclosure unfolded by the interpretation the subject finds a new placement, a relocation of oneself within the world as disclosed by the text. This finding of oneself against the background of the disclosure of the world leads to a new formation of the understandings and one approaches the work again with new expectations and anticipations. This

is the essence of what may be called hermeneutic experience in which appropriation of the world and understanding of the self are inseparable moments.

How do we response to this majestic sweep of a hermeneutical theory of understanding which, in every one of its claims seeks to preserve a mood of reconcilement, a sense for the necessary presence of the other point of view?

Ricoeur's hermeneutical landscape, we may say is articulated by a major polarity—the self and the world. It is this tension of the two orientations that leads to the project of a second Copernican turn. And this *motif* has been a generative principle of the multiform engagements of Ricoeur in the hermeneutical enterprise. It is this Cartesian–Hegelian counterpoint dialectic that has informed the argumentative motivations of Ricoeur's major texts as well as the movement from text to text.

But in focussing on this polarity, the theory perhaps submerges another polarity between the process and the product between the signifying energy and the resulting signification. The concentration is on what is achieved, the result or the outcome more than upon the ways in which it is brought about. It is a teleological rather than a strictly dynamic theory. I believe this privileging of result over the process, of the what over the how, has a number of consequences which may be taken into account in a final appreciation of Ricoeur's intentions.

We may begin with the bipolar tension in Ricoeur's account of symbols; Ricoeur has told us that there is a disclosure of the world as well as a disclosure of the self—a symbol discloses a mode of being in the world. While the idea of a two-fold orientation is useful for the hermeneutics of symbols, yet it does not serve equally well as an aesthetic standard or criterion. In this respect, a brief reference to psychoanalytic interpretations of art as an expression of the unconscious may be made. In so far as such a claim may be made in the case of every sort of expression, i.e. in so far every representation or idea may be said to express an unconscious content, the principle does not allow us to make *aesthetic judgments*. Similar remarks may apply to certain forms of Marxist interpretation of art. In all these cases we have to hold that it is not the representation as such but the process involved in the disclosure that determines the aesthetic quality of the work. Ricoeur's theory seems to neglect this aspect of the process of representation; the emphasis falls on the *product*, the result or what is disclosed.

We may note a consequence, for interpretation, of this neglect of process; the disclosure is the result of the interpretation carried out on the text and in this context, Ricoeur reminds us that even reading is an implicit interpretation; he reminds us that one always approaches the text by way of expectations and anticipations. This implicit interpretation which is *in* the reading is explicated and articulated in a more formal manner in the exegesis. As a result of this activation, the text reveals a

possible world. Given this background model of Ricoeur's theory of interpretation, one can see that it is congenial to literary works for here the medium of the work and the medium of the interpretation are the same, i.e. language. We can therefore say that interpretation actualizes a tendency which is already there in the object. But non-linguistic or non-discursive forms may create a problem for here we have to do with different orders. In such cases, either we say that Ricoeur's type of hermeneutics does not apply to such non-discursive symbolic forms or we take the view that is only when they are discursively interpreted that they disclose their meaning. If so, we would be saying that language is the primary access to transcendence and that every other sort of significance has to be mediated by language. It appears that Ricoeur's hermeneutic presuppositions give rise to two questions; with regard to the claim of transcendence, one can take the view of Wittgenstenian contextualism that in so far as every linguistic activity is part of a language game, this contextuality is carried over into textuality also. Or even if one accepts that thought has a capacity for context transcendence or universality—one can ask the question whether this capacity for transcendence can be realised only in language? Can't there be modes of universality in other forms or media also?

It is precisely this question which is central to Ernst Cassirer. For Cassirer, language is only one of the symbolic forms, besides which there are the mythical, the artistic, and the theoretical. Each one of these forms has its own distinctive style of meaning formation and the particular work of language has to be seen as relative to these other directions of the formative powers of the human. Not only is language, for Cassirer, only one of the symbolic forms but it is also put into question and contexted by the others.[31]

Cassirer would agree with Ricoeur that the problem of meaning is even more basic than Heidegger's question about Being for only on the basis of an understanding of meaning can we understand the question of Being.[32] But for Cassirer language is only a clear example of an intersubjective sharing of the world; besides language, there are other symbolic forms, each with its own specific style of form giving and each capable of providing in its own way, a common ground; hence for Cassirer, the symbolic is more radically distinguishable from the semantic than it is for Ricoeur, for whom, as we have seen, the theory of the symbol just becomes the semantics of plurivocal expressions.[33]

Another area of critical reflection upon Ricoeur that I would like to touch upon is the latent residues of a monological strain in his hermeneutic theory; Ricoeur as we have seen moves away from the monological premises of Kantian transcendentalism by way of the second Copernican turn. All the manifold argumentation of Ricoeur's wide-ranging hermeneutical theory may be ordered into a pattern characterized by a

two-step rhythm; the first step is to underline the irreducible and unavoidable role of the subject while the second is to place the subject, not in the isolation of a transcendental solipsism but in concrete existence, embodied, intersubjective and concrete. The first movement is a return to the subject but the second is a return to the world, without however giving up on the deliverances of the first movement. Ricoeur would claim that if the first Copernican turn is access to consciousness, to the subject, the second situates consciousness in the world and understands the subject as a subject *in* the world and the world as the world *of* the subject.

But in spite of the new beginnings of the second Copernican turn yet, there are remnants of an older way of thinking in his hermeneutics of the text; as we have seen, under the work of interpretation, a text discloses a possible world, a mode of being *vis-à-vis* the world as also a human possibility. This promise has to be redeemed which would amount to an authentication of the disclosure enacted by the text. On this issue of authentication, Ricoeur's ideas are somewhat reminiscent of Schliermacher's. In order to test the authenticity of the disclosure unfolded by the text. Ricoeur seems to be saying, I must place myself in the projected world, but not with all my concrete and idiosyncratic specificities but as a representative of humankind. In this thought experiment, if I find the projected world significant, then this recognition of it by my representative understanding is the mark of its authenticity. The process of certification suggested herein has some similarities with Kant. For Kant also, the universality of the moral principle is discovered in my selfconsciousness, in the form of an attempt to think of the rule of my action as a universal maximum for all. If I can universalize it without contradiction then it is a moral principle. Although Ricoeur does not deploy the full panoply of Kant's transcendental mode of validation, yet there are distinct affinities with Kant which are striking. Thus in *Fallible Man*[34] the idea of *humanity* plays such a justificatory role; Ricoeur describes it as the infinite focus—the fields of all possible human motivations. My humanity is my possible communication with all that is human and it is due to this latent capacity that I can understand others; it is a similar representative capacity that authenticates the projection of the text. Ricoeur repeatedly reminds of the unfinished and open-ended nature of interpretation—of the infinite horizons of understanding. But if we see universalization *as a process* then the open-endedness of interpretation would be due to the expanding range and scope of the dialogue itself. However, Ricoeur sees the fecundity of interpretation differently; he emphasizes the circular character of interpretation as a series of repeated returns and encounters. When I place myself within the world projected by the text, my frameworks of understanding get widened. I return to the text with newer expectations and anticipations of deeper levels of

meaning. In this process, the horizons of my understanding and empathy are enlarged. It is this process of self-formation, this process of enlargement of my capacities that makes the text inexhaustible—it functions as a continuing stimulus to self-formation.

It is in this sense that I believe there is a residuum of the monological in Ricoeur's interpretation theory for according to it, the authenticity of a disclosure is determined by my own reflective empathy; as against this, a dialogical perspective on understanding would see authentication as a *process* of expanding networks of dialogue for it is in these dialogues that aesthetic validity is recognized.

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Knowledge and Religious Consciousness

Some Considerations towards an Epistemology of Religion

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William James visualized a new era of philosophy as well as religion when empiricism becomes associated with religion.[1] His optimism, expressed at the turn of the century, has remained a mirage so far. What has gone wrong? This paper is an attempt to probe this question and explore the possibility of resolving the cognitive dispute about religion within an empiricist framework. It does not resolve the dispute, but shows some of the issues concerning a theory of cognition that need to be resolved before we can settle the cognitivity question about religion. The paper is divided into two parts: the first is diagnostic in character and the second proposes a method for remedying the situation. After preliminary considerations of the key principle of experiential justification and the importance of a theory of cognition for epistemology, the first part goes on to consider two types of cognitional theories which lead to divergent conclusions about the possibility of religious knowledge. The second part shows how the empiricist principle can be used to resolve the dispute between cognitional theories by relying on the type distinction between cognition and meta-cognition, which brings certain coherentist features to empirical foundationalism and thus paves the way for a possible intentional differentiation between experiences.

I

1.1 *Preliminary Considerations*

Though the meaning of the term 'empiricism' and its cognates 'empirical' and 'empiricist' is not always univocal, broadly they signify an ' "appeal to experience" in the establishment and justification of claims'.[2] Thus, empiricism is committed to the view that any of our knowledge-claims can be subjected to scrutiny and revision in the light of experience. It is this feature that saves knowledge from degenerating into a dogmatic ideology, which is the very antithesis of empiricism.[3] Considered thus, empiricism is an epistemological approach that seeks to avoid dogmatic claims to knowledge ultimately by an appeal to experience.

What is involved in this epistemological approach is some version of foundationalism, which in spite of increased attacks 'has become a philosophical hydra, difficult even to come to grips with and seemingly impossible to kill'.[4] This is so because basic insight is a sound one: that for any x to exist it must make a difference which is experienceable in principle. To deny it would be to do away with the distinction between a possible state of affairs and an actual state of affairs.[5] Once we accept this fundamental empiricist principle (of knowledge needing experiential foundations), we must also be able to specify what experience is. Here we face the first hurdle to be crossed by an empirical epistemology.

1.1.1 Experience is a very general term applied to anything that happens to a subject. The light-rays that are reflected on the object and fall onto the retina of my eyes is a happening, but not an experience. It becomes an experience only when it is 'taken up into consciousness', to use the Kantian phrase. Thus, the minimum requirement for anything to be an experience is awareness, awareness of an entity, an event, etc. However, being conscious of a happening is necessary, but not sufficient for experiential justification either of knowledge in general or of religious knowledge in particular.

To realize the inapplicability of such a notion of experience to justify religious knowledge, we only need to look at James's own conclusion about the cognitive worth of mystical experiences. After a detailed examination of the mystical phenomena he could only say that the mystic has the right to maintain the truth of what he has experienced, but the non-mystic is not bound to accept its cognitivity.[6] In other words,

> Religious experience is absolute. It is indisputable, you can only say that you have never had such an experience and your opponent will say, 'Sorry, I have'. And there your discussion will come to an end.[7]

An obvious conclusion to be drawn is about the autonomy of religious experience: it can neither be justified nor proscribed on independent grounds. What is even more remarkable is the near unanimity of this conclusion, irrespective of other differences, found among thinkers who are sympathetic to religion.[8] This raises two questions: what is so special about religious experiences that authors as varied as William James, Carl Jung, and language philosophers come to similar conclusions? Second, can a truth be true only for some people and not for others?

The latter is obviously untenable since it would undermine the epistemological enterprise itself. Inasmuch as epistemology seeks to pass from opinion to knowledge, epistemic justification requires certain inter-subjective agreement. That such is the case can be seen also from the disquiet felt by philosophers down the centuries over the so-called 'scandal of philosophy', together with a fascination for scientific knowledge. Why should anyone feel uneasy about disagreements about

knowledge-claims unless it is also presupposed that what is true is true for all and hence capable of intersubjective agreement? In other words, the very enterprise of epistemology presupposes intersubjective agreement to be a criteria of knowledge; it may not be what makes a statement true, but it certainly is a criteria for our knowledge of truth.

Empiricism, inasmuch as it is an epistemology, accepts this. What is specific to it is the claim that the path to such agreement lies in experience. On the other hand the general notion of experience does not lead to such agreement in the case of religious knowledge, as is obvious in the case of William James. In other words, the empiricist concern for overcoming dogmatic claims to knowledge by an appeal to experiential foundations fail in the case of religious knowledge.[9] Such complete autonomy of religious claims is not religiously satisfactory either, because when a religious person affirms his belief he considers it to be true and not just expressing an opinion. We cannot also underestimate potential of such a position for bigotry and fanaticism. As Frankenberry has observed:

> . . . so important and personal an affair as religion can scarcely be expected to live without experience, and yet when we consider some of the claims being made in the name of experience, it might seem that religion cannot live with it.[10]

Even apart from religious knowledge, can such a general notion of experience be of any use in settling cognitive disputes? The answer is in the negative for the simple reason that experience is taken to be essentially private and unshareable. And there is no way in which such a concept of experience can be used for epistemic justification. A genuine claim to knowledge based on such experiences would be indistinguishable from a false one. If such a general notion of experience is neither philosophically nor religiously satisfactory, then, how can it be brought out of its private phenomenal realm to intersubjective realm so that the truth of any knowledge claim can be subjected to scrutiny and the universality of knowledge be preserved?

1.1.2 This can be done if we take the linguistic turn via Kant. Kant defined experience as 'synthesis of perceptions, not contained in perception. . .' and as 'knowledge by means of connected perceptions'.[11] It is this aspect of connectedness or synthesis that is emphasized here. Such synthesized experience we shall call cognition. However, the Kantian notion of synthesis is transcendental and not the sort of experiential statements we ordinarily use for the justification of other claims. Therefore, *a la* the 'linguistic Kantians'[12], we shall make the concept of synthesis more down to earth and use 'cognition' to mean a cognitional statement.

Cognition is, thus, both an act and a product of the act. It is that synthetic act of consciousness whereby either we invest being with

meaning or conversely, discover the meaning of being.[13] It is the act by which an autonomously existing ontological entity is transformed into an epistemic entity which is dependent on consciousness. Cognition is also the result of such an act which takes the form of a knowledge-claim about the world. If a statement makes no claim about the world it would not be considered cognitional. Thus, 'I imagine a tree' is not cognitional whereas 'I see a tree', 'This is a tree' are cognitions. The object of cognition, therefore, is intentional though not all intentional objects are objects of cognition. An imagined tree is an intentional object, but not a cognitional object. Considered as an act, cognition is an experience and considered as a result, it is a determinate claim, not about the experience itself, but about being. We refer to the former as 'experience' (an indeterminate term) and the latter as 'cognition' proper.[14] Thus, we cannot have a cognition unless there is an experience, but experience itself is not a cognition. In short, cognition can be defined as determinate, communicable and hence, intersubjectively available experience. It is this class of experiences that is relevant to epistemic justification.

Needless to say that what is involved in this move is a repudiation of the Cartesian sort of foundationalism which looks for the foundations of knowledge in the private realm of one's own consciousness. The fact that modern empiricists have advocated phenomenalist theories of some should, then, be traced to a failure to distinguish between a *experience* being justified in holding certain belief and a *propositional belief person* being justified.[15] Some implications of this move, i.e. of making experiential foundations intersubjectively available, will be considered later.

Are the unnameable, incommunicable moments of experience, then, totally irrelevant? From a justificatory perspective they must be so treated, for they cannot be subjected to intersubjective scrutiny. Even so, from a larger perspective, they are very much relevant. First, in terms of discovery and personal conviction, it is these experiences that lead one to know how the world is, which then, finds conceptual articulation. There is a further sense in which the incommunicable moment in experience is relevant to epistemology. This can be appreciated better once we recognize a problem brought about by this 'linguistic turn' in our understanding of cognition. While this move brings the epistemologically relevant aspect of experience out of its inscrutable private realm to the public, in the process we have also lost some of the shine that is attached to experience. An experience is unquestionable, but a cognition is not. Intersubjective availability does not imply intersubjective agreement. We know that any of our cognitional syntheses, including the perceptual ones could be false. After all, perceptual errors are not unfamiliar phenomena. Therefore, we must make a distinction between cognition and knowledge. The former is a synthesized experience, i.e. a knowledge-claim. Connecting perceptions is a matter

of giving or discovering their meaning.[16] Only when these connected perceptions are justified, (i.e. shown to be supported by reality), shall we call the result knowledge. A cognition, then, is not the same thing as knowledge; it is a claim, a claim that is not yet justified and established to be true.

1.2 *Theory of Cognition and Epistemology*

This understanding of cognition and its distinction from knowledge causes a difficulty: what happens if cognitions lack inter-subjective agreement? How, then, can these justify other claims? The reason for defining cognition in terms of intersubjective availability seems to be undermined. How is cognition, the justifier, itself justified?

Empiricists have tended to justify cognition by an appeal to the nature of cognition, and with good reason. To suggest that cognition is justified in any other manner would be to say that we have something other than experience to rely on for epistemic justification, and this would subvert empiricism itself. Further, if empiricism is made operational, (as in the case when cognitivity of religious statements is in question), if must presuppose an account of cognitional statements. This is a requirement that is demanded of any foundationalist epistemology, including empiricism. The logic of justification cannot substitute for those presuppositions because logic itself requires its elementary propositions and a prior knowledge of them before a person can perform logical operations. A theory of cognition is an explicit formulation of those underlying pre-suppositions about the character of cognitional statements. It deals with the nature of foundational statements. This takes us to the heart of a cognitional theory. Here we have two problems: how to find out the nature of cognitional statements and how to determine the legitimacy of what we find. The first deals with the procedure by which a theory of cognition is arrived at and the second with the criteria of adequacy of the procedure. Let us examine the first.

1.2.1 How are we to determine the nature of cognition? Here too, the empiricist tradition, including logical positivism, has employed a distinct procedure which can be described as genealogical: it determines the nature of cognition by examining its pedigree. This, in a sense, is unavoidable and follows from the logic of the matter. As an explicit formulation of implicit presuppositions, a theory of cognition has a different logical status then a cognitional statement. If a cognitional statement makes a claim about the way the world is, a statement belonging to cognitional theory is meta-cognitional. It also makes a claim, not about the world, but about cognition. Since it is about that which precedes our cognitional claims, genealogy becomes unavoidable. This also makes it a matter for psychological investigation, and rightly so. However, that does not reduce its importance for epistemology. On the contrary, as a

metacognitional claim, it is of the utmost importance to philosophy, for it is a knowledge-claim as well. Moreover, as metacognitional claims, these are presupposed in all our cognitional claims. Thus, an enquiry into the genealogy of cognitional statements, i.e. a theory of cognition, becomes an important prerequisite for an empirical epistemology. It is a logical and not psychological requirement. The history of empiricism has recognised this. It is emphasized here because of the exaggerated antipsychologistic tendencies that seek a radical separation of epistemology from psychology.[17] However, empiricism cannot avoid presupposing it. It is noteworthy that this fact is reaffirmed in recent philosophical research.[18]

1.3 Consciousness and Cognition: Two Approaches

Genealogical considerations take us back to the experience which precedes cognitional judgements. What determines our cognitions and how? This is the genealogical question. A cognitional judgement is the result of our interaction with the environment. What is the nature of this interaction? John Dewey's analysis of experiences in general[19] shows that this interaction involves both a doing and an undergoing. This is applicable also to cognitional experiences. There must be an undergoing, a receptivity from the environment; or else our cognitional judgements could not be about the world. It is the notion of doing that is problematic. An obvious activity involved is the making of cognitional statements which is preceded by an undergoing. Is this the only type of activity involved? Or is there also some activity even prior to the undergoing? This question can be rephrased in terms of the role of consciousness in cognition: Is consciousness active prior to any input from the environment?

In answering this question, we must keep in mind that we have conscious access only to the results, the cognitional judgments, and not to their antecedents. The popular and commonsense answer to this question is in the negative. Traditionally, empiricists have subscribed to this view, as can be seen from John Locke's *tabula rasa* model of consciousness. However, one need not go back into history to find an example of this view. The computational or information processing model of perception that is popular in cognitive psychology gives a similar role to consciousness.

> Perceiving is assumed to begin with the stimulation of a sensory surface and to end with the formation of a 'percept', given in consciousness. . . (in this model), the whole train of events is inflicted on a passive perceiver, who takes what is given and must be grateful for it.[20]

In direct contrast to this realist view[21] are the various theories which assign an active role to consciousness. The term 'constructivist' will be

used as a convenient label for them. John Hick's theory of 'experiencing-as'[22] is a good example. It is modelled on Wittgenstein's concept of 'seeing-as'. Using the illustration of the duck-rabbit, Wittgenstein points out that in either case 'we interpret it, and *see* it as we *interpret* it'.[23] Expanding on this, Hick coins the comprehensive term 'experiencing-as'. In doing so he is claiming that though there may be entirely unconceptualized experiences in our infancy, all our ordinary experience is 'experiencing-as'. This is to say that in the process of experience itself there is an interpretation involved whereby we invest it with meaning.

Hick distinguishes between two levels of interpretation: that of the first order and of the second order. A second order interpretation is a conscious theory construction: it is that by which a historian interprets his data, a detective his clues, a lawyer his evidence, and so on. There is also another and more basic or first order interpretation that enters into virtually all our conscious experience. It is this first order mental activity that he calls 'experiencing-as'.

So far I have discussed two basic types of cognitional theories: those that assign an active role to consciousness and those that do not. Moreover, even these are considered only by giving a minimal presentation of an example from each. While such a treatment cannot do justice to any particular theory, it is enough for us to discover the two different procedures by which they reach their different conclusions about the role of consciousness. The role of consciousness is crucially important for examining the possibility of religious cognition. The passive view of perception gets credence from the fact that our ordinary perceptual judgements are determinate and invariant. Variations in perceptions are attributed to variations in the objects of perception. The perceptual judgements about a stone and a tree are different because the perceived objects are different; apparently consciousness plays no role in bringing about such variations and therefore, we assume that consciousness is a passive partner in cognition. It proceeds by focussing on the objects of perception, finds them varied, finds no role of consciousness in such variations and concludes that consciousness is passive in perception.

The constructivists adopt a different procedure. They focus not on the objects of perception, but on the fact of perception itself. They find that even when there are no variations in the objective factors, the perceptual judgements are varied. Since the objective factors are kept constant such variations could not be attributed to the objects of perception and therefore, conclude that it must be due to the activity of consciousness. Thus, both the activity and passivity of consciousness are valid conclusions arrived at from unquestionable premises. Therefore, we can only inquire which of these starting points is appropriate to the phenomena they are investigating. Before venturing into it let us examine the implications of these divergent conclusions for the possibility of religious knowledge.

1.4 *Implications for the Possibility of Religious Cognition*

The claim about the activity or passivity of consciousness has decisive implications for the possibility of religious cognition. Passivity implies constancy and invariance, whereas activity involves possibility of change and variation. Hence, to assign a passive role to consciousness is to say that there are no variations in consciousness or that if there are variations, they are irrelevant to cognition. The first is obviously untenable. That there are different states of consciousness is non-controversial. Thus, there is a waking state, a sleeping state, a state in which we day-dream and so on. Moreover, mystical experiences involve a state of consciousness different from our ordinary state of consciousness. This is not a dogmatic claim but a conclusion that William James arrived at after a detailed study claim but a conclusion that William James arrived at after a detailed study of the mystical phenomena from different periods and cultural backgrounds.[24] In the light of these findings, the invariance thesis turns out to be an assumption that such variations are irrelevant to cognition. This assumption is also to be seen in Kant, who otherwise recognizes the activity of consciousness in cognition. Once we accept the invariance/ irrelevance thesis, it is not hard to conclude that religion and mysticism are devoid of cognitive significance. To see this we only need to recall their starting point mentioned earlier: they take our ordinary perceptual experiences as paradigmatic of all cognition. Hence, together with the invariance thesis goes an additional unstated premise that the relevant state of consciousness is the ordinary, everyday perceptual consciousness. The logical outcome is the non-cognitivity of religion. If consciousness is invariant, (or at least if its variations are irrelevant to cognition) and if the relevant state is the same as our ordinary consciousness, then it follows that there could be no religious cognition inasmuch as religion involves a different state of consciousness.

On the other hand, if consciousness is active, it permits of variance and further if such variance is relevant to cognition, then we arrive at the opposite conclusion. It is precisely what the mystic does: by claiming cognitive status to his claims, he is in effect claiming that such a state of consciousness is relevant to knowledge. Inasmuch as religious consciousness is different from the ordinary consciousness and if such a state of consciousness is relevant to cognition, then, the negative conclusion about religion does not follow. What follows is only that religious knowledge is not to be placed in the same category as our ordinary perceptual knowledge. The believer acknowledges this; it has found its classical expression in the *via negativa* approach to religious knowledge. Thus, recognizing the activity of consciousness makes it possible for one to affirm that religious experiences have as much cognitive significance as a non-religious or ordinary experience. This is what gives some degree of plausibility to Hick's account of religious cognition. Since cognition involves an interpretative activity, it is possible for one to perceive the world (an event, an entity, etc.) as a natural event

or as an act of God. Hick points to the central events in the Bible (the exodus event in the Old Testament and the Jesus event in the New) and shows that a secular interpretation would not give them the meaning they have in the Bible. If religion is a matter of interpretation, it is easy to appreciate how Jesus could be seen merely as a heretical rabbi and political agitator or as the Christ; how a certain animal could be seen merely as a cow or as *gau-mata*, and so on. Thus, acknowledging the activity of consciousness makes it possible to affirm the possibility of religious cognition while considering it passive does not.

1.4.1 However, a general acknowledgement of the activity of consciousness does not necessarily lead to an acknowledgement of the possibility of religious cognition, as we have seen in the case of Kant. What is required for the latter is not merely a general acknowledgement of the activity of consciousness but also the relevance of the possible variations in consciousness which go together with such activity. This is obviously something which Kant does not consider. He just takes it for granted that the only relevant state of consciousness in cognition is our ordinary perceptual consciousness. Like the realists, he too takes our ordinary perceptual experience to be paradigmatic of all experience. What is remarkable is that there is no argument or justification given to show the relevance/irrelevance of variations in consciousness to cognition. On the other hand it is not surprising because in order to do so, we will have to know the general correlation between consciousness and cognition.

In order to realize the importance of discovering the correlation between consciousness and cognition let us consider an important difficulty that is faced by a proponent of religious knowledge like Hick. His theory of 'experiencing-as' provides him the epistemological basis of his advocacy of religious knowledge. However, apart from the fact that we are not aware of any such interpretative activity in our ordinary perceptions, it raises the question of how a religious cognition can be differentiated from an ordinary cognition. If it is the same event that is experienced as a natural event and as an act of God, is there any difference between them? To affirm that there is a difference is to say that a religious construction/constitution of experience is different from that of ordinary perceptual experiences. If there is such a difference, what is it?[25] And if there is no difference can we talk sensibly of religious cognition and religious knowledge? Hick has no answer. To answer this, we should know the principle according to which all the experiences in a religious state of consciousness is constructed and the principle according to which all the experiences in an ordinary perceptual state of consciousness is constructed. That would give us the correlation between a particular state of consciousness and cognitions in the state. Only then can we specify the differentia between them. In other words, what we are asking for is the principle which unifies all the experiences that take place in a

particular state of consciousness, because of which we differentiate it from other states of consciousness. Once we discover the difference we could further ask whether there is something common between the two principles to consider both as cognitions. That would also be the general correlation between consciousness and cognitional experience which does not make the unity of cognitive consciousness into a uniformity. Then we would have a comprehensive theory of cognition which is adequate to deal with ordinary as well as religious cognitions, for, it would cover both the states of consciousness and yet differentiate between them.

Thus, though it would seem to be imperative upon an adequate theory of cognition to discover the general correlation between consciousness and cognition, to my knowledge, no account of such correlation is to be found in empiricist literature. Neither Kant not Hick attempt this. Even William James who found that mystical experiences involve an altered state of consciousness does not venture into it. Here, then, we have an answer to the question we bypassed earlier about the reason for the intractability of religious knowledge. In the absence of the knowledge of correlation between consciousness and cognition, it is not at all clear why the opponents of religious cognition consider ordinary state of consciousness alone to be relevant to knowledge and why the proponents consider otherwise. The net result is that the cognitivity of religion continues to be a matter of opinion. Apparently, *doxa* triumphs over *episteme*. In order to resolve this problem, then, we should first settle the preliminary question about whether consciousness is active or passive in cognition. Second, if it is active, and hence permits of variations, then, on what grounds can we judge the relevance or irrelevance of such variations to cognition? In order to answer the second question we also need to know the general correlation between states of consciousness and cognition. Is there a way to answer these questions within the empiricist framework?

II

Let us briefly review the argument so far: Empiricism requires experiential foundations to knowledge. Experience cannot be a purely private affair, since truth and knowledge require the possibility of universal agreement. Such intersubjectively available experiential foundation is cognition. This move makes the foundations vulnerable to disagreement and subject to justification. They were sought to be justified by a cognitional theory. Upon examination we find that there is no agreement on metacognitional claims of a cognitional theory either. How are we then, to settle such metacognitional questions? Settling such questions within an empiricist framework requires that the principle of experiential justification be applicable to those answers too, so that dogmatism is

avoided and experiential foundations maintained. First let us see how the empiricist principle could be applied to settle the question about the activity of consciousness.

We begin by making a logical distinction between a cognitional claim and a metacognitional claim. The first is about the world; the second is about experience that precedes the cognition. This distinction demarcates those experiences which are relevant to the justification of metacognitional claims from those that are relevant to the justification of cognitional claims. The experience which justifies a cognition is a cognitional experience; that which justifies a metacognitional claim is a metacognitional experience. The object of the former experience is the world; that of the latter is the experience of cognition.

2.1 *Evaluating the two approaches*

This distinction helps us to evaluate the realist and constructivist approaches to cognition and settle the dispute about the activity of consciousness. We have seen that the starting point of the realists' argument is that 'we see different things', which emphasizes variations in the objects of cognition. This is a good starting point for investigating the world because the experience that justifies such first order knowledge is cognitional. A theory of cognition, however, is not about the world: it is second order knowledge. And the experience that justifies such knowledge is metacognitional. Since it is applicable to all cognitional claims, it is irrelevant to a cognitional theory to consider whether the objects of cognition are such mundane things like tables and chairs or such exalted 'objects' like God or Brahman or such theoretical entities as electrons, neutrons and so on; a cognitional theory is quite indifferent to such objective variations. In other words, the starting point of the realist theory of cognition is irrelevant to the subject matter being investigated. The proper starting point for a cognitional theory, then, is not the varied objects of cognition, but only the fact that we perceive. The role of consciousness in cognition is second order knowledge and therefore, starting with the fact of perception, we can make variations in the subjective factors to find the impact of such variations on the cognitional result. If there are variations in the result, then we can conclude that consciousness is active in consciousness. This is what the constructivist does. This is also the significance of Husserl's advocacy of *epoché*: in applying the empiricist principle to metacognitional claims it is irrelevant to focus on the varied objects of cognition. By not making the distinction between cognitional and metacognitional experience the realists start on an irrelevant premise. It leads to a misapplication of the empiricist principle and the result is dogmatism: in keeping the subjective factors constant they presuppose the conclusion without making an inquiry. Thus, we see that *any empirically adequate theory of cognition must be constructivist and recognize the active role of consciousness.*

On the other hand, there is dogmatism in the reverse when the experience that justifies the second order knowledge (i.e. that we see), is used to justify the first order knowledge. Then, *esse est percipi.* Keeping the objective factors constant is not negating them: it is merely a methodological procedure appropriate to a second order inquiry. Thus, when we use the principle of experiential justification with insight and discrimination we avoid dogmatism. Then the activity of consciousness is recognized without compromising on the autonomy of the ontological reality.

2.2 *Foundational Coherence: Key to the Principle of Correlation*

We have seen that to recognize the possibility of religious cognition it is not enough to recognize the active role of consciousness but also find the general correlation between a state of consciousness and cognition. How are we to go about this task? First, since we are dealing not with particular cognitional claims about the world but with all the cognitional claims that take place in a particular state of consciousness, reflection on those cognitional experiences enables us to formulate their salient features, which we call metacognitional phenomena. What is proposed here is a description of the intersubjectively available, non-controversial phenomena common to cognitional judgments within a particular state of consciousness. Inasmuch as they are intersubjectively available non-controversial phenomena about cognitions, such a description differs from Husserl's Cartesian phenomenology. Once we describe all such phenomena relevant to cognitions in a particular state of consciousness, we could look for a principle that gives a coherent explanation of them. That principle, since it gives a coherent explanation of all metacognitional phenomena within a particular state of consciousness and hence applicable to all cognitions within that state, would be the unifying principle of that state of consciousness. Thus we would have the correlation between a particular state of consciousness and the cognitions within that state.

If we adopt such coherence considerations what happens to empirical foundationalism? Once we distinguish between the first order statements about the world expressed in object-language and the second order statements expressed in metalanguage that deals with the knower-world relations we see that a theory of cognition comes under the second category. Justification of the first order knowledge maintains a vertical structure, at the bottom of which are the foundations of that type. Thus observation statements about stones and trees (not the phenomenal 'appeared to. . .' statements) would be foundational to first order knowledge. To say that obser-vation statements are basic in object language is to acknowledge that perceptual judgments are ordinarily reliable. Once this reliability is granted they maintain their foundational character in object language.

However, there is no claim that these foundations are self-justified or incorrigible. A skeptic is at liberty to question the epistemic warrant for such claims, which will then need to be answered. To pre-suppose the reliability of observation is not to give a justification, because it is this very presupposition that the sceptic questions. But the moment this question is raised, the discussion has shifted from first-order knowledge to that of the second order, i.e. the reliability of the cognitive processes. Thus, the ultimate justification of the basic statements in one type is not another statement of that type (hence foundationalism) but a pre-supposition about the nature of the basic statements in that type—that they are ordinarily reliable—which is a non-basic, theoretical statement of the second order knowledge. In other words, foundational statements are type-dependent: what is basic in one type could be non-basic in another. It is for the justification of the latter that we need an adequate theory of cognition, which will be available if we can find a coherent, explanatory account of the relevant non-controversial, intersubjectively available meta-cognitional phenomena.[26]

However, this reliance on coherence leads neither to an abandoning of foundationalism nor to an infinite regress. This is so because all metacognitional statements of a cognitional theory are about cognitional experiences and hence applicable to them irrespective of the objects experienced. A cognition, we have seen, is a synthetic experience: it synthesizes the varied input from the environment. So too, a metacognitional statement, inasmuch as it makes a knowledge-claim, is a synthesis: a synthesis of synthetic experiences. The former gives a coherent account of the perceived world; the latter gives a coherent account of our various cognitional experiences within a particular state of consciousness. To consider this reliance on coherence either as abandoning of the experiential foundations or as leading to infinite regress is to misunderstand the nature of metacognitional experience which give rise to metacognitional claims. It is not a claim about the experienced world, but a claim about experience in general. A metacognitional claim, therefore, does not arise from a further experience, say, an experience of experience. Hence it is neither true nor false in the sense in which a cognitional claim is, i.e. by describing or failing to describe the world. A metacognitional claim is either adequate or inadequate to explain metacognitional phenomena. Thus, the basic empiricist requirement of experiential justification of knowledge becomes applicable to metacognitional claims and at the same time the twin dangers of infinite regress and dogmatism are avoided. In other words, the conflict between foundationalism and coherentism must be considered a mock-fight resulting from the failure to distinguish between types of statements and the assumption that foundational statements must be self-justified. Both coherence and foundations are required for empirical epistemology. The coherence considerations follow from the empirical epistemology.

need for intersubjective agreement, which I have argued is the guiding motive of epistemology itself; the need for experiential foundations follow from the empiricist criteria for distinguishing an ideological or dogmatic claim from knowledge. Since both are inherent to the demands of an empirical epistemology, its success depends on reconciling the two. What is proposed here is a way of reconciling the two in a manner that can lead to the discovery of the correlation between consciousness and cognition, which we saw is required for an adequate theory of cognition.

2.3 *Unity of Religious Consciousness*

As far as religious experiences are concerned, a lot of work has been done that uncovers the principle of unity of religious consciousness. This principle may be described as a 'sotereological' intent. What the term means can be understood by paraphrasing William James three basic assertions about religion to the effect that,

1. there is something wrong about the human situation as it stands,
2. this wrongness can be, and must be overcome, and
3. that this process of becoming has ontological support.

The first two are not specific religion, but are applicable even to an ideology like Marxism, with which it has a lot in common. It is the third element that apparently differentiates religion from such ideologies and it is here that cognitivity of religion becomes important. William James described this third characteristic in terms of establishing connection with 'higher powers' and John Macquarrie describes it in terms of human aspirations for value having support in Being itself or Being having the character of grace such that human becoming is not purely a matter of human effort.[27] These characterizations may be objected to by a religion like Buddhism and therefore, I describe it in terms of human striving being supported by the ontological structure of the world. What is to be specially noted about this principle is that it is related to certain universal human goals. Now if such a principle is to be differentiated from that of ordinary perceptual consciousness we will have to first show that there is an inherent goal or intentionality specific to ordinary perceptual consciousness and that it is different from the religious one. Is there any such purposiveness in ordinary perceptions? The best way to answer this question definitively is to adopt the same method: identify the non-controversial, inter-subjectively available metacognitional phenomena and look for the theoretical principle that provides the most coherent explanation of such phenomena.

2.4 *Perceptual Consciousness: The Metaperceptual Phenomena*

What are these phenomena of ordinary perceptual experiences that can be expressed in non-controversial, intersubjective terms? I shall enumerate

the important ones here, without making any claim that the list is exhaustive.

2.4.1 *Determinacy or stability* Ordinarily, perceptual judgements are determinate and stable. When we judge something to be a stone, a tree, etc., the judgement is definite and there is no ambiguity involved. However, the fact of determinacy is no guarantee of truth; Determinacy is not incorrigibility.

2.4.2 *Immediacy* In perception, it is as if there is a direct confrontation with reality. Here again, we must be wary of interpreting this immediacy in an absolute sense as absence of any mediatory process. The terms 'directness' and 'immediacy' are to be understood relatively: in comparison to the process of conscious interpretation and inference, perception is direct. If we are to make an absolute statement of the phenomena, we can only say that we are not consciously aware of any mediatory process in perception, not that there are no such processes. There are so many things, even about the functioning of our body, of which we are not consciously aware, e.g. digestion, respiration, perspiration, and so on. We have no conscious awareness of how they occur, but from this we would not conclude that there are no processes involved in them. The same is true of perception: the phenomenological fact is that there is a lack of conscious awareness of any interpretative or other processes in perception.

2.4.3 *Selective attention* Our attention is selective. It is commonplace that

> . . . the information available during each moment in time. . . is vast and complex. We are constantly bombarded by a myriad of sights, sounds and smells. Yet most of these go unnoticed. . . .[28]

It is only a fraction of these that comes to be noticed by the perceiver. We agree with David Kelly that

> . . . the causal sequence set off by the proximate stimulus determines what *can* be perceived in any given condition, but not necessarily what *will* be perceived. The conscious activity of the perceiver is also a factor.[29]

It is the activity of consciousness which makes it possible for different people to notice different things in the same given environment. Consequently, even when all objective factors, including the physical position of the perceiver, are kept constant, the resultant cognitional judgments could vary.

2.4.4 *Perceptual search and perceptual absence* These are two related phenomena which also point to the active role of consciousness. Not only

do I see things that are presented to me but also I look for things that interest me. I can go to a library and search for a particular book; go into a crowd and look for a particular face. Then, there is the fact of perceptual absence. Not only do we make positive perceptual judgements like 'This is a book' or 'That is Mr John', but also negative judgments like 'The book is not in the library', or 'Mr John is not at the party'.

2.4.5 *Possibility of truth and error* These two are clubbed together because, though we take most of our perceptions to be veridical, we do know that occasionally we also make errors. The fact of perception guarantees neither truth nor its opposite; a non-controversial statement of these phenomena could only be that either is possible.

2.4.6 *Perceptual polymorphy* Like selective attention, this also points to the fact that even when there are no variations in the objective factors, the perceptual synthesis could vary. However, these are two different phenomena. Selective attention refers to the fact that the perceiver has a choice in receiving the stimulus input from the environment; polymorphy points to a different fact that even the same input can lead to different perceptual syntheses. One good example is Wittgenstein's duck-rabbit case where the same stimuli could be seen as a duck or as a rabbit. Though the common examples that are given for illustrating polymorphy often involve such artificially constructed objects, 'I shall be inclined to resist the temptation to fall in with this way of speaking:' seeing as 'is for *special* cases'.[30]

Some observations are in order: 1. All these are familiar, non-controversial facts related to ordinary perceptual situations, and hence, phenomena relevant to ordinary perceptual consciousness. 2. A remarkable feature of these phenomena is their diversity. Some of these are so diverse that they look incompatible with one another. This is most obvious in the case of the twin phenomena of the possibility of truth and error: both are real possibilities in perception. Or take the case of perceptual determinacy and polymorphy. Ordinarily, our perceptions are so determinate that our perceptual syntheses tend to be uniform and yet polymorphy is a fact. 3. In spite of their diversity, these phenomena also have certain unity on account of which we relate each of them to our ordinary perceptual consciousness. What is this principle of unity? If there were to be only one state of consciousness then this unity could be attributed to the fact that all perceptions are related to consciousness. But there are different states of consciousness, and therefore, the unity of perceptual knowledge cannot be the mere fact of consciousness: it must be something more specific about consciousness which needs to be discovered. Moreover, once we have taken into account all the relevant metaperceptual phenomena it is reasonable to assume that a coherent account of these diverse metaperceptual phenomena would give us the

principle of unity of perceptual consciousness since it would cover all perceptual experiences. Consequently, it is in such a coherent account these metaperceptual phenomena that we should look for the principle of correlation between our ordinary perceptual consciousness and perceptual experiences.

However, most theories of perception fail to give a coherent account of these metaperceptual phenomena and are therefore, partial: they take into account some of these phenomena and ignore the others, on account of which the principle of unity has eluded us. Earlier, in examining the procedures whereby the differing conclusions about the role of consciousness are arrived at, we saw that realism is unempirical. Now, even a cursory scrutiny of the meta-perceptual phenomena like attention and polymorphy confirms that realism which gives a passive role to consciousness is not adequate. This is also in accordance with the findings of cognitive psychology which recognizes 'top-down' or 'concept-driven' processing, which is contrasted with 'bottom-up' or 'data-driven' processing.[31] Thus having ruled out realist theories we can concentrate on the constructivist theories to examine their adequacy.

2.5 *Evaluating Two Constructivist Theories*

First we turn to Hick's theory. I wonder if Hick would claim his theory to be an adequate theory of perception because other than polymorphy none of the other phenomena relevant to a perceptual theory is considered by him. Especially problematic is determinacy. We have already noted that perceptions do have certain determinacy. It raises the question: how is such determinacy possible? One answer is in terms of the passivity of consciousness, in which case there could be no polymorphy. Once we recognize the real possibility of alternative syntheses such an option is no longer available. However, polymorphy does not do away with determinacy altogether, though it may not be so much as to warrant uniform synthesis. There are limits to perceptual interpretation. Thus, it is highly unlikely that anyone would talk of seeing a stone in place of a tree. If that were to happen we would call it an illusion or a hallucination, but not perception. Therefore, Hick's theory of 'experiencing-as' is too general to be able to explain how such limits can be drawn.

2.5.1 Ulric Neisser's constructivist theory of perception is an improvement upon Hick's. He takes into account many of the metaperceptual phenomena mentioned. Moreover, not only does he treat perceptual phenomena as a contribution of the perceiver but also describes their structures as a contribution of the perceiver but also describes their functions. One of the facts that he tries to explain is how most of our perceptions could be accurate and veridical. He writes:

> At one time I thought that it would help to insist (1967) that perceiving is a constructive process rather than a passive one. I still

think so, but this claim does not really come to grips with the basic question: how do we know what to construct?[32]

Here, Neisser recognizes that one way to answer this question is to take the Gibsonian turn, according to which the pick up from the environment is so highly specific that 'we can make only one construction, the right one, which renders the notions of "construction" and "processing" superfluous'.[33] However, Neisser does not consider the Gibsonian perspective satisfactory since it says nothing about the contribution of the perceiver, i.e. the internal structures which he brings to bear on perception. Neisser calls these structures 'anticipatory schemata' and it is in terms of these structures that he proposes to answer the question: how do we know what to construct. These structures function as formats and plans. Considered as plans they direct our perceptual explorations; considered as formats they set limits to what will be perceived. 'Information that does not fit the schema either alters it substantially or goes entirely unused'.[34]

Neisser's functional description of the cognitional structures is certainly an improvement upon the too general and amorphous notions of 'experiencing-as' and 'top-down' processing. An explicit acknowledgement of structures as a contribution of the perceiver helps us to explain the phenomena of perceptual search, perceptual absence and the like. If these structures are like plans, perceptual absence may be considered as an unfulfilled plan.

However, Neisser's theory, like Hick's, fails to explain the phenomena of determinacy and immediacy. Let us consider it in terms of the question that Neisser sets out to answer. Does Neisser's account help us to know what to construct? Apparently it does; but actually it does not. Apparently it does because structures function as plans for construction and hence tell us what to construct. However, a little reflection shows that such is not the case. To say that structures tell us what to construct is like saying that a road map tells us where to go. Taken literally, it is absurd—a map does not determine the destination of the traveller, it only helps him reach a destination that has already been chosen. The structures, therefore, do not really resolve the problem of construction. They tell us not what to construct, but rather, what we cannot construct; we cannot construct anything unless there are such structures. In other words, we can say that there are structural constraints on our constructions. In terms of determinacy, they tell us that our perceptions are determinate; nothing is said about how such determinacy is possible. Just as an amorphous notion of construction raises the question of how do we know what to construct, so too, an amorphous notion of structures as plans raises the further question: who draws up the plans and on what considerations? The question becomes all the more important if there are alternative structures and plans for construction while the materials (the perceiver and the environment) remains the same.

In other words, these constructivist theories fail to give a coherent explanation of the relevant metaperceptual phenomena, especially those of directness and determinacy. Of these, directness is easily understood as a lack of awareness of any constructing process. The real difficulty is with determinacy. But it is not insurmountable, since most of the questions raised about determinacy point to the constraints on our constructions. Once we identify these constraints, determinacy also can be accounted for within constructivism.

2.6 *Towards an Adequate Constructivism*

How to go about this task? Only a few suggestions can be given here. Since the active role of consciousness is beyond doubt, we can concentrate on analyzing those cases where we have conscious awareness of it, say, case that involves perceptual search. Such analysis would reveal that there are intentional, structural and ontological factors that constrain our constructions. Of these the structural factors are easily available to investigation.[35] The investigation would reveal their interrelationships and hierarchical organization such that the higher the level, the more comprehensive it will be. The highest level, then, would encompass the whole domain of perceptual consciousness, and show the principle of unity of ordinary perceptual consciousness. This unity, I submit, is due to the automatized (and hence, unconscious) practical intent which has been identified as the characteristic mark of everyday life-world by the phenomenologists, and which is different from the sotereological intent of religious life-worlds. However, showing that such is the case requires further work and extended argument. Once that is done, it will be seen that the general correlation of consciousness to cognition is intentional in the sense of being related to human goals and that the intentionality of religious experiences differs from that of the ordinary perceptual experiences. Until we discover such a principle of the unity of cognitive consciousness that does not reduce unity to uniformity all discussions about the cognitivity of religion within an empiricist framework is likely to be a groping in the dark.[*]

NOTED AND REFERENCES

1. William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*, New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1901, p. 314.
2. Nancy Frankenberry, *Religion and Radical Empiricism* (Albany: State University of New York Press) 1987, p. 3.
3. "If some aspect of our experience is sufficiently intrusive and persistent, and coherent with the rest of our experience, then to reject it would be in effect to

doubt our own sanity and would thus amount to a kind of cognitive suicide". (John Hick in Richard Woods, ed., *Understanding Mysticism*, New York: Image Books, 1980, p. 434.)

4. L. Bonjour, *The Structure of Empirical Knowledge*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1985, p. 17.

5. Cf. John Hick, "Religious Faith as Experiencing-As" in *Problems of Religious Pluralism* (London: MacMillan Press), 1985, p. 113.

6. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (NY: Image Books), 1980, p. 411–17.

7. Carl C. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, tr. by R.F.C. Hull (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1958, p. 104–5.

8. Besides James and Jung, see also the "language-games" approach to religion. E.g., Norman Malcolm, "The Groundless Belief," in Stuart C. Brown, ed. *Reason and Religion*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press), 1977; D.Z. Phillips, *The Concept of Prayer*, (London: Kegan Paul), 1965 and *The Autonomy of Religious Belief* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press), 1981. While John Hick does not approve of this conclusion, he too grants that the world is "religiously ambiguous", thus, implying that religious truths do not have the imposing character which apparently non-religious truths have. (Hick, op.cit., p. 100)

9. C.B. Martin argues that in the absence of inter-subjective checking procedures, appeals to religious experience amounts to no more than a psychological claim. Cf. "A Religious Way of Knowing" in B. Brody, ed. *Readings in the Philosophy of Religion: an Analytic Approach* (New Jersy: Prentice-Hall) 1974, pp. 516–27.

10. Frankenberry, p.3.

11. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, Tr. by N. Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan Press) 1933, Repr. 1978; B. 218; B161; A764=B972; Kant is using the word "perception" here in the narrow sense of empirical intuition.

12. Frankenberry uses this expression to describe language empiricism. op.cit., p. 60.

13. This two-pronged definition is intended to avoid the controversial question whether cognitional synthesis is due to the activity of the subject or due to the way the world is. (e.g., R.C.S. Walker, "Synthesis and Transcendental Idealism, in *Kant Studien*, vol. 76, 1985; This divide is irrelevant to the discussion at this point since our concern is with the communicability of experience. How this cognition itself is justified is a further question.

14. I have preferred the term 'cognition' over 'perception' for two reasons: (1) 'Perception' emphasizes the experiential dimension whereas 'cognition' lays equal emphasis on both awareness and judgement. (See Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary) Since the aspect of synthesis is emphasized here, 'cognition' seems more suited for our purpose. (2) 'Perception' is often identified with ordinary everyday cognition which makes it unsuitable for considering religious way of knowing. Therefore, the term ghperception° will be reserved for use in the latter, narrow sense.

15. For the distinction between doxastic and propositional justification, see Roderick Firth, "Are epistemic concepts reducible to ethical concepts?" in *Values and Morals: Essays in Honour of William Frankenna, Charles Stevenson, and Richard Brandt*, A.I. Goldman and J. Kim (eds.) (Dordrechet: D. Reidel) 1978, p. 218; P.K. Moser, *Empirical Justification*, (Dordrechet: D. Reidel Publishing Company) 1985, p. 3; Joseph Runzo, "World-views and epistemic foundations of theism" in *Religious Studies*, 25 (1989), p. 32.

16. "To grasp the meaning of a thing, an event, or a situation is to see it in its relations to other things: to note how it operates or functions, what consequences follow from it, what causes it, what uses it can be put to. In contrast, what we have called the brute thing, the thing without meaning to us, is something whose relations are not grasped". (John Dewey, *How We Think*, Boston: D.C. Heath), 1910. Quoted in

G. Miller, P. Johnson-Laird, *Language and Perception*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1976, p. 210.

17. Through much of the twentieth century epistemology, it was considered a confusion to introduce psychology into philosophy. Gottlob Frege opposed psychologism in logic and philosophy of mathematics. Analytic philosophy, for the most part, saw all legitimate philosophy to be 'logic' of science and analysis of key epistemic concepts. (See Rudolf Carnap, *The logical Syntax of Language*, tr. by Amethe Smeaton, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1937, sec. 72). This was aided by a sharp distinction between justification and discovery. The former is viewed as a matter of logic and the latter, of psychology. (for the distinction, see, Hans Reichenbach, *Experience and Prediction*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938, pp. 6–8). Popper's proposal for an objectivist epistemology without a knowing subject is subject to the same criticism unless it is taken to stand for the two types of justifications introduced earlier. (*Objective Knowledge*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, pp. 109–12).

18. For example, see Alvin Goldman's work *Epistemology and Cognition* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press) 1986.

19. John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Capricorn Books), 1958, p. 44.

20. Ulric Neisser, "Perceiving, Anticipating and Imagining" in Savage, ed. *Perception and Cognition: Issues in the Foundations of Psychology*. Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Vol. IX (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 1978, p. 90. An extended version appeared in his book *Cognition and Reality* (W.H. Freeman and Company) 1976.

21. The different versions of this theory goes under various names. It is called realist here, because such a theory often presupposes a realist ontology to the effect that "the way we see things is pretty much the way they are," (U. Neisser, ed. *Concepts and Conceptual Development: Ecological and Intellectual Factors in Categorization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 13; Also see Clifford Hooker in Savage, ed., p. 407). An explicit statement of this ontological preoccupation is to be found in J.J. Gibson's ‹ecological§ approach to perception which begins by a listing of the perceivables (Cf. J.J. Gibson, *The senses considered as Perceptual systems*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966; *The ecological approach to visual perception*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1979). Since such an ontology is often presupposed by realists, realism itself is often identified with its ontology. When such an ontology is presupposed, epistemology itself is dissolved into an ontology because then it is more a theory of the cognized than a theory of cognition—it deals with the 'what' of cognition than the ghhow° of it.

22. Hick, ‹"Faith as Experiencing-as. . ."

23. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, tr. by G.E.M. Anscombe, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell) 1963, p. 193.

24. Cf. William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (NY: Image Books) 1980.

25. Cf. Frankenberry, op.cit., p. 66; Kai Nielsen, *Introduction to Philosophy of Religion* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd) 1982, p. 157. In not being able to answer this question Hick is placing himself in the same boat as Hare (for whom, Religion is ghblik° see Hick, 1985, p. 110 ff.) though Hick explicitly distances himself from such a non-cognitivist position.

26. The word "relevant" indicates that coherence with all experiential phenomena is not required for any one theory of cognition: dream experiences and religious experiences, for instance, are irrelevant to a theory of ordinary perception.

27. J. Macquarrie, "How can we think of God", in J.H. Gill (ed.), *Philosophy Today*, No. 2, (London: MacMillan), 1969.

28. D.H. Dodd, R.M. White Jr., *Cognition: Mental Structures and Processes* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc.) 1980, p. 23.

29. David Kelly, *The Evidence of the Senses: A Realist Theory of Perception* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press), 1986, p. 148, emphasis added.

30. J.L. Austin, *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1962, p. 101 n. Some excellent examples of polymorphy involving perception of natural objects is to be found in this book. (e.g., p. 99). For other examples of perceptual polymorphy see also Don Ihde, 1986, p. 25. Ian Ramsey uses the phenomenon even more effectively and extensively than Hick in his empirical approach to Religion.

31. See, D.A. Norman, and D.G. Bobrow, "On the role of active memory processes in perception and cognition", in Cofer, C.N., ed. *The Structure of Human Memory*, San Francisco: Freeman, 1976. Also Clifford Hooker "An Evolutionary Naturalist Doctrine of Perception and Secondary Qualities" in Savage, ed., 1978.

32. In Savage, ed., p. 91. The 1967 reference is to *Cognitive Psychology* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts).

33. In Savage, ed., p. 91; for the Gibsonian turn see n. 21.

34. In Savage, ed., p. 98. Having such structures, however, is not perceiving; it is a prerequisite to perception. Perception is a cyclic process in which schema is just one phase. Perception begins with the anticipatory schema which directs exploration, picks up available information, which in turn modifies the schema itself. Thus, unlike the Kantian structures, these are modifiable structures. In another respect, the schemata are very much like the Kantian structures: in both cases there is no sharp distinction between form and content. (compare Ibid. with A 72 = B 97).

35. Eleanor Rosch and her associates have done excellent work in this field. See Rosch, "On the Internal Structure of Perceptual and Semantic Categories", in T. Moore, ed., *Cognitive Development and the Acquisition of Language*, (New York: Academic Press) 1973; Rosch and Mervis, "Family Resemblances: Studies in the Internal Structure of Cognition", in *Cognitive Psychology* 7, 1975; Rosch el al. "Basic Objects in Natural Categories", in *Cognitive Psychology* 8, 1976.

Approaches to Conducting Research in Management Sciences: A Philosophical and Methodological Reflection

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INTRODUCTION

The field of management is a relatively new discipline. However, even in pre-modern times, one form of technique or the other was used in solving organisational problems. But as modern organisations become more and more complex, both in scope, content of activities and context, modern managers now face newer challenges at work. The organisation of work in modern times seems to have become a kind of jigsaw puzzle. This situation has arisen as a result of rapid growth and development of modern industrial activities in this century. The growth in industrial activities has also affected the activities of modern governments; and this seems to have ostensibly created a reciprocal interaction between the organised business activities of the entrepreneur and the development of policy instruments formulated by government to control business activities. The intensive nature of the interrelationship between the activities of industry and the public sector has generated a lot of debate as to how best to manage the scarce and limited resources of the modern state.

The situation is becoming more complicated and, therefore, calls our attention to the introduction of more appropriate techniques in the organisation of work and work related activities at the work place. Some scholars (Shott, 1979; Hochschild, 1979; Denzin, 1970; Becker, 1953) have argued that problems in management sciences could be solved through the use of analysing qualitative data in social research. Other scholars (Dantzig, 1967; Goodeve, 1948; Ackoff and Sasieni, 1968, Kemper 1978[a], 1978[b]) have argued that it is unlikely that problems in management sciences could be solved by merely analysing qualitative data in social enquiry. They argue that organisational problems could only be solved through the application of scientific tools in the analysis of data. The first group sees research in management sciences as involving the investigation and interpretation of the social world using qualitative techniques in the analysis of data. The second group sees all social action or the social world as an objective reality which therefore,

could be investigated and interpreted using the canons of scientific principles and rigours applicable in the natural sciences. This debate has had a long-standing tradition which appears to have defied any form of meaningful settlement. But management scientists should as a matter of necessity adopt a position if their studies are to be given a place of prominence in contemporary research agenda.

In view of the issues we have raised, what we have set out to do in this paper is threefold. First, we shall discuss assumptions relating to ontology, epistemology, models of human nature and methodology employed in analysing and interpreting the social world from the point of view of the subjectivist frame of reference. Second, we shall also discuss assumptions relating to ontology, epistemology, models of human nature and methodology, employed by positivism in the analysis and interpretation of data in management or social sciences. The third and perhaps final issue addressed here is an attempt to identify areas of pragmatic affinity between the two polarities—relativism and absolutism. This will be our contribution to the debate between relativist and absolutist scholars in their search for answers in interpreting the social world.

DEFINING MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

The term management sciences is used in a very broad sense in this paper. Management sciences among others include disciplines such as organisational behaviour, industrial or organisational psychology, industrial sociology, economics, operations research, political science, statistics, cultural anthropology, accountancy, personnel management, organisation theory and all other related disciplines. Depending on the persuasion and school of thought of each contributor, the various disciplinary areas which constitute management sciences could as well be described as behavioural or social sciences. In this paper, we are not interested in the identification of semantic differences between different scholars. The terms management, behavioural or social sciences, therefore, are used interchangeably.

RESEARCH APPROACHES IN MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: THE SUBJECTIVIST–OBJECTIVIST ASSUMPTIONS

Research approaches in management sciences could be typologised into two broad categories—the positivist or objectivist and subjectivist or relativist approaches. The positivist or relativist approaches in management sciences assume or adopt scientific methodology in their method of data collection, analysis and interpretation. The positivist uses nomothetic methodology, found in the natural sciences in the study of the social world. The subjectivist or relativist on the other hand assumes or adopts ideographic methodology in his method of data collection,

analysis and interpretation. We shall explain the concept of nomothetic and ideographic methodologies later in this paper.

Management scientists have in the main adopted these two approaches in social enquiry. But there seems to be areas of conflict in the adoption of these two broad categories as a result of the unit of analysis in all management sciences. The view has been advanced that because the management sciences are concerned with the investigation interpretation of social phenomena, it is wrong to adopt positivist methodology or scientific investigations that are popular in the natural sciences. But positivist scholars, on the other hand, have argued that irrespective of the environment and social context in which we find ourselves, the appropriate methodology to adopt in an attempt to establish any form of objective reality is through the use of methods that are adopted in the natural sciences.

There has been a long-drawn argument between subjectivist and objectivist scholars in their analysis and understanding of the social world. These arguments are based on the premise that 'all theories of organisation are based upon a philosophy of science and theory of society'. It is therefore important to discuss the philosophical assumptions upon which the various approaches are predicated. Burrel and Morgan (1979) have argued that the convenience exists to conceptualise the management sciences based on four sets of assumptions. These assumptions according to Burrel and Morgan are related to ontology, epistemology, human nature and methodology.

It is the view of Burrel and Morgan (1979) that management scientists should see their subjects through 'explicit or implicit assumptions about the nature of the social world and the way in which it may be investigated'. The first set of assumptions are of an ontological nature. These are assumptions which concern or deal with the very purpose of the phenomena to be studied or investigated. Management scientists are faced with a fundamental ontological question. This has to do with questions relating to the 'reality' to be investigated. Ontological assumptions create the necessary pathway for the researcher to understand the reasoning behind the very essence of studying any phenomenon. Ontological assumptions are made to stimulate individuals to ask questions relating to the phenomena they are investigating—to establish the fact, whether or not the phenomena to be investigated are real, and of an objective nature. Ontological assumptions are made by researchers to identify the nature of the phenomena to be investigated—whether the phenomena being investigated are concrete, hard, and have objective features and characteristics.

Burrel and Morgan (1979) went further to argue that, succeeding the assumptions relating to ontology are other associated assumptions which are essentially of an epistemological nature. Epistemological assumptions which we make as management scientists centre on the theory of

knowledge. These are assumptions which have to do with how knowledge develops and is communicated to other people in intelligible form. The question of epistemological assumptions does not only address issues relating to communication of ideas or knowledge to people but also anchors on how to establish a line of divide between what is regarded as 'true' from what is regarded as 'false'. The ability to develop a level of consciousness to discriminate between what is generally regarded as true or false is what shapes our frame of reference. On a rather philosophical note, Burrel and Morgan (1979) have in fact argued that the 'dichotomy of "true" and "false" itself presupposes a certain epistemological stance'. All epistemological assumptions therefore are based on the 'view of the nature of knowledge itself, whether knowledge could be identified and it's nature communicated as being hard, real or tangible or whether knowledge is something of softer, subjective, spiritual or even transcendental kind', which is based on our experience of the past. In other words, whether knowledge as a phenomenon could be acquired through learning or something which the individual has to experience personally.

Closely following the heels of the ontological and epistemological assumptions but which are 'conceptionally separate' are a third set of assumptions relating to 'human nature'. The assumptions relating to human nature try to identify the relationship or tissue of connection between human beings and the environment in which they operate and transact. Burrel and Morgan (1979) have argued that there cannot be any meaningful discussion in the management sciences if the nature of human beings which form the object and subject of discussion is excluded. It is therefore possible to identify perspectives in the literature which advocate the view that human beings respond either in a mechanistic or deterministic way to situations they experience in the external world. If human beings respond in a mechanistic way to their environments, then the environments condition and shape their behaviours. But if human beings do not respond to their environments in a deterministic way then it is assumed that they create, control, manage and direct activities in their environments.

The three sets of assumptions discussed above have a symbiotic relationship and implication of a 'methodological nature'. Each of these assumptions has an overwhelming influence on the way we try to explain the social world. The kind of ontologies, epistemologies and nature of human beings determines the type of methodology one adopts in social research. There are methodologies used in the social sciences which conceptualise the social world in the same way as the natural world; as being objective, hard, 'real and external to the individual'. But there are others who see the social world in a rather subjective form, and, therefore, softer and even of transcendental and spiritual nature. Burrel and Morgan (1979) have argued that if management scientists subject

themselves to methodologies which treat the social world as a tangible entity, constituting any form of objective reality, then the issues involved border on the 'analysis of relationship and regularities between the various elements which it comprises'. The focus, therefore, is on how to identify and define the elements and how to design ways of expressing these relationships. The perspective that adopts a methodological stance which sees the social world as objective reality, attempts to establish principles and universal laws to explain and 'govern the reality which is being observed'.

But if a management scientist subscribes to the view that society or the social world could be explained or created through the subjective experience of individuals, it means that our search for understanding the social world around us is based on the subjective experience of the individual who is attempting to study and explain the social world. The central issues in this perspective border essentially on how individuals create, modify or interpret social phenomena via their understanding of the social world around them. The interpretation and explanation of the social world is seen to be a reflection of the unique features and finite provinces of meanings the individual gives to the phenomena under investigation. This approach in methodological parlance highlights the fact that the social world is on the whole relativistic in nature and, therefore, could be seen as 'anti-scientific' as opposed to the 'ground rules' which are generally used in the natural sciences. Burrel and Morgan made an attempt to use a schema to illustrate the dimensions on which to explain the subjective–objective debate in social enquiry. Burrel and Morgan's (1979) schema is replicated below:

THE SUBJECTIVE–OBJECTIVE DIMENSION

The subjectivist approach to social science				The objectivist approach to social science
Nominalism	<••••••	Ontology	••••••>	Realism
Anti-Positivism	<••••••	Epistemology	••••••>	Positivism
Voluntarism	<••••••	Human nature	••••••>	Determinism
Ideographic	<••••••	Methodology	••••••>	Nomothetic

THE ONTOLOGICAL DEBATE BETWEEN NOMINALISM AND REALISM

The ontological debate between nominalist and realist conception of the social world has been a long-drawn battle. The nominalist argument on what represents the social world anchors on the fact that what is regarded as social world external to the individual is merely the imagination of that individual, nothing but names, concepts, ideas, and labels used by individuals to describe situations. The nominalist does not accept the view that there exists any 'real' structure in the social world. The 'names' used by individuals are referred to as artificial creations whose value is

merely to make sense in our analysis of situations and in negotiating the social world of which we are an integral part. The realist on the other hand argues that the social world in which we exist is something of an objective type. The social world of the realist is assumed to be hard, tangible and is made of 'immutable structures'. The realist has postulated that even if we do see, feel or touch these structures, they still exist as 'empirical entities'. The realist developed the ontological argument that as we may not even be aware of the existence of some of these structures we cannot even give them names, labels or 'concepts to articulate them'. The realist has a strong belief that the social world exists quite differently and 'independently of the individual's appreciation of it'. The individual is born into the social world and learns to live within it. The individual cannot create the social world or any part thereof. The social world maintains an objective form and therefore, determines the behaviour of the individual. Ontologically, it is argued that the existence of the social world is beyond the realm of imagination of the individual. The realist believes very fervently that the social world has an existence which is tangible with immutable structures and, therefore, is as hard as the natural world.

THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEBATE BETWEEN ANTI-POSITIVISM AND POSITIVISM IN SOCIAL ENQUIRY

The epistemology of anti-positivism argues that it is practically impossible to establish regularities and search for general laws which could be used in defining, explaining and interpreting the social world. It is the view of the anti-positivist that the social world is highly relativistic, and, therefore, 'can only be understood from the point of view of the individuals who are directly involved in the activities which are to be studied'. Anti-positivists completely reject the notion of the 'observer', which dominates the epistemology of the positivist. Anti-positivists do not believe in the argument that those who observe situations and other social activities are better disposed towards understanding and explaining these activities. Anti-positivists argue that it is only possible to 'understand' social action or human activities if we put ourselves in the place of those individuals whose activities we are attempting to understand, while they are in action. They believe that we can only understand human activities from the 'inside' rather than the 'outside'. Anti-positivists do not believe that science can generate any form of objective knowledge.

Positivists, on the other hand, attempt to understand and interpret the social world by trying to establish regularities and general laws. Positivists themselves may differ in essentials and details in their search for regularities and establishment of general laws, but they are all in agreement as to how knowledge grows over time. They all see knowledge as a cumulative process. Knowledge to them is like mental bricklaying. Any time a new 'block' of knowledge is laid, the tendency is that the old

knowledge becomes obsolete. It is, therefore, important to tear down the old knowledge and allow the new stock of knowledge to assume its proper place. Positivist scholars believe in experimenting in their environments as a natural step towards establishing objective reality in the social world.

THE DEBATE BETWEEN VOLUNTARISM AND DETERMINISM AS MODELS OF HUMAN NATURE

There have been rival claims between positivists and anti-positivists as to the correct model of human nature in social scientific theory. The debate has rested on two extremes of a continuum, each group holding very fast to its claims of the proper model of human nature in social analysis. On one extreme are positivists, who hold a determinist view, arguing that man and his activities are determined by the situation in which he finds himself or the environment in which he exists and transacts. On the opposite end of the continuum we have those who maintain a voluntaristic position, arguing that man is completely autonomous and free-willed. For management or social science theories to be imbibed and articulated by both determinists and voluntarists in an attempt to understand human nature they must adopt either of these two broad categories. But those who are unable to identify themselves with any one particular conceptual rubric should adopt a 'middle of the road' position by synthesizing the two extremes of a bipolar system to understand the correct nature of human beings. We shall discuss a possible point of convergence between positivism and relativism in understanding human nature later in this paper.

THE METHODOLOGICAL DEBATE BETWEEN IDEOGRAPHIC AND NOMOTHETIC THEORY IN SOCIAL RESEARCH

The ideographic methodology in social research is concerned with the argument that to understand the social world requires the researcher to obtain first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation. This requires the investigator to have very close contact with the background and life-history of the subject of investigation. The ideographic research methodology focuses on the analysis of the subjective information to be generated by the researcher. The information to be generated could be obtained by 'getting inside' the situation to be investigated and taking active part in the daily flow of activities. The researcher could analyse insights or information emanating from such encounters with one's subjects. This could be done through the analysis of information found in diaries, biographies, resumés and journalistic records. Blumer (1969), has argued that the ideographic research methodology emphasizes the relevance and usefulness of allowing 'one's subject unfold its nature and characteristics' while the investigation is going on.

The ideographic research methodology was highlighted earlier by Glasser and Strauss (1967) in their 'Grounded Theory' approach in

social research. Brown (1973) also discussed the concept of 'Grounded Theory' elaborately in his review of literature in respect of approaches to conducting research in management or social sciences. The 'Grounded Theory' approach highlights the fact that in all social scientific productions it is necessary for the researcher to collect as much information as possible, in view of the fact that the knowledge being sought for is 'grounded' in the data the researcher is able to collect. The 'Grounded Theory' approach has little or no favour for *a priori* hypotheses formulation and testing. It is a research approach which assumes that as the researcher analyses the research data, the answers being looked for shall emerge as findings. The 'Grounded Theory' approach therefore ignores hypotheses formulation and testing but encourages the use of research questions.

Two important variants of the ideographic research methodology which have become acceptable and popular in management sciences are the concepts of interactionism and ethnomethodology. Interactionism as a research approach was popularised by Weber (1949) and Mead (1938). Interactionism as management science research approach is concerned with the 'interpretation of meaning'. The researcher interacts with respondents who are likely to act or react to the researcher's questions and the researcher interprets the actions of the respondents by giving meaning to such actions.

The second variant of the ideographic research approach which is relevant and useful in management sciences is ethnomethodology. Ethnomethodology which is reminiscent of Garfinkel's (1967) work is concerned with interest in observing every-day practices of organisational or societal members. Based on these observations, ethnomethodologists make identifiable 'observable-reportable' behaviour patterns of organisational members. Ethnomethodologists, according to Silverman (1985) 'are not concerned with what they are doing'. Ethnomethodologists, because of their interest in what people are doing, are able to observe and report social behaviour in organisations and at the wider level of society. Ethnomethodologists differ somewhat in their method of enquiry from interactionist scholars, but share a common view that proper description is in itself explanatory, part of 'a naturalistic observational discipline that can . . . deal with the details of social action(s) rigorously, empirically and formally', (Schegloff and Sacks, 1974:233). Other scholars, Cuff and Payne (1979), whose research lie within the rubric of interactionist-ethnomethodological approach lie within the rubric of interactionist-ethnomethodological perspective have vividly established the tissue of connection between description and explanation within ethnomethodology. They therefore, argue that :

> Instead of trying to produce 'deductive causal explanations' (Popper) or sets of law-like propositions, they aim to produce descriptions. These descriptions concern methods members use to accomplish the world for what it is. In the description and analysis of those

methods, ethnomethodologists, like other social scientists, are attempting to generalise about social life. In their case, these generalisations are about the sort of 'apparatus' the 'sense assembly equipment', that human beings use to construct and sustain their everyday lives (1979:178).

Another aspect of the ideographic research tradition which has important theoretical taste and value to the management scientist is the concept of ethnography found in cognitive anthropology. Ethnography, according to Silverman (1985) in sociological orthodoxy is concerned with 'methods for describing interactional particulars', which the sociologist would also refer to as 'participant observation' in social research. Halfpenny (1979) found a great deal of value in ethnography which is widely used in cognitive anthropology by researchers, and argues that the approach involves 'grasping and comprehending the culturally appropriate concepts through which (actors) . . . conduct their social life. Because culture has an important role to play in management sciences, Ahiauzu (1987) has in the past used ethnographic approach in investigating human activities in African organisations. Ethnographic research approach involves a situation where the researcher takes active part in activities involving the phenomenon under investigation. While actively participating in the group, the researcher is also observing, grasping and comprehending those aspects of a people's culture which influences the behaviour of group members in organisations. Although this approach is relatively new in mainstream management science investigations but it has a fairly long historical tradition in cognitive anthropology and interactionist sociology. Since management science principles are essentially derived from both anthropological and sociological theory, it follows therefore, that what is new is the practice and what is not new is the theory.

The second major strand of the debate is the use of nomothetic methodology in conducting research in management sciences. The nomothetic approach to social enquiry lays a great deal of premium on the application of scientific techniques in the analysis and interpretation of data. The nomothetic approach to conducting research in management sciences, according to Burrel and Morgan (1979) places great emphasis 'on the importance of basing research upon systematic protocol and technique'. The nomothetic approach adopts techniques and methods characteristic of the natural sciences. It subjects all data to the crucible and rigours of scientific examination, which has as its focus the process of formulation and testing of hypotheses. The major tool of analysis in the nomothetic approach to conducting research in management sciences is the use of quantitative techniques. The specific research instruments used in the nomothetic approach are surveys, questionnaires, personality tests and other standardized instruments.

The specific research instruments mentioned above form the basis of

the nomothetic methodology in management sciences. These instruments are essentially statistical in character. The techniques that are relevant in analysing and interpreting social reality in management sciences are the non-parametric statistics. Other aspects of the nomothetic approach which are relevant in conducting research in management sciences is the use of operations-research techniques. A fundamental feature of the use of scientific techniques in conducting research in management sciences 'is its ideal of objectivity'. A kind of ideal which subjects scientific knowledge to objective and impartial tests. The nomothetic methodology in conducting research in management sciences relies in explaining social phenomena via scientific experimentation. Scientism is the ideological preoccupation of the researcher who adopts the nomothetic methodology in conducting research in management sciences. The analysis and interpretation of all social phenomena is based on the principles of science.

THE SUBJECTIVIST–OBJECTIVIST DEBATE IN CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN MANAGEMENT SCIENCES: THE NEED FOR A CONVERGENCE THESIS

Both anti-positivists and positivists have the common goal of analysing and interpreting social phenomena. They both have different ways of attempting to achieve the same goal—the issue is not that of goal-setting but the problem is how to get to the goal. The process of attempting to get to the goal is where the argument begins to tilt towards the two polarities.

If we examine the rival claims made by anti-positivists and positivists in their analysis and interpretation of social phenomena based on different ontologies, epistemologies, models of human nature, and methodologies, the view has been powerfully articulated that they are competing approaches in social research. While anti-positivists have argued that their approach to the analysis and interpretation of the social world is the only viable option open to the researcher, positivists have strongly condemned this claim, arguing that it is 'fatally wrong' to compare two approaches that are entirely different.

The wide polarity created by anti-positivists and positivists in their attempt to understand the social world has caused a great deal of concern among scholars. Dilthey (1976) has therefore made some effort through the use of hermeneutics to establish some form of conceptual mediation and modulation between two competing polarities in social research. According to Burrel and Morgan (1979), 'Hermeneutics is concerned with interpreting and understanding the products of the human mind which characterize the social world', (p. 236). It is Dilthey's thinking that over time, human beings 'externalise the internal processes of their minds through the creation of cultural artefacts which attain an objective character'. Such cultural artefacts could be exemplified and typified in the form of 'institutions, works of arts, literature, languages, religions'

and other forms of characterizations of human thought. Other scholars (such as Weber, 1949; Hughes, 1958; Runciman, 1972) have also shown great concern as to how best to reduce the gap between the rival claims of anti-positivists and positivists in their understanding of social reality. Johnnie (1991) in a rather philosophical discourse has argued that the boundary line between social constructionists (anti-positivists) and positivists in their analysis and interpretation of the social world cannot be stretched beyond a breakable limit. This is because the arguments of both groups are all poised on the same continuum. But the demarcating point is merely the method adopted by each group to get closer to the 'truth'. Since what is regarded as 'true' or 'false' in management sciences is still a matter of the theoretical and ideological persuasion of each researcher, it is difficult to conclude that one approach is superior to the other.

In an attempt to blur the contours of demarcation between the two research approaches adopted by anti-positivists and positivists, Bulmer (1984) has argued that any attempt to polarize the two dominant approaches results in 'reifying the distinction between them and implying that each may be a self-contained and alternative method of social enquiry'. He says this is not the true situation but the opposite of the truth. Bulmer goes further to argue that different styles of research complement each other; and that a combination of different approaches can be fruitfully exploited to the advantage of management or social scientists. The view expressed above had earlier been advanced by Anderson (1972) when he argued that there is a need to combine both qualitative and quantitative data in the analysis and interpretation of social phenomena. Using the same argument in sociological analysis, Coser (1984) has argued that sociology as a discipline is not sufficiently advanced 'to rely on precisely measurable variables'. He believes that qualitative data collected within a small universe could theoretically provide a lead, which at a later stage in the development of the discipline could be subjected to the rigours of statistical analysis.

In another stimulating discourse, Sieber (1973) has highlighted the danger inherent in treating different research approaches as alternatives. Sieber has therefore advocated that it is likely to be more fruitful to combine different approaches within a single study. Sieber goes on to argue that:

> The integration of research techniques within a single project opens up enormous opportunities for mutual advantage in each of the three major phases—design, data collection and analysis. These mutual benefits are not merely quantitative . . . but qualitative as well—one could almost say that a new style of research is born of the marriage of survey and field work methodology.

The argument presented above by Sieber is also supported by Warwick

(1983) where the importance of 'methodological marriages' was stressed. Warwick has insisted that it is important to adopt different approaches or styles, as the weaknesses of one approach may be counterbalanced by the other.

EPILOGUE

There is no one best method or approach to be adopted in social research. The approach should depend on the individual researcher, the unit of analysis, the research design and the context in which the study is to be carried out. Zelditch (1962) had demonstrated that there were several routes to obtain different types of information. Zelditch, therefore, went on to argue that:

> Frequency distribution might best be obtained by enumerators and samples, but incidents and histories are illuminatingly studied by direct observation and institutionalized norms and statutes by interviewing informants.

There is therefore, no one 'best' method or approach in conducting research in management sciences. The best approach almost always is a function of the background of the researcher, the researcher's ideological persuasion, the contextual factors militating in favour or against the researcher and the nature of the phenomena under investigation. The adoption of a combination of the different research approaches is likely to lead scholars in the management sciences closer to the 'truth'. But this does not mean that researchers in the management sciences should always adopt a combination of the two approaches simultaneously. Some studies may require a combination of both approaches, while others may require the adoption of a single research approach.

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The Marxian Treatment of Religion

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In his school final examination, Marx wrote an essay on 'a demonstration; according to St John's Gospel, Chapter 15, verses 1–14, of the reason, nature, necessity and effects of the union of believers with Christ' in which he expressed his reverence for humanity rather than for any 'exterior power'.[1] This same attitude of his towards religion recurs in the 'Foreword' to his doctoral dissertation dedicated to Ludwig von Westphalen whose 'sun-bright idealism' attracted Marx so much at that time that he realised that 'idealism is no figment of the imagination'.[2]

> Philosophy, as long as a drop of blood shall pulse in its world-subduing and absolutely free heart, will never grow tired of answering its adversaries with the cry of Epicurus: 'Not the man who denies the gods worshipped by the multitude, but he who affirms of the gods what the multitude believes about them, is truly impious.'[3]

Whether Marx's anti-religious attitude had any causal connection with the change of religion in the Marx family (Marx's father was converted to Christianity from Judaism, when Marx was a boy) is a matter for enquiry to the psychologists.

Marx developed his notion of religion in his *Theses on Feuerbach*. Here, he agrees with Feuerbach that religion is the product of self-alienation, but criticizes Feuerbach for his non-cognizance of the fact that 'the "religious sentiment" is itself a *social product*, and that the abstract individual whom he analyses belongs in reality to a particular form of society.'[4] Marx's view of religion can, perhaps, be summarised in just two passages of his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law* :

> The basis of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion*, religion does not make man. Religion is the self-consciousness and self-esteem of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again. But *man* is no abstract being encamped outside the world. Man is *the world of man*, the state, the society. This state, this society, produce religion, an *inverted world-consciousness*, because they are in an *inverted world*. Religion is the general theory of the world, its

encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritualistic *point d' houneur*, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal source of consolation and justification. It is the *fantastic realisation* of the human essence because the *human essence* has no true reality. The struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against *the world* of which religion is the spiritual aroma.

Religious distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and also the *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people.[5]

Lenin dittoed Marx: 'Religion is the opium of the people.'[6] He further commented: 'Religion is the opium of the people—This dictum by Marx is the corner-stone of the whole Marxist outlook on religion.'[7] 'The deepest source of religious prejudice', Lenin declared in his speech at The All-Russia Congress of Working Women on 19 November, 1918, 'is poverty and ignorance; and that is the evil we have to combat.'[8]

Marx borrowed his epistemology from Hegel who said that everything of the world is partially true—we may add, *sub specie aeternitatis.* But the whole truth always belongs to the Absolute Idea. Everything is related to every other thing; nothing is isolated and complete in itself. Marx wants to say that the phenomenon of religion is related to (dependent upon) the economic phenomenon. But how to verify our notion? Marx adopts the theory of *praxis* with an attitude of partial obeisance to the Correspondence theory. For, he says that truth can be found 'comparing the notion with the actual situation',[9] but the comparing will require the 'criterion of practice'.[10] According to Marx, 'The essence of a thing expressed in a concept lies in the concrete system of its interaction with other things, in the system of objective conditions within which and through which it is what it is.'[11] If the concept corresponds with the objective conditions, then the concept is true or valid, otherwise not. Marx says that religion has its objective correlation in the capitalist society where the exploited class, being defeated in its life-struggle, appeals to an imaginary saviour which is God. In the capitalist society, the proletariat has either not found its essence or else has lost its essence. Before Marx and Engels, the Utopian socialists saw the proletariat only as a suffering mass—as 'a class in itself' and not as a 'class for itself'. Therefore, they could not see the essence of the proletariat. They could only see the 'empirically general' but not the 'theoretical expression of the empirical facts'. The isolated abstract member of the proletariat cannot recognise the theoretical expression of the empirical facts, and consequently finds himself abandoned in a hostile and overbearing, material and 'spiritual', social environment. Helpless as he is, he clinches at any imaginary super-power (God), only to deceive himself. For, the

more a labourer discharges his abstract labour in the capitalist society, the more he loses his concrete essence, humanity—he becomes dehumanised. No more can he orientate in the concrete; and so he takes shelter under the abstract God and propitiates Him for His beneficence. This abstract God is nothing but the notion of the combine of concrete bourgeois lords.

According to Lenin, the idea of God is the creation of men under the subjugation of other men and the violent nature. Interestingly, when Gorky somehow felt the necessity of the idea of God as a 'symbol of truth and justice, and as an inspiration for social justice and cohesion', Lenin snubbed him by saying that

> It is untrue that God is the complex of ideas which awaken and organise social feelings. That is Bogdanov *idealism*, which suppresses the material origin of ideas. God is (in history and in real life) first of all the complex of ideas generated by the brutish subjection of man both by external nature and by the class yoke—ideas which *consolidate* that subjection, *lull to sleep* the struggle.[12]

That is why Marx contends that man is debased by religion.[13] For instance, man is debased by Christianity, because it preaches cowardice[14] and the 'social principles of Christianity are sneaking and hypocritical. . . .'[15] But, in fact, Christianity is not always meek and humble; rather, sometimes it is aggressive and intolerant. For instance, in *Luke*, 19 and 27, we read: 'Bring hither mine enemies and slay them in my presence.' According to Marxism, Christianity preaches equality of all men in being born in the original sin and so Marx's charge against Christianity is that it metamorphoses free men into slaves and preaches forbearance with oppression. And thereby man is debased. But this charge is baseless as we have seen before.

Marx's conception of religion grew, perhaps, out of his perception of the three so-called world-religions.[16] (Christianity, Buddhism and Islam) and the so-called national or ethnic religions,[17] (Hinduism, Judalism, Confucianism, etc.) are out of his purview. So his criticisms of religion may not be applicable to these so-called national or ethnic religions which lay the utmost emphasis on morality than on religious performances. This welcome moral element of some religions escaped Marx's perception. Even such a staunch materialist as Feuerbach 'by no means wishes to abolish religion; he wants to perfect it'.[18] Further, Marx conceives of religion as something in which God is the hub. But this idea of religion is wrong, for there are religions where there is no unshakeable place for God. Buddhism, for instance, is one such religion.

Contrary to the pietistic belief that religion makes man out of the zoological individual, Marx says that religion is made by man, and not man by religion. But religion is not the creation of the individual man; rather religion is the expression of the spirit of nationality. This is why as

the nationality falls through, the consonant religion also meets the same fate. Religion is the spiritual expression, or, to wit, the philosophy of a nation. Marx writes:

> The Epicurean, Stoic or Sceptic philosophies were the religions of cultured Romans when Rome had reached the zenith of its development. That with the downfall of the ancient states their religions also disappeared requires no further explanation, for the 'true religion' of the ancients was the cult of their 'nationality', of their 'state'. It was not the downfall of the old religions that caused the downfall of the ancient states, but the downfall of the ancient states that caused the downfall of the old religions.[19]

Marx's equation between religion and nationality is not justified. We have not yet witnessed the rise and fall of nationalities side by side with the growth and decay of religions. It is true that somewhere and sometimes in the ancient world some nationalities upheld particular religions as the state religions (as even now it is the case sometimes); and it is also true that with the decay or destruction of the nation (or state), the prevalent religion lost royal patronage and was per force banished to the limbo. But that does not establish the claim of Marx that religion is the expression of a particular nation. The most that Marx can claim is that a particular religion may suit a certain nation. Further, Marx's view does not dovetail with his theory that God is the abstraction of the alien and exploiting forces of nature and society. In fact, it is very difficult to establish any causal connection between the material condition and the idea of God. If the exploiting and overbearing bourgeois masters are apotheosized by the proletariat, how then can we explain the fact that the bourgeoisie itself has an idea of God? Again, if a particular form of religion is the abstract reflection of a concrete material condition, how can different religions obtain in the same concrete reality? Further, Marx views God from the vantage point of economics only. This seems to be too simplistic and partial. In fact, we find such simplistic and partial hermeneutics of religion in other thinkers as well.

Krafft-Ebing, the noted psychologist, for example, finds a relationship between religious consciousness and sexual instinct:

> . . . we find that the sexual instinct, when disappointed and unappeased, frequently seeks and finds a substitute in religion. Even where psychopathological conditions are diagnosed beyond dispute, this relation between religions and sexual feelings can easily be established.[20]

But such theories are unacceptable simply because they are too simplistic in the pejorative sense of the term.

The whole of Marxism is posited on the podium of dialectics, such that if the latter gives way, the former necessarily falls through. The

phenomenon of religion also, according to Marx, falls within the scope of the ubiquitous dialectics. But B. Russell argues that Marx frequently but unnecessarily resorts to the dialectics. According to Russell, Marx could explain what he did 'without any reference to the dialectic'.[21] The present author has elsewhere shown how weak the foundation of the dialectic is.[22] Russell, though he admitted that the historical materialism of Marx 'contains very important elements of truth'[23] does not think that 'this applies to all niceties of culture'.[24] In his opinion, religion does not degrade man, as Marx complained, rather, the notion of the infinite instilled by religion, enlarges the human compass: 'In proportion, as the infinite grows strong in us, we live more completely the life of that one universal nature which embraces what is infinite in each of us.'[25] Interestingly, Alfred Meyer credited Marx for creating a new religion himself:

> However much its (Marxism's—SKS) proponents may denounce religion, Marxism as an ideology endeavours to satisfy all the religious urges in men, and the claim to be scientific can be seen as a necessary prerequisite in the modern age, without which men should not even be religious. Marxism is a doctrine of salvation and damnation, and some of the same fears and hopes which drew men into the fold of religions in the past now cause them to join this movement.[26]

And Russell at least partially agrees with Meyer: 'Marx professed himself an atheist, but retained a cosmic optimism which only theism could justify.'[27]

Marx, being influenced by Feuerbach, criticizes Hegel's view of religion by saying that the essence of theology is the transcendence of the human essence. By creating a god, man loses his human qualities: 'The more man attributes to God, the less he retains in himself.'[28] But our knowledge of the great religious personalities disproves this contention of Marx. However, Marx urges that 'philosophy should not start from God or the Absolute, nor even from being as predicate of the Absolute; philosophy had to begin with the finite, the particular, the real, and acknowledge the primacy of the senses.'[29] Marx hoped that that would prevent us from being driven away from our moorings on our essence. But he was wrong because he could perceive only man's finitude and not also the craving for the infinite in the human heart. Therefore, whereas Hegel committed a blunder, in the Marxian sense, at the starting point, Marx started from the right point, again in the Marxian sense, but could not move even an inch forward away from the particular—the finite. Consequently, Marx saw only the base of man and not also his apex. Further, Marx argued that religion arose out of man's vast ignorance and his extreme helplessness. But D.M. Datta rightly argues that if, as according to Marx,

religion arises from the ignorance and helplessness of man, there is little hope that it will ever disappear. For, as Marx and Engels are honest enough to admit in different places, man's power of knowing the universe, in which he lives, is so limited and is so insignificant before the forces of nature, that ignorance and helplessness can never disappear.[30]

Marx h l olds for religion a place subordinate to the material condition of society. He says that religion is a superstructure based particularly on the economics of a particular moment of history and on the material relation of a particular society. Religion, rather, 'stands furthest away from material life and seems to be most alien to it'.[31] Therefore, religion is a superstition which stands in the way of man's realising himself—it works, says Marx, like opium on him. Nevertheless, religious injunctions roll down through the ages like snow-balls, for, as Engels put it, 'religion, once formed, always contains traditional material, just as in all ideological domains tradition forms a great conservative force'.[32] And, consequently, according to Marxism, as Lenin says, religion is essentially reactionary: '. . . even the most refined and best intentioned defence or justification of the idea of God is a justification of reaction.'[33] And, yet, Lenin forthwith raises a caution: 'This naturally does not mean that every religious person is a reactionary. Among believers there are many working men and progressives. . . .'[34] However, religion has rooted itself so deeply in the society that even if it is an illusion, the Marxians say that utmost care must be taken to uproot it. Lenin writes:

> Commenting in 1874 on the famous manifesto of the Blanquist fugitive Communards who were living in exile in London, Engels called their vociferous proclamation of war on religion a piece of stupidity, and stated that such a declaration of war was the best way to revive interest in religion and to prevent it from really dying out.[35]

Instead of waging war on religion, Engels, therefore, recommends that the proletariat should be organised and educated, implicitly in the historical and dialectical materialism which 'would lead to the dying out of religion'.[36] This 'seeming "moderation" ' of Marxism, Lenin writes, is but 'due to supposed "tactical" considerations' and for avoiding a 'r-r-revolutionary war on God'.[37] Marxists avoid confrontation with religion, but, still, the Marxist motto on religion is: " 'Down with religion and long live atheism; the dissemination of atheist views is our chief work!' "[38] Even after so much so against religion, the Marxists, once again, soften their stand on religious views. Thus Lenin, for one, writes: 'We demand that religion be held a private affair so far as the state is concerned. But by no means can we consider religion a private affair so far as our Party is concerned.'[39] The Marxian ambivalence towards religious consciousness peeps through here.

From the angle of science and philosophy, Marxism fires broadside against religion. It says that religion is not only anti-science, but also anti-philosophy; because, while philosophy appeals to reason, religion appeals to emotions. Further, '. . . religion is not against a particular system of philosophy, but against philosophy of all particular systems.'[40] Marxism here appears to be a bully, otherwise, for instance, how could we call Marxism a system of philosophy? However, Marxism, in its effort to be scientific, not only explains religion away, but also says that science and religion are incompatible—science is anti-religion and religion is anti-science. This is wrong. Science endeavours to understand the phenomenal world by disclosing the laws behind its workings. Religion, on the other hand, is concerned with the ideal relation between man and the universe—seen and unseen. Again, man is not only a rational being but also an emotional one. So arises the question of an emotional-rational relationship between man and man, and between man and the universe. All this demands a clear view of our fundamental ends, and our scheme of valuations. Stark science is ineffectual here. Albert Einstein writes: 'To make clear these fundamental ends and valuations, and to set them fast in the emotional life of the individual, seems to me precisely the most important function which religion has to perform in the social life of man.'[41] However, Einstein succinctly expresses the ideal relation between science and religion thus: '. . . science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.'[42] Einstein's perspective of religion is very wide and from this wide perspective, says Einstein,

> You will hardly find one among the profounder sort of scientific minds without a religious feeling of his own. . . . His [the scientist's—SKS] religious feeling takes the form of a rapturous amazement at the harmony of natural laws, which reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection.[43]

Marx's criticisms, certainly, cannot bite religion. Here S. Radhakrishnan is of the opinion that science and religion can be cooperative and complementary:

> Both religion and science affirm the unity of nature. The central assumption of science is the intuition of religion that nature is intelligible. When we study the process of nature we are impressed by their order and harmony and are led to a belief in the divine unity.[44]

Marx missed this complementarity and parallelism between science and religion.

Marx's main argument against (and fear of) religion is that it is a

powerful reactionary force, because 'Being an element of the superstructure, religion in an antagonistic class society seeks to reinforce the economic basis on which it rests, to strengthen the exploiting system.'[45] Lenin also writes in the same vein:'Marxism has always regarded all modern religions and churches, and each and every religious organisation, as instruments of bourgeois reaction that serve to defend exploitation and to befuddle the working class.'[46] However, all this debate, all these arguments, for and against, must lead us to the question: how far our experience on the practical plane has proved the theoretical assumptions and predictions of the Marxists regarding the religious consciousness? In his *Anti-Duhring*, Engels predicted that

> When society, by taking possession of all means of production and using them on a planned basis, has freed itself and all its members from the bondage in which they are now held by these means of production which they themselves have produced but which confront them as an irresistible alien force; when therefore man no longer merely proposes, but also disposes—only then will the last *alien force which is reflected in religion* vanish; and with it will also vanish the religious reflection itself, for the simple reason that then there will be *nothing left to reflect.* (italics mine)[47]

But the experience of the USSR for about seventy-five years does not establish this conviction of Engels. On the contrary, even in the 1977 Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the USSR, under Article 32, we find that religious freedom has been guaranteed to the citizens: 'Citizens of the USSR are guaranteed freedom of conscience, that is, the right to profess or not to profess any religion, and to conduct religious worship. . . .'[48] We may ask: in spite of vigorous communist propaganda, why have the Communist states not been able to eliminate religion from the soil? M. Mchedlor suggests two reasons: The presence of the religious customs and traditions bequeathed by forbears, and the attractiveness of the life beyond death. The second reason is perhaps more cogent. Mchedlor writes about it:

> Proclaiming the immortality of the soul, religion to a certain extent elevates man above other creatures, which a believer cannot but find attractive. By so doing, religion caters, even if in an illusory way, to man's striving to overcome the 'limitations' of his existence and his fear of death.[49]

Man's quest for the life after death is eternal and inalienable. If not for anything else, this single spectre-like unconscious quest for the life after death will, perhaps, be enough reason for religion to exist in this phenomenal world.

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DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS

Tradition and Modernity

We are publishing below the reply of Professor Frits Staal to the comments made by Pt. P.N. Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī, Pt. Sūryaprakāśa Śāstrī, Professor K.T.Pandurangi and Professor Rāmānuja Tattācārya, on his interpretation of *Dravya Tyāga* published in *JICPR*, Vol. VIII, No. 3.

I am honoured by the attention that traditional scholars have paid to the three paragraphs from pages 4 and 5 of my book *Agni*[1] that Professor Daya Krishna made available to them in Sanskrit translation.[2] In the following pages, I formulate reactions to this attention but I am afraid I must disappoint those who might have been looking forward to an entertaining fight. For the chief criticism made by all these scholars is entirely valid: I made a mistake and I apologize for misleading my readers. I was wrong in asserting that the *tyāga* formula of the Yajamāna expresses his renunciation from the *fruits* of the ritual. The truth is that he simply abandons, by that formula, the ownership of the substance of his oblation. My mistake was caused by the popularity of the doctrine of *karma-phala-tyāga* advocated by the Bhagavad Gītā in which the same term *tyāga* is used to abandon the *fruits* of an action. I am not remarking this because I imagine that pointing out that my mistake had a cause is a valid excuse. I am adding it because I agree with Professor Rāmānuja Tattācārya's final conclusion: 'There is thus an insuperable difference between the notion of giving up as held in the Gītā and that of the Mīmāṃsakas' (p. 126).

The mistake I made has nothing to do with the difference between Western and Indian, or traditional and modern scholars. This is demonstrated by the fact that it was pointed out or hinted at long ago by Harold Arnold and J.C. Heesterman. More recently, attention was drawn to it in a publication by Helmut Scharfe.[3]

As for the contradictions that developed between *nitya* 'obligatory' and *kāmya* 'optional' rites, I don't think I made a mistake. This is illustrated by the lack of agreement between the traditional scholars themselves. Pandit Remella Sūryaprakāśa Śāstrī writes (p. 123): '*Nitya karmas* are not performed out of any desire for a fruit.' Professor Rāmānuja Tattācārya writes (p. 125): 'Every *yajña* whether *nitya* or *kāmya* has a fruit assigned to it and it is performed for its fruits.' Pandit Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī twice invokes (Govinda) Bhagavatpāda according to whom one should 'give up the thought of performing *kāmya yajñas*' (pp. 121 and 123). But if an act is optional, one may or may not perform it and there should be no strings attached; if one is encouraged not to perform it, it is not truly optional.

Some other criticisms especially in the article by Pandit Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī need not be taken seriously because they are quibbles about words attributed to me that are taken out of context or misunderstood. Pandit Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī writes that according to me 'Śrauta Sūtras are works which formulate a definition of *yajña*,' when all I did is quote a well known definition from Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra. If the Pandit could have taken a single look at my book (which he could not, since he was not told whose paragraphs he was asked to comment on), he would have noticed that I not only refer frequently to the Śrauta Sūtras, but that the second volume of *Agni* contains almost 200 pages from the Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra which do not contain a single definition of *yajña*. He also says that I quote a sentence from the Veda which is not found there (p. 120)—but I did not say or think it did; that the seven *saṃsthā* are beyond my understanding (p. 121)—but I describe them in my book (Vol. I, pp. 40 sq., 598 sq.); that the *tyāga* formula is uttered at the same time as the *vaṣaṭkāra* and tossing of the *dravya* into the fire—an event to which I refer throughout; and that there are numerous other things I have missed—but I mention all the relevant ones in my book though not on the one page that was singled out for discussion.

There are also misunderstandings simply due to the translation of my English into Sanskrit. For example, my innocent reference to Mīmāṃsā as a 'ritualistic philosophy,' translated *yajñīyadarśanam*, led the Pandit to hold forth on Mīmāṃsā as a system of thought 'which considers categories such as substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), actions (*karma*) and universals (*sāmānya*) as *dharmas*. It is not confined to the purpose of propounding *yajña* alone as *dharma*' (p. 120). The term *dharma*, however, is used here in two different senses. Jaimini himself, for example in Mīmāṃsā Sūtra 3.1.12, when he uses the terms *dravya* and *guṇa*, does not refer to them by means of the *dharma* concept 'proper to Mīmāṃsā' as Ganganatha Jha described it.[4] Pandit Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī acknowledges this himself by reminding us of the fact that Mīmāṃsā is known as *Dharmaśāstra* (p. 120) where *dharma* is not understood in the general sense of a *padārtha* category but as *codanālakṣaṇo 'rthaḥ*, 'that which is indicated by the Vedas as conducive to the highest good' (Mīmāṃsā Sūtra 1.1.2).

Traditional (Indian) and modern (Indian or Western) scholars can learn much from each other provided they do not depend too heavily on the basic difference that distinguishes them from each other: to most traditional scholars, the Vedas are *apauruṣeya*, 'not of human origin'; to modern scholars, they are *pauruṣeya*, 'of human origin'. Modern scholars conceive of the Vedas as compositions by human beings who may be called *ṛṣis* but who were members of the semi-nomadic communities that entered India during the second millennium BC from the North West, probably over an extended period of time and in several waves. There are other distinctions between traditional and modern scholars but most of them can be derived from this basic difference.

One corollary is that, according to modern scholars, the Vedas, like other human compositions, are not inherently devoid of contradictions. This conflicts with the *samanvaya* or harmony between all Vedic statements that has had a long and venerable history in Indian thought. It is the corner-stone of he two Mīmāṃsā systems which interpret it differently (for the Uttara Mīmāṃsā, see Vedānta Sūtra 1.1.4: *tat tu samanvayāt* with its commentaries). It is difficult to agree with Pandit Remella Sūryaprakāśa Śāstrī that 'it is not difficult to establish harmony between all Vedic sentences' (p. 125) because there are numerous at least *apparent* contradictions and it would have to be shown, in each case, that they are apparent only and not *real*.

That there are *apparent* contradictions is accepted by the Mīmāṃsā Sūtra because it refers to Kautsa according to whom these contradictions are *real* (1.2.34–38, especially 36: *artha-vipratiṣedhāt* 'because there is contradiction in the meaning'). Kautsa gives several examples, e.g. *aśatrur indra jajñiṣe*, 'Indra, you are born without enemy!' (*Ṛg-Veda* 10.133.2; *Atharva-Veda* 20.95.3; *Sāma-Veda* 2.1152) and *śataṃ senā ajayat sākam indraḥ*, 'Indra conquered a hundred armies at once' (*Ṛg-Veda* 10.103.1; *Atharva-Veda* 19.13.2; *Sama-Veda* 2.1199; *Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā* 17.33; *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 4.6.4.1; *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* 2.10.4; 135.10; *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* 18.5). The Mīmāṃsā, the Nirukta and Sāyaṇa all rejected Kautsa's view, but from the point of view of the modern scholar, Kautsa was right; in fact, he demonstrates that critical scholarship of the modern type existed in ancient India also—a fact already apparent from other Vedāṅgas and Śāstras.

I have noted that modern scholars are not only Western, and would like to end this part of the discussion with a quotation from V.S. Ghate, who examined the *Ṛg-Veda* itself in order to find out whether any precursors of the later idea of *apauruṣeyatyam* can already be found in it. After quoting a variety of passages he concluded:

> How are we to reconcile all these various ideas present in the *Ṛg-Veda*? It is clear that some of the ancient *ṛṣis* entertained a belief, though, no doubt, indistinct and hesitating, in their own inspiration. This belief was not then suffered to die out in the minds of the later generations. On the contrary it grew up by degrees into a fixed persuasion that all the literary productions of these early sages had not only resulted from a supernatural impulse but were infallible, divine and even eternal.[5]

I think this is a balanced view and one may go on from there. Returning to the Mīmāṃsā, it is clear that it tries to reconcile the contradictions that are found in the Vedas and other differences that have crept in over time. I have no problem with Pandit Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī's assertion that Mīmāṃsā is 'an enterprise to arrive at the truth of *dharma* through a rational interpretation of the Vedic texts' (p. 120). It should be added, however,

that in other civilizations than the Indian we come across similar developments and ideas. The Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Koran are accepted as *apauruṣeya* by Jews, Christians, and Muslims, respectively. They all evolved theologies, in some respects not unlike the Mīmāṃsā, designed to prove it. To modern scholars, these books are *pauruṣeya* like the Vedas, and all attempts to remove contradictions from them have been in vain.

Everyone must agree with Pandit Remella Sūryaprakāśa Śāstrī's first sentence: 'In truth there is no inconsistency.' We can go one step further if we are willing to accept Śaṅkara's expression of a principle familiar to logicians all over the world: if different and mutually contradictory opinions are expressed, at most 'only one of them is right, the others are erroneous' (*teṣām ekam abhrāntaṃ bhrāntānītarāṇi: Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* 3.3.1). I would go one step further still, based not only on logic but on plausibility: if so many mutually contradictory views are claimed to be *apauruṣeya*, it must be a human tendency to make such extraordinary claims and if that is the case, it seems likely that *all* of them are false. To which I like to add a *practical* corollary inspired by past and present events: if we reject all such claims, the world would be a better and safer place to live in.

I have already referred to the contrast between the one page that was singled out for discussion and the remaining pages of *Agni*: in Volume I, there are 715 and in Volume II, 832, partly written by other contributors. Since not everyone has access to these volumes or time to go through them, I would like to explain briefly what I attempted to do there. First of all, the book is not about Mīmāṃsā. It is obvious that I am not a Mīmāṃsaka but I also do not claim to be an authority on that *darśana* though there are connections between it and what I am interested in. I accordingly invited such an authority, Paṇḍitarāja K. Bālasubrahmaṇya Śāstrī, to contribute to Volume II. He wrote, in Sanskrit, a contribution that was translated into English, edited by Professor James A. Santucci, and published under the title 'Agnicayana in the Mīmāṃsā' (pp. 178–192). Pandit Bālasubrahmaṇya Śāstrī explains in detail many of the things that are explained by Pandit Paṭṭābhirāma Śāstrī, for example, that building of the *uttaravedi* (which is obligatory) in the form of *cayana* is optional, that other constituent rites (e.g., the sixth layer, the offering of twelve cakes to Vaiśvānara, the *agnicid-vratas*, etc.) are *naimittika*, etc.

In regard to Mīmāṃsā, the Editor of our discussion, Professor Daya Krishna, expressed wonder in his introductory note:

Professor Staal knows a lot of traditional scholars in the field of *Mīmāṃsa*. In fact, the volume on *Agni* itself is supposed to have been produced in collaboration with Shri C.V. Somayajipad and Shri M. Itti Ravi Nambudiri. But one wonders if Professor Staal ever talked to these persons about his theory of sacrificial offering in the Vedic *yajña*.

Or, if he did so, what their opinion was (p. 115).

It is true, as the title page of Volume I of our publication says, that it was written 'in collaboration with C.V. Somayajipad and M. Itti Ravi Nambudiri.' Pages xxiii–xxiv of the *Preface* describes this collaboration in greater detail:

The 1975 performance was organized by Cherumukku Vaidikan and Itti Ravi Nambudiri. Their responsibilities and roles will become apparent in the course of this work. Our collaboration at the writing stage is easily described. The description of the performance in Part II of the present volume was written in drafts that were separately submitted to C.V. and Itti Ravi for their scrutiny. They then sent me their corrections and additions. Many of these exchanges took place through correspondence, but fortunately I have been able to sit at their feet again in the course of this work, and after the manuscript had begun to take shape. These sessions were not confined to the correction of what I had written. They induced me to reorganize the material so as to express its structure more clearly, and to incorporate new facts and insights. For example, . . . (etc.).

The page submitted for discussion to the three Pandits occurs in the 'General Introduction' (pp. 1–23), not in Part I ('The Agnicayana Ritual': pp. 27–189) or in Part II ('The 1975 Performance': pp. 193–697), the part to which C.V. and Itti Ravi contributed and which is the chief part of the entire publication. These two Nambudiri brahmins, however, were not Mīmāṃsakas; they were not even Pandits in any strict sense of the term although C.V. had studied Sanskrit from his family teacher and from a retired lecturer. *What they were first and foremost is practising ritualists.* Their knowledge of the ritual was not based upon the Mīmāṃsā or upon any of the Śrauta Sūtras familiar to scholars through their published editions. Certainly, there are Nambudiri Mīmāṃsakas and other great scholars in that community. Certainly, C.V. and Itti Ravi followed Baudhāyana Śāṅkhāyana and Jaiminīya. But C.V. learned the rituals from his father and Itti Ravi from his father and grandfather's brother; they practised the rites as part of their tradition which is almost entirely oral. In case of conflict between that tradition and the published texts of the Baudhāyana, Śāṅkhāyana or Jaiminīya Śrauta Sūtras, with which they were not on the whole familiar, they follow the former and not the latter. In publishing a book written with the fortunate assistance of these two living embodiments of tradition I attempted to demonstrate that there is such a living tradition and make it more widely accessible. The bulk of the book, therefore, is a description of the actual performance that took place in 1975 and not of the ritual as described in texts.

For the benefit of those who are interested in the texts, it may be added that the differences of the living Nambudiri tradition with Baudhāyana's and Śāṅkhāyana's texts as we know them are mostly minor; in the area of

the Sāmaveda, the differences with the Jaiminīya Śrauta Sūtra are somewhat more extensive. In order to enable scholars to study these differences in precise detail, the second volume of *Agni* provides Caland's text and a translation by Yasuke Ikari and Harold Arnold of Chapter X of the Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra as well as summaries and articles by E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma on the Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa (with numerous notes on the Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra) and by Asko Parpola on the Jaiminīya Śrauta Sūtra. On the significance, if any, of all of this I have commented in *Agni* and other publications and there is no need to repeat it here.

In conclusion, I would like to thank and applaud Professor Daya Krishna for his attempt to build a bridge and initiate a dialogue between 'current scholarship and classical learning' in the pages of the *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research.*

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Religion versus Militant Atheism

Rational (adj.), Devoid of all delusions save those of observation, experience and reflection.

Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

A proselytizing mission has been an aspect of the religious traditions of Europe and the Americas since at least the sixteenth century (to go only that far back). It is often forgotten, however, that atheism, too, has long pursued its own proselytizing agenda, directed towards tumbling the gods from their altars and setting up reason in their place. The motives animating this secular mission are (like those inspiring the religious one) many and varied. Not a few are deeply admirable, and urgently felt. God knows, religion has much blood, and oppression, to answer for. Though

to regard it as the sole source of hatred and cruelty in human life will not survive a moment's intelligence. Still, even while acknowledging that the springs of evil are more various than holy water, it is difficult to dismiss out of hand C.S. Lewis's assertion (recently recalled to us by Patrick Grant) that the worst bad men are religious bad men.[1] This is one of those remarks which, even if arguably false (unless we dilute the word 'religion' to the point of uselessness), bears so much truth as to be terrible in its truthfulness. This is so even when we hold up against it both the companion truth that many among the best good persons have been deeply religious persons, and the contrasting truth that Hitler, Stalin, and Idi Amin, to name only three recent worst men, were not noted for religious faith.

Atheism's assaults on religion have drawn on many strands of argument. The most central and recurring, however, has always been the appeal to reason itself. This move has struck more than one person (perhaps most notably Pascal) as rather like appealing to the dogmas of one's domestic gods in an address to convert strangers. But the idea at work in atheism's appeal is of the believer being (whatever else he or she is) a *rational* intelligence, entangled in ignorance and error. We have only to replace the ignorance with knowledge, while training the intelligence to recognize error, and—behold!—another son or daughter of the Enlightenment.

This long purposed strategy for conducting the warfare of reason against religion has had latent in it from the beginning the conclusion that any well-informed modern intelligence thoroughly practiced in rational argument must be proof against religious belief. He or she must be so, because he or she must be proof against such belief's *ir*rationality.

I propose to engage this conclusion in what follows. I shall do so by examining an argument to the conclusion advanced by Kai Nielsen in his recent book *God, Scepticism, and Modernity*, wherein he affirms that 'belief in God is irrational for a philosophically sophisticated and scientifically knowledgeable person in our cultural space, standing where we stand now in the twentieth century'.[2]

I

Two further formulations by Kai Nielsen of his thesis are that 'belief in God in our times is irrational for someone who has both a good philosophical and a good scientific education'[3] and that belief in God is not 'a live option for a reflective and concerned human being possessing a reasonable scientific and philosophical understanding of the world we live in'.[4]

However, the most preferable formulation in the book is this one: [I]f natural theology has been shown to be a non-starter, and if arguments of the sort I . . . make for the incoherence of God-talk are correct . . ., then, for the philosophically and scientifically trained who are in a position

readily to recognize this, it is unreasonable to believe in God.'[5] This statement of the thesis is preferable because it brings out what Nielsen himself calls attention to: that his thesis is 'a complicated hypothetical'.[6] *If* it has been shown that 'anthropomorphic God-talk results in false or very probably false truth claims', and *if* it has been established that '[non-anthropomorphic] God-talk is incoherent', and *if* Nielsen's 'account of rationality is approximately correct', *then*, 'it is irrational for someone in a good position to know th[ese things], to believe in God'.[7]

I shall begin by trying to make clearer what (as I understand it) Nielsen's thesis minimally commits him to.

<div align="center">II</div>

Suppose that ten years ago (to pick an arbitrary date), in the autumn of 1984, a person who is twenty-five years of age begins to study at a distinguished British or North American university. This person is a Christian, believing in God, and striving to live according to that belief. He or she first completes an honours degree in a natural science (physics, say, or microbiology), and then continues to study for a further two-year-period in order to complete an honours degree in philosophy. In the final year of philosophical study, this person follows a seminar class in the philosophy of religion, one of whose texts is Kai Nielsen's *God, Scepticism, and Modernity*. The teacher and students together work through Nielsen's arguments against natural theology and his arguments for the incoherence of non-anthropomorphic conceptions of God. Let us suppose that this scientifically knowledgeable person is not only able to follow and understand Nielsen's arguments. Let us suppose further that he or she finds Nielsen's arguments against natural theology persuasive and concludes that Nielsen establishes that the Christian conception of God involves claims (such as that God is a person yet infinite, creator of this temporal world yet eternal, in this world yet not of this world, and so on) which, when judged by the ordinary meanings of the words in question, cannot be made to cohere with one another. I take it that Nielsen's thesis must minimally be that this person cannot rationally continue to believe in God.

Whether this thesis is true or not must depend on at least two things: what is it to believe in God (meaning by 'God' in all that follows, for the sake of simplicity, the Christian God), and whether it can be rational to continue to believe in God if one is the person just described. If we make a mistake in understanding what it is to believe in God, we must make a mistake in judging whether it is rational for the person just described to continue to believe in God. Or, if we avoid a mistake in understanding belief in God, we might still make a mistake about the rationality of our hypothetical believer continuing to believe. In what remains of the essay I shall seek to set out briefly some difficulties I have with Kai Nielsen's thesis that involve both of these aspects of the matter.

<div align="center">III</div>

I commence with the more general issue of rationality. The basic question provoked by Nielsen's thesis is: when can we justifiably attribute irrational belief to another human being? (In certain circumstances we can attribute irrational belief to ourselves, but for simplicity's sake I shall attend only to the 'other person' case.) Nielsen's own answer to this question is as follows:

> A belief is irrational on my account if the person holding it, on the one hand, either knows or, standing where he stands, can reasonably be expected to know that the belief is either inconsistent, unintelligible, incoherent, or false. Or, on the other hand, the person has very good grounds for believing that belief is either inconsistent, unintelligible, incoherent, or false, or ... it is reasonable to expect . . . that someone standing where he stands would have readily available to him such grounds.[8]

Note the reference in this specification of irrational belief to where the believer 'stands', a reference that recalls Nielsen's statement in one of his thesis formulations that the religious believer who can be charged with irrational belief in God is the believer inhabiting 'our cultural space, standing where we stand now in the twentieth century'.[9] These references are important, because they reveal that Nielsen is conscious that we can only convict a person of irrational belief if the person *is acquainted with* and *accepts* those criteria by appeal to which certain facts or logical relations constitute 'very good grounds' for judging the belief unacceptable. It can only be irrational for a person to continue to believe something if this person is in a position to appreciate that, *judged by his or her own admitted criteria of knowledge and justified belief*, the strongest evidence and reasons tell against the belief. We might express this fact by saying that irrational belief is *culpable* just in the sense that it can only be irrational for a person to believe something where he or she *knows better, or should know better*.

This is, of course, what Nielsen judges is the case regarding our hypothetical believer. This believer cannot, according to Nielsen, rationally continue to believe in God because he or she accepts that anthropomorphic God-talk issues in falsehood or improbability and also accepts that non-anthropomorphic talk of God issues in claims which, when judged by the ordinary meanings of words, lack coherence.

Now as Nielsen's discussion proceeds it becomes clear that for him the most important issue is coherence. In pages 222–23 of his book he directly ties 'the coherence of the concept of God' to 'the legitimacy of belief in God'. It is, in Nielsen's view, our hypothetical believer's admission that the Christian conception of God is vulnerable to charges of incoherence that especially requires this believer to repudiate belief in God, on pain of being irrational if he or she continues to believe.

My first difficulty with Nielsen's thesis is that it seems to me that Nielsen presupposes that he and our hypothetical believer both accept that it is always a conclusive reason for disbelief if belief would involve one in claims that lack coherence. But do (or must) Christian believers accept this? Indeed, do even practitioners of science accept this?

Keeping first to Christian believers, don't believers distinguish importantly between belief in God and beliefs other than belief in God? And do they not openly insist that human beings cannot (during 'this life') expect ever to understand and explain the being and nature of God, for the reason that the God in whose existence they believe is a being whose nature transcends the known properties and possibilities of our observed world and universe? But is it not, then, open to believers always to insist that whatever lack of coherence is chargeable against the understanding human beings have reached of God cannot by itself constitute adequate reason to disbelieve, because these judgments of incoherence are grounded on our human knowledge of our observed world and universe? So long as the believer conceives of God as a being not limited by the properties of the humanly observed universe, why must incoherence claims that are erected on appeal to observed properties of this universe be accepted by the believer as conclusive grounds for disbelief?

If Nielsen should wish to object that this misses the point, which is that it is irrational to suppose the existence of a being answering to such a conception, because the conception lacks coherence, may the believer not reply that arguments from incoherence are among the weakest kind of argument, since they rest on what is presently judged to be known (*and so regarded as possible*) by human beings, and hence are always subject to being overturned by increased knowledge? Indeed—the believer may ask—isn't the history of science littered with discarded conceptions of 'the impossible', many of these replaced by theories and existence claims that even a hundred years ago would have been vehemently pronounced incoherent, such as that matter is energy, space is curved, time is relative, matter is opposed by anti-matter, continents move, there are black holes in space, and so on (up to and including the *very wild* theories and existents postulated by contemporary physics and cosmology)? May the believer not insist that 'incoherence' arguments enshrine existing human conceptions of reality in a way that even science should caution us not to?

Nielsen himself asserts, on page 231 of his book, that 'there is nothing in the very idea of accepting the authority of reason which requires that there can be no appeal to facts which are not empirical facts'. Yet on the very page before, in discussing sub-atomic particles, he emphatically states that he rejects 'any appeal to a reality transcending what we can empirically comprehend'—'any conception of there being any fact of the matter, any objects, relations or processes, that are not, even in principle, empirically accessible'. Indeed, he goes on directly to declare

that the expression 'empirical facts' is 'pleonastic': that 'all facts are empirical facts'.[10]

It is not clear to me how these remarks of Nielsen's own are to be made coherent with one another. But all I wish at this point to ask is: if the believer believes in God *before* becoming acquainted with Nielsen's arguments for the coherence of the Christian conception of God, why can't the believer *rationally discount* the implications of these arguments in the way I have suggested? Where is the *logical* necessity that he or she cease to believe?

IV

If Kai Nielsen should reply (as passages in his book suggest he might) that, in continuing to believe, our hypothetical believer lives according to concepts that do not *make sense*,[11] does this reply overlook that there are two different ways in which belief in God might make sense? It might make, or fail to make, coherent sense conceptually: it might invoke kinds of being and processes or relations that cannot (presently) be rendered intelligible or coherent with one another by appeal to empirically familiar and well-established phenomena. Or, belief in God might make sense in a different way: *it might prove to be effective practice.*

Imagine a human society possessing only a primitive technology and no science, who live by a simple type of agriculture. These people have the continuing objective of ensuring a good crop, and to achieve this, each autumn they strew some part of their harvest, and also fruits and leaves gathered from the forest, over their fields. These are left on the ground, and dug into the earth at the next planting. Let us suppose that these people follow this practice, not because they have an understanding of composting and harvesting, but because they conceive of the earth as their mother, and they wish to acknowledge this by offering up some part of what the earth yields them to the earth herself.

Because of organic processes of which these people have no knowledge, observance of this practice does increase or sustain crop yields. And so long as it does, it is rational for these people to follow this practice, despite the fact that they follow it for the wrong reasons. However, suppose there comes a time when (what causes it does not matter) these people cease to believe that the earth is their mother, and discontinue the practice. Crop yields now begin to decline. Responding to this fact, they go back to the old practice, but without its originating belief. We now have a 'black box' situation. These people follow a practice which it is rational for them to follow, though they are aware that the explanation of its efficacy is unknown to them.

Does this example not demonstrate that *a practice* can be rational, though it remains a mystery to its practitioners why it achieves their ends? (Do not some medical remedies rest on this basis even today?)

But why, then, can't belief in God make sense to our hypothetical believer, *because living according to this belief enables him, or her, to cope with living* —even as he or she cannot explain *how* living according to this belief '*blesses*' the one who does so? All the believer *knows* is that, in understanding and meeting life this way, he or she finds sense and beauty, and some inexplicable capacity denoted 'grace', in the midst of what otherwise can very easily seem (even, at times, to someone striving to live by this belief) an endlessly vulnerable, often ugly, deeply discouraging, and ultimately senseless human condition. In short, while openly acknowledging that belief in God is not explainable in any way that 'makes sense' by appeal to what are 'empirically accessible' phenomena, may not the believer, nevertheless, insist on his or her part that living in this way 'makes sense', despite this fact? But if a practice does make sense in this way to those who live by it, can't this be a rational ground for keeping to it, even in the face of *no coherent theoretical explanation* of how the practice is efficacious?

V

If Nielson should object that his stance is not open to our hypothetical believer, because it involves ignoring empirical or logical criteria of justified belief that this believer readily accepts in 'common-sense' or 'scientific' contexts[12] doesn't this objection make the mistake of treating 'belief in God' as if it were just one more belief among all the other beliefs of the believer? But is it?

While we employ the expressions 'believing' and 'belief' of religion, isn't there considerable evidence that 'believing' here refers to something importantly different from what we ordinarily mean by this expression in such contexts as courtrooms, gardening, after-dinner gossip, science, or automobile marketing? One philosopher who has argued this is Wittgenstein:

> Suppose that someone believed in the Last Judgment, and I don't, does this mean that *I believe the opposite of him,* just that *there won't be such a thing*? I would say: 'not at all, or not always'.[13]

That is to say, there is much more difference here between Wittgenstein and the believer than disagreement about a fact. (Unlike the situation where one of the two thinks there is a German aeroplane overhead and the other doesn't.) In the case of the religious believer: 'he has what you *might* call an *unshakeable* belief'.[14] He has, that is, 'belief' that is not shakeable by the production of contrary evidence or the exposure of incoherence. This is because his 'belief' in God is not *based* on evidence in the way that his beliefs about his children's preferences in books, his co-workers' reliability, or the comparable safety of driving with or without a seat belt, are. In other words, his 'belief' in God is not 'belief' as this

expression is usually employed. It was not acquired on the basis of evidence, and it is not continued on the basis of evidence. It is not belief that a God the believer has *perceived* exists, and has the qualities alleged. It is belief *in* a God that the believer has never perceived, but *trusts* and *hopes* and *keeps faith* with, despite his or her lacking anything that could be called *objectively established evidence.* Believing in God is most like *believing in a human being,* despite overwhelming evidence and accusations that the person is not as he or she claims to be.

It is this feature of belief in God that accounts for the unshakeableness of the believer's belief, which 'will show', as Wittgenstein observed, 'not by *reasoning* or appeal to *ordinary grounds* for belief, but rather by *regulating for* [everything] in *all* life'.[15]

In the remarks collected under the title *Culture and Value,* Wittgenstein underlines this while pointing to how belief in God functions epistemically in the believer's reasoning:

> It strikes me that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it is *belief,* it is really *a way of living,* or a way of *assessing* life. It is passionately seizing hold of *this* interpretation.[16]

Now a human being will find it hard to assess his or her own *basis of assessing* (because his or her own *basis for understanding and coping with*) life and all other experienced reality. One might bring out the implications of this fact by stating that, in a sense, there are no *non-religious* beliefs for the Christian believer. For the believer, all beliefs are religious, just in the sense that the believer regards God as the *ground* of all being and knowing, and interprets everything he or she experiences or encounters according to this grounding belief.

One might draw an analogy here (but only an analogy) with the conditions of knowledge. It is, I believe, now widely accepted that doubt cannot be 'free-floating' in the way the sceptic has often supposed. Doubt, too, *presupposes foundations,* just in the sense that doubt only has a purchase where something admittedly counts as knowing or justifiably believing—as having *no reason* to doubt. To try, in some cognitive context, to take doubt *into* the relevant foundations is (to use Wittgenstein's famous example) like trying to take measuring to standards of measure. One can't sensibly doubt that the meter rod in Paris is a meter long. The person who contrives to do this must either be appealing to some other putative standard of a meter, or must be supposing that the original meter rod has been destroyed and replaced by one of different length (which is the same thing).

Now as I understand *believing in* God, once someone believes (however this comes about), belief in God constitutes *the ground* from which everything else that is known and experienced is engaged and interpreted.

This is the *status* accorded the belief in the believer's life. (A status that constitutes the believer's own standard for assessing the firmness or waning of his or her '*faith*'.) This is the 'rock'—to recall that expressive word—on which the believer stands. It follows that the believer's word—on which the believer stands. It follows that the believer's impassioned *commitment* to *this* sense of the word disposes the believer to interpret whatever appears recalcitrant to belief in God according to what is warranted by this grounding belief itself. And so long as he or she can accomplish a reconciliation *within the terms of this grounding belief,* isn't it, then, rational for this person, *standing where he or she stands,* to do so? In other words, isn't it a mistake to think that our hypothetical believer *is* 'standing where [Kai Nielsen] stands now in the twentieth century'.[17]

Wittgenstein calls attention to the differences at issue here in the exchange:

> Suppose someone is ill and he says: 'This is a punishment', and I say: 'If I'm ill, I don't think of punishment at all'. If you say, 'Do you *believe* the opposite [of what he believes]?'—you can call it believing the opposite, but it is entirely different from what we would normally call *believing the opposite* [of what someone else believes].[18]

It is 'entirely different' because what we normally mean by 'believing the opposite' of what someone else believes involves both persons sharing the same criteria of explanation and judgment. Whereas:

> I think differently, in a *different way.* I say different things to myself. I have *different pictures.*
>
> It is this way: if someone said: 'Wittgenstein, you don't take illness as punishment, so what do you believe?'—I'd say: '*I* don't have any thoughts of punishment.'[19]

Now it bears stressing (given the way these and similar remarks by Wittgenstein have frequently been interpreted) that there is nothing in these passages that entails that persons who live by belief in God have their own impregnable and logically sealed off criteria of *truth.* The issue before us, remember, is not truth but *rationality.* In living according to belief in God, believers are not living according to—are not grounding the conduct of their life on—what are appropriately termed 'truth' and 'evidence'. But that does not mean (despite claims to the contrary by Dewi Phillips, Norman Malcolm, and others) that we who are non-believers cannot assess the beliefs and expectations of religious believers by the standards of truth and evidence. Of course we can. And the resulting judgement is the commonplace 'false' or 'improbable'. Nevertheless, that judgement and its accompanying argument is not likely to make much headway among those who are passionately claimed *and sustained* by this religious way of *making sense* of and *facing* life.

VI

However, there *is* a class of believer who is *more likely* than other believers to be dislodged from religious belief by continued exposure to such scrutiny of religious discourse as Nielsen practices. This is our hypothetical student believer. The reason is that such a person is more liable to become claimed by the Enlightenment commitment to living according to the empirically established truth and evidence. One reason why this is so is because this believer is (*ex hypothesi*) likely to live more and more apart from a community of shared religious belief, and more and more within a community of inquiry and critical judgement whose commitments and preoccupations make it much more difficult to keep religious belief alive in oneself. If Kai Nielsen were to replace his claim that it is irrational for such a believer to continue to believe with the different claim that it is more probable that such a believer will cease to believe, I, for one, would agree with him. But this, note, is a psychological and sociological thesis, not the logical thesis Nielsen adumbrates.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that what we have here is only increased probability, not a certainty. Nielsen conceives of the 'philosophically sophisticated and scientifically knowledgeable' believer as standing with him in that 'cultural space' and intellectual stance from which each can proceed to a 'dispassionate look at the facts'[20] and 'dispassionately deliberate'[21] about their implications. I have tried to suggest that this is exactly where *a believer in God* is not to be found. Belief in God involves what cognitive psychology calls (if anything is to be called) a 'hot' context, and it is, accordingly, the opposite of dispassionate belief. Nielsen, on the other hand, at least once in his book comes close to *defining* rationality (in the manner of Kant) as entailing 'a dispassionate . . . point of view'.[22]

My own understanding of 'believing in God' is that it is much more like reading and responding to a novel than it is like framing theory and practice according to dispassionate observation and investigation of the world. The believer *reads* the world in a certain way, and finds (or hopes to find) his or her deepest needs answered by doing so.

Such a 'reading' of the world is obviously easier, or more difficult, according to the historical, social, and individual circumstances of the believer. The difficulty of living religiously in modern times is aptly characterized by Wittgenstein in the closing pages of *Culture and Value:* 'An honest religious thinker' (by which I take Wittgenstein to mean a believer who does not actively seek to annul his or her intelligence) 'is like a tightrope walker. He looks almost as though he were walking on nothing but air. His support is the slenderest imaginable. And yet it really is possible to walk on it.'[23]

This strikes me as exactly right. And not only is it possible. There can

be a real and compelling point to it. If you ask me how I know this, my answer is: *I used to do it myself.*

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Patrick Grant, *Reading the New Testament*, W.B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1989, p. ix.
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3. Ibid., p. 3.
4. Ibid., p. 221.
5. Ibid., p. 3
6. Ibid., p. 3
7. Ibid., p. 246.
8. Ibid., p. 24–46,
9. Ibid., p. 239.
10. Ibid., p. 230.
11. Ibid., p. 222.
12. Ibid., p. 7ff.
13. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, edited by Cyril Barrett, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1966, p. 53. All italics in passages quoted from this work should be regarded as mine, even though some duplicate Wittgenstein's own emphases.
14. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Belief*, edited by Cyril Barett, op.cit., p. 54.
15. Ibid.
16. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, edited by G.H. Von Wright, translated by Peter Winch, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1980, p. 64e. All italics in passages quoted from this work should be regarded as mine, even though some duplicate Wittgenstein's own emphases.
17. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, edited by G.H. Von Wright, op.cit, p. 239.
18. Ibid., p. 55.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p. 213.
21. Ibid., p. 231.
22. Ibid., p. 235.
23. Ibid., p. 73e.

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God and the Crisis of Modernity

I

Rodger Beehler's response to my *God, Scepticism and Modernity* takes a sensitive Wittgensteinian turn.[1] I welcome this, principally because it does not see religion as essentially a theory but as a set of practices to which the religious believer (where the belief is authentic) is passionately

committed in her, not infrequently failing, struggle to make sense of her life.[2] No doubt that Wittgensteinian conception reflects a regimented and partially stipulative conception of a believer and of religion as well. There are believers and believers and conceptions of religion and conceptions of religion. But Wittgenstein, like Kierkegaard, was perfectly aware of that. He had the highest respect for some believers but he turned away from others with disdain. What Beehler talks about is the kind of believer who should be of interest to people who are reflective about religion. My beef with Beehler is over his characterization of the believer's situation, his characterization of the nature of religious belief and over Beehler's conception of religion and how it stands in relation to the rest of culture.

To try, as an initial gesture, to give something of what I have in mind and to show why I argue as I do in *God, Scepticism and Modernity*, I shall begin by commenting on the passage from Wittgenstein that Beehler approvingly cites right at the end of his essay:

> An honest religious thinker (by which I take Wittgenstein to mean a believer who does not actively seek to annul his or   her intelligence) is like a tightrope walker. He looks almost as though he were walking on nothing but air. His support is the slenderest imaginable. And yet it really is possible to walk on it.[3]

Beehler correctly, right at the beginning of his essay, articulates the underlying thesis of my book. I would like to re-express it in terms of the above citation from Wittgenstein and in doing so make evident where and in some measure why I take a different road than Beehler. In arguing about what I take to be the irrationality of having religious beliefs for certain people—I think for an increasingly large number of people—in the twentieth century situated in certain intellectually and often materially fortunate circumstances, I had in mind Wittgenstein's 'honest religious thinker': a thinker who won't and indeed can't crucify his intellect. Wittgenstein is exactly right in describing him as a tightrope walker. His support is the slenderest possible. What I seek to show is that in the case of the religious believer the rope will not in fact support him where he is clear-headed and nonevasive. If we remember our Pascal and Kierkegaard, and Beehler's argumentation as well, about practices and making sense of our lives, we will understand that reflective people, deeply caring about life, can come to feel, as Wittgenstein did, that there is a profound and compelling point to our lives and that religion is essential here.

What I shall try to make persuasive is that that point is not really the deep and compelling one they take it to be, both because

(1) there are adequate purely secular sources that yield sense to life, and

(2) that the religious beliefs and practices—belief-in being

dependent on belief-that—cannot sustain the tightrope walker for they are in reality without the requisite propositional content.

It is over this latter point where arguments for incoherence crucially enter. I am well aware that it is, as a matter of psychological fact, possible for such people to walk that tightrope. Both Beehler and I once did such tightrope walking ourselves. But I am, beyond any socio-psychological generalization, making the critical and normative comment that if people situated as we are think hard and can, as well, find the psychological resources within themselves to be nonevasive, they will, if my conceptual arguments for incoherence are roughly on the mark, come to find it irrational to believe in God. They will take it to be irrational to continue to accept those central religious beliefs. I am not saying that there are not, to accept those central religious beliefs. I am not saying that there are not, and in the predictable future will not be, some philosophers who will remain religious believers even in the face of such incoherencies. What I am saying is that it is irrational for them to do so or that at least in doing so they are operating with an irrational belief. But one should not forget here what I stressed in my book. Perfectly reasonable people can have some irrational beliefs. Indeed, in certain circumstances it may even be desirable to have irrational beliefs. I went out of my way to stress that I was not claiming religious believers were less rational than atheists or other religious sceptics but that belief in God for people so situated is irrational if the conditions I described, and Beehler repeats without critique, are satisfied.

That such tightrope walking *should* no longer be possible is something I argue. I do not just assert it. Even if my arguments are sound—something which in the case of philosophy is always problematic—I make no predictions about their success with believers. Beehler may be right in saying that they are not 'likely to make much headway among those who are passionately claimed and *sustained* by their religious way of making sense of and *facing* life.' What I am prepared to argue, and do argue, is that, if my arguments are sound, that they *should* make such headway. We not only should want to be people who live and relate to each other in certain ways and can find a sense in our lives but we should not want to annul our intelligence either. If my arguments are right, Kierkegaard is right, we cannot, standing where we are, have theistic commitments without annulling our intelligence (crucifying our intellects).

II

Beehler argues that I am mistaken in believing it is irrational for such twentieth century people to believe in God principally because I am mistaken in my understanding of what it is to believe in God, though I also, he would have it, have a mistaken conception of rationality and its import in such domains. Moreover, these two mistakes are linked, as

Beehler puts it, 'if we make a mistake in understanding what it is to believe in God, we must make a mistake in judging whether it is rational for the person just described to continue to believe in God.' Beehler, like various Wittgensteinian Fideists, thinks I have an overly intellectualist conception of what belief comes to in religion and what it is to be a religious believer. My central difficulties, he would have it, stem from my mistaken conception of what it is to believe in God.

Let us start with belief. Believers distinguish, Beehler maintains, in a way that I fail to note, between belief in God and other beliefs. After giving us an interesting little narrative to which I shall return, Beehler asks why, even if all the theoretical difficulties I allege obtain, can't belief in God make sense to the believer in spite of all that, 'because living according to this belief enables him or her to cope with living, even if he or she cannot explain *how* living, according to this belief, "blesses" the one who does so?' The believer doesn't understand how his conception of God makes sense—how he can speak of or conceptualize an infinite individual who is also a person, albeit a bodiless person, transcendent to the world yet acting in the world, an individual, without body, yet everywhere. Such talk utterly baffles him; he understandably can make no sense of it, yet he also knows that it is part of his practice of believing in God and that this practice has transformed his life. In spite of the intellectual impediments, he comes back to his recognition of how this belief, at least seemingly incoherent, enables him to cope with living. He can, on Beehler's account, make neither head nor tail of this strange God-talk about an infinite bodiless person transcendent to the universe, but he holds fast nonetheless to something that he does understand, namely that the practices that go with his sincerely avowing his belief in God sustain him in his entangled life. He knows that, in engaging in these practices, he says certain things in the context of acting in certain ways that he does not understand. Verbal formulae go with his acts of contrition, prayers, marrying, confirming, behaviour at funerals, and the like. They are human practices replete with various speech acts. He uses terms expressive of concepts carrying background beliefs, some of which he does not understand. What he knows—and Beehler seems to take this as sufficient for his belief not to be irrational—is that in understanding and meeting his life in this religious way, he 'finds sense and beauty, and some inexplicable capacity denoted "grace", in the midst of what otherwise can very easily seem . . . an endlessly vulnerable, often ugly, deeply discouraging, and ultimately senseless human condition.' In spite of all his intellectual difficulties with the very idea of God, his belief in God all the same makes sense of his entangled life.

Beehler then asks: 'If a practice does make sense in this way to those who live by it, can't this be a rational ground for keeping to it, even in the face of no coherent theoretical explanation of how the practice is efficacious?' Moreover, to realize how central such way-of-living-

considerations are to understanding what belief in God comes to, we need to recognize how very distinctive the conception of belief is when applied to theistic belief. Belief *in* God is central. 'Belief' here is not employed as it is usually employed. Belief, in 'belief in God', is not 'acquired on the basis of evidence, and it is not continued on the basis of evidence'. It is not the belief that God exists and has such and such attributes. Belief in God is trust in God, keeping faith with God, even in the face of not having anything that could be objectively called evidence for His existence. Believing in God is closely linked to faith and it is not unlike believing in a human being. Suppose, to illustrate, you have a very close friend. You will believe in that friend, that is, trust him. If he does things that appear to be contrary to what friendship requires you will, at least initially, discount them, give them a reading that does not conflict with the trust that obtains between friends. Say, to translate into the concrete, you hear that your friend has been badmouthing you, acting with disregard for you, breaking faith with you. In believing in him, that is in trusting him, you will discount those things, seek a different construal of them, sometimes 'despite overwhelming evidence and accusations that the person is not as he or she claims to be'. This is what believing in him comes to. Without behaviour like that there is no believing-in. Believing in God is like that, only rather pushed to the limit—some might say 'beyond the limit'. It is this feature, Beehler maintains, of 'belief-in', that accounts for the *unshakeableness* of the believer's belief.

Beehler cites Wittgenstein twice to capture what he takes to be the proper sense of belief here but he could as well have been citing Kierkegaard, their thoughts here are so close. The believer's belief, Wittgenstein tells us, shows itself in the way he lives his life and 'not by reasoning or appeal to *ordinary* grounds for belief, but rather by *regulating for* (everything) in all his life'.[4] Or again, Wittgenstein tells us, 'that a religious belief could only be something like a passionate commitment to a system of reference. Hence, although it is *belief*, it is really *a way of living*, or a way of assessing life. It is passionately seizing hold of this interpretation'.[5]

This is a rather poetic articulation of something that is close to the truth and an important truth-claim to make. I agree, that is, with Beehler that that is roughly what belief-*in* consists in when it is belief-in *God* and, while more accentuated, it plainly is in a family resemblance to 'belief-in' as applied to friends, comrades, partners and the like. But what Beehler utterly neglects (and this is philosophically crucial) is that 'belief-in' is logically dependent on 'belief-that'.[6] There can be no believing-in with friends, God, partners, or what not, without believing-that. There can be believing-that without believing-in but not the reverse. Suppose I believe in Gorbachev. That presupposes that I believe that Gorbachev exists—that I believe there is such a chap and that he has certain attributes. I could

not believe in Gorbachev without believing that Gorbachev exists and, for the latter, things like evidence are relevant. 'Belief', in this latter use, functions like 'belief' functions in my remark 'I believe that Port Angeles lies across the strait from Victoria'. Similarly there could be no believing in God without believing that God exists: that there is such a reality.

If believing that God exists is a very problematic conception through the groundlessness of our believing or through the incoherence of our conception of God, then that problematicity transfers to our believing-in. If believing that God exists is incoherent, as Norman Malcolm, for example, believes, then believing in God is also incoherent.[7]

Beehler's response might be that whatever we should say about 'belief-in'/'belief-that', it is the deed, action, life-orientation that sorts out religious believers from nonreligious believers. Whether someone believes in God shows itself in what she does, not in what she says or what she thinks can be coherently claimed about what there is. Some will go on and believe in spite of all the incoherencies (if incoherencies they be). They can be intellectually utterly at sea but believe all the same.

That I never denied. My inquiry is whether this is something that, everything considered, is the right thing for a person to do, is what a person should do, if she would keep faith with herself. My argument was that it is not. My argument, it should be noted, is actually a cumulative one and does not, *pace* Beehler, put all its eggs in one basket, though in *God, Scepticism and Modernity,* Beehler is certainly right in stressing, the emphasis was on incoherence. But this stress was against the following background, to wit what we might call lessons learned from the Enlightenment and its aftermath, with what Max Weber called the relentless disenchantment of the world. We have learned, if we are keyed into such a background, that there can be no direct awareness of God, that putative revelations are many and often conflicting, that there is no sound argument for the existence of God and that there is nothing that would count as a good evidential appeal for theistic beliefs. Moreover, the problem of evil is intractable, there is no grounding morality in the natural law (at least where this is understood theistically) or in the morality of Divine Commands.[8] But that is not a tragedy for there are numerous purely secular sources in virtue of which we can make sense of the moral life and our own lives more generally. Wittgenstein thought this Russell-like reaction was superficial but he did nothing at all to show that it was so. If God is dead it is simply false that nothing matters or nothing matters as deeply and profoundly as it does in a God-endowed world. Moreover, this is not at all undermined by immortality being all illusion, perhaps something that is as incoherent as I take the concept of God to be.[9]

We need to have a historical and cultural sense of what has at least arguably been established here or, at the very least, made persuasive, and not as philosophers who not infrequently do reinvent the wheel—always,

culturally speaking, trying to start from scratch. We need to see what difference the Enlightenment has made. Some Enlightenment thinkers principally gave us a new *Weltbild* but others, Hume and Kant paradigmatically, for example, did much more than that. Hume and Kant, with their devastating critiques of the proofs and evidences for the existence of God and Hume with his powerful dissection of the problem of evil, dealt natural theology a mortal blow and made very problematical what had hitherto been standard defenses of religion. Fideistic responses, of course, arose. Kant himself, we should remember, was a pietistic Christian. But culturally speaking we have moved farther down the road of disenchantment. We came to be more fully aware of the diversity of conflicting faiths and we came to see that morality did not require religion and that religion was not necessary to give sense to our lives. Religion became a more vulnerable thing and secular ways of looking at the world gained a stronger footing.

Of course, as a kind of rear guard action, there continues to be arguments purporting to prove or provide evidence for the existence of God, arguments that are ever more arcane and ever more concessive.[10] But these essentially defensive arguments fail to convince and there is a rather extensive agreement that Hume and Kant did the essential work here and what has been going on here in that domain since then is a mopping up operation, correcting here, refining there, meeting objections some place else. I tried to do a bit of that in my *Reason and Practice* and it has been done brilliantly and extensively by J.L. Mackie in his *The Miracle of Theism.*

Two problems remain outstanding, set in large measure by reflective and sophisticated versions of Fideism, including Wittgensteinian Fideism. First, there is the old claim, made even by some atheists, that life—the fullness of the moral life, a deep attuning to the world and a making sense of our lives—requires, as Wittgenstein thought, a religious orientation to be really adequate. Secondly, there is the claim that God-talk could be very obscure, full of paradox and what appears to be incoherencies, and yet in some mysterious way might still make sense. God-talk is distinctive, perhaps even *sui generis*, and necessarily mysterious. But when engaged in by the person who would enter into those language-games and forms of life in the right spirit, such illusive talk still makes rough sense in spite of the complete lack of evidence for the existence of God or even something like an even remotely plausible natural theology defense. This leaves, or seems to leave, conceptual space for the religious believer, as well as for the sceptic, the former being completely invulnerable to the critiques of 'empiricist or naturalistic philosophers' who do not really understand how religious language-games are played or what religious forms of life are like.[11]

Sometimes to this line of argument there is added the historicist thesis that what we have here is a clash between a secular orientation (with or

without a philosophical articulation). And a non-rationalistic religious one (with or without a philosophical articulation). But this is not a clash that can be reasoned out, the argument goes, for it is a conflict of unargued and indeed unarguable *Weltbilden* that deeply, and in different ways, inform lives, but nothing non-question begging can be said for one over the other.

God, Scepticism and Modernity, as well as other writings of mine, have been primarily directed at that very modern defence of religion. I have attacked the very idea of there being deep conflicting incommensurable framework beliefs that can only be subscribed to. Part, but only part, of my argument here has been the incoherence argument. If religious sentences of a crucial sort, e.g. 'God created the heavens and the earth' really are incoherent then there can only be the illusion of believing them, i.e. believing that they are true, for what is incoherent cannot be true and cannot be believed, for there is literally nothing to be believed or to be something with propositional content that can intelligibly be accepted. We can believe, perhaps mistakenly, that 'Mulroney talks faster than Clark' but not that 'Mulroney sleeps faster than Clark' any more than we can believe that procrastination drinks melancholy. Beehler fails to note this because he speaks in the religious case only of believing-in and neglects believing-that. But he also neglects the cumulative nature of my argument. Perhaps if alleged revelations were not so many and so conflicting and if we could not make adequate sense of life without religion, we could set aside the problems of incoherence as technical philosophical problems that we could hope to resolve sometime while continuing to be believers, remaining steadfast in our belief, because of the overwhelming need for God to ground morality and make sense of life. But if books like Richard Robinson's *An Atheist's Values* or my *Ethics without God* have shown that such Fideism is mistaken, then the core of the argument shifts to the part about incoherence.

I stressed the issue of incoherence in *God, Scepticism and Modernity* in the belief that, culturally and philosophically speaking, that is where we are in the state of play of reflectively coming to terms with religion. It was the part of the cumulative argument that needed stressing given our situation. But there is a logically independent point I also made and that needs remaking here. It is linked with the above mentioned historicist defense of Fideism. Even if my arguments about incoherence are fatally flawed and Wittgensteinian Fideist claims are well taken and we only have in such domains conflicting incommensurable, unarguable framework-beliefs and systems of action welling up from differing forms of life, this still would be devastating for Christianity, though less so for the Enlightenment which could perhaps survive a historicist turn, for it is Christianity that proclaims Christ as the Truth and the Way. (Her sister religions would be in similar trouble.)

So my arguments for incoherence belong to a larger scheme of

argumentative strategy or (put less scientistically) reflective examination of religion. They are not meant to have the decisive role that Beehler thinks I am claiming for them. They are, or so I would claim, at best a reasonably distinctive wave, in a large swelling sea of the understanding and critique of religion, growing out of the Enlightenment and slowly, I would argue, undermining reli-gious belief or at least the belief-systems and related ways of life of the traditional religions. The Enlightenment case—considerations and arguments—is cumulative and my incoherence arguments have a small but I believe tolerably important part in the whole. Indeed, even if they are mistaken, as such fellow atheists as J.L. Mackie and Wallace Matson believe, the Enlightenment case could be made from the evidential side and from the critique of revelation and morals' side, showing, as Mackie would put it, that theism is indeed a miracle. I persist in my way of putting things not because I am hubretic or foolish enough to think the Enlightenment case rests on it but because I believe that what I claim is a reasonable approximation of the truth: that is to say, because I really do think such beliefs are incoherent and that it is important to see that. Thus, even if it is correct, that arguments about incoherence are the weakest kind of arguments in such discussions, this is of no considerable moment for they are not being offered, as Beehler is of no considerable moment for they are not being offered, as Beehler believes, as a conclusive argument concerning the rationality of belief but only as part of a larger web of argument which *together* counts, and I believe reasonably decisively, against sticking with a religious orientation. Indeed, it makes an even stronger claim, namely the claim that belief in God is irrational for intellectuals placed as we are placed.

Beehler thinks it is very likely people so situated will not be able to keep religious belief alive. I think that claim is probably right, particularly if the people in question are secure and reasonably affluent. (Look, for example, at the ways the Scandinavian societies have gone and are going.) But I am concerned to argue, whether or not that factual claim is true, that this is the way that it is reasonable for them to go and the way that, everything considered, it is desirable for them to go. I am not principally concerned with educated guesses about how the *Weltgeist* will shift given affluence and security. My concern is through and through normative.

III

I want to turn now to Beehler's little story for it seems to me that when thought through it has implications quite different from those Beehler notes: implications which in fact (or so it seems to me) support my own arguments. Beehler deploys his narrative in an attempt to support his argument against my claim that religious believers of the non-simple sort I discuss live according to concepts that do not make sense. Beehler says that here I overlook the fact

that there are two different ways in which belief in God might make sense. It might make, or fail to make, coherent sense conceptually: it might invoke kinds of being and processes or relations that cannot be rendered intelligible or coherent with one another by appeal to empirically familiar and well-established phenomena. Or, belief in God might make sense in a different way: *it might prove to be effective practice.*

Beehler argues that a believer would *not* be irrational, indeed would be behaving quite reasonably, if, while acknowledging the incoherence of his belief in God, he continued to believe because he realized that belief yielded an effective practice. His narrative is designed to make this surprising claim persuasive.

He imagines a primitive society which, without realizing what they are doing, fertilize their fields effectively by strewing over their fields some part of their harvest each fall which they dig into their fields with the next planting. However, they do this without realizing that they are fertilizing and for quite different reasons than we would do such a thing. They believe that the earth is their mother and they 'acknowledge this by offering up some part of what the earth yields them to the earth herself'. But in fact what they do, though without that intention, sustains the land. Beehler remarks that as long as this fertilization technique works it is rational for them to engage in this practice though they follow it for the wrong reasons. He them makes the obvious analogy with religious belief.

So far Beehler has not managed to disagree with me for I argue that *sometimes* it is reasonable and desirable to act on an irrational belief. But I do argue as well that belief in God is irrational for people culturally located as we are and that, generally speaking, for people situated as we are situated now, there is no need to believe in God. It may sometimes be the case, *à la* Kierkegaard, that a person can succeed in crucifying his intellect and believe what he knows to be absurd, even incoherent. And he may be able to carry out actions—live in a certain way—beneficial to himself and perhaps to humanity, acting on those incoherent beliefs. It is at least *arguable* that in doing so he does something which is, everything considered, desirable. Similarly Beehler's hypothetical tribe has an incoherent belief in believing the earth is their mother. And at a certain stage in their enlightenment they would come to realize that belief is incoherent. But it still would be rational for them to continue to fertilize. But their belief that the earth was their mother would still be an irrational belief. When they, realizing the senselessness of their belief that the earth is their mother, cease composting, they make, however under-standable, a mistake. And if they do stop fertilizing it is rational for them, when they see the effect, to return to composting *without* the originating belief. That incoherent belief does no work. We are to suppose that they still do not know *why* what we call composting is so effective. But experience has

taught them *that* it is effective. They now spread some of the harvest and dig it in knowing that this is effective—crop yields increase—without their knowing why. So proceeding is perfectly rational.

It is, however, a mistake to describe what goes on through these changes, as Beehler does, as the same practice. First there was the ritual practice of making offerings to Mother Earth. Later, when they see it is incoherent to believe the earth is their mother, they abandon their ritual practice. Still later, after some years of declining crops, they return to a practice related to the old practice but still distinct in no longer being a ritual practice, namely, to the practice of plowing part of their harvest back into the earth each year *because it increases crop yield.* That is their quite distinct reason for doing what they can do—a reason completely different from the old ritual reason. Note that with this changed rationale the practice has changed. It is no longer a ritual practice. The change is similar to a change where people who first will not eat pork because in some holy writ it is forbidden, later come not to eat pork simply because they see that eating it is somewhat dangerous if not cooked properly, though still not knowing why it is dangerous. Not knowing the causal mechanisms that make it dangerous, they simply know that, not infrequently, people get sick when they eat pork. But their practice of not eating pork is no longer a ritual practice but a purely secular one with an utterly different rationale. But the Christian practice related to belief in God cannot similarly dispense with belief-in God and remain that Christian practice, though surely that practice is not just the holding of certain beliefs, among them the belief that God exists and has certain characteristics. Still that at least putatively cognitive belief is nonetheless an essential part of it. In the pork case and the fertilizing case, the incoherent belief is dropped and a different practice develops, though historically related to the old practice. There is with those new practices (field composting and non-eating of pork) no requirement to crucify your intellect and believe something incoherent but in the Christian practice the incoherent belief is essentially tied to the practice. There is no persisting in the Christian practice without the incoherent belief.

There then arises a standard problem of whether, given a clear recognition of the incoherence of a belief central to the practice—to wit that God actually exists—whether the practice could, in fact, continue to be effective. And secondly, even if it could, would it, everything considered, continue to be desirable to persist in the practice given that is requires one to believe in that which one knows to be incoherent. We, as Beehler stresses, Wittgenstein stresses, do not want to crucify our intellects either. So we do not have a case like the pork case or the fertilizing case where we, without incoherent beliefs, operate with a practice which we see achieves our ends without knowing why. Such a practice is a practice that is quite reasonable to follow. But to continue to follow a practice with incoherent beliefs is an altogether different matter. It is continuing such

a practice that is irrational for a person to do if she understand what she is doing. Still, Beehler might reply, isn't there this much left in common between his primitives' practice and the Christian practice, namely that in each case the practice enables them to cope with living?

It is here that the cumulative nature of my argument becomes important. The argument for incoherence, as we have seen, does not stand by itself in my argumentative strategy. The believer says 'My belief is incoherent but it enables me to cope'. I reply—and here the analogy is carried out with the composting people—'But you can cope without your religious beliefs and distinctively religious practices and just as well and indeed perhaps even better without the need to crucify your intellect.' If that claim is well taken, the persuasiveness of the believer's 'needing to cope' argument has been undermined for he is no longer in the desperate Kierkegaardian predicament of needing to choose between crucifying his intellect and suffering sickness unto death. To persist in the religious practices when there are equally adequate purely secular practices for coping is not a rational way of living.

IV

Beehler makes an independent argument against incoherence arguments that clearly merits discussion. Beehler maintains, 'arguments from incoherences are among the weakest kind of argument, since they rest on what is presently judged to be known (*and so regarded as possible*), and hence are always subject to being overturned by increased knowledge'. The history of science, he goes on to remark, is littered with claims that once were confidently claimed to be incoherent but now are parts of established science. Beehler's examples are: matter is energy, space is curved, time is relative, matter is opposed by anti-matter, continents move, and there are black holes in space. At one time anyone who claimed that continents move or space is curved, or indeed any of these claims would have been taken to be saying something incoherent. Yet today we have very good reasons to believe that such claims are at least approximately true. The believer seeing the fragility of these incoherence claims has good reason, Beehler maintains, not to be very disturbed by charges that some of her central claims are incoherent.

Beehler's argument has the merit of in effect stressing that we should not just look at sentences by themselves but at sentences as they are embedded in practices and in language-games and that we should keep firmly in mind the time and contexts in which these utterances were uttered. What is nonsense standing alone or without a context or sometimes without a new properly specifiable context is sometimes at least intelligible when so embedded. If in 1825 Simone, while living in Montreal, said that she talked to Nadine the previous night in Paris, she would have rightly been deemed to be saying something incoherent—and

to be plainly mad—but given the establishment of modern telecommunications such a remark is perfectly intelligible and thoroughly routine. There is a background that once supplied makes a remark that is incoherent without that background perfectly coherent. In the science cases, Beehler mentions, such a background has been supplied at least for knowledgeable people. It is perhaps easiest to see with 'continents move'. With the scantiest understanding of modern geology there will be a rough understanding of what is claimed and what counts for or against its truth. For someone with, in some instances, a rather considerable knowledge of modern physics the same thing is true for the other examples. Similar things should be said for claims that there are unconscious thoughts. What without Freud, and his context embedded examples and elucidations, sounds like a contradiction in terms is plainly not such a contradiction when we read them with even some rather minimal understanding of Freud. What in one context is incoherent can, not infrequently in a rather verificationist way, be given a context in which it becomes intelligible.

What I claim and argue in some detail in *God, Scepticism and Modernity*, and elsewhere, is that, in the very context of the cosmological-belief-embedded religious practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, certain cosmological beliefs crucial to these practices can be shown to be incoherent. We do not need to take them out of context and should not do so. In their standard contexts they can be seen to be incoherent. This is not the case with Beehler's scientific examples. Moreover, I look, with some considerable detail, at positivist (Hare and Braithwaite) and various Wittgensteinian and other revisionist (Penelhum, Hick, Crombie) attempts to supply a new or partially new context for such religious or theological beliefs. Sometimes these revisionists, like Beehler, just avoid entanglement with arcane religious beliefs—the cosmo-logical claims of religion—treating religious practices in effect positivistically as if they could exist without such beliefs or (more typically) as if such beliefs were inessential to them. At other times (D.Z. Phillips is a good example) they are in effect so reductionist about such beliefs that they are transformed into religiose sounding secular beliefs (religion becoming morality touched with emotion) or else (and more rarely) the beliefs are let to stand but the new background account doesn't succeed in rendering them coherent.

For these contentions of mine to be convincing we must case by case look at the detail of the particular accounts, something I do in *God, Scepticism and Modernity,* and, as well, carefully inspect the quality of my arguments concerning those accounts. But if my arguments are near to the mark (something Beehler doesn't challenge) then the at least *prima facie* incoherent religious beliefs have not been shown, as similar beliefs in the case of science have been shown, to be coherent by being placed in carefully articulated and broadly testable theories with their appropriate

practices. If in what Beehler calls the wilder areas of scientific cosmology, such conditions have not been met, it is perhaps wiser, *à la* Susan Stebbing and Stephen Toulmin, to remain skeptical about the coherence of such accounts. As Max Black argued years ago, 'science' is sometimes a contested honorific label. Not everything that gets labelled as science should be taken as such. Those philosophers given to metaphysical speculation are prone to be rather gullible here. (Wittgenstein had a good nose for that and debunked such 'scientific mythology' very well.)

V

Belief-in, as we have seen, presupposes belief-that. Religious belief cannot *just* consist in belief-in. It must as well consist in some believings-that. Both, as Beehler claims, following Wittgenstein, may be unshakeable beliefs. Beliefs-that, where centrally embedded, should, for good Quinean reasons, be *relatively* unshakeable. All sorts of things on the periphery should give way first. Similar things should be said for similarly situated beliefs-in and in addition a conceptual-cum-moral dimension enters for them. Beliefs-in involve trust and commitment, and being what they are, will not, and should not, easily be abandoned.

That all is unexceptionable and shows what centrally placed believings-in and believings-that should be. But if the beliefs—the believings-in and/or the believings-that—are taken to be so unshakeable that they will be held no matter what—against any evidence, any considerations of coherence or consistency, against any other considerations at all, including moral conside-rations—then they are *ideological* beliefs and being such they are beliefs which ought not to be held.[12] They are irrational beliefs for contemporary people fortunately placed with a good scientific and philosophical education. If his religious beliefs or key religious beliefs give him a passionately held system of reference regulating everything in his life such that he really has no non-religious beliefs since he, to use Beehler's phrasing, 'regards God as the *ground* of all being and knowing, and interprets everything he or she experiences or encounters according to this grounding belief', then, if his beliefs so encompass everything and stand no matter what, then they are ideological beliefs to be set aside by reflective, knowledgeable persons.[13] They are in a pejorative sense both ideological and metaphysical.

Following Wittgenstein, and against epistemological scepticism, Beehler is right in rejecting universal or global scepticism. Something must at a given time stand fast for doubt to be even possible. But he misses the Peircean fallibilist rendering of essentially the same point, namely that this does not at all mean or establish that anything—any one thing—can, let alone must, stand unshakeably fast. Anything, Peirce tells us, can be doubted but not everything can be doubted at once. Moreover, doubts should have the real context of taking place where there is

actually a blockage to inquiry. They should not be merely unreal methodological doubts; that is, not really doubts at all. But this does not at all mean that there are some unshakeable beliefs but only that in any given context some beliefs will stand fast though a new context can arise where those beliefs will in turn be questioned and so on *ad infinitum* for any belief you please. No single belief or set of beliefs need always stand fast, though some, of course, may *as a matter of contingent fact* always stand fast. This is fallibilism, incorporating Beehler's sound conceptual point within the reasonability of fallibilism, where no unshakeable beliefs are claimed or thought *à la* Collingwood to be unavoidable absolute presuppositions. There are no beliefs that must stand unshakeably fast for us, no matter what, though there are plenty of beliefs that we have no reason at all to doubt and that we have no reason to trouble our heads to try to doubt.

Beehler has a religious believer being a believer who believes that 'God constitutes *the* ground from which everything else that is known is engaged and interpreted.' If we take this at face value, many people, particularly in our times, taken to be religious believers and indeed sometimes serious religious believers, are not, in that way of looking at things, religious believers at all, for they will compartmentalize their beliefs, including their religious beliefs. They may be physicists or biologists or logicians—think of Alonzo Church or Saul Kripke—who take their beliefs in physics, biology or logic to be quite autonomous and apart from their religious beliefs. But be that as it may, if the religious believer is the pervasivist with the unshakeable beliefs Beehler attributes to him such that his 'impassioned commitment . . . disposes [him] to interpret whatever appears recalcitrant to belief in God according to what is warranted by this grounding belief itself,' then he is a person in the grip of an ideology, and, if philosophically and scientifically sophisticated, he is not only in the grip of an ideology, his belief is an irrational belief to boot. To stick with it diminishes his reasonability. It is not, *pace* Beehler, rational for a person so situated to continue to believe.

VI

Contemporary religious believers do not live, as Max Weber powerfully stressed, any more than the rest of us do, in hermetically sealed off religious communities free from what James Joyce called the wolves of disbelief. Our *Weltbild* is, as Beehler remarks, one increasingly claimed by the Enlightenment commitment to live according to empirically established truth and evidence. We, even when we are religious, do not live in communities of shared religious belief but live 'more and more within a community of inquiry and critical judgment. . . .' When I talk about standing where we are standing in the twentieth century, I mean we are in such a situation: the situation of the increasing disenchantment

of the world. Beehler grants that for people in such situations it is much more difficult to keep religious belief alive in themselves. Kierkegaard, agreeing, tries to make things even more difficult for the believer, for he thinks that only a religious belief that could stand such trial by fire would be worth much. But this leads him to extravagant Tertullian paradoxes. I argue that for someone so placed that he will have sound reasons for taking key religious beliefs to be incoherent and, given this belief, in turn dwelt on and taken to heart, and set against the cultural, including the scientific and philosophical understandings of our time, he should (a) reject religious beliefs as irrational, and (b) come to see that he need not do a Kierkegaard or Hamann and stick with them steadfastly all the same, for he does not really need them in facing life. We do not need them to make sense of our lives. We need more Russell and Feuerbach and less Wittgenstein and Kierkegaard here. To claim that, in that way lies superficiality, is just *parti pris*.

Belief in God indeed involves what cognitive psychology labels 'hot contexts' but some religious believers, as well as some religious sceptics (including some atheists), have been able to take, in a cool hour, a more dispassionate point of view, which indeed is linked with reasonability as the long drawn-out dialogue between belief and unbelief attests. Religion is indeed a way of living and responding to the world, so it certainly is not just a theory and practice running according to dispassionate observation and investigation of the world. Still that practice, in a way Beehler, like the Wittgensteinian Fideists, mistakenly neglects, involves cosmological beliefs as well which try to assert truth-claims. There dispassionate investigation and logical analysis are essential and cannot be set aside and it is there where religious beliefs seem at least to be deeply vulnerable. So vulnerable, I argue, that they ought to be rejected.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Rodger Beehler, 'Religion versus Militant Atheism', *Canadian Philosophical Association*, University of Victoria, Victoria, Canada, May 26, 1990. This was part of a symposium on my book *God, Scepticism, and Modernity*, Ottawa, University of Ottawa Press, 1989.
2. For good examples of a scientistic way of viewing religion see the essays by J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig in J.P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen, *Does God Exist?* Nashville, TN, Thomas Nelson, 1990). For a more religiously sensitive and utterly non-scientistic defense of Christian belief against criticisms of the sort that I raise, see Hendrik Hart's contributions in Hendrik Hart and Kai Nielsen, *Search for Community in a Withering Tradition*, Lanham University Press of America, Toronto, 1990.
3. Rodger Beehler, op. cit., Further citations from Beehler will be given in the text. See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1980, p. 73.
4. Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, p. 54.
5. Ibid., p. 64.
6. I.M. Crombie, 'The Possibility of Theological Statements' *Faith and Logic*, edited by

Basil Mitchell, Allen and Unwin, London, 1957, pp. 31–48.

7. Norman Malcolm argues that belief *that* God exists is radically problematic but that believe *in* God is not and that in this case belief-in does not, as is usually thought, presuppose belief-that. Norman Malcolm, 'Is it a Religious Belief that God Exists?', *Faith and the Philosophers,* edited by John Hick, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1962, pp. 167–96. I argue against this in my 'On Believing that God Exists', *Southern Journal of Philosophy,* 5, Fall 1967, pp. 31–42.

8. Of course from the Enlightenment on, arguments for this have been myriad. I have tried, as part of my cumulative argument, to argue for such considerations in my *Reason and Practice,* Harper and Row, New York, 1970; and my *Ethics Without God,* Buffalo, New York, Prometheus Books, 1989; and my 'The Meaning of Life', *The Meaning of Life,* edited by E.D. Klemke, Oxford University Press, New York, 1981.

9. Kai Nielsen, 'The Faces of Immortality', *Death and Afterlife,* edited by Stephen **T.** Davis, Macmillan, London, 1989, pp. 1–30.

10. See, for example, Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God,* Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1979; and William L. Rowe, *The Cosmological Argument,* Macmillan, New York, 1979. For a critique of such efforts, see Keith Parsons, *God and the Burden of Proof,* Prometheus Books, Buffalo, New York, 1989.

11. D.Z. Phillips, *Belief, Change, and Forms of Life,* Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1986.

12. Kai Nielsen, 'On Speaking of God', *Theoria* XXVII, 1962, pp. 110–37.

13. Kai Nielsen, 'Religion and Rationality', edited by Mostafa Faghfoury, *Analytical Philosophy of Religion in Canada,* University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, 1982, pp. 71–124.

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Hounding Heaven

Tell me *how* you are searching, and I will tell you *what* you are searching for.—WITTGENSTEIN

I wish to comment on three aspects of Kai Nielsen's response to my essay: his remarks on my agrarian society example, his characterization of my position as 'Wittgensteinian', and his reiteration of his irrationality thesis.

I begin with the imagined society living by primitive agriculture. It may help to recall the sentences in question. (In quoting them, I italicize the most relevant expressions.)

Imagine a human society possessing only a primitive technology and no science, who live by a simple type of agriculture. These people *have the continuing objective of ensuring a good crop,* and *to achieve this,* each autumn they strew some part of their harvest, and also fruits and leaves gathered from the forest, over their fields. These are left on the ground, and dug into the earth at the next planting. Let us suppose that these people follow this practice, not because

they have an understanding of composting and harvesting, but because they conceive of the earth as *their mother,* and they wish *to acknowledge* this by offering up some part of *what the earth yields them* to the earth herself.

I then supposed that a time comes when the members of this society no longer believe that the earth is their mother, and discontinue the practice. Crop yields begin to decline. Responding to this fact, the society goes back to the old practice, but without its originating belief. I asserted that these people now follow a practice which it is rational for them to follow, though they are aware that the explanation of the practice's efficacy is unknown to them.

Kai Nielsen twice states that I represent these people as doing what they do *without the intention of sustaining the land.*[1] This is true. The concepts of fertile as distinct from infertile soil are unknown to them. But it is important to note that these people do what they do with the intention of *sustaining themselves.* I expressly state that they do it with the intention of achieving a good crop.

It is also important to note that I distinguish, in the passage, between this people's *practice* of strewing some part of the harvest over the fields, and their *reasons for following* this practice. Their reason is that they conceive of the earth as their mother, and wish to elicit continuation of the earth's nurturing bounty by expressly acknowledging the earth's motherly provision for them, in the manner indicated. This distinction between a practice and persons' reasons for following the practice is commonplace. Two people may follow the practice of sending flowers to their parents on their parents' birthdays every year. But the reasons why each follows this practice may be very different. (One, say, has affection for her parents; the other invests prudently in maintaining the appearance of affection with a view to ensuring receipt of his expected substantial inheritance upon their deaths.) Still, in one very straightforward sense of the word, we have here the same practice, observed for very different reasons. One could multiply examples indefinitely. The practice of always observing the law is a familiar practice, commonly followed, but for differing reasons. So too is the practice of exercising daily.

In presenting my example I claimed that, given what these agrarian people know and could be expected to find out, so long as the practice followed by them is succeeded by what they seek from it (flourishing crops) it is rational for them to follow it, despite the fact that their reasons for observing it are not the reasons why it has the effect they seek. I then supposed that eventually (putting aside whatever causes it) these people cease to believe that the earth is their mother, and discontinue the practice. Crop yields declining, the community goes back to the old practice of strewing part of the harvest over the fields. However, they now do so with the awareness that why the practice has the effect it does is a

mystery to them. Where before this society *thought* it was known to them why the practice was efficacious, though it was not known to them, now they know that it is *not* known to them.

Nevertheless, I claimed, it is still rational for this people to renew the old practice, because it is rational for them to follow a practice that accomplishes the end they seek, despite the fact that explanation of how the practice works its effects is unknown to them.

Kai Nielsen objects that it is 'a mistake to describe what goes on through these changes . . . as the same practice'. In fact, as I have shown above, it is perfectly in order to describe what is going on here as renewed following of the old practice, but without the old belief that its efficacy is the work of Mother Earth. This makes what the society *does* in presently observing this practice importantly different from what the society was doing earlier (and doubtless that is what Kai Nielsen is concerned to say). Before the practice had religious meaning, *and now it may, or may not, have religious meaning*. (The example is opaque about that.) But it is still describable as the old practice.

When I first wrote the essay to which Kai Nielsen has responded, I included some sentences in which I drew attention to a certain parallel between this example and historical Christianity. But as the essay was written to be a symposium contribution, in which there was a time limit on presentations, in trimming the essay to fit the allotted time those sentences were among a number deleted. However, it may help to note here the parallel between the history of the people in the example and the movement, traceable among many Christian communities, from crudely anthropomorphic explanations of the efficacy of faith and prayer, to an account of these that is much more openly *agnostic* (if one may use the word) about how exactly these commitments and practices work the power they (allegedly) do.

In any case, the whole point of the example was to call attention to two things. The first is that there is a dimension to rationality that is grounded in what (to invoke a vocabulary Nielsen knows well) some might term *praxis*. As Hume (whom Nielsen is fond of enlisting on his side) rightly insisted, what it is rational for you to do is importantly connected to what you want. If you want *x*, and find that *y* promotes your getting it, even though you know that you fail to understand how *y* does promote it, then it is rational for you to observe *y*, provided only that, to your knowledge, there are no offsetting counterproductive consequences of pursuing *x* by means of *y*.

The second, related thing the example sought to call attention to is that efficacious practice constitutes one of the *dispositional* contexts in which human beings judge of beliefs and evidence. The more his or her religious way of life is experienced by the religious believer as giving *benefit*, enabling him or her (among other things) to cope with the difficulties and uncertainties of life, the more this person has reason to

discount or accommodate allegedly contrary facts or apparent inconsistencies to the full extent that the believer's tenets of belief allow such discounting or accommodation. And the fact is that sophisticated religious belief systems such as Christianity have a long history of sensitivity to the need to accommodate belief to experience, and have refined belief to the point where the believer is able (as the saying goes) to *explain* a very great many seemingly recalcitrant phenomena 'away'.

For it is false (what Kai Nielsen repeatedly implies) that I ignore how belief *in* God entails beliefs *about* God. Rather, I seek to focus attention on the fact that the believer's 'beliefs that god . . .' include the belief that God's being is a *mystery*, that his ways exceed the wisdom of human beings, that He is *to be trusted in*, not challenged to produce his credentials, that He is to be waited on faithfully, no matter what adversity befalls the believer, and so on. At the same time, I emphasize how believing in God is most like believing in a human being, and how this affects the way apparently inconsistent or recalcitrant 'belief that' claims are engaged by the believer. I try in the essay to suggest that the believer's epistemic posture is always to give first priority to reconciling the claims of belief against allegedly contrary facts or inconsistency, and that the believer is supported in this *both* by the affective commitment involved in 'believing in God' (to which I shall return) *and* by our wider rational procedure of reserving judgment when confronted by inconsistent but inconclusive data.

This was the point of my appeal to science. In science, the recognition of incoherence between established theory and new data or explanation claims need not prompt immediate repudiation of one or the other or both (still less of the enterprise 'science'). It may most reasonably prompt expectation of and search for new knowledge or understanding that will reconcile what at present appears as conflicting. Apparent incoherence with what is now held to be known does not automatically discredit contrary data or explanation claims. It provokes pursuit of and waiting upon further data and insight. (I speak ideally here. The treatment, to cite only one example, of Alfred Wegener and his proposal of continental drift shows that this is not, even in this century, always what happens.) As for Nielsen's attempt to discount my analogy with science by invoking Black, Stebbing, and Toulmin: what better deserves to be identified as 'science' than the *theoretical speculation* that *drives* not only laboratory experiment (including the search for instruments or procedures recognized as needed but not yet developed) but mathematical articulation, and *basic scientific conceptualization*?

In the same way (to pick up a related point) what better deserves the description 'religion'—or more compellingly constitutes what the philosopher has to explain—than the believer for whom belief is the foundation from which the whole of life is engaged? (—'The way', not one among several prudently compartmentalized 'ways'?) To hold

otherwise, either of science or religion, tends (in my judgment) toward confusion of the definitive thing with the routine, derivative, carefully ventured activities of scientific journeymen and Sunday morning Christians. Religious believers may be an extinct species. But that does not entitle the investigator to turn the argument on what remains.

Kai Nielsen continues to press his irrationality thesis (though now urging 'the cumulative nature' of his argument). But Nielsen continues, in my judgment, to pay too little attention to the way in which reasoning and action are always undertaken from within an epistemic and affective *perspective*. Agents judge and act from within a richly layered 'internal' and 'external' *context*.[2] When Nielsen, in his many writings, discusses questions of justice or ideology or historical change, he shows a ready sensitivity to this fact. Indeed, in many of his recent writings he vigorously subscribes to the *dicta* of these sentences by a contemporary philosopher:

> [W]e have no ahistorical, context-independent criteria of rationality, reasonableness, knowledge, goodness or truth [!] with which to construct a philosophical discipline that transcends history or to adumbrate a permanent, culture-transcendent, and impartial matrix for assessing all forms of inquiry and all types of knowledge. . . . Philosophy cannot be the overseer of culture, the adjudicator of knowledge-claims, and it cannot usher the sciences to their proper places and demarcate them from the rest of culture. It cannot—to put the matter very broadly—be the arbiter of culture, distinguishing between what is rational or reasonable and what is irrational or unreasonable to believe and do . . . . [P]hilosophers cannot tell us what makes our ideas really clear, what we really mean or what we are justified in believing. To make good the underlabourer [conception of philosophy] . . . [a] philosopher must be able to show us how we can distinguish clear ideas from unclear ones and to show us how we can distinguish sense from nonsense. But we have very good reasons indeed to believe that we philosophers cannot deliver the goods here . . . [that] we may not be able in general to say anything very enlightening about what meaning, truth, knowledge, belief or rationality is. . . .

The author of these sentences (and one could produce a good many like them from the same pen) is Kai Nielsen[3], and my own view (for what it is worth) is that there is a curious division in Nielsen's work between the sensitivity he shows to the contextuality of rational judgment and action (which I wish to distinguish importantly from truth) when he is engaged in social theory or metaphilosophy, and the sort of agenda he continues to press in philosophy of religion (and to some extent in metaethics). We find him in *God, Scepticism, and Modernity* laying down the law, left and right, about what can rationally be believed, what makes sense, what is indefensible nonsense, and so on—all the imperial 'foundationalist'

transgressions he delights in declaring *verboten* when, in the avowed company of Rorty and Habermas, he sweeps fiercely through the philosophical stables in a metaphilosophical mood. It is as if Nielsen (and this would be a very human condition!) still harboured frustrated 'foundationalist' passions, and unconsciously pours all of these into his discussions of, especially, religion, beating up on the 'irrational' believer, hounding him relentlessly, like some aggressively worrying sheepdog, toward the heroic positivist paddock of atheist 'tough-mindedness'. (Nietzsche would recognize this circumstance immediately.)

In any case, in respect of the issue before us, I am puzzled at Nielsen's repeatedly asserting in the course of his reply (2, 11, 19) that there can be a 'profound and compelling point to our lives' without religious belief—that religion is not 'essential' here. I, for one, nowhere in my essay (or anywhere else) allege the contrary. I do, in the essay, stress that whoever *finds* point and support in life *through* belief will be disposed—reasonably—to give this fact much weight in reckoning any challenge to belief: and that this place of belief in the believer's life *converges* with the other things pointed to by me to keep the believer (more often than not) rationally unmoved by arguments of the kind Nielsen urges. Nielsen more than once ties the idea that religion is essential to life's having meaning to Wittgenstein, and it appears that this may be one of the reasons he several times terms my own position 'Wittgensteinian'. In fact, while some early writings of Wittgenstein—especially on ethics—support this attribution of the idea to him, it is by no means obvious that the later writing does. In my view, it contains much to the contrary, including the late remark in *Culture and Value* : 'Man's greatest happiness is love'.[4]

As for Nielsen's designating my own remarks on religion as Wittgensteinian, I wish to resist it for several reasons. It is true that Wittgenstein is especially insightful about several features of religious belief. He is particularly alert to the way in which belief is a *response* by believers to a certain *conception* of the world. I have in mind such remarks as these from *Culture and Value* (emphases are mine):

> Christianity does not *rest* on historical *truth*; rather it offers us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not, believe this narrative with the belief appropriate to a historical narrative, rather: believe through thick and thin, which you can only do as a result of a life [i.e. of having a life to live]. Here you have a narrative, don't take the same attitude to it as you take to other historical narratives! Make a *quite different* place in your life for it.—There is nothing *paradoxical* about that!

> Queer as it sounds: The historical accounts in the Gospels might, historically speaking, be *demonstrably false*, and yet belief loses nothing by this: *not*, however, because it [belief] concerns 'universal truths

of reason'! [Truths, that is, which any person possessing reason must *a priori* rationally accept.] Rather, because historical proof (the historical proof game) is irrelevant to belief [in Jesus Christ as god]. This message (the Gospels) is seized on by men believingly (i.e. *lovingly*). *That* is the certainty characterizing *this* particular acceptance-as-belief, not something *else*. (32e)

Insightful as these remarks are, one comes upon the same insight in people earlier than Wittgenstein. Pascal is one; Kierkegaard (as Nielsen himself notes) another. Furthermore, not all the things Wittgenstein says about religion are right-headed or helpful (in my judgment). For example, in the second of the two passages quoted above, it goes too far to assert that 'historical proof' (i.e. evidence and testimony) are 'irrelevant' to believers' belief in Christ as God. We need to distinguish between all that disposes believers to believe and *what* they believe. Wittgenstein here overlooks this distinction.[5] Also, along with his early (and lingering) conviction that we must ground ethics in the 'transcendental' (against which I have argued at length in a book published a dozen years ago[6]), Wittgenstein is inclined at moments, even into the 1940s, to lapse into remarks that seem a wishful playing *at* belief that sits ill with the other things he says.[7]

But, putting these considerations aside, I primarily want to resist Nielsen's designation *on principle*. I think the whole practice of fastening labels like 'Wittgensteinian', 'Marxist', and so on, upon ideas and arguments, needs to be got rid of. It has (in my observation) two deleterious consequences. For those applying the label to someone else's theses or arguments the practice tends to close down thought. Pigeonholing a position works against *attending closely to and thinking intently about* what is before one. One reaches 'with automatic hand' and puts another *already reckoned* (one thinks) proposal into the out tray.

For the *self*-labeller, the tendency worked by the practice is the same. Enlisting oneself as an 'N-ian' or 'N-ist' (an engagement that Noam Chomsky has aptly noted the 'organized religion'—i.e. *sectarian*—parallel to[8]) constrains the self-labeller constantly to tailor and monitor his or her thinking for conformity to that of the 'master'. If anyone thinks this is nonsense, he or she may wish to reflect on these remarks by G.A. Cohen (one of the most intelligent human beings now or ever) in his Preface to his recent *History, Labour, and Freedom*[9], where, speaking of his earlier book on Marx's theory of history, Cohen declares:

> When I had finished the book, an unexpected thing happened. I came to feel, what I had not consciously anticipated when planning or writing it, that I had written the book in repayment for what I had received. It reflected gratitude to my parents [who had met in the course of struggle to build unionism in the garment trade in Montreal], to the school [run by a communist Jewish organization]

which had taught me, to the political community in which I was raised. It was my homage to the milieu in which I had learned the plain Marxism which the book defended. But, now that the book was written, the debt was paid, and I no longer felt obliged to adjust my thinking to that of Marx. I felt, for the first time, that I could think entirely for myself. I certainly did not forthwith stop believing what I had believed when I embarked upon the book, but I no longer experienced my commitment to those beliefs as an existential necessity.

These remarks bear thinking about.[10]

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Kai Nielsen, 'God and the Crisis of Modernity', this journal, this issue, pp. 130–47.
2. For further discussion see my 'Forms of Social Life: Introduction', *The Philosophy of Society*, edited by R. Beehler and A. R. Drengson, Methuen, London, 1978, pp. 3–11, especially pp. 8–10.
3. Kai Nielsen, 'Philosophy as Critical Theory', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Association*, 1987, Invited panel: The Future of Philosophy, Sixty-first Annual Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco, pp. 89–108, at pp. 95, 97. See also his "On Finding One's Feet in Philosophy: From Wittgenstein to Marx', published in *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 116, 1985, Presidential Address to the Canadian Philosophical Association, June 1984: pp. 1–11.
4. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value*, edited by G.H. Von Wright, translated by Peter Winch, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1980, p. 77e.
5. There is a connection here to the 'life having meaning' issue. It is an error (to which, among others, Feuerbach and Marx were prone) to think that because religious beliefs operate to console in the 'vale of tears', they obviously are illusory. This does not follow. If religious beliefs were known to be true they would *also* console. To show them to be false a quite different kind of argument is needed.
6. R. Beehler, *Moral Life*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1978, Chapter IX, pp. 203–14.
7. For example: God may say to me: 'I am judging you out of your own mouth. Your own actions have made you shudder with disgust when you have seen other people do them.' *Culture and Value*, p. 87e. See also the fourth remark on p. 86e.
8. Noam Chomsky in an interview with James Peck in *The Chomsky Reader*, edited by James Peck, Pantheon Books, New York, 1987, p. 29.
9. G.A. Cohen, *History, Labour, and Freedom*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, p. xi.
10. For further discussion see the Introduction and third chapter of my forthcoming book *Marx Against Marxism*.

Review Articles

What Chari attempts to do in this work is to develop a theory of *rasa* that applies specifically to imaginative literature *and* to show that the theory is cogent and meaningful in 'modern' terms: the terms of contemporary western critical, philosophical discourse, its categories, stances and modes of reasoning in the analytical positivistic tradition. Such a 'modern' is for him the only viable form of the truly universal—or as some people like put it more geographically—'global' discourse.

He shares this belief with many scholars who study Indian thought as Indologists. But some good Indologists, both Indian and western, have been recently engaged in trying to present Indian thought as meaningful *thought,* meaningful even today and not of mere historical interest. Chari is one of these. The effort of such Indologists seems, though, to lie more in translating Indian thought into a currently acceptable idiom of western concepts and modes of thinking rather than in presenting a true rival, an alternative discourse. Chari's attempt also appears to fall into this class.

One hopes that the destiny of all discourses other than the western is not to become just a river lost in the ocean of western thought. It may be that we are all fated to become a suburb of the 'global', 'universal' city of the west. But need we accept this palpably dubious thesis as true? If there is something worthwhile and distinct in Indian thought, its distinction should be critically, creatively, carried forward rather than merely translated in 'modern' terms. This, Chari, like other sympathetic Indological thinkers of his kind, who want to project Indian thought to 'modern' audiences, fails to do. Yet this is what, one feels, should be the real destiny of the rich tradition of Indian thought.

But let me come now to Chari's book. It presents itself as a champion of received *rasa*-theory, which it defends against rivals and translates ably into English intellectual idiom, seeking parallels in the thought of the west to demonstrate the universality of the theory and using illustrations from English *kāvya* for the purpose. What I would like to do here is to critically take up Chari's presentation as a special representative of the *rasa*-theory and combat it on certain points which I find worth quarrelling against. I would thus be addressing myself not only to Chari but also to a tradition of thought. This to my mind does not seem to go against the grain of Chari's own intentions of being an interpreter rather than a propounder of an idea.

One of the key reasons why Chari finds the *rasa*-theory interesting is that the theory embodies a discourse on emotions which places them in

a kind of positivistic framework. This in Chari's estimate, is what makes the theory 'modern' and worthy of consideration by contemporary philosophers who value a concrete specificity of analysis over vagueness. Chari extols the *rasa*-theory for the specificity of its discourse concerning the emotions, the articulation of which generally remains vague in the context of art. Such a discourse, he grants, is not possible in all the arts but it is possible in poetry if we adopt the *rasa*-theory. The strength of the *rasa*-theory, he argues, lies in its being exclusive to the art of literature, or as he puts it, 'poetry in general'. Emotions in the non-representational arts such as music or abstract painting are by contrast vague, anonymous and nameless. *Rasa*-theory does not apply to such arts:

> The *rasa-theory* implies that there are a number of specific emotions, each with its distinct tone and flavour, and not an anonymous aesthetic emotion or a host of nameless emotions. Poetic works are not merely emotionally charged in some vague sense like music or non-representational painting, but they treat a specific number of emotions as their subject matter (pp.12-13).

This, to me, sounded somewhat odd. The feeling I got from this and similar other passages is that Chari seems to be giving a special, exclusive, place to literature as an art on the peculiar ground that it can be discoursed about in a certain 'specific' way, approved by positivistic modes of thought. To say that arts which are non-representational are 'merely emotionally charged in some vague sense' is surely not a neutral, merely theoretical statement but indicates unconcern for them. The categories of clarity, specificity, and vagueness can, one would think, be meaningfully used in reflecting on all the arts and it might be an interesting exercise to reflect on what the contrast between the specific and the vague could mean in music or other non-representational arts, but to dub all creations of these arts as vague is merely to show one's apathy to them. To Chari they are vague because, as he says, they are not concerned with emotions that can be specified, named, and numbered in the way which Bharata, according to him, has done for drama and, by implication, 'poetry in general'. But here, one might retort, lies their strength. These arts, one could say, manifest a world of feeling—or 'specify' it, if you will—which can be expressed only through non-verbal, non-representational symbols.

Many people might also find the idea that the *rasa*-theory applies only to poetry strange or puzzling. It is generally thought that the theory seeks to be *the* universal theory which applies to all the arts. Yet when Chari argues that the *rasa*-theory applies only to the literary arts, there is, I think, much truth in what he says. One major distinction between the arts—a distinction which was known to Indian thinkers from the days of Bharata, as Chari, too, affirms—is the distinction between the representational and the non-representational arts. Any aesthetic

discourse which claims universality, such as the *rasa*-theory does, must, clearly, contend with this difference. Chari knows of the claims made to include non-literary, non-representational arts such as music and dance within the scope of the theory, but such claims, he asserts, are made for them only in as much as they can play a subsidiary role in association with a play or a song. In such contexts they do acquire an emotional specificity but such a specificity is parasitic upon poetry or drama (p. 12). It is only in this sense, he says, that the two major Indian *rasa*-theorists have spoken of *rasa* as applying to an art like music : 'Both Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta recognize that musical sounds too can be suggestive of *rasa* in this way, although they are non-meaningful or nonexpressive (*avācakaśabda*). Abhinavagupta states explicitly that the power of conveying *rasa* inheres only in the expressive situations of the play or poem.' (pp. 13-14) Chari refers here to a passage in Abhinavagupta's commentary on Ānandavardhana where Abhinava does, indeed, make a statement to this effect. Yet it might be argued that the position of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta was to claim a real and not a literature-centred universality for *rasa*. Music, Ānandavardhana affirms, in more than one unequivocal passages—passages which apparently make an assertion quite the opposite of the passage quoted by Chari—is capable of evoking *rasa* despite the fact that musical sounds are meaningless : that is, they have no *vācya*[1]. This, indeed, is the position which later theorists understood him to adopt. The famous 17th century poetician, Paṇḍitarāja Jagannātha, whose words we shall later quote, understood Ānandavardhana and the entire tradition of thinkers after him, to have taken such a view.

And yet it must be granted in agreement with Chari that the major *rasa*-theorists succeed in universalizing *rasa* only by making non-representational arts parasitic in their aesthetic intent upon the arts of representation. If we look at the context in which the passages from Ānandavardhana quoted below occur, it is clear that a *rasa*-evoking power is granted to the non-meaning, *avācaka*, sounds of music only as an integral *part* of drama and not on their own. I would like to add here, though, that theorists such as Ānandavar-dhana and Abhinavagupta who made this move show a greater aware-ness of the independent riches of music and dance than is shown by Chari. Unlike Chari their interest in *rasa*-theory was not because of its specificity of discourse concerning emotions. They were genuinely concerned with universalizing the scope of *rasa* to the realm of the aesthetic as such, making it reach out beyond drama, reflections on which gave rise to the concept of *rasa* in the first place.

Mature ideas concerning *rasa* show a deep tension between the intent to universalize the concept and to keep it rooted in drama. This gave rise to two quite distinct and separate sets of concepts concerning *rasa* which yet, stubbornly and contrarily, sought to unite. There is a clearly universal,

aspect of *rasa* in which it can be truly seen as the master Indian concept for delineating the realm of the aesthetic as a whole, developing insights, articulating concepts, that are, indeed, true of the aesthetic experience as a distinct kind or experience. It is in characterizing this aspect of *rasa* that the experience has been described as *brahmānanda-sahodara*—'akin in its enjoyment to the mystical experience of *brahma*'—or resulting in *saṁvid-viśrānti*—'consciousness coming to rest in itself'—or the removal of the blind and dark *tamas* and the impelling *rajas* from an emotion, revealing its joyous, gracious, *sattva*, in which the emotion shines out in a consciousness of itself. Chari is wary of these concepts because they are mystical and metaphysical and go against the grain of his positivistic programme. But such are the concepts which make the post-Bharata *rasa*-theory the universal theory that it is claimed to be.

But the *rasa*-theory also insists on a kind of specificity which has enamoured it to Chari : a specificity which does, indeed, make the theory applicable to only some of the arts, the arts concerned with *anukaraṇa* or representation. In fact the *rasa*-theory is actually narrower still. It was born of thinking about drama and remains specific to theatre. Its specificity to drama makes it weak where the other arts are concerned, even where poetry—which has been unjustly clubbed by Chari with drama as a single art—is concerned. I believe that the best of our *rasa*-theorists were aware of the tension between the universality of the notion of *rasa* and the attempts to keep it rooted in drama; yet they were unwilling to give up this tie.

With the *rasa*-theory goes a theory of *bhāvas*, or 'states' to be depicted in drama. It is the *bhāvas* which give rise to *rasas*. It is also in the theory concerning *bhāvas* that, as Chari points out, the specificity of discourse concerning emotions is to be found. The *rasa*-theory, even as it expanded into a universal theory of aesthetic remained rooted in the theory concerning *bhava* which is plainly theatre-centric. The *bhāva*-theory is not a *necessary* requirement for the *rasa*-theory as it expanded into a universal theory of aesthetic in the thought of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta. The *rasa*-theory does not need it and is not *anupapanna* without the *bhāva*-theory—to use an idiom from Indian thought.

But let us examine the *bhāvas* as they are described in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the source book for the *bhāva* as well as the *rasa*-theory. There is clearly a conscious attempt by Bharata to make them specific. But it is equally clear in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* that their specificity is not of emotion but of theatric presentation. They are the building blocks with which the edifice of a drama as an audio-visual performance and show is erected. Let me expand.

Bhāvas are 'states of being' in two interconnected senses: (1) they are *bhāvas* in the sense that they refer to various human states of being which can in some sense be called 'inner'; many *bhāvas* being plainly inner emotional states. (2) They are also *bhāvas* in that they are *made* to occur

on the stage and consist of *enacted* happenings which embody and manifest the *bhāvas* as human states. They are in this sense, as Bharata puts it, the theatrical representation of inner *bhāvas*, consisting of the enactment of a narrative accompanied by music and dance. *Bhāvas* are *bhāvas*, says Bharata, because they are instrumental in conveying the ethos of the situations designed by the play-wright : situations which contain dramatic speech, music-and-dance as well as acting of the kind that demands the reproduction of tears, horripilation, sweat and the like (*vāgaṅgasattvopetāṅkāvyārthānbhāvayantūti bhāvā; Nāṭyaśāstra,* GOS, ed. opening passage of the 7th ch. which concerns *bhāva*). *Bhāvas* are, in this sense, tied down to, even equated with, the specific situations as well as characters which embody them and give rise to them. Situations and characters which embody the *bhāvas* are otherwise called *vibhāvas*. Bharata, in the passage quoted above is clearly equating *bhāva* and *vibhāva*. *Bhāvas* as inner states are embedded in *vibhāvas* and caused by them—and also as Bharata puts it, 'made known' to us by them: we *name* a *bhāva* on the basis of the *vibhāva*, that is, the character and situation in which it is embedded. (*vibhāvo vijñānārthaḥ, vibhāvaḥ karaṇaṁ nimittaṁ heturiti paryāyaḥ. Nāṭyaśāstra,* GOS, ed. prose passage following 7, 3.). *Bhāvas*, embedded in *vibhāvas*—particular situations and the characters involved in it—are expressed through *anubhāvas*: their enactment by individual actors on the stage.

The entire notion is, clearly, specific to theatre and, importantly, theatre as a performing art. *Bhāvas*, along with the theatric context in which they are embedded, are the stuff with which the ethos of theatre as 'spectacle'—to use an Aristotelian term—is woven. There has been a move, initiated by Aristotle himself, in western thinking on drama to deprecate spectacle and try to assimilate drama into poetry or literature. For Aristotle the extra-literary, audio-visual or theatrical aspect of drama was accidental to it. Chari, too, following Aristotle, approves of this. Immediately after outlining Bharata's theory of emotions—meaning his notion of the *bhāvas*, (on page 13)—he says: 'This theory of poetic emotions is, again, a theory mainly of poetry in its broadest, Aristotelian sense, not a general theory of the arts'.[2] But Bharata, unlike Aristotle, was very conscious of the 'spectacle' aspect of drama. His discourse is upon theatre as a specific art, not upon drama that can be reduced to a script. The art of the poet, was for him, integral to drama, but so were other arts such as music and dance. Theatre, for him, was not just poetry with spectacle added to it. It was a distinct art and he instructs the poet who provides the script to be mindful of this and not to be carried away by the pulls of his own art (*Nāṭyaśāstra,* GOS, ed. 16, pp. 127–28 also 16, *anubandha,* 41). The move to assimilate drama into poetry, or rather poetry into drama, was made much later by theorists such as Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta.

Bhāvas as presented on the stage were considered incomplete by

Bharata without non-literary ingredients, especially music and dance. Products of these arts were, like poetry, to be integrated into the theatre and with as much care. Abhinavagupta, using a significant term, calls arts like music and dance as used in theatre, *uparañjakas*—aids to the main aesthetic purpose of presenting *bhāvas* that lead to *rasa*. Poetry, or the script of the play, too, was in a sense an *uparañjaka*: the soul of drama, its *rasa* was created by *bhāvas*, not the *itivṛtta*, the script which sets forth the plot. Ānanadavardhana, significantly, calls *itivṛtta* the mere 'body' of *rasa* (*itivṛttādi tu śarīrabhūtameva*, *Dhvanyāloka*, 3, 33). It provides nothing more than the frame, so to say, within which *bhāvas* were to be enacted. An *uparañjaka* could be part of the *rasa*-evoking process only in the context of the presentation of *bhāvas* in drama and not on its own.

Bharata names and describes forty-nine *bhāvas* in terms of their *vibhāvas* and *anubhāvas* (*evaṁ te vibhāvā-nubhāva-saṁyuktā bhāvā iti vyākhyātā: Nāṭyaśāstra*, GOS ed. prose passage following 7, 5) in order to help theatre directors and actors create them on the stage. The *bhāvas*, as we said, are 'human' states with some kind of 'innerness' about most of them and some *bhāvas* can no doubt be seen as name able 'emotional' states. But Bharata did not articulate them in order to specify emotions as such. To call them all *cittavṛttis*—psychological functions or states—is a later move.

Indeed, the relation of many *bhāvas* to specific emotions or even to any psychological state is remote, vague, ambiguous and even in some cases just not there, as we shall presently see. Chari seems to gloss over this fact. The reason is obvious. He would like the *bhāvas* to be emotional states ('Bharata names forty-nine emotional states', he says: p. 13).

Let us sample some of them. There are, for example, the eight *sāttvika bhāvas*—which Chari calls, *involuntary expressions* (emphasis mine)—consisting of tears, horripilation, trembling and the like. To call them emotional states is plainly a misnomer. Even Chari does not call them so. But 'involuntary expressions', too, I think, is not quite the right phrase for them. For on the stage, where they are meant to occur, they have to be voluntarily, deliberately enacted. They are in this sense more akin to *anubhāvas*, deliberate physical expressions of human states. They thus seem out of place even in Bharata's list of *bhāvas*. One wonders why Bharata calls them *bhāvas*. Bharata seems to have included them with *bhāvas* because they are 'inner' states in some sense: they are states of the *sattva*[3] or *prāṇa*, our vital being or life-energy and not mere *enactments* of states, hence not *anubhāvas*. But 'inner' they may be in some sense, *sāttvika* states are ambiguous or vague as to emotion on their own. In fact, to use Chari's own turn of phrase, a *sāttvika bhāva* acquires specificity of emotion only in association with another *bhāva* such as *īrṣyā*—jealousy. Chari, too, grants them ambiguity and argues that the larger dramatic context reveals the specificity of their emotional content: tears of joy, for

example, can be distinguished from tears of pain in the larger dramatic whole.

The interesting thing to note here is that *sāttvika bhāvas* are not unambiguous as to specifiability. They can be made quite specific, as Bharata does make them. But they are essentially unspecifiable as to emotion. In this they are notably like music or other non-representational arts that act as *uparañjakas* in theatre. A musical composition accompanying a theatrical representation can be specified in detail (in fact a theatre director will, except in the rare improvised forms of theatre, need to do this); it can be structurally described, notated, named, reproduced, analysed into parts, or, in other words, it has all the properties of specifiability in as much as anything is specifiable. However, like a *sāttvika bhāva* it will on its own remain unspecifiable as to emotion. Specifiability of emotion, it should be noted here, has a limited possibility even in arts like the theatre and the novel or the story, which aim at portraying human life in a 'lived' manner through the presentation of *bhāva*-like human states of being.

One could perhaps, following Bharata, identify other kinds of *bhāvas* in theatre or its sister forms, the film, the story, the novel, towards which Bharata, busy with *bhāvas* geared to create moods of a certain kind, has not paid attention. We can speak of 'narrative' *bhāvas*, describable, specifiable, 'states' in the realm of action rather than emotion. For, action in a narrative aims at creating its own kind of human ethes, or in Bharata's terms, its own *sthāyi bhāvas* (a notion of which we shall speak in some detail a little later) which no doubt are associated with emotional overtones, but these are subsidiary to an action that seeks quite a different dramatic value. These *sthāyi bhāvas* can be analysed into *bhāvas* of their own kind which are actually used by dramatists, novelists, story-writers and even poets. Moral dilemmas—*dharma-saṅkata*—for example, can be said to one such *sthāyi bhāva* of narrative action; it is a *bhāva* which repeatedly occurs in the Mahābhārata, to take a well-known Indian example. Such a *sthāyi bhāva* is, I believe, analysable into its own kind of *bhāvas* specifiable as its building-blocks. Situations of *dharma-saṅkata* are plainly, rich with feeling, but these are not specifiable 'emotions' or, at least, their emotional importance is subsidiary to the action. 'Suspense' can be another *sthāyi bhāva* of action. Many narratives such as stories of adventure or detection thrive on suspense, which, too, as writers know, can be analysed into *bhāvas* of its own kind. These *bhāvas* are again, more meaningfully specifiable as to narrative formulae for creating surprise, tempo and the like rather than specific emotions, though their emotional overtone is obvious. Emotion in them remains secondary, ambiguous or even vague. An interesting question to ask could be the difference between specificities of different kinds within drama and within the other arts and how these are related. All arts wield structures that can be

analysed and specified in various ways. Music like drama is, indeed specifiable as to its parts and even the wholes it creates, namely, *rāgas*. *Rāgas* are specifiable, recognisable and distinguishable in their own ways. Indeed part of the art of creating *rāgas* is to maintain their distinct identity. This identity is said to be both in terms of a *rāga-rūpa*, the structure of a *rāga* and a *rāga-bhāva*, the 'feel' or ethos of a *rāga*. *Rāga-bhāvas* are not specifiable in terms of nameable human states or situations such as dramatic *bhāvas*, but they can be related to the more specifiable structural aspects of *rāga*, that is its *rūpa*. How are the two related can be an interesting question. Or, one might ask, how are the parts of a *rāga* related to the *rūpa* as a whole and what is the difference between the specifiability of the parts as distinct from that of the whole? Another interesting question could be: music, specifiable in its own way, can also be made an *uparañjaka* to a theatrical *bhāva*; in what way can the relation be specified? Bharata and other theatre theorists do go into this latter question, but to pursue that would be out of place here.

Curiously, Chari dismisses music as emotionally vague because *rāgas* are not specifiable in terms of nameable emotions like the theatric *bhāvas*. Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana, on the other hand, thought that they could detect some kind of *bhāva*-oriented specifiability in musical forms when they sought to assimilate music to theatrical *bhāvas* and hence to *rasa*, even while granting a non-representational intent to the art.

Besides *sāttvika bhāvas* which are essentially ambiguous in terms of a nameable emotion, there are other *bhāvas* which, too, cannot be called 'emotional' states. They can also perhaps be described as 'inner' in a sense but they too are equally ambiguous as to emotion. The 'state' of intoxication, *mada*, is a *bhāva*. It is described in terms as specific as Bharata uses in describing other more emotion-like *bhāvas* such as fear or jealousy: '*mada* [is the state] which arises due to imbibing intoxicating drinks' (*Nātyaśāstra* GOS ed., Ch. 7, prose passage following 37). But *mada*, plainly will acquire a specific, nameable, emotional content, if at all, only in association with another *bhāva*. A notable *bhāva* is *ālasya*, laziness. It is described as the *bhāva* which arises due to physical exertion, illness, pregnancy, dejection or satiety (*Nātyaśāstra*, GOS ed., ch. 7, prose passage following 47). *Ālasya*, obviously, is no emotion but a state which can be associated with very different emotional or even quite non-emotional states. Its description in terms of situations which give rise to it are not to name or identify an emotion but help actors enact it. In fact, after identifying *ālasya* as a state—an identification which leaves it quite ambiguous as to its 'feel'—Bharata tells us that it arises only in women and in lowly characters, meaning, clearly, that it should be enacted only by them; he considered it unseemly in more elevated characters. Bharata then proceeds to give instructions as to how it should be enacted (*tat-abhinayet...*). Like *ālasya*, *śrama* or 'feeling tired' is another *bhāva*. It arises due to travel, exercise and the like (*Nātyaśāstra*, Ch. 7, prose passage

following 46). *Śrama*, clearly, has nothing to do with emotions. Even *moha* or a state of swooning is a *bhāva*. So are *nidrā* and *vibodha* or sleep and awakening. *Apasmāra*, epilectic fit, sickness (*vyādhi*), madness (*unmāda*) and death (*maraṇa*), too, are *bhāvas*. These are obviously *bhāvas* because they are states that have to be enacted not because they are emotions.

The specifiable *emotional* content of such *bhāvas* is established through their connection with other *bhāvas*, especially, the *bhāvas* called the *sthāyi bhāvas*. What we have been sampling above belong to the class called *vyābhicāri bhāvas*, which Chari terms 'transient' emotions. A notable fact about the *vyābhicāri bhāvas* is that they describe 'states' of individual actors and not a dramatic context as a whole. On the other hand, the *sthāyi* or what Chari calls the 'durable' *bhāvas*, seem clearly intended to form substantial and meaningful theatric 'situational' wholes. They are to be formed in association with the *vyābhicāri bhāvas*. Most *bhāvas* are 'states' of single individuals. But dramatic situations as a whole contain interacting emotions of different individuals. The emotion of a complex situation or even an episode as a whole can be difficult to specify. The *bhāva* of fear, for example, can have two interacting individuals, one with a fearful and the other with a ferocious emotion. The resulting 'feel' will depend upon who has our sympathy, a factor which, among other things, has to be carefully guided through an arrangement of other *bhāvas*. Thus a specific, nameable, emotional *bhāva*, too, needs a proper arrangement of other *bhāvas* which may be vague in themselves as to their emotional specificity. This is one of the reasons why it is a *sthāyi bhāva* that is said to lead to *rasa*, each distinct *sthāyi bhāva* leading to a distinct *rasa*. There are in Bharata eight—or if we include the *śānta*—nine durable *bhāvas*. A durable or *sthāyi bhāva* is *sthāyi* in two distinct senses. One, a *sthāyi bhāva* is *sthāyi* in the psychological sense: it is a *bhāva* which is thought of as comparatively more deep-rooted, more 'abiding' in the human psyche and can subsume the *vyābhicāri* or more transitory *bhāvas*. Indeed, a *sthāyi*—it seems to be assumed by Bharata—by its very nature, includes or contains the transitory *bhāvas*. In the second, and I think a more primary sense for theatre as an art, the notion of the *sthāyi bhāvas* is an aesthetic ideal which assumes the psychological notion of the *sthāyi* as its ground. In this sense, *sthāyi bhāvas* are *bhāvas* that theatre aims at creating. They are the affective wholes of Bharata's theatre. The *sthāyi* in Bharata is the central *bhāva*, the organising matrix for assembling a multiplicity of *bhāvas* into an orchestrated unity. *Bhāvas* that can 'go' with a particular *sthāyi bhāva* are carefully listed. This notion of consciously matching and weaving *bhāvas* into a designed whole also clearly battles against a psychological conception of *bhāvas* as natural clusters in the human psyche. An articulate insistence on such a psychological assumption came much after Bharata with the later theorists.

In more complex—also more satisfactory—forms of drama such as the *nāṭaka*, more than one *sthāyi bhāvas*, and the different resulting *rasas*, were

to be combined into a single whole. The different *rasas* were also to be orchestrated harmoniously according to a principle of affinity between *rasas.*

The Indian tradition was greatly influenced by Bharata. The ideas concerning *bhāva* were largely accepted in their broad outlines. Yet they were questioned in their details, modified and enlarged. Some later thinkers were dissatisfied with the number of *bhāvas* and added to them; arguing also that some which were otherwise deemed *vyābhicāri* could also function as *sthāyi.* Others demonstrated, especially in single-verse *muktaka* poems that single *vyābhicāri bhāvas* could on their own become the basis of satisfactory wholes. An aesthetics of *vyābhicāri bhāvas* loosened from a *sthāyi* context can be seen even today in *nṛtya*, a dance dominated by *abhinaya.*

A more trenchant criticism of the *bhāva*-theory and its ideal of creating smooth, homogeneous wholes, with the narrative being made subsidiary to the fashioning of stable, almost static, *sthāyi bhāvas*, is that such an aesthetic seems out of line with the very nature of drama. Drama lies in a tension between emotions, in one emotion intruding quite unharmoniously, unceremoniously, into another through a stir and movement in the action; in one *bhāva* battling against another *bhāva.* But Bharata, and following him the Indian tradition in general, wants to take it into just the other direction, towards the direction of an aesthetics of *sthiti* rather than *gati*, an aesthetic closer to that of the more abstract arts such as music and poetry, as has often been remarked.

In Bharata's theatre *sthāyi bhāvas* were a complex of *bhāvas* carefully built up into a specific emotional state through theatric design. But designs can be different. A theatre of suspense or of *dharma-saṅkaṭa*, as we have noted above will have very different kind of *sthāyis.* Moreover, different *bhāvas*, even if they constitute specific emotions in themselves, need not be combined to lead to specifiable emotions: A complex *created* through specific individual emotions, or the different specific emotions of interacting individuals need not itself be specific. It could be ambiguous or 'vaguely emotional' in the sense that music is for Chari. Such complexes, though not passing the test of specifiability, can be much more satisfying as art than the transparent, perspicuous *sthāyi-bhāva*-like symmetrical wholes of Bharata. Another question also arises: where in drama does one identify the specificity of a *bhāva*, in the script or on the stage? Different directors can give quite a different 'feel' to the same scripted *bhāva*, not to speak of the drama as a whole. Change in *abhinaya*, the accompanying music, the stage setting, the tone of voice and a host of other details can create a different ethos for the same *bhāva.* It can become questionable if the emotion presented is the 'same' even if we grant it an inanely nameable identity.

What Bharata aimed at in speaking of *bhāvas* was, I think, not to establish a discourse concerning emotions but to delineate a delimitable number

of 'states' into which his drama could be analysed. His purpose was to construct a descriptive and prescriptive *śāstra* of drama that could act as a manual for people who put up plays. His *bhāvas* are specific building blocks that can be assembled, following certain rules of affinity, into meaningful wholes for creating the 'spectacle' of drama. The *bhāvas* thus had to be identifiable in some specific sense since they were the tools to be readily handled for constructing plays.

A *bhāva*-like approach in analysing artistic wholes into building blocks is to be found also in the *śāstras* of arts other than theatre. Music for example, has *sthāyas*—the modern-day *aṅgas* in Hindustani music—which are specifiable, describable, nameable structural tonal units that can act as building blocks of *rāgas.* The *Nātyaśāstra* in describing the pure dance of *tāṇḍava*—or even in describing drum-playing—again uses this *bhāva*-like technique of description: the *tāṇḍava* is analysed into building blocks called *karaṇas*, delineated in terms of specifiable bodily postures and movements. Drum playing is broken down into units similar to our modern drum *bols.*

Unlike *bhāvas*, *sthāyas* and *karaṇas* are, however, not attached to specific emotions, though like *bhāvas* they are named and described. But since music and dance are also *uparañjakas* to the formation of *bhāvas* on the stage, Bharata—and especially later theatre-*śāstrīs* such as Kohala, Yāṣṭika and others—specify ways in which appropriate musical forms can be chosen for different *bhāvas.* Independent wholes in these arts, such as *rāgas* or *aṅgahāras* have an independent aesthetic and principles of formation of their own.

But what about poetry, one might ask. Surely the *bhāva*-theory can be meaningfully extended to poetry as the later theorists, in fact, did ('poetry is drama seen by the eye of the mind instead of the physical eye', said Abhinavagupta). These later theorists also made the notion of *bhāva* more 'emotionally' oriented than was intended by Bharata. It was Abhinavagupta who called the *bhāvas*, *cittavṛttis.* This certainly brought a certain psychological richness to poetic discourse. It was also responsible, perhaps, for the graphically theatric quality in a great deal of Sanskrit poetry which can be very effective in the hands of a great poet, such as, for example, Amaru. But for the *rasa* theorist, much that is specific to poetry as an independent art, figures, images, style, its formal qualities—*alaṅkāra*, *rīti*, *guṇa*—become *uparañjakas*, supporting aids like music and dance in theatre, to the real purpose of evoking *rasa* through *bhāvas* which in the case of poetry are presented through word pictures.

But poetry is not theatre and need not busy itself in creating theatre-like *bhāvas* that lead to theatric *rasa.* This is to take away from the autonomy of poetry and impoverish its realm. Paṇḍitrāja Jagannātha, the famous 17th century critic, protested against *rasa* as the defining characteristic of poetry and the entire theatric orientation of understanding and discourse it implies, on this very ground. To the entire tradition of *rasa*-

theorists beginning with Ānandavardhana, Paṇḍitarāja declares, even *rāgas* which belong to the distinct art of music evoke *rasas*. And this, he adds, can be said to be equally true of all the elements integral to theatre. But this, he counters, is what makes the concept of *rasa* unsuitable for the purpose of characterising poetry as an individual art.[4]

Paṇḍitarāja takes up for severe criticism a previous *lakṣaṇa*—'characterization', 'definition'—of poetry made in the thirteenth century by Viśvanātha, the author of *Sāhitya-darpaṇa*. '*Rasavadeva kāvyam*', says Viśvanātha—'*only that which has rasa can be termed* kāvya' (Viśvanātha's actual words are: *vākyaṁ rasātmakaṁ kāvyam*—'a sentence evoking *rasa* is a poem'; thus limiting the possibility to creations in language. Jagannātha, even in giving a looser formulation of what Viśvanātha says, was surely aware of this.) This *lakṣaṇa*, says Jagannātha, does not allow room for (1) poems which are descriptive of things, and (2) poems dominated by *alaṅkāras*, figures of speech. Some of the greatest of poets, he argues, have been fond of describing nature: the flow of water, its speed, its falls, its risings, twists and turns and things of the like. They have also written verses on the antics of monkeys or little children. Such descriptions, he points out, cannot be fitted into the *bhāva*-framework, considered essential for *rasa*, by any stretch of the imagination; since an attempt to do so could turn any sentence whatever into words expressive of *vibhāva*, *bhāva* or *anubhāva*: 'The cow moves', 'the deer runs', will all become sentences expressive of *rasa*, making the theory empty and meaningless. Jagannātha clearly implies that only themes embedded in theatre-like *human* situations can be the basis of *rasa* but the range of poetic themes and poetic aims is much wider.[5]

Yet, though considering the field of poetry to be greater than that of *rasa*, Jagannātha was still much under its influence; his taste in poetry, ingrained through a long tradition, inclined him more towards the poetry of *rasa* than aesthetic goals of any other kind. This is reflected in his gradation of poetry, where *rasa*-poems are rated the best, and in the attention he devotes to expounding his own individual understanding of the nature and process of *rasa*. His notion of *vyañjanā* is as much theatre-oriented as that of Ānanadavardhana or Abhinavagupta. Like his great predecessors, his view regarding the nature of *rasa*—influenced in his case by Advaita Vedanta—can be termed a universal idea that may be said to be true of the aesthetic experience of art in general, but also like his predecessors, it remains rooted in the *bhāva*-theory which has theatre for its model.

Jagannātha was a much discussed author in later poetic theory. But the discussion is not easy to get hold of. It is difficult to know of the post-Jagannātha debate concerning *rasa*, if any. I have seen a commentary written on Jagannatha as late as in 1947, (though published in 1977 with the title, *Rasacandrikā*—by Kedarnath Ojha; published in the Sarasvatībhavana Granthamālā, Sampūrṇānanda Sanskrit Viśvavidyālaya).

It pays great attention to the analytic *navya-nyāya* use of language adopted by Jagannātha, but does not speak of the *pūravapakṣas* of Jagannātha concerning his *lakṣana* of poetry, which must surely have arisen in later thought.

The history of thought on *rasa*, then presents a strange anomaly: a universal theory of *rasa*, which is unable to become truly universal because of its association with theatric *bhāva*, which it seems quite unwilling to give up.

Perhaps I should end here but I would like to say something in defence of Bhaṭṭanāyaka, who, following Abhinavagupta, has been held in the Indian tradition as a minor theorist of *rasa*, the propounder of a *pūrvapakṣa* that has been overruled and superceded. Chari, too, overrules him. But I believe that there are suggestive elements in his thought—that is available to us only in a brief exposition made by Abhinavagupta—which could be interestingly carried forward. We can perhaps discover in Bhaṭṭanāyaka a universal theory of *rasa*, independent of a theory of *bhāva*.

The universal theory of *rasa* as a master aesthetic concept is grounded in a theory of language. This is natural because the model on which it is based are the somewhat related arts of drama and poetry, both of which are unthinkable without language. Ānandavarduana put forth the concept of *vyañjanā* to account for how the use of language in poetry leads to *rasa*. *Vyañjanā* is basically a notion concerned with language but it reaches out beyond language to cover theatre in which the theory of *rasa* is embedded. The interesting move that was made here was that *rasa* which was a theatric notion was made to reach out of theatre into poetry on the basis of *vyañjanā*, a notion that was centred in language, the medium of poetry. But theatre, too, which is not at all language and where *rasa* was already established, had to be brought into the fold of *vyañjanā*. I will not go into a description of the concept of *vyañjanā* here but it would be interesting in the context of what I have been saying above, to point out that *vyañjanā* in reaching out of language does not travel beyond theatre, an art which had to be taken into account by a theorist who was building an edifice founded on theatre. The non-linguistic *uparañjakas* of theatre, gestures, looks, movements, even music and dance, are all granted *vyañjanā*—the power of evocation which 'causes' *rasa*, albeit in a non-natural manner. But—and it is a confining, limiting 'but'—the non-linguistic arts are granted *vyañjanā* only in a theatric context. *Vyañjanā* thus cannot be a basis for extending *rasa* to all the arts and making it a universal concept. But, perhaps, let me suggest, Bhaṭṭanāyaka's concept of *bhāvakatva* can do this.

The discourse on *rasa* views art as 'enjoyment' or 'savouring': *āsvāda*. This is, no doubt, a limiting view since art can be profoundly disturbing and disquieting too. Yet art certainly is savoured and this is the aspect which *rasa* (*rasana* = to savour) builds on. The savour-ing of *rasa* is a subtle, abstract savouring, as though the savouring was that of noumenal

entities, like concepts, and not merely sensuous things. This is clearly suggested by the notions of *sādhāraṇī-karaṇa*, the particular becoming univerzalised in art, and of *vigalita-parimita-pramātṛtva*, the universalization of cognition through a partial dissolution of the ego, a state in which a feeling, such as fear, is experienced in a kind of transcendental sense: it is experienced as one's own and yet not really as one's own as Abhinavagupta beautifully puts it (*tathāvidhe hi bhaye nātma' tyantatiraskṛto na viśeṣata ullikhitaḥ: Abhinavabhāratī*, on the *rasa-sūtra*). Obviously, the savouring is a kind noetic, non-sensuous savouring suggesting the savouring of a second order entity such as a concept. In *rasa*, art is presented to our 'savouring' or *bhoga* in a manner that concepts are said to be presented to the 'perception' of reason.

Since very ancient times consciousness has been seen in India to have the dual aspects of the *draṣṭā* and the *bhoktā*, the knower and the enjoyer. Bhaṭṭanāyaka, I think, can be understood as suggesting that the art object is to the enjoyer what the concept is to the knower. True, the distinction between the objects of sense and the objects of reason was not quite made in India in the radical way it has been made in the west since Greek times. Yet *Sāṅkhya*, which Bhaṭṭanāyaka used for his own theorizing, does make an important distinction of its own kind between the three *guṇas*, bracketing *sattva* in a context relevant to us, as quite distinct in its function from *rajas* and *tamas*. *Buddhi*, which, reflects the pure awareness of *puruṣa*, and thus 'sees' the objects of *prakṛti*, acts as the *draṣṭā* in us. It has the power to see for two reasons: the dominance of *sattva* in it over *rajas* and *tamas* as well as the presence in it of all the three *guṇas*, *rajas*, *tamas* as well as *sattva*. *Sattva* reflects *puruṣa* and thus can see; the objects it sees are provided by the interweaving of the three *guṇas*, which form *prakṛti*. We can add here, whether *Sāṅkhya* actually does so or not, that *buddhi* in its *draṣṭā-bhāva* sees because it can abstract the *sattva* from whatever it sees. This, in other words, can be understood as its power to form concepts: it is through concepts that it sees.

One could charge here that I am distorting *Sāṅkhya* in my own perverse way. I see nothing wrong in that, but that is not the issue here. The interesting thing to note, I believe, is that the picture I have presented above of the *draṣṭā* in us and how it functions is analogous to the picture Bhaṭṭanāyaka seems to draw of the *bhoktā* and the function of art in our *bhoktā-bhāva* (*bhoktā*-hood). His picture, in fact, is the model for the picture I have painted for the *draṣṭā-bhāva*.

Our *bhoktā-bhāva*, like our *draṣṭā-bhāva*, has in it an interweave of the three *guṇas*. But unlike the *draṣṭā*, we usually think of the *bhoktā* as purely sensuous and driven by irrational 'drives'. There is nothing in the *bhoktā*- that can be said to be analogous to *buddhi*. We seem to think of it as dominated purely by *tamas* and *rajas*. Bhaṭṭanāyaka provides it with a '*buddhi*' of its own which he names, *bhāvakatva*. The experience of *rasa*, through art, Bhaṭṭanāyaka can be seen to argue, reveals that our *bhoktā*-

bhāva, too, has its *sūkṣma*, *sattva*-dominated, abstract level of *bhoga* or *āsvāda* where the object of *bhoga* as an art object becomes analogous to what the concept is to the *draṣṭā*. The formulation and presenting of the of art objects to the *bhoktā* in its subtle, abstract level is the function of *bhāvakatva*. Interestingly, *bhāvakatva* need not be tied down to a limiting notion such that of *vyañjanā* which confines it to some specific arts. Bhaṭṭanāyaka, it is true, formulated his concept of *bhāvakatva* in reflecting on drama like the other *rasa*-theorists, but he did not limit the notion through any concept specific to theatre and poetry. *Bhāvakatva* can thus be more readily universalized.

Through a creative use of *Sāṅkhya*, Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory also accounts for the different aesthetic qualities of different art objects. It is the differing balance of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* in them that creates the distinct qualities of *vikāsa*—openness expansiveness, shine, bloom; *druti*—a flow, a melting, a loosening—and *vistāra*—spread, intensity, prolixity. These, interestingly, are more formal than emotion-oriented qualities and can be true of an art object as an art object and not only of drama, poetry, or the representational arts in general. The distinction between representational and non-representational art does not figure in Bhaṭṭanāyaka in the little that we have from him, but one can perhaps try and explain it in his thought, though this admittedly presents a tricky problem. I would suggest that a non-representational art object is distinguished from its counterpart by a greater dominance of *sattva* in it. *Bhāvakatva*, for Bhaṭṭanāyaka functions in ways quite distinct from the ordinary processes of knowing: sense-experience, memory and the like. It is perhaps difficult, as Abhinavagupta has argued, to imagine a special process even in the distinct experience of *rasa*, a process which is entirely untouched by the ordinary processes of knowing. Yet it can be meaningfully suggested that the non-representational arts are 'purer' objects of the *bhoktā-bhāva*, less alloyed by the ordinary processes of knowing which are rooted in sense-experience than the arts of representation: they have a greater dominance of the independent *sattva* of the *bhoktā*.

This review is plainly no place for a detailed and scholarly delineation of what Bhaṭṭanāyaka actually says, answering his *pūrvapakṣa* and establishing the above brief picture as really his. That perhaps calls for an independent article. Yet I felt that it was not too out of place here to attempt a suggestion, a *dhvani*, however faint and inadequate, of the possibilities inherent in Indian thinking, possibilities that works such as that of Chari could open out.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See statements such as the following made in the *vṛtti* on the *dhvani-kārikās* in *Dhvanyāloka*, 3,33: *na hi śabdasya vācyapratītiparāmarśa eva vyañjakatve nibandhanam tathā hi gītādiśabdebhyo'pi rasādyabhivyaktirasti:* 'For a sound to become evocative,

there is no such necessary condition that it should have a meaning. And so *rasa* is evoked through sounds of music too.'

Also: *na hi yaivābhidhānaśakti saivāvagamanaśakti avācakasyāpi gītaśabdāde rasādilakṣaṇārthāvagamadarśanāt:* 'The power to denote and the power to manifest understanding are not the same. Sounds of music are devoid of the power to denote but we can see that they can reveal *rasa* to our understanding.' Again: *tathā hi gītadhvanīnāmapi vyañjakatvamasti rasādiviṣayam, na ca teṣāṃ vācakatvaṃ lakṣaṇā vā kathaṃcillakṣyate:* 'And so, the sounds of music can be also evocative of *rasa*. Yet we see that they have neither a denotative or a connotative meaning.'

2. Aristotle begins his reflections in *The Art of Poetry* by postulating a general principle underlying all art including music and dance. All art, he says, is imitation. What art imitates is for Aristotle the human condition, character and situation. This is what Bharata says of drama. Aristotle too, soon forgets music and dance and concentrates his attention on the arts of language: elegiac and epic poetry; and especially drama. All these are for him, 'poetry'—hence Chari's phrase 'poetry in general'. Within this realm of 'poetry' Aristotle's reflections are centred mostly on drama, which, for him, was the best of poetry. So, like Bharata, he can be called a theorist of theatre, but quite unlike Bharata, the enactment of a play was, for him, accidental, even detrimental to its 'poetry' (see Ch. 26 of *The Art of Poetry*, Tr. T.S. Dorsch, Penguin Classics, 1982). Aristotle is willing to grant some effect to music as part of drama, but for the rest, he deprecates 'spectacle'. Tragedy, which he considers the greatest form of poetry, has in his analysis six constituents: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song. At the end of Ch. 6, he has the following to say of spectacle and song: 'Of the remaining elements music is the most important of the pleasurable additions to the plays. Spectacle, or stage-effect, is an attraction, of course, but it has the least to do with the playwright's craft or the art of poetry. For the power of tragedy is independent both of performance and of actors, and besides, the production of spectacular effects is more the province of the property-man than of the play-wright.' Later in *The Art of Poetry* (Ch. 26) where Aristotle wants to show that tragedy is greater than epic, he clearly speaks of acting as unnecessary for drama. 'Tragedy fulfils its own special function even without the help of action and in just the same way as epic", he says. And further: "the effect is as vivid when a play is read as when it is acted.'

3. The word '*sattva*' as used in this context should not be confused with the '*sattva*' of Sāṃkhya. Indeed, interestingly, Sāṃkhya hardly figures in Bharata, though it does a great deal in later *rasa*-theory. '*Sattva*', in a great deal of ancient usage stood for 'energy', 'strength', as well as, 'a living being'. In speaking of the 'states' of '*sattva*', Bharata is clearly speaking of the states of the life-energy.

4. *Rāgasyāpi rasavyañjakatayā dhvanikārādisakalālaṅkārikasammatatvena prakṛte lakṣaṇiyatvāpatteḥ okiṃ bahunā nāṭyāṅgānāṃ sarveṣāmapi prāyaśastathātvena tattvā-pattirdurvāraiva: Rasagaṅgdhara,* ed. Bhaṭṭa Mathurānātha Śāstri, reprinted by Motilal Banarasidass, p. 6–7 (*Kāvyalakṣaṇa*).

5. *Yattu rasavadeva kāvyamiti sāhityadarpaṇe nirṇītaṃ, tanna, vastvalaṅkārapra-dhānānāṃ kāvyānāmakāvyatvāpatteḥ, na ceṣṭāpattih, mahākavisampradāyasyākulī-bhāvaprasaṅgāt, tathā ca jalapravāhaveganipatanotpatanabhramaṇāni kavibhirvar-ṇitāni kapibālādivilasitāni ca, na ca tatrāpi yathākathañcitparamparayā rasaspar-śo'styeveti vācyaṃ, idṛśarasasparśasya 'gauścalati', 'mṛgo dhāvati' ityādāvatiprasakta-tvenāprayojakatvāt, arthamātrasya vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicāryanyatamatvāditi dik. Rasagaṅgādhara,* ibid, pp. 8–9.

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Anti-Fundamentalist Investigations

RAMCHANDRA GANDHI, *Sita's Kitchen: a testimony of faith and inquiry*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1992, xii + 127 pp. (Indian edition distributed by Penguin India).

When an author like Ramchandra Gandhi, whose work interweaves the literary, the religious, and the philosophical, intervenes on an issue as overdetermined as Ayodhya has been in recent years, the resulting text invites a variety of readings. In this review, I read it as philosophy. It may be useful to begin by specifying further. This book practises what I would like to call *post-formal* philosophy.

My remarks here are organized as follows. Section I characterizes the notions of formal and post-formal work. Section II discusses the book itself. Section III addresses certain issues about discourse and dialogue which arise in the context of the reception of such work in the milieu of philosophers in contemporary India. Section IV relates these issues to the general theory of language.

I

Provisionally, assume that modern philosophy begins with Descartes and that Kant represents a rupture in the tradition. Let us take the stand that the philosophical content of this rupture is best understood in terms of a mutation in the episteme as a whole affecting more than just philosophy. Call this mutation the critique. The critique inaugurates what turns out to be a period tending towards the formal. Why?

As Kant's problematic came to be widely accepted, most philosophers abandoned metaphysical responses to precritically asked ontological questions. In so doing, they sought, in their own ways, to express an experience of exile which they shared with other inquirers. Of course, they did so without losing their distinctive identity, as philosophers, within the wider community of inquirers. And they certainly did not speak in one voice. Nevertheless, we can make certain generalizations that help us to grasp the development of the formal mode of thought.

At the heart of the exile experience which philosophers shared with other thinkers in the post-critical period was the sense that one had lost the once-available notion of an unproblematic home in which the self could naively identify itself and refer all other cognitions and complexities to this basic identification. It followed from this loss that dogmatic ontologies were no longer formulable or sustainable, and thus could not underwrite any sort of theoretical confidence.

The philosophers responded to this situation by trying to reestablish a universally acceptable basis for discourse. This led them to concentrate on the form of knowledge, thought, or communication. Hence the

formalism at the heart of all the postcritical modern philosophies. The early foundationism associated with Enlightenment optimism offered formal categories purporting to sponsor all possible concrete concepts, as in a Hegel. Late foundationism, in a Carnap or a Quine, acknowledged the impossibility of building such a universal home and retreated to the more limited enterprise of specifying the logical foundation on which the architecture of any particular language would have to rest. Even when foundationism is abandoned, as in the later period of Wittgenstein's work, there emerges a reflexive effort which localizes specific fields of verbality and does not postulate inter-field bridges beyond necessity. Such moves continue the formal enterprise of postcritical philosophizing. It is important to see and explicate this continuity.

I shall take the position that philosophy commits itself to formality when it promises to keep giving an intelligible and connected account of what its colleagues in other forms of serious discourse are saying. For such an account needs to keep track of the forms of such discourse.

This imperative is akin to the commitment of a classical descriptive science like astronomy to the task of 'saving the appearances', presenting the known phenomena and as far as possible deriving them from a coherent body of theory. What the individual disciplines do to save their respective appearances becomes the data for philosophy's metadisciplinary enterprise, then, of saving the second-order, disciplinary appearances.

On this view, postcritical modern philosophy is formal because it tries to save appearances the way classical philosophy sought to save souls. Such a general portrayal of the postcritical enterprise makes possible an equally global evaluation that cuts across the numerous and considerable differences which prevent various postcritical projects from seeing themselves as partners in a joint undertaking. Without attempting a comprehensive judgement, I shall simply focus on two points that must figure in any evaluation.

My first point arises from the postcritical enterprise's own anxieties associated with the strain of trying to save. On its own terms, the enterprise keeps slipping, and keeps trying to recover from failure. This continual loss of poise undermines the project of saving. One simply stops being able to afford the increasingly costly effort of preserving a continuous and connected account that saves the phenomena. This is like the case of an aristocratic family which, as it sinks into genteel poverty, becomes unable to bear the costs of retaining a mutual visiting relationship with other branches of the clan (readers following the drift of my argument will note that this comparison is more than just a rhetorical device.) One lets many of the once-important phenomena lapse into the limbo of relegation to the dusty archives of obsolete knowledge-systems. One puts up with the consequence that this

abandonment of much of the phenomenal base of one's systems rearranges one's map of subdiscourses that are connected to or disconnected from other subdiscourses, in that one often abandons crucial mediating data in this fashion and papers over the consequent gaps in a discipline by creating new specialized disciplines which are not supposed to add up to a coherent or connected account of the relevant domain.

This mode of making a virtue of necessity amounts to permitting the inductive imperative (of saving the phenomena) to go the way of the already abandoned deductive imperative (of seeking a foundation of certain knowledge from which equally certain theorems follow). One stops saving phenomena in response to the realization that one is losing them because they disconnect as one keeps dealing with them. So we give up on saving, as we once had to give up on apodictic certainty. This is the first failure of critical philosophy, a failure registered in the very texture of the anxiety or frustration that characterizes such philosophizing.

A second failure is so deep that it is no longer even present to the consciousness of the practitioners. It lies in the fact that the critical enterprise loses all theoretical contact with classical philosophy in so far as classical thought wished to save souls (or to identify the road to the good life or to some niḥśreyasa). Modern humankind inherits classical philosophy's failure to formulate a method of saving souls (if one may use this phrase to refer also to the other forms of salvation); the trouble is that in no explicit sense can modern *philosophy* be said to explicitly inherit this failure. For critical thought simply avoids facing the problem, and is not in dialogue with classical thought's faith in the possibility of posing and even answering such a question. In other words, modern thought does not face the inquiry whose classical pursuit led to the exile experience; it merely treats the supposed fact of exile as a datum and a starting point and thus deprives itself of the right to interrogate this exile.

My reading is that both of these failures of critical philosophy reflect the fact that it has been a *formal* enterprise locked into a commentarial dialogue with the *serious* discourses rooted in the modern sciences. Working within these limits, modern philosophizing cannot take on the task of explicating the sense of safety ('home') or of certainty as a valid goal of human striving, but may at most take up the serious-epistemological special case of such an inquiry, as is done by Wittgenstein in his work on certainty in the context of what precedes and grounds serious discourse (this reading of his context is of course mine, not Wittgenstein's).

A postformal philosophy, of course, can only be a philosophy that is aware of and avoids the formal bind outlined above. It succeeds to the extent that it images the sense of safety and the possibility of cognitive access to this sense of safety as a regulative principle in striving and—as a special case of striving—in inquiry. Instead of outlining the abstract

conditions for the possibility of a successful postformal project, let us move now to the section that deals with *Sita's Kitchen*, a text which seems to me to practise—and to embody—such a project.

II

I read *Sita's Kitchen* as addressing the crucial question of how to conceptualize the safety of the naively inhabited and valorized home whose memory every ex-child, i.e. every adult, inherits from his or her personal past interwoven with the personal pasts of others who participated in that home. This question is crucial in that systems of thought which, like formal philosophy, rest entirely on the apparatus of disenchantment and demystification leave modern (and therefore system-fearing) adults vulnerable to the seduction of ethnic and religious fundamentalisms promising to image that safety for their constituencies.

It may be important to stop and ask why disenchanted theorizing should not consider it sufficient to formalize and recuperate some sort of critical reconstruction of what I choose to call the sense of safety or home. An exchange of views on this would be welcome. My own view is that no formalization purporting to be an account of safety would simultaneously empower critical adults to (a) seriously remember the narrative histories populating their childhood, and (b) problematize the magic circle of home. Problems of language would arise acutely in any such enterprise and pull it apart by exerting contradictory pressures.

Sita's Kitchen's postformal view of language images the dialogical act as a hospitable invitation to the common human celebration of a nonviolent (postviolent) ability to renounce the use of causal force. This view of language is coupled with a postformal approach to textuality which links adult speaking to the pre-adult textual initiation. The reference is to the actions, repeated in every generation, whereby children are initiated by magical and inviting elders into the practice of imaginatively and myth-readingly participating in a legacy of festive narrativity. The linkage of adult to pre-adult and the imaginative continuity of texts over the generations are both underwritten by the conception of imaging that holds the book together. This conception—which is basic to Ramchandra Gandhi's Advaitin theory of the self as unitary and its self-*imaging* as the process giving rise to the perceptible multiplicity of appearances—takes the integrity of mythically imaged realities as seriously as it does the trustees, the holders and handers-down who transmit and reshape textual traditions.

The perspective of *Sita's Kitchen* may be called 'substantive' rather than 'formal', for reasons explained elsewhere (see Dasgupta, 1989). Let me recapitulate those considerations briefly. A system is formal to the extent that it highlights a single principle of formalization which privileges one set of criteria for deciding what counts as an element, which elements

belong to the centre that structures the system, and which ones do not. Dasgupta, 1989, argues that a formal system must allow for—and, in the general case, must accept—the subordination of its internal centre-periphery distinction to outside forces that bring about the differentiation which the formalization merely represents. For a system to have a body of its own that does not directly depend on external determinants, it needs to be substantive in the sense of being a site of interplay among competing (but never decisively winning) formalizations which count elements differently and draw various types of centre-periphery distinction over the same body. Such a sameness of body, created and sustained through interformal play, non-formally negotiates an identity, here called 'substantive', which does not tend to reflect the workings of some single organizing principle outside the body.

Why is *Sita's Kitchen's* perspective substantive in contrast to the formal philosophical approaches to language and textuality? Because *Sita's Kitchen* interrelates language, textuality, tradition-holding (or text-trusteeship), and imaging. Interrelating them highlights the form-mediating interplay of the various centre-periphery formalizations. In *Sita's Kitchen*, notions of invitation and hosthood run through the theoretical structures in all the domains considered. They free Gandhi's sense of tradition from the fundamentalist search for a purity of unmixed origins. The freedom from the idea of a purity rooted in the documentary or historical past enables him to seek the future-building purity of a panhuman covenant with the Forest, a major presence in the highly visual narrative of *Sita's Kitchen*. Such a purity retrieves a past, but not the concrete historical past documented by the official archives of states—rather, the aboriginal sense of the everpresent past which Gandhi's method of rereading finds documented in images and narratives as they weave our experience through critical-conscious wakefulness and childhood-reclaiming dreamwork, pointing to the serious stillness of deep sleep.

The Forest is, in *Sita's Kitchen*, the inviting face of the cosmos. In and as the Forest, the world invited our aboriginal ancestors to live. The terms of that invitation enjoined them to take moderately, when in need, and to give festively, to those who need. Aboriginal societies continue to honour that covenant with the Forest. Civilizations, especially in the modern period, stand in serious violation of it, and thus undermine the categories of all invitations and host–guest relationships, all forms of language, textuality, traditional transmission, and imaging. Hence, in the terms in which I pose the problem in this review, the experience of exile. The central proposal of *Sita's Kitchen*, which addresses this issue directly, is that we should all purify ourselves by reaffirming the covenant with the Forest and thus become aboriginal again, afresh. Such a collective rediscovery of self will give an epiphanic fact for all our traditions to articulate in various ways. Philosophy can then become a matter of working out specific and concrete responses to the fact that we

can best image the hospitable cosmos-home by rereading all mythic traditions as having played guest and host to each other—not by fundamentalistically seeking pure lines of textual descent. Even without a massive epiphany, we can tell that the cosmos is a home and thus hospitable; for the cosmos could in principle have been an unbroken chain demonstrating causal capability without any room for sentient choice or hosthood or festivity; but in fact it renounces this option and welcomes conscious, linguistic selves imaging themselves as selves and as Self; the cosmos celebrates our presence by treating us to all the lushness—and the dangers—of Forest. Since the cosmos has kept its side of the covenant with us, philosophy can thus in any case respond to the fact of this covenant and the imperative of our learning proper guesthood, even in the absence of a massive collective success in such learning, a success that might take the form of large-scale reaffirmations of the covenant.

The programme of *Sita's Kitchen* is based, then, on this reading of the problem of facing our apparently hostile or 'Other' context (which we in our exile tend to call a location, a situation, an environment, a space, a non-home). Such a reading empowers us to reperceive the cosmos as an inhabitable home. As serious home-makers, then, we can assume the full dignity of all that we know. Our various knowledges can overcome disconnection and range from the surfaces of our critical adult present to the depths of our precritical narrative past, provided that we do not perversely assume that all connections have to be bridged formally, by words. They can be mediated informally, through the interformal play of concentrations (centre-periphery distinctions different from each other) and silences (surrounding each form of concentration with its own specific ring of independence), given the basic but not foundational or fundamentalist relationship with the Forest, the guest-host relation that underlies all other relatednesses.

How can such a mode of thinking redeem our past which includes so many errors and even major crimes with which so many serious knowledge systems were complicit? We can handle the problem, in the context of the proposal made by *Sita's Kitchen*, provided that we do not try to purge our legacy of all supposed errors. The point, rather, is to be rigorously 'together' about our integrity. Integrity requires us to carry forward all obligations, in a redemptive and thus noncalculative mode of retention. Being noncalculative, this non-formal mode calls for no revenge or reparation.

I turn now to the concrete way in which *Sita's Kitchen* unpacks and practises this programme. After a brief theoretical prologue, which states the programme in a language clear enough for readers who have been following the author's work, *Sita's Kitchen* offers a body of serious narrative putting Buddhist and Hindu mythic articulations together in a new context where both signification 'systems' (if even the exigencies of brief

reference can legitimize the use of such a tight term for the flowing looseness of these robes of thought) become mutually hospitable and enable us to reread the Indian philosophical tradition in terms of hospitality. This rereading, in a book published in 1992, underwrites a response to the Ayodhya problem as it stood before 6 December. The core of that response continues to be relevant, and to invite discussion and assessment, although some specific proposals were geared to the pre-December ground realities and have naturally been superseded by Gandhi's later proposals (see for instance Gandhi, 1993). This core may be summarized as follows. It has become necessary to emphasize the belief of the inhabitants of Ayodhya that the Rama-birthplace region is also the Kitchen of Rama's consort Sita. The memory of the Sita-kitchen-shrine that was destroyed, with the mosque, on 6 December—a shrine whose tangible deities, a rolling board and a rolling pin, suggested aboriginal worship of the generativity of the Forest herself—may serve as a basis for us all to return, together, to a new aboriginal compact with the Forest, and thus to redeem ourselves, forgiving each other's major lapses.

I shall now try to summarize the narrative itself which rearticulates Hindu and Buddhist thinking in a rereading. It is inspired by the *Bhaddavaggiyavatthu*, a text that belongs to the *Vinayapiṭaka* in the Buddhist canon. In the text itself, a standard translation of which is partially reproduced at the end of the Prologue section of *Sita's Kitchen*, we see Buddha sitting 'at the foot of a tree' while there is 'a party of thirty . . . rich young men . . . sporting in that same grove together with their wives. One of them had no wife; for him they had provided a harlot.' While the rest are 'indulging in their sports', the harlot steals their things and runs away. The party pursues her. They notice Buddha, and ask him if he has 'seen a woman passing by'. He makes them tell their tale of woe, and then asks them: 'Now what think you, young men? Which would be better for you, that you should go in search of a woman, or that you should go in search of yourselves?' When 'the rich young companions' opt for the latter, Buddha preaches to them. They see the truth and receive the Upasampadā Ordination. This Buddhist canonical text is the point of departure for the mythical-imaginative narrative in *Sita's Kitchen*.

As Gandhi retells the story of the young men and women, the harlot becomes 'an ādivāsī girl who is alone and not a wife-substitute for the [original Buddhist] text's lone bachelor' (112 n 21). She is 'a slave girl' (27) and is the 'only person in that group who does not have a partner' (27). In the metafictional mode of narration he adopts, the author, speculating about the kind of story he should tell, suggests that 'perhaps the slave girl's name was 'Ananyā', which means 'No Other', i.e. Ātman, oneself, which is what the Buddha had asked her pursuers to seek: singular self imaged in all beings, the true surplus of existence of which the excesses of our covetousness are such a costly caricature. We can imagine [contemporary nihilist masters] Ajita [Keśakambalin] and

Makkhali [Gośāla] in a gesture of defiance, and as indicative of their championship of the cause of the oppressed, asking Ananyā personally to convey to the Buddha their desire to engage him publicly in a debate on the meaning of life. And they would have conveyed a similar challenge to Mahāvīra. . . . And of course those who started it all, the gullible aristocrats [the rich young men and their wives], and Brāhmaṇical philosophers, and sundry other categorieṣ of people, would also have been called' (30). This debate, held under 'the ample shade of the banyan tree under which first her tormentors, and later Ananyā herself, had encountered the Buddha' (31), constitutes the bulk of Gandhi's narrative.

Given the crucial role that host-guest relations play in his perspective, it is structurally important that nihilism hosts the symposium, enabling all concerned to attain dialogical clarity.

Let us outline the sequence of events briefly (the parenthesized numbers refer to pages in *Sita's Kitchen*). Buddha and the 'revellers . . . lost in their pleasures' are present in the same forest but unaware of each other (27). The slave woman runs away with the valuables and is pursued (27). The search party speaks to Buddha and is converted (28). Ananyā meets Buddha and her life changes (30). The aristocrats, shaken out of their life-style by the experience, diffusely initiate some rethinking in the community (29–30), disturbing the complacent cynicism of an 'age dominated by the nihilism of the likes of Ajita Keśakambalin and Makkhali Gośāla' (29), who decide to convene a symposium (30–31). The debate comes to a head (67) and compels Ananyā to speak at length (67–97, interrupted by other speakers and by stage-directions) both about the issues debated and about the experiences and thinking that had led to the proposal that she, with some of the aristocrats, should go to the Divine Mother [Sītā] at Her Kitchen Shrine in Ayodhyā (85) and offer her, as a gestüre of atonement on humanity's behalf, the stolen ornaments, and that this symbolic act should mark the end of Ananyā's bondage. Ananyā reports that this proposal had troubled Śabarī, an ādivāsī legist, who noted that aboriginal law recognizeḍ slavery, in cases where the slave was a woman, 'as a form of forced marriage of slave to master or masters', so that 'only another marriage along with formal liberation could annul it' (90); but that Śabarī had obtained from Buddha—and joyfully accepted—the explanation 'that the same ritual which would secure my release from servitude would also enact my marriage to all-encompassing emptiness, limitless self-realization' (91). Of the aristocrats, 'Prince Parantapa and Princesses Viśvapriyā and Lopāmudrā had also been present when [Śabarī] visited the Buddha' (91); their response to these ideas modified the plan. The following day, in Buddha's presence, Śabarī and Ananyā enacted a simple ritual whereby Ananyā was freed, 'restored to [her] timeless marriage to self and emptiness, mokṣa and nirvāṇa' (93), and then Lopāmudrā took the

ornaments which would later be offered at Sitā's kitchen shrine in Ayodhyā (94).

Ajita and Makkhali ask Ananyā to 'take to Ayodhyā this fist of hair also, defiant disbelief in divinity, pure power of probability; and let the dice it protects contend in the boweḷs of the earth with the jewels of faith you wanted to sow there, side by side. Two sets of seeds, let us see what Sītā's alchemy makes of them. You see your jewels blossoming into a new tree of life, don't you, Parantapa, Viśvapriyā, and Lopāmudrā, you skeptics of little faith! I see nihilism's dice sprouting into a series of mushroom clouds of climactic catastrophe!' (102), and with these words give her a bag of dice tied in 'a large patch of densely-knitted hair from the hem of the gown-like blanket of hair that [Ajita] wore' (101)—to match the ornament pouch made from a patch of Buddha's saffron. It is decided that both offerings would be given to the Divine Mother at Ayodhyā. The colloquium ends. An old man, who had stayed on to clean up after everybody because of a premonitory vision commanding him to stay, performs his purificatory task and then meditates. His attention is rewarded by 'a pair of pigeons on a low branch of the banyan, lost in the play of love. "Rāma, Sītā, Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā", he exclaimed in ecstasy, "the non-duality of love, the love of non-duality, that is your [Sītā's] truth." And then like a thunder-bolt, a hunter's speeding arrow struck and pierced and felled to the ground one of the lovers, leaving the other screaming in inconsolable grief' (106), reopening the timeless Rāmāyaṇa narrative yet another time and closing this attempt to re-read it.

Without trying here to summarize the colloquium itself, I note that one strand of the debate concerns the proper reading of the epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata. Ajita argues that 'Rāma's abandonment of Sītā . . . is the letting down of life by truth itself' (39) and that 'Kṛṣṇa engineers the total destruction of the Kauravas because of his special love for the Pāṇḍavas' (42–3). Taking the position that the Mahābhārata 'unmasks the duplicity of divinity and the meaninglessness of morality and secretly celebrates the frenzy of self-destruction' (53), he hopes that there will be sufficient strife 'to enable the best minds and hearts of Bhāratavarṣa in two or three millennia to join the best of the rest of the world in proposing, in the then obtaining ecologically devastated and militarily explosive and psychologically traumatized conditions of life, the final solution to the problem of life: global death' (39), and he urges his audience to immediately 'embrace the secret annihilationism of your tradition!' (39) and accelerate progress towards that desirable collective self-destruction.

At the theoretical heart of the debate is Buddha's response to Ajita's basic nihilist posture: 'Nothingness is not a *thing* in competition with other things. Indeed it is continuous with the heart of each thing which is also a not-thingness, like the selfhood of human personality which is also not a being in competition with other beings and things but the limitless

space of not-thingness, emptiness. The practice of compassion by human beings is a realization of the omnipresence of self or nothingness, and also a realization thus of their identity: the identity of self-realization and nirvāṇa which are not, Ajita, masks put on the terrifying face of nothingness, because nothingness, although no unreality, is no thing and not at all terrifying, being the heart of all things and ourselves. Only when we misconstrue nothingness as a limitless *something*, and misconstrue ourselves as limited *things*, does nothingness appear to us as a devouring, annihilatory, malevolence, and human consciousness congeals in fear in relation to its own monstrous misconception, hardening its heart towards life and the possibilities of civilization and realization and invites apocalypse.

'Do not declare war against reality, Ajita, because reality doesn't declare war against anything. The nihilism you preach and the self-centredness you pardon are caricatures of the pacifying compassion of nothingness and the joyous explosiveness of self-realization. But ... cynicism and doomsaying are great awakeners of conscience and consciousness and life from sleep and dream and complacency: so we are grateful to you, Ajita. May peace be with you' (44–45).

We note that Buddha is here presenting nothingness as a space which a host opens up for a guest, and thus as a relation continuous with the self of the guest and the self of the host, each of which can be self-aware only as a relationhood. We note also that he comes close—as close as the non-thanking Indian rhetorical system would let him—to offering direct thanks to Ajita for hosting such an important debate. Ramchandra Gandhi's Buddha is thus a preacher of guesthood and enables us to reread Hindu texts as hospitable.

The actual rereading is done in Gandhi's narrative by others. In response to Ajita's cynicism about Rāma, a paurāṇika present at the symposium offers his reading of the Rāmāyaṇa: 'Violating the hunter's code, a human being has killed a mating creature, and a curse spontaneously issues from the sage's lips ... Vālmīki ... finds that the metrical rhythm of his verse of curse is hauntingly beautiful. ... I see .. . tonight ... that the moral of this ... episode is that condemnation of ecological crime cannot be too harsh and that ecological sensitivity alone can provide the rhythm of language and thought necessary for telling and understanding the story of the divine couple' (49). 'The divine threesome—Rāma, Sītā, Lakṣmaṇa—are much happier in the forest in ecological harmony with nature.... So there they are in their forest home one afternoon . . . having recently enjoyed, with gratitude to life's generosity, and without gluttony or guilt, a meal of venison. Now suddenly enters into the narrative and Sītā's field of vision an incomparably beautiful deer ... who is in reality Mārīca' (50). Now, 'although the deer was a demon in disguise who merited death, the disguise had all the perfection of appearance; and, at the level of appearance at which

ordinary humanity lives, killing the animal would count as a violation of the hunter's code which forbade the taking of life beyond the necessity of nourishment, and remember our trinity had just finished a meal of deer flesh. ... I see it clearly now, that Rāma, Sītā and Laksmana decide to violate the hunter's code phenomenologically, i.e. to all appearances, rather than see life and civilization undermined by the fury of Rāvaṇa. And they are willing phenomenologically to pay the price for their apparent ecological indiscipline, so great is the importance of such discipline to the nature of things and the integrity of life. Thus it is that at the level of appearance, Sītā is abducted by Rāvaṇa; and at the end of the war, citizens of Ayodhyā are able to doubt her fidelity. . . . Rāma abandons Sītā ostensibly because of his subjects' skepticism regarding her chastity. But I see . . . that victory and reunion had not made Rāma and Sītā forget the killing of the golden deer. . . . Thus it is in kārmic reparation that Rāma and Sītā separate, and in order to strengthen the credibility of the ecological lesson they want their subjects and humanity in general to learn' (51).

And the rereading of the Mahābhārata is done by a Yādava woman, Viśvapriyā: 'the kṣatriya hero's war-weariness springs . . . from the realization that the complexity of evolving human society and technology is such that a just war can no longer be fought with honour even by the just. The luxury of even a moderately clean war is no longer available to the noblest warlords. Such was the case even with the Mahābhārata war. The old gallantries of limited tribal warfare were laughably unobservable in the context of the deadliness of new weaponry and the novelties of battle formations and the immensely complex consequences of victory or defeat.

The Pāṇḍavas could not abjectly surrender to the Kauravas and leave the earth to the mercy of human equivalents of mutants and demons. Nor could they hope to defeat the Kauravas with their hands tied to their backs by inapplicable rules of gallantry, as Krṣṇa knew. It is only by the grace and encouragement of the divine Śrī Krṣṇa that a narrow victory accrues to the Pāṇḍavas after an inevitably brutally fought and unavoidably rules-flouting battle. The Pāṇḍavas barely survive. . . . It is again by the grace of Krṣṇa that some Yādavas survive the clan's self-slaughtering spree.... I see divine compassion and warning in all this, not annihilationist destructiveness, Master Ajita. . . . call modern warfare's bluff ... Krṣṇa is saying to those who can hear: it has lost aboriginal innocence, it is not an honourable game any more, it cannot frame rules which it will not flout. Prevent war, therefore, not because war has always been wrong, but because it can never be gallant again. . . . Master Ajita, . . . do not . . . slander the cowherd of Vṛndāvana and the lover of humanity who cared more for the survival of life and peace and joy on earth than antiquated rules of prehistoric war games!' (60–61).

I have not tried to summarize the course of the debate, nor even to

present all the important material pertaining to the enterprise of rereading the epics in terms of the thematics of guesthood. I prefer to focus on passages that strike me as crucial in the context of the development of Gandhi's work. Hence this rather selective portrayal of the details of how the text of *Sita's Kitchen* unpacks what I see as its programme.

III

Establishment philosophy in contemporary India gravitates towards an Anglicist pole and an Orientalist pole. Anglicizers are so caught within the formal phase of critical philosophy that they are unable to even read, let alone respond to, any post-formal work. Orientalizers are guilty of uncritical complicity with the Western orientalist project, in the sense which Said's (1978) well-known critique attaches to the term Orientalist; consequently, they do not see it as a task of modern Indian philosophers to open up and critically reread India's narrative texts. One consequence is that no major variety of modern Indian philosophizing, of the kind practised in the university departments, has offered any theoretically well-founded resistance to fundamentalism. (Some readers will object that many people situated in such departments are on the 'left' and thus immune to this charge; to see why I regard such readers as examples of illiteracy in high places, it may be useful to read Dasgupta (1993) which includes an analysis of the complicity between the 'left' and fundamentalism within the modern episteme in India.) Thus *Sita's Kitchen* is unlikely to be received comprehendingly, or as an even potentially welcome guest, by professional practitioners of philosophy in this country, as things—rather lamentably—stand.

However, there is some reason to believe that the truly sensitive and serious rethinking about our thinking, which is going on outside professional philosophical milieux in present-day India, will offer a better reception to a book like this. Such a reception will of course include the normal measure of initial hostility and incomprehension. But our para-Parisian literati are sufficiently imbued with the Franco-German rebirth of Buddhism (in the guise of intellectuality) to be likely to respond, one way or another, to what *Sita's Kitchen* does at the Buddhist/Hindu interface. It is perhaps through such readings of this book that the philosophy profession will eventually discover and come to terms with *Sita's Kitchen* in particular and post-formal work in general. Such a coming to terms may take the form of opening up the major philosophical discourses of contemporary India—Anglicism and Orientalism—to the serious and usable process of critique that one normally calls 'dialogue'.

IV

It is not an accident that I have to imagine philosophers coming to

understand *Sita's Kitchen* via their literary colleagues discovering it first. In our times, the theory of language has shifted from the word-oriented perspective (which ended with Wittgenstein) to a metatextual one which requires a displacement of concept thinking by image thinking for principled reasons. To the extent that language is central to modern philosophizing, it is to be expected, then, that there should be a difficult and protracted transition while philosophy catches up with the new thinking about language initiated by literary, linguistic, and social scientific thinkers over the last few decades. This is especially natural because philosophers continue to think, with Locke, that their discipline should play hand-maiden to something or other, and thus should always be catching up with other disciplines. Suppose we accept this attitude. Then the point is that, once philosophers *finish* catching up with the overall transition from concept thinking to image thinking (see Dasgupta 1992 for discussion), it will become possible to see that *Sita's Kitchen*, a body of dialogical narrative imaginarily treating of epic texts central to Indian traditions, is not an exercise at the boundary between philosophy and some literary or religious 'applied' domain, but is as pure a piece of philosophizing—given the shift of perspective we are all taking part in—as the late twentieth century is capable of producing. The book is, in several senses, a *pièce de résistance*.

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CHHATRAPATI SINGH, *Law From Anarchy to Utopia*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1985, xxi + 299 pages, Rs.170.

The book under review has a long subtitle and also a long Preface intended to explain the basic approach of the book. I would therefore start with commenting upon the approach and then present a summary of the author's views followed by some concluding remarks.

The author states that the book is an attempt at reestablishing the wisdom and advancing the depth of our own traditional understanding

of the idea of law (p. v). A meaningful theory of law, the author believes, should ask fundamental metaphysical or transcendental questions about law (p. vi) though he finds that unfortunately most western thinkers nowadays avoid probing into foundational questions. He presents a critique of western thinkers, primarily to prepare a ground for developing a theory of law which he claims has its roots in traditional Indian wisdom.

But when one goes through the book, one finds that neither the critique nor the author's own theory is grounded in Indian thought. In fact, it did not have to be so but for the author's pronouncement that his work is typically Indian. Although he says that the occurrence of Indian concepts in this work is not just referential but substantial (p. ix), surprisingly, he does not think it necessary to quote any Indian text in the entire work nor even to list major classical Indian texts in the Bibliography, which contains a long list of works of western thinkers right from Plato to Kripke. The book of 262 pages carries hardly 20 pages wherein Indian concepts are discussed and wherever discussed contain questionable theses. The author's fundamental approach itself is problematic in this regard. He says that his work derives its source from *Dharmaśāstra* for the concept of *dharma*, *Sāṃkhya* philosophy for the conception of possible world thesis, *Advaita Vedānta* for the conception of self, *Nyāya* including *Navya-Nyāya* for its epistemology, and finally Buddhism for its ethics (pp. xiv–xv). Now, this is not an obvious proposition and the author has not attempted at proving its tenability either. Is it a matter of our arbitrary choice to believe in Sāṃkhyan ontology while not accepting its epistemology but of *Nyāya* and, further, not accepting Naiyāyika ethics but that of Buddhism? After all each philosophical system has its own theoretical framework; its epistemology, metaphysics and ethics remain interwoven with each other. To accept one aspect of a philosophical system and to reject another one which is conceptually related to it, needs some rational consideration. One cannot assume that any combination of ideas drawn from various systems is good enough to make a consistent theory. In what way is the concept of *Dharma* as conceived in *Dharmaśāstra* tradition compatible with Buddhist ethics? I think the author should have and could have avoided advancing such a thesis without considering the implications it involves.

The author further contends that he has tried to present a true philosophy of law by working out the transcendental conditions of law. Now, if the endeavour is to work out the transcendental conditions of law, conditions that make law possible, certainly there cannot be anything like *Indian* or *Western* philosophy of law; there can only be the philosophy of law, there would just be one rational conception of a legal order. If Singh is using the word 'transcendental' in purely Kantian sense, he cannot relate it to any metaphysics whatsoever, and if he is using the word transcendental in a different sense, which he sometimes does, then the situation is all the more complicated. In fact while working out what he

terms as the transcendental conditions of law, he *presupposes* a set of metaphysical concepts and in fact also maintains that in order to comprehend the deepest reasons for any phenomenon, a return to metaphysics is inevitable.

Now, one might believe in a particular metaphysics and then present legal order as a part of the world order conceived therein. In fact, the entire western tradition has precisely attempted only this kind of enterprise before the advent of legal positivism in the 19th century. One cannot understand Plato's views on law unless one has already comprehended his metaphysical standpoint. So is the case with Aquinas. The problem with this kind of approach is that since legal order is conceived as a part of the world order, with the rejection of that conception of world view the idea of law too loses its ground or support. And since it is theoretically difficult to provide sound arguments in favour of choosing one metaphysical theory in preference to the other one, it has generally led thinkers to present conceptions of law or justice independent of an a priori commitment to a metaphysical theory. Those engaged in such an activity are not doing philosophy of law unphilosophically as the author thinks they do (p. vi).

Further, what intrigues me is that the author seems to have little patience with serious thinkers the way he summarily dismisses their views. I can spot more than twenty remarks made regarding others' views which are either factually incorrect or are obviously incorrect at the level of thought. But that would take me too long. However I would like to consider two examples. Commenting upon the recent trend of avoiding metaphysical questions about law the author says '. . . the evolution of legal positivism is not unrelated to the evolution of logical positivism. The latter's polemics against metaphysics have affected the methodology of all social sciences, including theorizing about law' (p. vi). This is factually incorrect because Bentham and Austin were 19th century thinkers and hence their methodology could not have been affected by logical positivism which is a 20th century movement. Even if we concede that the development of legal positivism in the 20th century particularly Kelsen's theory of law has been affected by logical positivism upto a certain extent, this concession would not support the author's stand because he treats Austin and Bentham as the dominant thinkers of legal positivism. He says '. . . as against the dominant legal positivism which bases law on the will of some people . . .' (p. ix). This certainly is a Benthamite-Austinian conception of law and not a Kelsenian conception which treats law as a system of rules.

Secondly, while presenting a critical assessment of Hart's views the author says 'the secondary rules, which are rules of recognition, change and adjudication are according to Hart, "Matters of fact"' (p. 97). The idea of a secondary rule plays a very crucial role in Hart's theory and hence the need to understand it properly. The above statement referred

to as made by Hart (The concept of law, p.107) does not say anything about the rules of change and adjudication (which is another factual error the author makes) but only about the rule of recognition which is the ultimate rule of a legal system. Hart in fact says that the rule of recognition is fundamental and different from all other rules of the system in that it provides the ultimate criteria for validation of all the rules of the system. And since all the rules of the system are validated with reference to this ultimate rule, it itself cannot be validated by reference to any other rule. Hence its validity is to be accepted as a fact; it is not that the rule itself is a fact. This misunderstanding leads the author to make such an unjustifiable charge against Hart that he confuses norm with a fact. I wish he had been more careful in his treatment of others' views. The worth of what he had to present as his own contribution would have remained the same in any case. In order to present the author's own positive conclusions, I now proceed to present a summary of the book.

In Part I of the book the author works out three formal requirements of law which make it a system. He believes that in law its formal aspect is necessarily linked with its material aspect. In order to be a system, it is necessary that propositions of law are internally correlated. This correlation is revealed in a hierarchy wherein the particular propositions of law can be deduced from the basic or foundational propositions. Secondly, the system should be complete formally, morally or substantially and should also be complete in its application. Thirdly, all the propositions of law should be consistent with each other. He further suggests that the concept of logic as far as it denotes a study of formal relationship between propositions is inadequate for the study of law since the latter necessarily involves moral relationships (p. 34). He substitutes the concept of *Nyāya* which is a word denoting both logic as well as justice. The concept is introduced but is not worked out in detail.

Part II deals with the normative requirements of a system. Here a distinction is drawn between a normative and a factual discourse. Normative propositions are concerned with 'feats'. A feat is a possibility that is actualized when a conscious being acts in accordance with a norm. A fact is that whose existence is not dependent upon the activities of human beings. The author then works out five requirements—material, heuristic, hermeneutical, teleological and epistemological which need to be satisfied for a system to be normative. Among them, the epistemological requirements of a normative system are worked out in detail and that forms the best part of the book.

In Part III while discussing the epistemological status of legal propositions, the author contends that they are synthetic a priori propositions. He firstly tries to make clear three distinction—those of synthetic–analytic, a posteriori–a priori and contingent– necessary. He discusses the well known Quinean argument against synthetic–analytic distinction and concludes that the Quinean argument does not prove

that there are no synthetic a priori propositions, it only shows that propositions whose truth is based on experience are corrigible. Thus Quine's thesis is true only if empiricism is true for all types of propositions. But if there are other types of propositions, and legal propositions are of the other kind whose truth can be justified in a way other than by grounding them in sense experience or for whom transcendental justification can be given, Quinean arguments will not be applicable to them.

At present it is not my task to examine this controversial issue. Here it should suffice to note as to what precisely the author understands by the notions of analytic–synthetic, a priori-a posteriori and necessary-contingent. For him an a priori statement is that (1) Whose truth cannot be justified by appealing to experience, or (2) whose truth requires a transcendental justification (p. 67). An analytic statement is that (1) wherein the predicate is contained in the subject, and (2) which cannot be denied without contradiction (p. 67). A necessary statement is that (1) which cannot be rationally rejected, (2) whose truth must be assumed to make some experience actual, (3) whose truth must be assumed to make other propositions true, and (4) which is known with certainty. The opposites of all these statements are characteristics of the opposite notions of syntheticity, a posteriori and contingency. It is important to notice here that for Singh the impossibility of contradiction is a characteristic feature of analytical statement and not of a necessary statement.

In accordance with the specific meanings which he attaches to these concepts, the author contends that legal propositions are synthetic a priori propositions. He selects three legal propositions regarding the law of citizenship, the law regarding freedom of expression and the law of amendment. The law of expression says that 'everyone has a fundamental right to freedom of expression'. It is a synthetic proposition because, (1) the negation of the proposition does not result in a self-contradiction, and (2) the notion of speaking is not a part of the notion of freedom. But a necessary connection holds between freedom and expression. This necessity cannot be established by convention. The necessity has to be justifiably established and can be done so only by presenting some transcendental arguments. The author does present such an argument. The crux of the argument is this: Law is an enterprise that makes rational interaction possible. Reason requires freedom; freedom for its actualization needs expression. Hence, a legal system in order to be a system must grant freedom of expression.

The author says that all basic legal propositions of law assert a necessary relation between legal subject and a legal object. These basic synthetic a priori propositions of law organize and give structure to a normatively possible world. They are neither derivable from experience nor are they propositions of law of nature. So the author concludes that

his theory is neither positivistic nor a natural law theory. It is Kantian because here we see reason applied to practical discourse; it is an amendment to Kantian theory because for Kant synthetic a priori propositions which belong to moral and legal discourse only regulate our knowledge of the moral realm whereas the author contends that they are also constitutive principles of the social realm (p. 93).

Part IV deals with what the author terms as juristic requirement of a normative system. He deals with four questions:

1) What conditions make legal system possible?
2) What conditions make it actual?
3) What conditions maintain its continuity? and
4) What makes it efficacious?

In answer to the first two questions the author works out what he terms as the transcendental, metaphysical conditions of law.

Following Leibniz, the author says that man as a moral agent like God is in the end obliged to do the same thing as God, i.e. to create the best of all possible worlds. As a rational being it is his obligation, though its fulfilment may be problematic because of the finitude of human beings. Since each free will desires to create its own system, i.e. to mould the world in accordance with its understanding, the best of all normatively possible worlds will be one which maximizes the possibility for varied creative activities, or maximizes freedom and harmony or maximum compossible normative artifacts. A legal system does precisely that (p. 139). Hence it follows that a legal system is not a relative necessity of a society; it is its absolute necessity. We, as rational agents, have the obligation to create the best normatively possible world; we have an obligation to create a *Utopia*, this constitutes the transcendental condition of law; the condition which makes law possible.

To answer the question 'What conditions make law actual?', we have to work out the metaphysical conditions of law. [According to the author the possibility conditions are 'transcendental' conditions of law (p. 119) and actuality conditions are metaphysical (p. 120) ones.] The author says that the idea of coercion is extraneous to law. A legal system presupposes co-operation among people and, since co-operation is non-coercive, so is law. The author says that this idea of law is the idea of *dharma* (p. 196). As the two dimensions of practical reason law and ethics have a common foundation; in both the realms freedom is presupposed. When an agent legislates for himself, it is ethical law; when two or more than two agents mutually legislate for themselves they are enacting legal laws. (Thus ethics is internal morality; law is external morality.) Man has a dignity in being a self legislating member in a 'Kingdom of Ends'. Man and God are of the same kind, the difference is that of degree. Man too is divine holy will (p. 211). Being divine, evil is accidental to human nature. This concept of man, is the concept of *ātman*. Kant's dictum, 'treat everyone

as an end in himself' means, 'treat everyone as an *ātman*' (p. 212). Only that system (and no other system) is a legal system which treats its subjects as persons having dignity (p. 213).

I think what the author terms as transcendental conditions of law can well be treated as those presuppositions (of the possibility of law) which reflect the author's own conception of man and his role in this world, that man is *the* creator and legislator of his own world which is normative in nature. The rest of the analysis presented in the concluding part of the book is an extension of this conception. The book ends with these conclusions: (1) law has its own fundamental synthetic a priori propositions (p. 253); (2) since fundamental legal propositions are provided by reason, epistemological rationalism is the only viable theory of law (p. 253); (3) this work is neo-Kantian (p. 260); (4) it presents the idea of law as the idea of *dharma* (p. 262).

The first two conclusions will be acceptable to all those who contensd that the task of a legal philosopher is to present the a priori concept of law. As to the classical controversy whether law or the principles of law are to be formulated a priori by reason or they are to be founded upon generalizations based upon understanding of actual functioning of legal systems, I would like to reserve my opinion. However, it is clear that the author takes one standpoint and maintains it throughout his work. Granting that his is a viable theory, I would like to point out that the theory remains a formal one. That all human activities should spring from reason is a proposition obviously acceptable to all rational beings. But, reason when applied to practical affairs, in concrete situations, might take many directions and again we find ourselves in need of a criteria to opt for one direction rather than another. Now, if we say that reason should help us optimize our freedom, that again is a non-controversial proposition but, what laws, procedures and situations will promote freedom is difficult to determine. 'That we have an obligation to create the best normatively possible world' cannot be a debatable issue but what is best and in what matter can it be achieved is debatable. Anyone having even a little acquaintance with the functioning of a legal system knows that the problem is not so much about fundamental principles as about their application in concrete cases.

Since the author has presented a more detailed and elaborate formal structure of a legal system, it is only in this sense, I would like to treat this work as an extension to Kantian legal theory. But, this is not an exposition of the idea of law as the idea of *dharma* as the author contends. In our tradition *dharma*, in the context of law, does not mean 'non coercive moral order' as the author says (p. 196). Nor do I think that the Kantian concept of man as a free rational agent, individually legislating for himself or collectively legislating for the community goes well with our traditional dharmaśāstric conception of man and his role in the social structure. As a regulative principle of cosmic order as well as social order,

dharma is not something whose source can be a *human being.* The Kantian concept of man and dharmaśāstric concept of man seem compatible to the author but he has nowhere tried to prove their compatibility.

There are a lot of mistakes in the transliteration of Sanskrit terms. The term *Ātman, Manusmṛti, Jñāna, pramāṇaśāstra, Yājñavalkya* have been transliterated by the author as ataman (p. xv), Manusmriti (p. xiv), Jnyanan (p. xv), pramansastra (p. xvi), yagyavalika (p. ix) which reveals the non-use of diacritical marks as well as the spelling errors which need to be corrected.

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J.L. MEHTA *Philosophy and Religion: Essays in Interpretation,* Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1990.

The appreciation of Professor Mehta's book requires familiarity not only with the wide spectrum of Indian and Western philosophy but also with the German phenomenological trend, especially Hermeneutics. The book consists of the following lectures delivered by him from 1970 to 1988, at various universities in India and abroad:

1. Heidegger and the Comparison of Indian Western Philosophy
2. In Memorium: Martin Heidegger
3. World Civilization: The Possibility of Dialogue
4. A Stranger from Asia
5. My Years at the Center for the Study of World Religions—Some Reflections
6. Philosophy, Philology and Empirical Knowledge
7. The Hindu Tradition: The Vedic Root
8. Sri Aurobindo: Life, Language and Yoga
9. Science, Conversation and Wholeness
10. Bhakti in Philosophical Perspective
11. Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana: Poet of Being and Becoming
12. Modernity and Tradition
13. Life Worlds, Sacrality and Interpretative Thinking
14. The Discoverage of Violence in the Mahābhārata
15. The Ṛg-Veda: Text and Interpretation

As the book is posthumously published, one fails to understand why the collection does not include Mehta's last lecture, given a month before he died, at Harvard on 'Problems of Understanding' which not only sums up his whole vision regarding the nature and method of

philosophy but also gives a new dimension to some of the basic concepts of Indian tradition and culture. The book is rightly entitled '*Philosophy and Religion*', for it focuses more or less on the related themes and issues. While one can notice the cumulative impact of certain issues on the one hand, on the other one also finds at places the lack of compactness of argument or counter-argument in favour of or against some crucial thesis.

On the nature of philosophy and its mode of inquiry, Mehta is highly influenced by Heidegger. Mehta's contribution to western tradition by his understanding of Heidegger and Gadamer's Hermeneutics and to East by applying the latter notion to Indian tradition is well-known. Besides, his proposal for future prospect of research for Indian scholars in terms of seeking out, reviving and reinterpreting the forgotton foundations of the text and tradition, is remarkable in the history of Indian thought. More precisely, his innovative attempt in the book consists in showing:

  i. How Heidegger's philosophic hermeneutic method is appropriate in modern times in India;
  ii. how the method has already been used in the understanding of ancient Indian texts and/or tradition.

The important point, however, is that his admiration of Heidegger does not prevent him from offering some counter Heideggerian proposals, for example, his thesis of:

  a) the viability of Indian Philosophy, and
  b) the possibility of synthesis or comparison of the two traditions.

In more concrete terms, Mehta's attempt here lies in showing the untenability of Heidegger's refutation of Hegel, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche's attempt at interpreting and translating Indian texts or tradition. In his view the study of Ṛg-Vedic hymns as well as Bhakti tradition in western categories gives new illumination and 'a breath of fresh air and fragrance'. One can see its illustration in Mehta's attempt at showing the unitary conception of man on the basis of western conception. Moreover, his claim of 'feeling' as a prerequisite of 'knowing' and 'willing' on the basis of *Bhāgavat Purāṇ*, not only gives a clue to a counter-proposal of Professor K.C. Bhattacharyya's well-known thesis of three alternative absolutes, but also shows how the underlying root of Bhakti can be philosophically formulated in the light of modern phenomenological terminology.

The present review article is divided into two parts. Part I gives a brief outline of Mehta's views on the concept of philosophy, the method of philosophy, i.e. hermeneutics, comparative philosophy and the relevance of philosophic hermeneutics to Indian philosophy.

In the second part of the present article some general problems have

been indicated along with the various possibilities and their implications in respect of:

a) Heidegger's approach to Eastern and Western thought and
b) Mehta's response to it in terms of the possibility of comparative philosophy.

While explicating Mehta's views, instead of citing quotations from the book, his own terminology and expressions have been used.

PART I

Professor Mehta while agreeing with Heidegger:

i. On the nature and method of philosophy, where the task of philosophy is a hermeneutical dealing more or less with the understanding and interpretation of a text in the modern altered situation, rather than construing a system or providing argument and counter-argument, i.e. ratiocination in favour of a thesis or counter-thesis, and

ii. (Unlike Hegel) in believing that the beginning of a thought is always the richest while subsequent philosophy is an expression of a latent possibility,

disagrees with Heidegger on his notion of Europeanization of Earth where philosophy is essentially western having its roots in Greece.

On the contrary, for Mehta, Indian philosophy, like western philosophy too, is a culture-bound unending process where no interpretation should be considered as an interpretation once for all. Mehta rejects any attempt of a parrot-like repetition of text. That makes the past text dead, fixed or a closed phenomenon. The question why Heidegger thought that there was no Indian philosophy, is considered by Mehta. He suggests two possible reasons:

(i) that there is no place for ratiocination and argumentation in Indian thinking,
(ii) that it is devoid of historical sense or a sense of historical process.

In answer to the first objection, Mehta says that Indian philosophical tradition, like its western counterpart, has remained constantly busy in the dialectic and creative appropriation throughout its history by various acts of interpretation and understanding. In his view, the 'Brahman' or 'Ātman' can be treated as a ground-word of Indian tradition just as the concept of 'Being' is treated in the western tradition by Heidegger. Besides, for Mehta, the Indian tradition has also been characterized by an energetic pre-occupation with the question of ultimate reality with the world, with the criterion and categories of knowledge and with the elaboration of a refined conceptuality and availability of rational dialogue in the form of precise argument and counter-argument among Indian

philosophical theories and systems.

In answer to the second objection, Professor Mehta, while agreeing with Heidegger's objection, asserts that Indians did not seek to objectify their past by recording it in the sense of a chronologically ordered narrative. This, however, does not mean that Indians had no true history or had no awareness of the past. One can see an inner logic that governs the three millennia of religious change and thinking in the Indian heritage. In fact this inner logic or the thread running unbroken from the Vedic times to the present consists of the dimensions of the holy human living and gives a sense of unity and historic continuity to the tradition.

Philosophy for Mehta is a process which occurs in time and thus is always, not only, culture-and-tradition-bound but also experimental and changing in nature. It is a process of finding or creating a new opening for itself. For him philosophical thinking can be seen either (i) as a process of thinking which has *already been* thought; in this sense philosophical thinking is necessarily treated as a historical process or/ and is identified with the history of philosophy, or (ii) as a process of thinking which is *yet to be* thought. Philosophy in the former sense is embodied in the classics of philosophic literature, which may be seen as a subject for scholarship whether they are ordered as a history of philosophy as is done in the West or as constituting horizontal synchronic systems as is done in the Indian philosophical traditions. Since the sources of information in the latter case are themselves standards of scholarly mastery of classical texts, philosophy may be regarded as empirically gathered cumulative knowledge. In this conception of philosophy the dividing line between philosophy and poetry becomes blurred. Thus in his views, the poetics, semiotics and rhetorics all are constituent of philosophical thinking. For, they all help in reading an ancient text afresh and thus provide a variety of interpretations such as linguistic, ritualistic, philological, mystical, symbolic, Marxist, phenomenological, etc. As a consequence, the enterprise of philosophy becomes interdisciplinary in character and gets close to or takes help from poetry, rhetoric, sociology, psychology, linguistics, psycho-analysis, cultural anthropology and religious studies, etc. Obviously, this notion of philosophy goes against that notion of philosophy which dominated the history of thought for centuries. According to this, philosophy is not only different from empirical knowledge or empirical sciences but it is also different from poetry and rhetoric. It is not clear as to what Mehta means by the other aspect of philosophy in which philosophy is identified with a process or something which is still to be thought? Obviously, it cannot be equated with the view of philosophy as systematic thinking or a problem-solving enterprise. Rather, the other aspect seems to be identical with the aspect in which philosophy is considered as a thinking already thought. But contrary to Heidegger's views, Mehta thinks that there is an

intercultural phenomenon and hence philosophic hermeneutics is relevant or appropriate to Indian tradition. But in order to maintain this, Mehta thinks that one will have to show that:

a) Indian philosophy is philosophy proper,
b) philosophy can be equated with the history of philosophy and thus can be treated as empirical knowledge, and
c) that philosophy as history of philosophy is also systematic philosophy.

Prof. Mehta advocates philosophic hermeneutics as a valid mode of Indian philosophy. Hermeneutics as a mode of inquiry is accepted by Gadamer, Dilthey, Nietzsche, Heidegger and various other thinkers. The aim of this inquiry for Mehta in general is to find out what the philosophical implications of understanding are, i.e. it deals with the question, what is it, to understand or translate or reinterpret something, specially a text of another culture or even if some culture but that of distant past, in present altered life situation.

Prof. Mehta applied this general inquiry to a specific case, i.e. to the Indian context. This hermeneutic approach, according to him, is the most appropriate mode of inquiry for Indian philosophy. Although Mehta has talked about the various advantages of this approach at various places, the following three can be considered as the most important ones:

a) first, it escapes the trap of choosing between tradition and modernity,
b) secondly, it overcomes the idea that only a specific style of thought can be called philosophy, while other areas of the thinking may have to do with science, religion, or poetry.
c) thirdly, in Mehta's view it releases us from the metaphysical thought and its complications and gives predominance to language.

Here it is not clear how far this latter aspect, i.e. language, relates his views to the western twentieth century movement called analytic philosophy or philosophy of linguistic analysis. If it does so, how does it go with the second advantage where philosophy due to its interdisciplinary nature is identified with poetry, religion, semantics or spirituality etc.

Comparative philosophy for Mehta is a recent phenomenon arisen as an outcome of the encounter and fusion of alien intellectual worlds of different cultures, civilizations, languages or philosophies, i.e., an encounter in the form of explicit elucidation or self-awareness of the presuppositions and prejudices in scholarly translations or studies of the texts of the East by the West or vice versa. The approach of Mehta and Mohanty may be seen as a paradigmatic case of such an understanding. In Mehta's view, comparative philosophy emerges only when a scholarly attempt is made to comprehend in a language proper to one's own

tradition, a text of another tradition, written in a language specific to that tradition. The advantage of this way of doing comparative philosophy for Mehta is to show the nature of the projection from the present to the past or the various ways of approaching one tradition from the viewpoint of another. Besides, it also gives rise to the emergence of new questions by the encounter of two traditions and thus helps in showing how the past is relevant to the present. If it is so, then, the question arises as to what is the difference between philosophic hermeneutics and comparative philosophy, for both show the relevance and revival of the past into the present altered situation. It may be argued that philosophic hermeneutics is a mode of inquiry or a method while comparative philosophy is not a method but indicates a content, a subject-matter or a discipline emerging as an outcome of the encounter of cultures, traditions, languages, religions or philosophies for which philosophic hermeneutics can be an appropriate methodology. But for Heidegger comparative philosophy does not mean an inter-cultural phenomenon since, according to him, there is no culture other than Greek or European or Western culture.

In the article 'The Hindu tradition, the Vedic Roots' and the related articles Mehta says that the Vedas are fundamental *sui generis* texts of Hindu tradition, not written by man. They consist of a topology of transcendence. They form a collection of hymns and mantras which are given by God to various deities and are composed and articulated in verbal form by different rishis—seers or poets—at different times. According to Mehta, Vedas are not the only source of each and every aspect of thought of Indian culture but they have also given rise to different commentaries and interpretation in each age right from the *Nirukta* of Yaska of 4th century BC to post-modern Indian and Western interpretations in terms of structuralism or deconstruction. Mehta has mentioned in this connection various names from Max Mueller to Dayanand Saraswati. Professor Daya Krishna could also have been mentioned as one who is currently engaged in an attempt of philosophical interpretation of the tradition.

However, by pointing out the series of interpretations, Mehta tries to show that the Vedic mantras have still something new and important to say to us even in our altered world of thought, sensibility and religious consciousness, i.e., it seems to offer ample scope for various kinds of explorations such as ritualistic, philological, indological, poetic, etc., where the interpreter's activity is determined largely by the contemporary state of his thinking and the general milieu in which he thinks. Yet this does not allow one to twist the meaning of a text or to interpret the text in any arbitrary way.

But it seems that despite the opacity in textual meaning, the phonological (or pronouncement) aspect of chanting the mantras for a specific purpose is immune to any sort of change or altered situation. Interestingly in the context of Veda only, it seems problematic as to how

to reconcile the two demands: the need of re-interpretation of the ancient tradition, to make it alive in the contemporary world and the demand of the tradition that the interpreters of sacred texts have to fulfil the requirement of *Sādhan chatuṣṭaya* (साधन चतुष्टय) should one re-define the concept of साधन चतुष्टय in the modern philosophical terminology (or even in the modern life situation), who can be qualified to undertake such an exercise? Is it one who has mastered the tradition, i.e., the original text and also has deep understanding of western conceptual framework? Besides, it seems that in this process of interpretation we have to preserve a radical distinction, in the light of core of the tradition, between epistemic status of a text like Veda which are not man-made and other texts which are man-made like Rāmāyana, Smṛtīs or even *Padārthatatva Nirūpana* of Raghunath Śiromani or *Tractatus* of Wittgenstein.

In the paper 'Modernity and Tradition' Mehta seems to argue that these are not two opposite poles but are rather complementary in nature. For every act of interpretation makes an ancient text alive or nurtured, as seen earlier, by carrying it forward from one historical epoch to another just by translating or re-interpreting the ancient into contemporary thinking. If, for example, a scholar of Tulsidas takes it out of its own tradition confinement and applies to it what is being done in modern literary theory and criticism then he enables us to make Tulsidas relevant in the current altered religious consciousness and thereby sustain the continuity of its own tradition. Here, it is not clear in what sense Mehta defines modernity? Does it indicate a category which divides the history of thought into pre-modern, modern and post-modern i.e., that which is marked as a new beginning or break with the past age of faith and which begins in the western history after 1500 AD and continues till the end of the 18th century, which ultimately culminated in the Europeanization or secularization or in a state of disenchantment or loss of meaning or feeling of homelessness and was renamed in Heideggerian terminology as a state of technicity or technology? Or is modernity that which is not necessarily westernization, but rather a moving in the direction of an increasing awareness of alternative choices? Are both these meanings in Mehta's views ultimately one and the same? This remains unclear.

Besides the Rg-Veda Samhitā, the *bhakti* tradition is the other paradigmatic case mentioned by Mehta, to substantiate his claim of the relevance of philosophic hermeneutics as a mode of inquiry in the Indian philosophic context. In his paper 'The Bhakti Tradition in Philosophic Perspective', Mehta not only re-interpreted *bhakti* in terms of one's own metaphysics and theology but has pointed out an unending need of a fresh effort at reinterpretation in each *yuga*. Besides, *bhakti* for Professor Mehta is an expression of *Rasa* which implies wholeness, i.e., a wholeness or the totality of human being which consists in the unity of all the three-fold aspects of the nature of man, i.e., knowing, feeling and willing. In

other words, *bhakti* is a mode of relationship with the highest/ultimate reality in which man's being is concentrated in its wholeness.

Mehta says that *bhakti* manifests itself in the day-to-day life of man. For him, *bhakti* is an inspiration to move, to live, to act morally and, above all, to provide a vision of life and its meaningfulness. Thus, for him, there is in *bhakti* an inseparability of creative philosophical reflection and radical change in our experience or in our encounter with life as personally lived. Thus Caitanya's life itself is a living embodiment and the primary text on *bhakti*. To show the relevance of philosophic hermeneutics to the *bhakti* tradition Mehta indicates that many of the basic terms relating *bhakti*, such as *brija, go, gopa, rāsa, gopī, ānanda*, etc., came from the originative *word* of the Rg-Veda Samhitā, and the *Bhāgawat Purāna*, a supreme literary text on *bhakti* which in its style and organization, retrieves and re-appropriates the Vedas after one and a half millennia creatively. In fact, after Caitanya there developed a new literary form in our religious history which showed the need of re-interpretation of the central key concepts of Bhakti in the world of changed religious consciousness. In this regard he has also mentioned the task of the six Vrindavan Goswamis who were charged by Caitanya himself to enshrine *bhakti* by:

a) codifying Vaisnava religious practice and rituals;
b) codifying a new *smṛti* to govern Vaisnavas living;
c) creating or re-appropriating Vaisnava theology and
d) formulating a new metaphysical framework and examination of the new religious ideas and
e) creating a new science of taxonomy of *bhakti* or *Rasa*, or in modern terminology, a need of creating a taxonomy of *bhakti* as *Rasa* based on modern linguistico-analytic technology of philosophy.

This shows that Caitanya, an incarnation of *bhakti* itself, felt the constant need or call for a fresh reading in the altered religious consciousness, in a world equipped with the advancement of more technical and precise knowledge. The need of saints like Caitanya or Tulsidas is not only for the revival of the holy places, or *tirthas* which have been lost but also for redefining of certain basic concepts of tradition according to the altered life situation, e.g. (a) one can see this phenomenon of change in the conception of duties of household or even in the path of self-realization (e.g. in the latter case, i.e. seeking absolutes is not in these times, i.e. in Kaliyuga, as hard as it was in the earlier times, i.e. in Sat, Treta or Dvaparayuga, a division of time scale of tradition). (b) This phenomenon of change can also be seen in Tulsidas's attempt at re-interpreting or translating the Valmiki *Rāmāyana*, written in Sanskrit, into *loka bhāshā* according to the need of the time so as to make it more meaningful for and accessible to the masses. (c) Mehta's own attempt at giving a phenomenological analysis of the concept of *bhakti* is also indicative of this phenomenon of change by providing a new dimension, or beginning

in the understanding of *bhakti* tradition in the 20th century perspective. Besides, he has also tried to justify c(*i*) his unitary conception of man of the tradition in terms of cognitive, conative and affective aspects through the modern western philosophic reflection in terms of feeling, knowing and willing, by showing that no willing is possible if not guided by some knowing and feeling, and no feeling is possible without being accompanied by knowing and willing, and no knowing which is not determined in part by feeling and willing. Thus there is no sharp distinction between body, mind, heart and intellect.

It seems that Mehta's model of unitary nature of humans could have also been supported by the following two contentions of the traditions:

First, the Sāṃkhyan model of *triguṇa* is very similar to the unitary conception of man. In the Sāṃkhya system the three *guṇas*—*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*—work mutually; none of them exists alone. We cannot conceive *sattva* without *tamas* or *rajas*, or *rajas* without *tamas* and *sattva*, i.e. all three ontologically constitute the same nature or *prakṛti*. The difference may be understood as valuational but not ontological.

Secondly, the concept of the wholeness of individual could have been substantiated by another idea available in tradition and which in modern western terminology could be interpreted in terms of a transcendental deduction of the three-fold nature of man, i.e. knowing, willing and feeling (emotive, cognitive and affective) aspect from the three-fold aspect of Brahman, i.e. *sat, cit* and *ānanda.* Among these three aspects of Brahman the last is also called Ālhādini Śakti or blissful power of the ultimate reality. Parallel to this picture of world-soul we can conceive of *jiva* or individual soul where the latter is considered as part or '*ansh*' of the former. Although the three characteristics of individual unlike ultimate is always in finitude, till it submerges in the former which can be understood as transcendental ground of it. It also seems that the well-known three paths of attaining the Absolute namely *jnāna-mārg, karma-mārg,* and *bhakti-mārg* are based on the triple aspect of human soul and are ultimately ontologically grounded in it, i.e. word-soul. c(*ii*) Mehta, however, points out that among the three, feeling provides the basic attunement of what is and so constitutes a ground for various modes of knowing and willing. Here feeling is not understood as a psychological inner agitative emotion, rather it is taken in a metaphysical and ontological sense, i.e. as a mode of man's relationship to being, as has been mentioned earlier too that *bhakti* for Mehta is a *rasa* or feeling which represents man's primordial relationship to Being. Mehta, further believes that we cannot separate truth, reality and value from feeling. For, Bhakti, for him, is the bedrock which enables us to live and to understand life. In Mehta's view the basic insight of the *Bhāgawat Purān* is to show how our basic pre-theoretic affection (i.e. emotive disposition) governs our primary attunement to all that is, on the basis of which we then build our theoretic constructs. Thus, according to Mehta, to know things as they truly are in

the realm of the sacred, we must first have an emotive attunement, i.e. we must first love them. In this sense, it is feeling, out of the three, which constitutes the ground at which willing and knowing do their exploring.

It seems, first, that the predominance or prerequisite of feeling should not be restricted to the realm of the sacred only. It can be extended to the realm of action in general also. As, one can not act unless one has an emotive attunement towards one's goal.

Secondly, the primacy of feeling can be supplemented by Sāmkhya model too where *rajas* is a prerequisite to the activitation of the other two, i.e. *sattva* and *tamas.*

Thirdly, it can also be supported by the Vedic saying or mantra रसो व म: which says that the ultimate reality is full of bliss, and only by realizing Him, i.e. having feeling or love for Him, can an individual become blissful. It seems that feeling is logically prior in the sense that it provides the ground on which the other two rest, while it is also temporarily posterior in the sense that *jīva* or individual soul's ultimate aim is to become blissful.

Here it is not clear whether the logical priority can be equated with the ontological priority? If yes, then, Mehta's argument in the history of Indian philosophical thought is not only as radical as K.C. Bhattacharyya's conception of the three alternative absolutes but as stated in the beginning Mehta's argument can also be treated as a counter-proposal to his well-known standpoint of three absolutes.

The concept of life-world is a wider concept which includes tradition, historicity, culture, theoretical knowledge and myth. Mehta believes in the possibility of a single all-encompassing or a common life-world which allows translating from one life-world into another. The underlying assumption of Mehta is that we all are human beings and inhabit one common world. This not merely permits translation from one life-world into another life-world but also the necessity of doing it all the time. He concretizes this thought by illustrating his own situation and shows how he was born into a certain life and also simultaneously lived another and consequently lived in a double life-world which together constitued an intertwined world, which was both eastern as well as western. In this context the following questions in Mehta's view, deserve hermeneutic inquiry:

a) To what extent India's entry into modernity has violently affected the Hindu life-world?

b) In the presence of the Anglo-American legal system, what type of religious sanctions attach to Indian life?

   i.   what is the notion of just ordering or just life?

   ii. how much has already been thrown away in the name of modernity?

In Mehta's view the breakdown of what we may call the fundamental

autonomous civilization or cultural balances, i.e. Indian, Chinese, or Greek give rise to the possibility of conversation which presupposes an emergence of a whole, where all parts are coming together and talking together rather than seek to counter each other. But according to Mehta, as we constantly use western literature, philosophy, science, education and economics in our conversation, it is bound to be unequal. Yet, in spite of all this we have not tried to study the roots of western culture, science and metaphysics to see how it is different from our own tradition. For him, we can know our tradition only in contrast to other traditions.

Heidegger is doubtful about any such attempt at conversation between two traditions, i.e. interpreting and translating Indian views in western thought. For him the central idea of the theory of Brahman of Vedānta could not be translated without distortion in Platonic or Kantian language of western thought. Furthermore, he severely criticized the attempts of Hegel, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer at interpreting Indian texts. He believes that these thinkers in their reading of Indian thought are not authentic, as they are all confined in the prison of their own metaphysical thought. These views of Heidegger reject outright the possibility of synthesis and comparative philosophy in terms of intercultural conversation in the East-West context.

II

Before we see Mehta's response to Heidegger on this issue, four logical possibilities of translation regarding the East-West tradition or texts may be laid down in the following way:

  I.   Interpretation — by an Indian of an Indian text.
 II.   Interpretation — by an Indian of a western text.
III.   Interpretation — by a westerner of a western text.
 IV.   Interpretation — by a westerner of an Indian text.

Possibility I:

If an interpretation is done by an Indian of an ancient or a modern Indian text the interpreter may be either a traditional scholar or Pandit or he may be a modern intellectual trained in the western mode of thinking. In the first case the interpreter is familiar with the textual language but not with the western philosophical thinking. In the latter case the interpreter may be familiar with vernacular and western medium, yet may not be familiar with the Indian textual language, e.g. Pali, Sanskrit of Prakrit. In this case further four sub-possibilities arise:

  a) the traditional Pandit's interpretation of an ancient Sanskrit text;
  b) the interpretation by him of a modern Indian text (with the help of a translator);

  c) the interpretation by a modern Indian of an ancient Indian text (again with the help of a translator); and
  d) interpretation of a modern thinker of a modern text.

Here in the case of (a) and (d) no problem arises. But in the case of (b) and (c) we do find difficulties. The problems are to be seen in the attempt at unifying and comparing the two readings of a text of the same tradition. We have to look or see the differences in their perspectives and way of thinking and ask which interpretation is more faithful to the basic insight of the tradition of a text. The question arises as to how do we determine the degrees of faithfulness? Or, is this faithfulness or commitment to the roots of tradition necessary? Would it not be an obstacle to the richness, novelty and variety of interpretation? It seems that faithfulness and novelty are two major yet opposite demands which need to be fulfilled in an act of interpretation. Just as the two opposites 'reason and experience', 'universality and contingency', 'necessity and novelty or new information', are treated as the constituents of any judgment or knowing event, similarly the rootedness in one's own tradition or faithfulness to one's own tradition on the one hand and influence of an alien style on the other are the two constituents involved in every act of interpretation. Absence of either will render the interpretation either a misinterpretation or a parrot like repetition. (As in knowledge, 'experience' is only the beginning and not its end. For knowledge consists, in the Kantian sense, of the hybridic form which takes into account necessity or the element of universality, which comes from reason, on the one hand and 'synthetic' or 'the element of newness' which comes from experience. Similarly for Mehta, rootedness in tradition in every act of interpretation is essential. For rootedness is the beginning in which all possibilities are latent and which is clearly explicable or manifested by subsequent acts of interpretation or translation where each act is to be considered as one out of many possibilities. But this act of interpretation also requires the western categories where each act of re-interpretation of the tradition is to be given in current changed scientific and religious life-situation.) In other words, we may say that in Mehta's view it seems that every interpretation should meet the two opposite requirements, i.e. due to the principle of hermeneutics of historicity of understanding and the principle of going back or repetition, an interpreter has to stick to the text in the name of commitment to a tradition on the one hand to save one from the undesirable consequences of parrot-like recitation', the text requires to be read in the current way of thinking.

In Mehta's view one can see that the fusion of Eastern insight and western thinking is not an impossibility. But they together enable one to give a new interpretation of a text. This fusion of the two traditions in his views is not a matter of meaning distortion or cultural violence. Here two

questions arise: who will decide the true traditional insight of a text?—a text like the Veda which is a Śruti or even the other Śāstras, and how the degree of rootedness or faithfulness to the text in any interpretation will be determined?

II. The attempts at interpreting and understanding an Indian text or tradition by Hegel, Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer are, in Heidegger's views, examples of the second case. According to him, these are the thinkers who avidly turned to Indian philosophy and yet remained prisoners of their own metaphysical tradition. Such attempts at understanding and interpretation, in Heidegger's view, are cases of misinterpretation, inauthenticity (for interpreters are not familiar with the original text and its language) or of cultural violence where meaning or spirit of a tradition is destroyed. The reason for this in Heidegger's views, according to Mehta, is that these thinkers' reading of tradition is always biased by their own religious traditions and the common Kantian framework of the western conceptual theorization.

III. The only possibility which Heidegger allows is that of the third case—interpreting western text by a westerner. His own work of understanding comes under this category where he studied Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* from a phenomenological perspective and Hegel from his own point of view. This is a case of translation, done within the same culture or civilization or an attempt at a translation of some ancient western text, whether it is from German or French or from Latin into English, by a westerner also comes under this category. If we have not misunderstood Heidegger's view then the possibility of translation within the western zone would also pose a problem. For, western tradition itself is rooted in a tension or conflict between reason and faith: authority and freedom or autonomy, Greek tradition and Christianity. This is similar to the polarity found in a modern Indian intellectual between his own tradition and western modernity. One may say that the distinction between East-West (an inter-cultural distinction) is similar in some respects, to the distinction between Greek tradition and Christianity, as between Christianity and modernity or Greek tradition and post-modernity (which are not treated as inter-cultural). More concretely, if Kant's critique can be studied in terms of phenomenology as has been done by Heidegger himself or Aristotle's metaphysics treated dialectically or Plato's dialogue seen in the light of hermeneutic interpretation or St. Augustine writing in the light of linguistic analysis or from a logical positivistic or existentialistic standpoint, then why can't the Indian texts or thinkers be studied by a westerner, a Hegel or a Schopenhauer or a Nietzsche and be treated as authentic? If not, then studies of Indian texts in the light of western approaches or more specifically *Nyāya-mīmāṁsā* theories of meaning in the light of linguistic analysis or logical positivistic

perspective, should also be treated as misinterpretations or distortions of their meaning. The conclusion seems to be that the gap of understanding between the phenomenological study of Aristotle or hermeneutic interpretation of Plato in the west is of the same nature which is found in the interpretation of an ancient Indian text by a modern Indian intellectual.

IV. The understanding or act of interpretation of Heidegger's phenomenology by Mehta and Mohanty exemplifies the fourth case in which a western text is being understood by a western trained Indian mind. Here many questions arise: most of them are classificatory in nature. We shall discuss only one of them. If interpretations of an Indian text by a westerner is not permissible in Heidegger's view on the ground of culture-violence, then the reverse must also be true, i.e. the interpretation of a western text by an easterner should also be judged as inauthentic. Contrary to this, Heidegger has complimented Professor Mehta on his attempt at understanding his phenomenology. He goes to the extent as to say that his views are best understood or presented by an Indian mind. This obviously, renders his position inconsistent. But in Mehta's view every Indian mind is most of the time in the predicament of being rooted in the tradition and yet ironically also influenced by the western viewpoint being thus alien to its own tradition. Mehta thinks that his predicament is not a source of cultural violence or distortion of meaning as Heidegger believed but placed the Indian thinker in an advantageous situation. Such an encounter or collision of West with East is beneficial not only in the context of text reading but also in the context of science and technology. The history of civilizations shows that in spite of differences in the initial beginning of each tradition the traditions do influence each other. For example, the West borrowed the Indian decimal system, its astrology and astonomy, meditative practices and the concept of inner self-development, while the Indians borrowed from the West not only their science and technology, but also applied their techniques of philosophical analysis and subtle distinctions which are an outcome of the application of the advancement of formal, symbolic and philosophic logic developed in the West systematically after the First World War till today. Here the question arises as to why should we not adopt the methodology or techniques of philosophical analysis of other cultures like China or Islam too? Furthermore, if in Indian thinking religious and philosophic traditions are intermingled, a doubt may be raised regarding the adequacy of the western model of thinking in the realm of religion.

It is hard to see how the core of Indian religiousness, i.e. *Sanātana Dharma* could be supplemented by Christianity. Should we then say that modern western methodology of the analytic technique can be applied only as a tool or instrument to achieve better understanding of the philosophical

tradition only. Even if that is so, one might question the wisdom of borrowing methodology or philosophical approach from an alien source, why should one not create or re-structure one's own approach and, coin an appropriate word for it, evaluate or interpret the text of 'other' in the light of it? Similar demand has already been felt in the context of applying western technology or managerial tactics in the context of Indian rural life situations.

It also explains why we are hesitant of seeking things (texts) through the set approaches of western contemporary philosophy whether it is analytic or phenomenological or existentialistic. If this state is inevitable then, obviously, it shows either the dominance of the western philosophical viewpoint over others or that these approaches are universal in nature, i.e. by being philosophical approaches they are not bound up strictly with a particular geographical region of either East or West. If it is not so then it is necessary, as said above, to seek or develop approaches or methodology unique to Indian tradition from the similar western approaches, illustrate applications by citing examples or cases from the different places and lastly to make it popular like the western approaches. Consequently, one can see the possibility of reversing the practice, or trend of interpretation, i.e. of interpreting Indian text in the western current conceptual categories.

Now, Mehta believes not only in the possibility of inter-cultural translation but also in the possibility of a single comprehensive life-world from which various civilizations and cultures could be derived.

But what that grand civilization would be, has not been mentioned by him.

Paradoxically, Heidegger thinks that there is only one world civilization, i.e. the western civilization which is called Europeanization of the Earth. One wonders, if Professor Mehta would argue this way.

On the contrary, it seems that due to the inevitable character of comparative approach in modern Indian philosophy, Mehta seems to think or may be expected to think the Indian framework as a common ground or a single comprehensive life-world. Any how, an this conception one needs further elaboration of Mehta's views.

In this context it would be instructive to note Mehta's own presuppositions and deep commitment to the following:

  i. Both philosophy in general and Indian philosophy in particular, constitute an empirical enquiry (not abstract or conceptual thinking) and thus indicate a historical process and thereby reveal interdisciplinary character.

  ii. Consequent belief in the possibility of reduction of different traditions and life-worlds to one-life-world, tradition or culture.

  iii. The unitary conception of man in terms of feeling, willing and knowing.

  iv. The unity of mankind where all human beings are rational.

Thus for him philosophy cannot be self-sufficient or isolated from the rest of cognitive venture and its methodological and belief structures. Philosophical issues are not issues which can always be geographically restricted to a particular region. Philosophy as an inter-disciplinary horizon not only takes into its purview the terminology, definition or the method of other disciplines as Mehta points out but also takes into account the perspectives of other cultures.

However, if Mehta's view is taken seriously where every act of interpretation is regarded as an enrichment, then we cannot demarcate a valid and authentic interpretation from an invalid and inauthentic one. This raises the question as to what will be the necessary and sufficient criteria for an authentic interpretation. Perhaps a valid interpretation will be that which preserves the basic insight of a tradition. In other words, can we say that an act of interpretation in the name of fresh insight or novel attempt at looking into the text would not be counted as valid unless it preserves the basic insight? One might ask as seen earlier who is authorised to decide that a certain insight is the basic insight of a system? Even if we assume it, i.e. if the re-interpretation, re-thinking, deconstructing does not allow us to give totally new ways of looking at a text or if the core remains intact and changes are allowed only at secondary levels, then can the change be called change in the true sense or would the tradition be understood as a growing phenomenon? Further, if no interpretation is rejected and each interpretation is supposed to preserve the basic insight, then what would be the place of an interpretation which presents a counter-perspective think of the counter-perspective of Indian philosophy as presented by Daya Krishna. Such a possibility may manifest as a turning point in the history of tradition leading to a change in the whole history of thought.

It seems that to some extent the answer to the questions mentioned above requires a precise definition of the notions of *interpretation, translation, reiteration, deconstruction* and *dismantling* of a *text which are frequently used by Mehta.* In fact, the term dismantling of a text at first sight seems closely similar to an archaeological enterprise where no attempt in either of the realms can be considered as final. But, in philosophy unlike archaeology, the continuous demand for re-interpretation of a text according to the interpreter's intellectual make-up or the demand of current state of the world is not sufficient. Besides, every act of interpretation of a text aims to highlight those aspects of tradition or text which are latent, lost or side-tracked.

Regarding the distinction given by Professor Mehta between How hermeneutical inquiry has already been used in the tradition and how it can be used in areas like the *Bhāgawat* and Ṛg-Vedic hymns, (to which according to him much attention has not been paid either by ancient or

by modern scholars) the following points can be considered as relevant.

First, in the latter case we can also apply the hermeneutical method to the *Nārad Bhakti Sūtra* and even to *Kashmir Shaivism* which are considered as central text of the Bhakti tradition.

Secondly, it would be more rewarding if we applied Mehta's method of hermeneutical inquiry not only to other saints besides Tulsidās and Caitanya, like Kabīr, Nānak, Mīrā, or even all the saints after Śankarācārya, but can also be applied to a great poet like Tagore. This, of course, will deny any distinction among philosophy, poetry, religion and spirituality or even between a philosopher, a poet, a seeker, a seer or a ṛṣi. (i.e. a person who besides the theoretical knowledge also has practical experience). But certainly it will not make his position inconsistent as in his views the nature of philosophy is essentially inter-disciplinary in character in which besides semantic, or semiotic etc. even religion, poetry and spirituality are fused.

Thirdly, since Mehta has not cited any illustration in his book of the former case, i.e. of a case where philosophical hermeneutics as a method has already been used, it is tempting to ask whether the following enterprise could be seen as illustrations of it—the reconstruction of Indian jurisprudence on the basis of smṛti—the possibility of Indian sociology or social sciences on the basic of re-interpreting various concepts like varna, āshram, dharma, purusārtha, suffering, mōkṣa, yajña, karma, etc. It is interesting to note that some contemporary Indian sociologists are looking at the concept of society perceived from this point of view—the enterprise of Indian theory of ethics or morality on the basis of Mahābhārata and stories of Panchatantra etc. Similarly, attention may be drawn to the other fields of Indian cognitive enterprise e.g. linguistics, āyur-vijñāna, Indian mathematics, science of matter, art, sculpture, aesthetics, nātya-śāstra, music and logic etc.

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Notes and Queries

India's Intellectual Tradition: Dead or Alive?

The problem that troubles me most concerning Indian tradition is the 'closed mind-set' of the traditionalists. What is not clear is the extent to which one can isolate such a practice from tradition *per se,* if one believes that something of the latter kind indeed exists. Keeping in view the oral beginnings of the Indian tradition, the problem is all the more serious. The traditionalists seem to be saying: 'Accept what we say if you want to know what Indian tradition is all about. You have to first accept the tradition to become eligible to pass critical judgement on it'. Granted! But what if in the process one loses one's critical discernment and becomes 'traditional'? It seems to imply that one has to first become traditional to know what tradition is all about. Perhaps, there is nothing wrong in having such an attitude provided the tradition is 'attractive' enough to attract followers. But this does not seem to be the case as the followers of Indian tradition are ever shrinking in number, unless of course one is willing to grant the status of traditionalists to the saffron brigade. Such an attitude will also not permit the complaints that traditionalists often make of being ignored.

In such a situation the important thing seems to be to inquire whether the Indian tradition is dead or alive. If it is dead, then one can only write its history and inquire into the reasons for its death, i.e., one has to account for its death and find out whether it has died for good. If it is not the case then how are we, as students of philosophy, to provide a criterion of goodness, for not all good things seem to stand the tyranny of time? In my view our failure to provide such a criterion would force us to accept some unadulterated form of social Darwinism. However, if it has died for good (or is in the process of dying) then why should we not celebrate its death or decline, whatever be the case? In such a situation will not clinging on to tradition be a sign of backwardness in the sense of traditionalists' failure to change with the times, their lack of adaptability? Is it not therefore the duty of the traditionalists to work out ways so that people can take cognizance of the Indian tradition? It has in any case ceased to be 'attractive' enough to inspire people to follow it. Should not followers of the Indian tradition take note of this fact and work upon it?

Moreover, why should anyone try to follow it? What, for example, does it offer to a woman or a *Sudra*? What place does tradition have for them? Have these sections of society not experienced it as oppressive and even exploitative? How is one to distinguish the ideological content of the Indian tradition from its other aspects? What I am also not sure about is the extent to which such queries can be accommodated within the Indian tradition. This can perhaps be clarified if one knows whether Indian

tradition is a homogeneous thing or not, i.e. whether there is a multiplicity of voices in it or not. If there is a multiplicity, then is it also not necessary to identify such voices and work out their relationships? I wonder if anyone has really tried to do it. It will also be interesting to know how successful such attempts, if ever made, have been. These are some of the issues that come to my mind concerning Indian tradition. Maybe, someone can find time to help me clarify some of these issues.

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Book Reviews

The present volume is the first in a series intended by the author to bring out a new English translation of Śaṅkara's Commentaries on the *Prasthāna-trayī* along with his own original comments and explanations. His purpose is to make the thought of Śaṅkara available to the modern reader by providing a 'reliable and readable translation' accompanied with explanations based on the tradition of sages and seers. For the author Śaṅkara is not a mere philosopher to be understood with the help of the scholastic and commentarial tradition. He is the interpreter of the tradition of spiritual wisdom enshrined in the Upaniṣads but continued by the sages down to modern times. Apart from the need to understand Śaṅkara in the context of this spiritual tradition, rather than the polemical context of his commentators and sub-commentators, there is the further need of understanding him in the idiom of modern thought.

> Even an ideal translation . . . could not communicate every-thing to the modern reader, especially one nurtured in the Western tradition of thought. The translation has to be supplemented with a commentary, and a commentary written in an idiom that contemporary man can understand and participate in. . . . I have assumed some acquaintance with the thought of important modern writers.

One would like to comment that the author's reliance not merely on the idiom of modern thought in general but on the thoughts of contemporary thinkers gives his work its peculiar quality which is its virtue as well as limitation. Those readers who are familiar with post-modernist discourse should be happy to be brought in contact with Śaṅkara, but the readers of Śaṅkara constitute a larger class which hopefully would survive post-modernism too. But the answer to this could well be that each generation must produce its own tradition.

The author, however, intends more than a mere modernization of the linguistic idiom. He intends a presentation of Śaṅkara's ideas in a comparative context so that the Indian and western traditions may 'speak to each other and understand each other'.

The author thus seeks to combine three tasks in one—the translation of Śaṅkara, the interpretation of his exposition of spiritual wisdom, and a comparison of its basic cultural attitudes and existential reflections with those expressed in Western writings especially literary classics. The translation is generally accurate, clear and readable. The interpretations

offered by the author also often succeed in focussing attention on the basic existential and spiritual issues. The inter-cultural comparisons adduced by him are interesting and learned but they tend to be disproportionately large in the earlier part of the volume. If necessary he could even systematically expound his own understanding of wisdom in a separate volume, perhaps at the end of the series or independently as a companion volume.

On the whole, the attempt of the author to present Śaṅkara to the modern reader as a thinker of universal significance deserves to be welcomed. He approaches his task with commendable preparation and has succeeded in producing a highly readable and thought-provoking volume. One looks forward to the other volumes which the author intends to bring out. And may one hope he would follow the example of Śaṅkara himself and restrict his own meditations and comparisons to what is strictly necessary to let the voice of the text be heard clearly.

11, Balrampur House, Allahabad   G.C. PANDE

ANUPA PANDE, *A Historical and Cultural Study of the Nāṭya Śāstra of Bharata,* Kusumanjali Prakashan, Jodhpur, 1991, pp. 340, Rs 350.00

The book, as the title suggests, is a holistic study of the *Nāṭya Śāstra* from a historical and cultural perspective. The *Nāṭya Śāstra,* which is the most ancient extant work on Indian dramaturgy, is a work of encyclopaedic nature which includes the allied arts of dance, music and poetry within its compass. Many noticeable contributions have already been made on the various aspects like the stage-craft, dance, or musicology of the *Nāṭya Śāstra.* But Mrs Pande's work is one of the few of its own kind which attempts to approach the *Nāṭya Śāstra* as a whole.

In the first chapter Mrs Pande raises the problem of its date and authorship. She refers to and quotes from the various ancient texts like the *Vedas, Abhinava Bhārati, Amarakoṣa,* etc., and discusses the views of the different oriental scholars in the context of ascertaining its probable origin and authorship. In the next two chapters she deals with the drama of ancient Indian as it is to be found in the *Nāṭya Śāstra* — the size and measurements of the platform and the closed enclosure where the drama is to be performed, the sitting arrangements of the audience, etc. She refers to the *Mahābhārata* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmana* in order to throw more light upon the matter. She also discusses the probable origin of drama in India as well as the possibilities of Greek influence upon it.

In the fourth and fifth chapters she attempts to place the work geographically and tries to puzzle together the socio-cultural values of the people. She discusses the geography of India first in terms of the

mythical concept of the world found in the *Purāṇas* and other ancient works apart from the *Nāṭya Śāstra,* and then in terms of the scientific hypotheses about the then geographical demarcations of India that can be drawn from the various literary and anthropological data. It is true that the *Nāṭya Śāstra* refers to a wide tradition that encircles an entire world. But how wide does this world extend? It is that which Mrs Pande tries to answer.

She also tries to filter out the moral and socio-cultural implications that are mirrored throughout this encyclopaedic work. Social representation was an important aspect of ancient drama. The dramatic work not only dealt with the characters of kings and noble men, but with that of beggars, mendicants, jesters, merchants, etc — in other words, the entire world of men. And the social action of men depended more upon man's natural drives and the norms of moral law (*Dharma*) than upon any other considerations. In such a context, society was considered timeless and unchanging rather than in a state of flux. And this is reflected in the drama. Then Mrs Pande goes on to discuss the structure of the ancient society and its various components.

In the chapters that follow she deals with *Nṛtta* (dance) and *gāna* (music) of the *Nāṭya Śāstra.* She discusses at length the three types of dance forms, *Tāndava, Lāsya* and *Pindibandha,* as well as the various gestures and expressions that have been enumerated in this ancient work, and the basic elements of music mentioned in the work which today form the skeleton of Indian classical music. She draws parallels and differences that our music has with western classical music, and discusses the concepts of *śruti* and *swara* from a comparative point of view. Here, her knowledge of Indian classical music gives clarity to the discussion. Next she discusses the music of the theatre and rhythm and beat (*tāla*) in music.

Mrs Pande, finally, rounds off her discussion by talking about Indian Poetics as it is found in the sixth *adhyāya* of the *Nāṭya Śāstra.*

The book is a result of painstaking research and scholarship and is an invaluable help to the scholars in this field as it also includes elaborate and detailed references. Even otherwise, it is a good introduction for anyone who wants to know about Bharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra.*

However, the vast area that the book attempts to cover makes it an impossibility for Mrs Pande to elucidate her own views at length.

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