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 49. Ibid., p. 310.  
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## The Person as Knower and Known

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It might not be inappropriate on this occasion when the contributors to this special issue of the *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* have been invited to celebrate the philosophical achievements of Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB), among which must surely be counted his analysis of the human subject, to reflect upon some of the implications that might follow from his initial insights regarding the subject as knower and known. I have often thought that the greatest tribute one can pay to a philosopher is not so much to talk or write *about* his work as such but to think *with* him about a problem that one knows was one of deep and lasting concern to him. I want to reflect, then, on the theme 'The Person as Knower and Known' in such a way as hopefully to extend KCB's own interest in it.

### I

In his complex, but extremely important, work *The Subject as Freedom*, KCB states initially that the word 'I' is always used as part of a kind of private language game; for

Object is what is meant, including the object of sense-perception and all contents that have necessary reference to it. Object as the meant is distinguished from the subject of which there is some awareness other than the meaning awareness. The subjective cannot be a *meaningless* word: to be distinguished from, it must be a speakable and yet if it be a meant content, it would be but object.<sup>1</sup>

He goes on to remark that :

A meaning that is conveyed by a word must be intelligible to the hearer as what he would himself convey by the word. What the speaker means by a word must be capable of being meant by the hearer if he were to use it. . . . The word 'I' as used by a speaker is not understood by the hearer to convey what he

would himself convey by the use of it. If he used the word, he would intend himself and not the speaker.<sup>2</sup>

But KCB then allows:

Actually however when he understands the word 'I' as used by the speaker, he understands it to stand for the speaker. He may accordingly be said to understand the thing intended by the speaker through the word but not through the *meaning* of the word.<sup>3</sup>

The word 'I', then, for KCB, is indeed a 'referring expression'; but of a very special kind. It refers always to a particular person as used by him. 'You' can be applied indiscriminately to any individual/person; it can be part of the domain of what is 'meant'; but 'I' calls for a radical particularity. Its use affirms an inviolable subjective—and finally free—consciousness as the centre of personhood.

Kant—who was perhaps KCB's favourite western philosopher—argues that we can never know ourselves as we are but only as we appear to ourselves. An 'I think' always accompanies our representations, but the ground of that 'I', the transcendental unity of apperception, the noumenal self, cannot be an object to itself. And we lack, Kant says, the kind of (intellectual) intuition that would allow us immediate access, as it were, to ourselves. But suppose we had the kind of intuition which Kant denies we have: the question would still remain as to its noetic character in relation to its object. Just as the self is not an object or thing, so, it would seem, it is not something to be 'intuited'. It is rather a state of being which, as the Vedāntin would say, needs to 'realized'. If part of the definition of intellectual intuition is that of 'a mind entering into its object', then this intuition functions within a subject/object situation; albeit it partially overcomes it in its consummation. Realisation, on the other hand, is altogether unintelligible in subject/object terms.

According to classical Advaita Vedānta, what stands in the way of our having an adequate self-knowledge is a fundamental and pervasive self-confounding of our own making. We incessantly and, according to Śaṅkara, quite naturally, misidentify ourselves and wrongly attribute to ourselves characteristics which properly belong only to our individuality; we 'superimpose' (*adhyāsa*) attributes of the non-self onto the self and of the self onto the non-self. In our ordinary consciousness of ourselves we are thus subject to a profound ignorance (*avidyā; ajñāna*). Śaṅkara in his oft-quoted introduction to his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, writes:

It is a matter not requiring any proof that the object and the subject, whose respective spheres are the notion of the 'Thou'

(the Non-Ego) and the Ego, and which are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, cannot be identified. All the less can their respective attributes be identified. Hence it follows that it is wrong to superimpose upon the subject—whose self is intelligence, and which has for its sphere the Ego—the object whose sphere is the notion of the Non-Ego and the attributes of the object; and vice versa to superimpose the subject and the attributes of the subject on the object. In spite of this it is on the part of man a natural procedure...<sup>4</sup>

This superimposition thus defined, learned men consider to be nescience (*avidyā*), and the ascertainment of the true nature of that which is (the self) by means of the discrimination of that (which is superimposed on the self) they call knowledge (*vidyā*).<sup>5</sup>

For example:

Extra-personal attributes are superimposed on the self, if a man considers himself sound and entire, or the contrary, as long as his wife, children, and so on are sound and entire or not. Attributes of the body are superimposed on the self, if a man thinks of himself (his self) as stout, lean, fair, as standing, walking or jumping...<sup>6</sup>

In other words, we quite naturally misidentify ourselves by attributing to *the self* qualities and characteristics that belong only to *an individual*. When I conceive of myself as—when I believe that I really, as distinct from only empirically, am—of a certain height and weight, with such and such an IQ, possessing this or that thing, I am subject to *avidyā*, to ignorance, and am engaged in *adhyāsa*, superimposition. 'My' self is *saccidānanda*—being (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ānanda*). 'I am reality'—*ahaṃ brahmāsi*.

The Advaitic analysis suggests that we need to distinguish carefully between *the self* and *an individual* and look to see the different ways in which they are known. I think it is necessary as well to distinguish both of these from the concept of a *person* and then to look at the different ways in which these are *known* and are *knowers*. I distinguish them as follows.<sup>7</sup>

*An individual* is a concentration of all the given conditions of his or her being (the accidents of birth, of environment); in short, an individual is constituted by whatever is objectifiable in and of the human being as the given physical, intellectual, social, cultural materials of that given human being.

The *self* is undifferentiated, without time or space but is nevertheless realized as the enduring ground of one's being, as one's primordial spiritual spontaneity.

A *person* is a creative articulation, in varying degrees of rightness, of his or her individuality within the matrix of social community and the enduring reality of the self. A person is thus an achievement, not a given. A person is a dynamic integration of the conditions of his or her individual being as grounded in the self.

An individual, in principle, is *explained* by universal laws; he or she is, we have come to believe, an 'instance' of them. A person, on the other hand, is *understood* only as the being which he or she has become; which is to say, only as he or she is the particular person that one is. Although I may understand a person only if I see the degree to which he or she has realized certain universal potentialities (of spirit), it is nevertheless always a particular person that is being understood in his or her particularity. A person is a unique achievement and thus is understood only through sensitive recognition.

Transcending all the conditions of ordinary knowing and understanding (time, space, form; in short, the entire subject/object situation) the self is unknowable and cannot be understood. The self nevertheless can be realized in the immediacy of experience, which realization is utterly self-certifying.

For an individual nothing other than his or her bare unity is in principle hidden. An individual is defined precisely as that which is objectifiable in human being—and is thus knowable by description and acquaintance. There is, however, always something about a person that eludes public inspection: his or her creative spontaneity; his or her subjective depth.

A person is necessarily *social* in the profound sense of one's being articulated only in contexts of relationships with other persons and things. A person is understandable, therefore, only when seen relative to the kinds of societal relations in which one enters, seeks to contribute, and derives fulfilment. These relationships are often quite subtle, and are not reducible to the rather more ordinary and conventional (albeit central) relationships associated with one's occupation, one's family, one's so-called 'social life'. The manner, for example, in which one relates to one's 'personal possessions' is very much part of a person's articulation: Does he or she care for them or merely use them? When caring, if he or she does, is one attached to them as though they belonged to one ontically or does one respect their integrity and act more as their custodian rather as their owner, and so on.

It is often thought that although one cannot know oneself directly (because as a subject, one cannot be an object to oneself)

one can nevertheless know oneself indirectly through others' perceptions of one. I can know myself as others' know me.

But before another person can know me (in any interesting or significant way) and not just evaluate me according to his or her own values and interests, must the other not know one's self first?

It has often been observed that once one learns how to perform a certain action (say, riding a bicycle) one is able subsequently to perform that action with relative ease, even after a lapse of many years. It is as though the body were educated and had a remarkable memory of its own.

In any event, it is clear that we do acquire various body-habits or dispositions to act in certain ways; and these contribute significantly to the kind of identity we have as persons. Our self-knowledge consists to a considerable extent in our awareness of what we can do. 'Who I am' and 'What I am able to do' are interrelated.

And it is here that the social dimension of personhood once again becomes evident. Much of what I am able to do—and especially the manner in which I do what I am able to do—is socially informed. I am educated to do a rich variety of actions in addition to those which I do instinctively (like digesting). The vast majority, in fact, of one's everyday actions, from eating to talking, reflect one's learning how to do these things in certain ways. One's self-knowledge, then, is at the same time one's knowledge of one's culture.

## 11

Human consciousness, like personhood itself, is not simply an attribute that one possesses by virtue of being human; it is rather something that each person realizes in a unique manner from within the given conditions of one's individuality and the rich intricacies of one's experience. Persons *appropriate* their various mental capacities and exhibit this in their perceivings, their reasonings, their evaluations, and so on, in ways that make these capacities their own. Mental appropriation is thus the taking-up of the mental conditions of one's individuality into the matrix of one's personal identity and involves the educating of these conditions for various forms of concentrated awareness.

And it is the appropriated mind that thinks. Although there have been many contemporary philosophical rejections of mind/body dualism in the West, especially of a Cartesian sort, we are still so accustomed to believe, and to express in everyday language, that it is some isolable mind or pure intellect that thinks that we find the plain assertion that it is not a mind as such but a person who thinks quite startling. Nevertheless, is it not obvious that just as it is a person, a concrete psycho-physical, historically placed man or

woman, who suffers pain and expresses joy, who talks and walks, writes letters and entertains friends, and not some bit or piece of the person as such, so it is the person who thinks, and not some separate disembodied mind? If this is the case then a whole range of implications follow which challenge many of the basic assumptions which underlie a good deal of epistemology—West or East. Let us examine a few of these implications.

III

#### *Particularity*

If it is a person who thinks then all acts of knowing have a pronounced, and not merely trivial, particularity. Each and every one of a person's cognition is coloured by his or her past experience (*karma*) and reflects present interests and future expectations. One's ability to follow an argument to its conclusion, to concentrate on relations obtaining between things, to see intricate connections between ideas—all the factors that constitute 'rationality'—will, to a considerable extent, be a function of one's basic capacities as these have been disciplined by one. No two thinkers will be the same with regard to these factors. Every mental act will reflect what we might call the mind-style of the thinker. The universality of pure rationality is thus a chimera.

Now this, of course, does not mean that rational agreement and mutual understanding is impossible. Knowing is particularized, but certain universal or at least general elements may be present as well, for the maturation of the mental is informed to a great degree by cultural factors. What and how one sees and thinks is largely a shared experience within any culture. In short, the mental conditions that get appropriated by persons are similar in many important ways; culturalization, in spite of many particular features, is much the same for most persons during any given historical epoch; what we take to be canons of intelligibility will be shared widely; and the languages we employ will of necessity be 'public' in character. Particularity does not rule out generality: it does, however, lay bare any pretensions of 'reason' to a simple universality.

#### *'Changing your mind'*

One cannot, it seems, alter another person's basic understanding of reality and the ultimate concerns that inform that understanding by mere argument. I might be able to persuade you, if I am clever enough, that there are numerous inadequacies in the way in which you understand the world and organize your experience in ontological terms. I might be able to persuade you that your very notion of what is rational is incoherent, and so on. But I will not

succeed in replacing that 'world-making' of yours with a better one until I am able to effect a change in your personhood. To change one's metaphysics is to change oneself. One's experience, in its deepest value-laden dimensions, provides the foundations for one's world-view, and a change in view requires a change in experience—a change in the person.

#### *Error*

Closely related to this is the problem of error. KCB writes:

I am said to correct an error of mine when I disbelieve in what I am aware I believed.<sup>8</sup>

The consciousness of a belief has been shown to involve disbelief in its content. As to be conscious of any subjective fact is to be conscious of a belief, all reflective consciousness may be said to involve disbelief in the content of the corresponding unreflective consciousness. Thus the consciousness of the subjective and vice versa. We are necessarily aware of the false and the subjective together.<sup>9</sup>

Western philosophers for the most part (going back to Descartes) have tended to attribute error to the 'will' or, as is also the case with Indian philosophers, to the waywardness of perception, but not the person as such. Errors or mistakes, it is believed, unlike with primary *avidyā* are correctable without having to alter a person's way of seeing or manner of being.

Although the terms are often used interchangeably, we need, I think, to distinguish between 'mistakes' and 'errors'. A mistake occurs when one does or says something incorrectly within the framework of a rule-governed system of action or of speech. I mistype and misspell words; I sometimes say the wrong thing (in both a social and purely linguistic sense), especially when speaking a 'foreign language', and so on. Simple mistakes are correctable. 'One learns from one's mistakes.'

Nevertheless, as Freud has convincingly shown in his 'pathology of everyday life', many of our mistakes are not made by sheer ineptitude, or by one's hand or mouth as such. It is not just my foot which hits the leg of the table, spilling soup over an unwanted dinner companion; it is not some defect in my hand-movement that is the source of my writing 'My dear fiend' in a letter. In their full intentionality these mistakes are *my* acts and express (indicate, show) my hidden propensity to do certain things, revealing thereby my 'true' intentions.

For the most part, we are quite capable of discriminating between those mistakes of a compulsive kind, as it were, from those of a more mechanical sort. We have little difficulty in distinguishing between

the case of someone who always makes mistakes in subtraction whenever she is making a deduction in her cheque-book from the case of someone who is just learning to add and subtract and oftentimes gets her figures wrong.

An error, on the other hand, applies primarily to beliefs and judgments. And here too a further distinction needs to be made between those errors which come about because of the necessity we often face to act and to make decisions without our having sufficient knowledge, information or evidence concerning the situation, from those of a more fundamental person-based kind. Most of the trivial and many of the gravest decisions we make are made in the context of our simply not having adequate knowledge of all the relevant facts, with the beliefs informing those decisions thereby turning out to be erroneous.

On the other hand, many errors of belief and judgment, like those of compulsive mistakes, have their source more fundamentally in our entire psycho-physical person in the form of our having propensities to err in certain ways with respect to certain things. This is exhibited most clearly in interpersonal relationships. It is often observed that there is a strong tendency for people to commit over and over again their errors of judgment in the closest relations they have with others. The divorced woman who has been unhappily married suddenly appears with a new mate who is strikingly similar to her previous one. Whereas we learn from mistakes, we tend to repeat errors—which is only quite natural, as our beliefs and judgments are informed by our total experience. We acquire, one might say, dispositions to err—habits (*samskāras?*) become deeply ingrained in our entire personality.

In short, many, indeed most, of the crucial errors as well as mistakes which I make are a reflection of 'me'. For these to be altered or eliminated requires a change in me. There is little mystery as to why we err. It is rather something more of a miracle that we sometimes get things right.

#### *Non-person truths*

If it is the person who thinks, with his ideas always thereby having a particularized aspect and being grounded in relatively stable ontical-value structures, with the errors in his beliefs and judgments being attributable to his very person, then those noetic acts that rightly claim to be self-certifying, to transcend ordinary subject/object relations, to involve an identity between knower and known (*scientia intuitiva; jñāna; intellektuelle Anschauung; prajñā*) do not belong as such to the person. They are not *his* intuitions. In the wonderful words of the *Kena Upanisad* (II, 3): 'To whomsoever it [*Brahman*] is not known, to him it is known: to whomsoever it is known, he does

not know.' The 'higher knowledge', in short, is essentially non-personal. *Paravidyā* knows nothing of 'me'. The 'I' is absent when it is present.

#### *Perception*

According to KCB:

To knowledge, the object is *there* and the body *here* is its presupposition; and as knowledge deepens, there is a regress to prior presuppositions, the felt-body etc. up to feeling. . . . Each presupposition persists undistinguished in a lower stage and hence feeling may be said to inform even the perceived object.  
... 10

Phenomenologists (Husserl, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty) have analyzed closely the role of the body in perception, especially as it 'positions' a perceiver to perceive an object from a determinate standpoint. Where I am physically (my 'object-body' in public space/time) will influence mightily how I perceive the objects in my visual field. Aron Gurwitsch writes:

The fundamental phenomenon which the phenomenological theory of perception must consider first and take as its point of departure is that of perceptual adumbration. By this we mean the essential onesidedness of every particular perception of a material thing. For instance, we stand before a building and look at it from a certain point of observation. Accordingly the perceived building presents itself from one determinate side, say its front side, and not from a different one; it appears as near, as located straight before us, as seen as street levels, and so so on.<sup>11</sup>

And not only one's present position but past positions as well influence perception, for every act of perception involves one as a person with a history—with certain dispositions to see things in certain ways, with certain interests that contribute to the selection of what one sees, with certain memories of previous experience which colour present contents. Where one has been, as much as where one now is, forms a central part of that 'perceptual adumbration' which is a feature of all experience.

In sum: If we take seriously, as I believe KCB would have us do, the notion/fact that it is a *person*, and not a disembodied rational 'mind' as such, which thinks and knows, then not only are various dimensions of our human being (individual, self, person) known in different ways but all our knowledge contains various elements of particularity. Each person is a knower in a very special and unique way: every mental act of a person will involve a certain 'mind-style'.

But this does not mean that each person is locked within oneself, a windowless monad, for a person is throughout social in nature, is part of a culture which informs his or her every action. Nevertheless one needs to look to the particularities of experience in order to see to what extent that experience controls a person's basic values and thereby thoughts. To change a person's view concerning the most fundamental metaphysical (religious, spiritual) commitments requires, not simply a convincing rational argument, but a change in the person. This is made most evident in the mistakes and errors we make, for at least one form of these clearly show them to be 'mine', that is, to belong entirely to the person.

Still there remains what might be called 'non-person truths' which are those associated precisely with those 'experiences' which transcend the ordinary subject/object relations that constitute the framework of our empirical and rational knowledge.

The latter, however remains always as body-based and not just of 'mind' or 'intellect'. One's entire history—one's 'past positions'—as well as present situation determines who and what we are as thinkers.

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## Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya and the Plurality of *Puruṣas* (*puruṣa-bahutva*) in Sāṃkhya

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#### INTRODUCTION

At the conclusion of his introductory remarks to his *Studies in Vedāntism*, Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB) comments,

A true philosophic system is not to be looked upon as a soulless jointing of hypotheses; it is a living fabric which, with all its endeavour to be objective, must have a well-marked individuality. Hence it is not to be regarded as the special property of academic philosophy-mongers, to be hacked up by them into technical views, but is to be regarded as a form of life and is to be treated as a theme of literature of infinite interest to humanity.<sup>1</sup>

Just before these comments, he describes his method as follows:

The attitude to be borne towards the present subject should be neither that of the apologist nor that of the academic compiler but that of the interpreter which involves, to a certain extent, that of the constructor, too.<sup>2</sup>

Gopinath Bhattacharyya, the editor of KCB's work, speaking about this method of 'constructive interpretation', remarks:

From a consideration of his actual procedure it would appear that by 'constructive interpretation' the author means much more of construction than of interpretation, and the method in substance amounts to speculative re-construction based on a few pivotal tenets rather than an objective exposition based on a detailed study of the more important texts of the particular school of philosophy that is claimed to be interpreted. The method is apparently a risky one and may easily be taken to be a fanciful reading of one's own thought into others' thinking. The author was quite conscious of this risk. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Even more than in *Studies in Vedāntism*, the method of 'constructive interpretation' or 'speculative re-construction' is to be found in his monograph, *Studies in Sāṃkhya Philosophy*.<sup>4</sup> In the area

of Sāṃkhya philosophy, however, the method is much more than an interpretive choice. As KCB rightly understood, 'constructive interpretation' or 'speculative re-construction' is the only possible way to proceed. Says KCB:

The interpretation of all ancient systems requires a constructive effort; but while in the case of some systems where we have a large volume of literature and a continuity of tradition, the construction is mainly of the nature of translation of ideas into modern concepts, here in Sāṃkhya the construction at many places involves supplying of missing links from one's imagination. *It is risky work, but unless one does it one cannot be said to understand Sāṃkhya as a philosophy. It is a task that one is obliged to undertake.* It is a fascinating task because Sāṃkhya is a bold constructive philosophy. Sāṃkhya is not the avowed formulation of religious experience which Vedānta is primarily, nor analytical and critical like Nyāya, but is based on speculative insight and demands imaginative-introspective effort at every stage on the part of the interpreter.<sup>5</sup> (italics mine)

One of the more interesting conundrums in classical Sāṃkhya philosophizing is the puzzling claim that there is a plurality of *puruṣas* (*puruṣa-bahutva*). No aspect of Sāṃkhya philosophy has been so thoroughly ridiculed by philosophical interpreters, both ancient and modern. Usually it is explained away as a historical anomaly, the lame result of a compromise between an old nature-philosophy and the self-doctrines of the Upaniṣads.<sup>6</sup> It is to the great credit of KCB not to have accepted this conventional line of criticism but, instead, to attempt to think through what the ancient Sāṃkhya *ācāryas* meant by this crucial notion.

My own view in these matters is that KCB was clearly on the right track in trying to give a philosophical justification for *puruṣa-bahutva*, that indeed the 'plurality of *puruṣas*' makes much more philosophical sense than the old religious cosmic *ātman* of the Upaniṣads and later *Advaita Vedānta* philosophy, and that the notion of *puruṣa-bahutva* could possibly be interpreted in ways that would allow traditional South Asian reflection about the non-intentionality of consciousness to provide some interesting insights into certain contemporary discussions within the field of philosophy of mind. I shall present my analysis in three sections, or perhaps better, on three levels of discourse: (i) a structural level in which I want to place the Sāṃkhya *puruṣa-bahutva* in its Indian environment *vis-à-vis* the Vedānta position; (ii) an interpretive level in which I shall utilize KCB's discussion by way of showing the rational justification for *puruṣa-bahutva* in Sāṃkhya; and (iii) a brief comparative level in

which I want to show how *puruṣa-bahutva* may be utilized for discussing certain issues in philosophy of mind.

*The Structural Level: The One and the Many in Sāṃkhya and Vedānta*

The classical Sāṃkhya interpretation of *puruṣa* is set forth in *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* (SK) 17-21 and is best summarized by simply quoting the *kārikās* as follows:

17. The *puruṣa* exists, (a) because combinations exist for another; (b) because (this other) must be apart or opposite from the three *gunas* (together with what this entails as mentioned earlier in *kārikā* 11); (c) because (this other) (must be) a superintending presence; (d) because of the presence of an enjoyer; and (e) because there is a basic urge towards freedom (in all beings).

18. (Moreover), there is plurality of *puruṣas* (*puruṣa-bahutva*), (a) because there is diversity of births; (b) because there is diversity of deaths; (c) because there is diversity of organs (both cognitive and motor) (in different beings); (d) because (beings) pursue their various goals at different times and in different ways; and (e) because (beings) are made up of different combinations of the three *gunas*.

19. (Furthermore), since *puruṣa* is opposite from that (*prakṛti* or the unmanifest), it follows that *puruṣa* is (a) a witness; (b) (grounded in or the basis for) freedom; (c) indifferent; (d) a ground or basis for subjectivity; and (e) characterized by non-agency or incapable of action.

20. Because these two (namely, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*) are in the presence of one another, the unconscious one (that is, *prakṛti*) appears as if possessed of consciousness. Similarly, the indifferent one (that is, *puruṣa*) appears as if it is an agent or doer involved in the activities of the *gunas*.

21. The presence of these two to one another (that is, *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*), (functioning in a mutually beneficial way) like a lame person and a blind person, has for its purpose the conscious illumination of the natural world (by *puruṣa*) and the manifestation of the radical freedom of pure consciousness (by *prakṛti*). The world unfolds by means of this (mutual presence).<sup>7</sup>

I have discussed these verses and the notions of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* at great length in other contexts, and there is no need to repeat those discussions here. They are easily accessible to the interested reader.<sup>8</sup> Similarly I shall assume that most readers of this journal are fully familiar with the classical expression of the Advaita Vedānta position in terms of *ātman*, *Brahman*, *māyā* and *avidyā*.<sup>9</sup>

What I do wish to call attention to in this context is the little noted contrast between the Sāṃkhya structuring of the problem of the one and the many and the Vedānta structuring of the problem of the one and the many as a result of the divergent interpretations of consciousness in the two systems. Usually Sāṃkhya and Vedānta are contrasted in terms of dualism versus monism, and that, of course, is a true enough distinction as far as it goes. What is more interesting by way of contrast, however, is what might be called the 'double reflection' antithesis between Sāṃkhya and Advaita Vedānta regarding the one and the many that grows out of their divergent assertions about consciousness.<sup>10</sup> A simple chart reveals the contrast at a glance:

ONE	MANY
Śaṅkara's <i>ātman-Brahman</i>	Sāṃkhya's <i>puruṣa-bahutva</i>
Sāṃkhya's <i>prakṛti</i>	Śaṅkara's <i>māyā-avidyā</i>

Śaṅkara's one and the many is the exact antithesis, or perhaps better by way of keeping the 'reflection' metaphor, the mirror reversal of Sāṃkhya's one and the many. For Śaṅkara and the Advaita Vedāntin generally, contentless consciousness (*ātman*) is always one, whereas the multiplicity of the phenomenal, empirical everyday world is a bewildering and, finally, illusory, or at least irrational, many (*māyā, avidyā*). For Sāṃkhya, the exact opposite or the mirror reversal is the case. Contentless consciousness (*puruṣa*) reveals itself as many, whereas the multiplicity of the phenomenal, empirical everyday world is a completely intelligible, rational one (*prakṛti* or *mūlaprakṛti* as *traiguṇya*). For Śaṅkara, a single, cosmic consciousness disperses itself into a random and finally unintelligible multiplicity. For Sāṃkhya, many consciousnesses reside in a single, rational world. For Śaṅkara, contentless consciousness (*ātman*) can never be particular or individual; it can only be general or universal. For Sāṃkhya contentless consciousness (*puruṣa*) can never be general or universal; it can only be particular or individual. For Śaṅkara, what truly is and what is truly intelligible and what is ultimately satisfying (that is, what is *sat, cit* and *ānanda*) can only be the sheer transparency of contentless consciousness (*ātman*); anything else is an unintelligible, mysterious otherness. For Sāṃkhya, the world itself is truly intelligible and rational; what is unintelligible and mysterious is my particular or individual presence in it.

Whatever else might be said about this 'double reflection' or mirror-reversal between Śaṅkara and Sāṃkhya on the level of systematic structure, it surely cannot be explained away as the result of some sort of lame, historical compromise, as so many conventional interpretations have suggested. What we see here is a clear philosophical difference that calls for careful philosophical interpretation, and as mentioned earlier, it is to the credit of KCB that he clearly saw this. But let us move on now to our second level of discourse, namely the interpretive level.

*The Interpretive Level: The Many as Warrant for Community and Certitude*  
KCB introduces the issue of the plurality of *puruṣas* with the following comment:

Sāṃkhya admits a plurality of pure selves or *puruṣas*. The plurality is also taken to be inferred from the circumstances of the birth, death, organ, willing and feeling differing in different embodied selves (SK 18). A prior inquiry, however, is how a body other than mine is known to be of another self, for such knowledge is obviously assumed in the above inference. The *kārikā* starts with the commonsense belief in other embodied selves, but the inferences of many pure selves would be invalid if the datum can be shown to be due to illusion, as it is sought to be shown by the Vedāntist.<sup>11</sup>

*Kārikā* 18, in other words, which sets forth the arguments for *puruṣa-bahutva*, begs the question. It assumes what is at issue. It asserts the commonsense belief in a plurality of beings or entities and then simply assumes that contentless consciousness (*puruṣa*) must likewise be plural. KCB continues, however, with the observation:

The Sāṃkhya view . . . can be defended if *buddhi* in its pure *asmitā*-function is taken to yield knowledge of I as in a community of I's or in reference to the object, if my certitude about an object be taken to involve others' certitude about it. This would be holding that the commonsense belief in many selves cannot be due to illusion corrigible as in the Vedānta view within *buddhi*-knowledge.<sup>12</sup>

KCB then proceeds to argue that the Sāṃkhya view is indeed defensible precisely because of the nature of contentless consciousness (*puruṣa*) as reflected in the *buddhi*. Says KCB:

The self is known in *buddhi* in its pure *bhāva* not only as not finite (i.e. as above *ahamkāra*) but as not me (i.e. as object to itself). Now the self as infinite I can only mean I as involving all I's. Infinity in Sāṃkhya is infinity as in the finite. It is in reference to the finite phenomenal object the universal and in



reference to a constituent of one's exclusive body the corresponding cosmic substance, but what is it in reference to the subject 'I'?<sup>13</sup>

This latter question is, of course, crucial. Whereas it is clear enough what the 'infinite' might mean in terms of phenomenal objects or in terms of the Sāṃkhya *tattvas* of *prakṛti*, it is not at all clear what the 'infinite' could possibly mean with respect to the 'I as involving all Is'. With respect to phenomenal objects, the 'infinite' would obviously be the universal—for example, cows as sharing in the 'infinite' universal 'cow-ness' (*gotva*). Or with respect to the Sāṃkhya *tattvas* of *prakṛti*, the *tattvas* that make up my embodiment can be seen as exemplifications of the cosmic make-up of *mūlaprakṛti*—for example, the exclusive *tanmātras* that make up my embodiment may be seen as exemplary of the cosmic *tanmātras* of the universal *prakṛti* or *mūlaprakṛti*.

Regarding *puruṣa*, however, I cannot assert a universality or 'infinite' on analogy with 'cowness' or 'cosmic *tanmātra*' (substance), for that would be to reduce *puruṣa* to the realm of phenomenal objects or to a *tattva* of *prakṛti*. The 'infinite' or universal of *puruṣa*, namely *puruṣa-sāmānya*, is of a peculiar kind. It is, to be sure, an abstraction, but not an abstraction along the lines of 'cowness' or 'cosmic *tattva*' (substance). What then is it? Says KCB:

It is an abstraction in the sense that it cannot be represented like a universal or a substance as really or apparently comprising individuals (or modes) under it, being intelligible only as the *svarūpa* (or character of being itself) of the individual.

The subject is manifest as what has no character (*nirdharmaka*), but this characterlessness is itself taken as its character of self-manifestness. Thus the subject is manifest simply as individual thing, as being itself. The pure individual is necessarily intelligible as individual among individuals. The subject that is consciously manifest as simply individual is manifest to itself as a self among selves.

The self is essentially individual, any individual implying others. The term 'I' is to the person who uses it singular though he is necessarily aware that others can use it of themselves. *Puruṣa-sāmānya* or selfhood is this necessary universality of a singular, being universal only if uniqueness or the unique-in-general is universal. Unique-in-general means any unique, not all uniques. 'All A is B' indeed means 'any A is B' but 'any A is B' need not mean 'all A is B', for even the distributive *all* has an implied collective character. As applied to the object, *any* and *all* may be regarded as equivalents but not as applied to the subject . . . . In point of being, each subject is

absolute. . . . In this sense we may say that the self is known in *buddhi* as having with it a community of selves.<sup>14</sup>

*Puruṣa*, in other words, is the singular universal or the universal singular in the sense that its very individuality requires plurality. *Puruṣa-bahutva*, therefore, rather than begging the question, shows itself instead as the only intelligible way of formulating the question of contentless consciousness within *buddhi*-awareness.

In a similar fashion, *puruṣa-bahutva* in *buddhi*-awareness is related to issues of intersubjective certitude. Says KCB:

So far as I know through *buddhi*, I know the object as not to me alone but to any knowing. This applies both to the phenomenal object and to the objective *tattva*. The *bhogyā* is indeed relative to me as exclusive *bhoktr* but it is nonetheless taken by me as given, as having an existence that is for any *bhoktr*. So when the body, mental and material, is viewed through *buddhi* as object not only to me but to all, the constituents of the body become manifest as cosmic *tattvas*.<sup>15</sup>

KCB, then, brings together the various strands of his 'constructive interpretation' with the following comment:

The self is thus known in pure *asmitā* as an individual involving a community of individuals, each being an infinite or *Īśvara*. There is no suggestion in Sāṃkhya of a self really or illusorily differentiated into many selves, nor of a single *Īśvara* as in Yoga distinct from the selves and mystically working within them. Each self is essentially *Īśvara* and pure *buddhi* as revealing and embodying the many infinite selves is called *mahat* or the great which gets restricted by *rajas* and *tamas* conditioning the movements towards *bhoga*. Of the self as *mukta* which to one's final reflection is absolute (*kevala*), we cannot say if it is an individual aware of itself involving a community of individuals. There is no reason to regard it as not individual in being, but all we can assert of it is that it is contentless consciousness, not consciousness of itself as object.<sup>16</sup>

K.C. Bhattacharyya, finally, concludes his discussion of *puruṣa-bahutva* with the following intriguing comparative comment:

The distinguishability of *puruṣa-sāmānya* in the *puruṣa* known in *asmitā* lapses when the *asmitā* lapses, and hence the *mukta* self is at least not consciously individual. To Vedānta, unconscious being or individuality of the pure self or consciousness is meaningless. To Sāṃkhya the being of consciousness can be manifest only to *buddhi*. When *buddhi* lapses, the self would not be aware of its being. Vedānta would take it

to be then ecstatically self-conscious. Apparently to Sāṃkhya, the being of the *mukta* self or absolute consciousness is then unmanifest or unconscious. Whether it is then individual or not can never be asserted. The conflict between Vedānta and Sāṃkhya on this point may, therefore, yet disappear. Only Sāṃkhya would insist that through *buddhi* you cannot know the individuality of the self as illusory. Apparently, Vedānta will rely on some spiritual feeling or *Śāstra* for its denial of individuality and seek not to disprove individuality by reason (*buddhi*) but only to disprove objections to the faith in its illusory character.<sup>17</sup>

The ironic upshot of KCB's interpretation, in other words, is that finally the Vedāntist is left with no rational justification for a single, universal self and an illusory plurality of *jīvas*. The only basis for a cosmic, universal *ātman* is 'spiritual feeling', *śruti* and 'faith'. It is hardly an accident, therefore, that Śaṅkara considered Sāṃkhya his main philosophical opponent. Not only did Sāṃkhya rationally justify its claims. Its very rational analysis, at least if KCB's 'constructive interpretation' is a plausible interpretation of Sāṃkhya's *puruṣa-bahutva*, showed the Vedānta analysis to have no rational basis whatever beyond its assertion in *śruti*. But let us move on now briefly to our third and final level of discourse, the comparative.

*The Comparative Level: Contentless Consciousness as the Singular Universal*

In the history of western thought, it is, of course, Hegel who treats in depth the problem of the 'concrete universal' or the 'singular universal' in his discussion of the notion (*der Begriff*) in *Wissenschaft der Logik*.<sup>18</sup> For Hegel, however, the singular universal or the concrete universal is finally the most completely determinate. It is that which has the most content, the most character. It is the most completely intelligible, the fully rational and the fully real. Substance is finally subject as absolute *Geist*, and the rational is the real. Such, however, is hardly the 'singular universal' to which KCB is referring in his treatment of the Sāṃkhya *puruṣa-bahutva*. If there be any point of contact in South Asian philosophizing, one would have to look to the Advaita Vedāntin's cosmic *ātman*, *mutatis mutandis*, for a South Asian equivalent to the Germanic absolute *Geist*.

A better locus for the Sāṃkhya equivalent to *puruṣa-bahutva* in the history of European thought would be Hegel's *Gegenspieler*, namely the great Kierkegaard, who refused to be reduced to Hegel's system. I have in mind here the famous and seminal essay on Kierkegaard by Jean-Paul Sartre, first presented at the UNESCO Conference on Kierkegaard in April 1964, and later published in *Situations* with the title 'Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal'.<sup>19</sup>

Kierkegaard's 'lived experience' in its sheer singularity becomes a 'non-knowledge' in the very heart of knowledge, or put somewhat differently, Kierkegaard's simple presence'. . . . constitutes itself within knowledge as irreducible non-knowledge.<sup>20</sup> Says Sartre about Kierkegaard: '. . . the anchorage of the individual made this universal into an irreducible singularity'.<sup>21</sup> Or again: 'Kierkegaard . . . wanted to designate himself as a transhistorical absolute. . . . The subjective has to be what it is—a singular realisation of each singularity'.<sup>22</sup> Hegelian 'knowledge' knows everything that can possibly be known about Kierkegaard but, finally, really knows nothing about Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard, says Sartre, shows himself as a . . . singularizing accident . . . it produced his most intimate self as a pure historical contingency, which might not have been and in itself meant nothing'.<sup>23</sup> Sartre continues: 'Kierkegaard lives on because, by rejecting knowledge, he reveals the transhistorical contemporaneity of the dead and the living.' In other words, contra the absolute determinism of the Hegelian project, Kierkegaard shows us '. . . the inaccessible secret of interiority', 'the human singularity of the concrete universal', and the remarkable revelation that '. . . each of us is an incomparable absolute'.<sup>24</sup>

We are back, *mutatis mutandis*, to KCB's discussion of the Sāṃkhya *puruṣa-bahutva*: 'In point of being, each subject is absolute . . .' and again, 'In this sense we may say that the self is known in *buddhi* as having with it a community of selves.' 'The subject is manifest as what has no character (*nirdharmaka*), but this characterlessness is itself taken as its character of self-manifestness' (or, in other words, a 'non-knowledge' in the heart of knowledge). And finally: '. . . this necessary universality of a singular, being universal only if uniqueness or the unique-in-general is universal. Unique-in-general means *any* unique, not *all* uniques.'<sup>25</sup> If, as mentioned above, the Advaita Vedāntin's cosmic *ātman* is, *mutatis mutandis*, a South Asian equivalent of the Germanic (Hegelian) absolute *Geist*, then surely Sāṃkhya's *puruṣa-bahutva* is, *mutatis mutandis*, the South Asian Danish (Kierkegaardian) reply. Put directly, just as Kierkegaard's 'singular universality' refused to be embraced by the Hegelian system, so Sāṃkhya *puruṣa-bahutva* can never be assimilated into the murky fog of Vedānta's cosmic *ātman*.

But let me conclude by moving outside the abstractions of European continental philosophizing in order to suggest another context in which the Sāṃkhya notion of *puruṣa-bahutva* could prove useful in dealing with certain problems in comparative philosophy. I have in mind some of the recent discussions regarding the nature of consciousness in philosophy of mind, and in particular I am thinking of the debates between the dualists and the reductive materialists or physicalists in the philosophy of mind.<sup>26</sup> Dualists for the most part

maintain the traditional distinction between mind and body or thought and extension, and the materialists and physicalists maintain a largely reductionist, scientific realism that simply discounts any separate notion of selfhood or non-materialist (or non-epiphenomenal) consciousness. Some recent philosophers of mind, and here I am thinking primarily of Paul Churchland, Michael Devitt, *et al.*, have argued that both traditional dualists as well as many reductive materialists and physicalists operate largely with a kind of 'folk psychology' paradigm that has been very much a part of western philosophy since its beginnings in pre-Socratic times. By trying to salvage traditional dualism or by attempting to reduce the propositions of 'folk psychology' into modern scientific discourse, many philosophers of mind are not really getting anywhere, since the 'folk psychology' orientation (namely a 'subject' that somehow 'believes' or 'desires' x, and so forth) is hopelessly outdated and largely false. Instead of a 'reductive materialism', they argue, we need an 'eliminative materialism' whereby the traditional western 'folk psychology', like phlogiston-theory, is simply dropped as false.<sup>27</sup> Why try to salvage what is so obviously naive and false?

Roughly speaking, then, on the materialist or physicalist side, one can identify what might be called a traditional materialist position, a reductive materialist position and an eliminative materialist position. Similarly, on the dualist side, one can identify a simple dualist position (e.g. Descartes), a reductive dualist position (e.g. some of the work of J.C. Eccles) and a possible 'eliminative dualist' position. Regarding this latter possibility, Paul Churchland comments:

The third possibility here . . . is one that to my knowledge has never been cited before, but it is real just the same. . . . The ontology of the P-theory (i.e. the 'person'-theory of folk psychology) would thus be eliminated in favour of the ontology of the more general theory that displaced it. We might call this possibility 'eliminative dualism'!<sup>28</sup>

What is interesting to me as a student of Indian philosophy is that indeed an 'eliminative dualist' position has been argued, and that position is that of the classical Sāṃkhya *puruṣa-bahutva*. *Puruṣa* is contentless consciousness that is nevertheless 'the necessary universality of a singular'. 'The subject is manifest as what has no character (*nir dharmaka*), but this characterlessness is itself taken as its character of self-manifestness'.<sup>29</sup> What Sāṃkhya represents philosophically in its philosophy of mind is an intriguing synthesis of the dualist and materialist positions in an 'eliminative' mode. That is to say, the conventional 'person' is encompassed within a general materialist ontology of *prakṛti* (as *buddhi*, etc.), and intentionality is dealt with in terms of *buddhi*-awareness in a reductive materialist

fashion. At the same time, however, a claim is made for the presence of a contentless (that is, non-intentional) consciousness that is nevertheless absolutely singular and unique but, finally, impersonal, inactive and unknowable (precisely because it is contentless).

## CONCLUSION

But let me quickly conclude. The great genius of KCB is that he took traditional Indian philosophy as a starting-point for his own creative philosophical reflection. He refused to allow the insights of traditional Indian philosophy to be 'hacked up' by the 'academic philosophy-mongers' (and one might well add that great company of pedants known as 'Indologists' and 'Orientalists'). He really believed that Indian philosophy has an important role to play in modern philosophy. He was surely right, and all of us who claim to do Indian philosophy should really start doing it!

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. K.C. Bhattacharya, 'Studies in Vedāntism', in *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. I, edited by Gopinath Bhattacharya, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 1956, two volumes, p. 6.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
3. *Ibid.*, p. xi.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 125–211.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 127.
6. See, for example, A.B. Keith, *The Sāṃkhya System*, YMCA Publishing House, Calcutta, 1949, pp. 94–95; and D. Chattopadhyaya, *Lokāyata*, People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1973, pp. 383 ff.
7. For text and translation of the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā*, see Gerald J. Larson, *Classical Sāṃkhya*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979, revised second edition, pp. 255–77. For an exhaustive discussion of the Sāṃkhya system overall and the *Sāṃkhya-kārikā* itself, see also G.J. Larson and R.S. Bhattacharya (eds.), *Sāṃkhya, A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987; *Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. IV, General Editor, Karl H. Potter, pp. 3–103 and 149–63.
8. *Ibid.*
9. A useful recent exposition is Karl H. Potter, *Advaita Vedānta up to Saṅkara and His Pupils*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1981, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. III, General Editor, Karl H. Potter, pp. 3–100. A precise discussion of the relation between Sāṃkhya and Śaṅkara may be found in Gerald J. Larson, 'Saṅkara's Criticism of Sāṃkhya and the Sāṃkhya Response', in *Classical Sāṃkhya*, *op. cit.*, pp. 209–35.
10. By 'double reflection' I have in mind the debate between Vācaspati-miśra and Vijnānabhikṣu regarding the Sāṃkhya-Yoga relation between *buddhi* and *puruṣa* in terms of a theory of single reflection (*pratibimba*, maintained by Vācaspati-miśra), or a theory of 'double' or 'mutual reflection' (*anyonya-pratibimba*, maintained by Vijnānabhikṣu). Herein I am suggesting that a metaphor of 'double reflection' or *anyonya-pratibimba* may be helpful by way of

showing the structural difference between Advaita Vedānta and Sāṃkhya regarding the problem of the one and the many.

11. K.C. Bhattacharyya, 'Studies in Sāṃkhya,' op. cit., p. 194.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., p. 195.
14. Ibid., pp. 195–96.
15. Ibid., p. 196.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., pp. 196–97.
18. G.W.F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, translated by A.V. Miller, *Hegel's Science of Logic* foreword by J.N. Findlay, Humanities Press International, Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1989; translation based on George Allen & Unwin edition of 1969, pp. 600–22.
19. Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Kierkegaard: The Singular Universal', in *Between Existentialism and Marxism*, translated by John Mathews, Pantheon Books, New York, 1974, pp. 141–69.
20. Ibid., pp. 147 and 152.
21. Ibid., p. 156.
22. Ibid., pp. 147 and 145.
23. Ibid., p. 157.
24. Ibid., p. 167.
25. K.C. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., pp. 195–96.
26. A useful anthology that nicely brings together almost all of the important papers concerning these debates is David M. Rosenthal (ed.), *The Nature of Mind*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991. Two books by Paul M. Churchland are also helpful by way of understanding the manner in which the current debates are being framed, namely Paul M. Churchland, *Matter and Consciousness*, MIT Press, Cambridge, 1988, revised edition; and Paul M. Churchland, *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986.
27. Churchland, *Scientific realism*, op. cit., p. 114.
28. Ibid., p. 108.
29. K.C. Bhattacharyya, op. cit., p. 195.

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Underlying and scattered throughout *The Subject as Freedom*<sup>1</sup> there is a well-developed theory of meaning to which I would like to draw attention in this essay. In this theory, meanings are understood not merely as linguistic meanings, but also as correlates of appropriate modes of subjectivity. Let me start with formulating the central core of that theory which consists in the following theses:

1. Object = meant content.
2. Meanings must be communicable and sharable between the speaker and the hearer.
3. Meanings as entities emerge from images through ideas and finally in pure thought.
4. The indexical 'I' does not have a meaning.

Let us start by looking at these theses somewhat closely.

Thesis 1 may be construed in a manner which would make it amount to saying that the object is what is referred or intended. Such a construal will get rid of meanings as intermediate entities and identify them with referents. However, it does seem to me that Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB) did not quite subscribe to a referential theory of meaning. On the contrary, he speaks of meanings as 'ghostly entities' (p. 42) and gives an account of how such ghostly entities emerge (thesis 2). Therefore, by saying that the object is the meant content, KCB must have in mind the thesis that objects are referred to, or posited, always through meanings, and never without them. Thus we have a Fregean-type—but not quite Frege's—theory.

Although meanings must be communicable and sharable between the speaker and the hearer—here he would agree with Frege—KCB holds that contents which are not meant (i.e., which are not therefore objects) may also be communicated and understood. This is the case with the speaker's uttering the word 'I'. The word 'I', according to KCB, does not have a meaning (thesis 4). The reason given by him for this thesis is that 'The word I as used by a speaker is not understood by the hearer to convey what he would himself convey by the use of it' (p. 2). Nevertheless, the word is *understood*

by the hearer to stand for the speaker. This understanding is not grasping of a meaning. As KCB puts it, in this case the word itself, but not the meaning, carries the intention of the speaker. This is what he means when he writes that the speaker's self-consciousness is *incarnated* in the word 'I' (p. 3). We should not assume that by denying that the word 'I' expresses a meaning, KCB avoids Frege's predicament of having to admit incommunicable senses. Does the word 'I' then simply refer to myself (not to *any* speaker, not also to me as *the* speaker)? Here KCB's view regarding 'I' departs from a Russellian sort of theory which treats 'I' as a logically proper name. The term is not even a singular term, for different people do not use it of the same thing (p. 179). According to KCB's theory, even if 'I' does not have a meaning, it nevertheless has a meaning-function, it expresses the speaker's actual introspection by incarnating it (pp. 179–80). How should we understand this claim? Why does he speak of meaning-function, and what does he mean by it?

There is a distinction between meaning-function and actual meaning with regard to demonstratives, which is upheld, amongst others, by Husserl and Perry. Husserl distinguishes between '*anzeigende Bedeutung*' and '*angezeigte Bedeutung*',<sup>2</sup> and Perry between the role and the value of the indexicals.<sup>3</sup> In each case the former is grasped in understanding, the latter is determined, amongst others, by context. Both ascribe to indexicals, including 'I', a meaning-function as well as a meaning. KCB denies to 'I'—but not to 'this'—meaning, but ascribes to it a meaning-function. (It should be noted that consequently KCB does not give a unified theory of indexicals. He has one theory for 'I' and another for 'this'.) What then does he mean by 'meaning-function'?

I think what he means is two-fold. For one thing, the I (who is incarnated in any use of 'I') is just and simply the function of speaking. The speaker (who utters 'I') is not first someone who then says 'I'. She is rather one who is the I in the sense of the 'I'-speaker. 'It is just the first person I, the speaker who is not an object to introspection but is simply the function of speaking' (p. 175). Being *I* and being 'I'-speaking are one and the same. For another, speaking 'I', therefore being-I, is the same as introspecting. 'Introspection is not believing in the I, it is the I' (p. 175). If Kant regarded the self, not as a substance, but as the thinking function, KCB regards the self, at a more fundamental level, as just speaking, saying 'I' (and introspecting). The function of speaking is the meaning function which the use of 'I' expresses, although it does not refer to an object (the alleged self) through a meaning. If it did so refer, then the self would be an object in accordance with thesis 1, being a meant content. However the self incarnated in 'I' is a functioning (speaking, introspecting) subject.

When the expression 'morning star' is understood, one grasps its meaning. When the word 'I' as uttered by a speaker is understood, one does not grasp a meaning, one does not have a 'mystic intuition' either. The subject is being literally communicated by speech, and is so understood, and so known. Though 'unmeanable', the I is knowable. As contrasted with both 'morning star' and 'I', 'abracadabra' is just unmeanable and is not understood at all.

Unlike many other philosophers who have advanced a theory of indexicals, KCB gives a different theory in the case of 'this' than in the case of 'I'. 'I', as we have noted, does not, according to him, express a meaning. The word 'this' however may be used by two persons to refer to the same object in the same sense. Thus 'this' has a general meaning, and the availability of any other general meaning requires that individual things to which such a meaning applies can be identified as *this*. 'This' therefore is paradigmatic of words that refer to objects—primarily the perceivable objects, but also to generalities.

I have said earlier that KCB does speak of meanings as objects of a sort, as rather 'ghost-like' objects. But can we ascribe to him then a Platonic theory of meanings (such as Frege's) according to which meanings are abstract entities having a mode of being of their own, independently of being grasped by a mind or of being expressed in a language? Apart from the rich ontology it commits one to (which by itself does not worry me), KCB's own theory would lead to undesirable consequences if combined with such a Platonic theory. If objects are meant contents (thesis 1), and if meanings are objects of a sort, then meanings must also be meant contents—in which case there would be second level meanings through which the first level meanings are meant, and so on *ad infinitum*. (The Fregean theory does not entail this consequence, for according to that theory although objects are referred through senses, objects need not be referred at all, so that they cannot be *defined* as meant contents. Senses become referents only under intensional contexts, and only then are higher order senses required.)

One response to the Platonic reification of meanings is the Husserlian: meanings are better construed as ideal contents of intentional acts<sup>4</sup> so that ideality preserves their irrealty while being contents of intentional acts they resist reification. Does KCB follow such a route?

A definitive answer to this question would require us to determine, in the first instance, what KCB's position *vis-à-vis* the intentionality thesis is. The following sentence from *The Subject as Freedom* is relevant: 'The ordinary view of the ghostly psychic fact as coordinate with objective fact ignores the experienced non-distinction of presentation from its object. . . .', (p. 90). Elsewhere,

he writes: 'Presentation and object are so related that while the latter is given distinct from the former, the former is not given distinct from the latter, being only abstracted or tried to be distinguished in introspection' (p. 57).

In valid perception, the object alone is there, not its distinction from presentation. In illusory perception, after the illusion is corrected, only presentation is there but no object distinct from it. The usual formulations of intentionality state that all consciousness (here presentation) is of an object. But the two, presentation and object, are never given as distinct—if KCB is right—in primary cognition. Only introspection abstracts presentation from the object, and distinguishes object from presentation. The intentionality thesis presupposes such introspection, and is not a description of primary perceptual cognition.

KCB calls meaning a presentation in a text where the image, idea and meaning are all taken to be 'ghostly objects', and all are designated presentations. (Recall Frege's characterization of *Sinn* as a mode of presentation.) As a presentation meaning is not given as distinct from the object, except to introspection, especially, to introspection into non-perceptual knowledge. These modes of presentation may themselves be objectified, in which case consciousness would be detached from them, thereby becoming non-presentational or spiritual subjectivity. What is relevant for my present purpose is a two-fold thesis. First, that meaning is a presentation, originally not distinguished from the object but capable of being so distinguished in introspection and therewith also objectified. Second, image and idea and pure thought are stages through which meaning develops. The image is a quasi-object, has an objective form but no objective position in space and time; when introspected, it shows itself as a process of forming, of imagining, it appears 'as a form being formed' (p. 140). As 'the finished form that interprets the forming', the image is to be called an idea (p. 142), which is originally given as 'a fringe of the image', not yet separated from it. The dissociated idea is thought—at first pictorial, but then thought proper which is presented as 'unpicturable meaning' (p. 145). In this account of the genesis of meaning, KCB recognizes the appropriate validity of the image theory of meaning, of a conceptualist theory of meaning, and of a Platonic theory—each being true of a stage of development of meaning. Again seeking to avoid a Platonic reification, he adds: 'Thought is still presented as meaning, as the unobjective something about the object, being characterisable only in reference to the object as what the object is not.' Is not the Fregean *Sinn* defined in relation to the *Bedeutung*, as what is not the *Bedeutung* and as what yet determines the latter? Why then did he call it a kind of entity, a quasi-object, a 'ghostly

object'? Let us suggest: functionally, it is unobjective, it becomes an object, or rather a quasi-object, only for introspection. But KCB hastens to add: 'The introspective awareness of meaning as distinct from the image is awareness of the explicit unobjective' (p. 152). I think, with regard to the question of the ontological status of meanings, KCB wavers between according to them a quasi-objective status and regarding them as purely unobjective functions. But this wavering may indeed correspond to the nature of the matter at hand. It may indeed be that here there are two complementary modes of describing the phenomenon, no one of which exhausts the nature of meanings.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. E. Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, Max Niemeyer, Vierte Auflage, Halle, 1928, pp. 79–86.
3. John Perry, 'Frege on Demonstratives', *Philosophical Review*, LXXXVI, 1977, pp. 474–97.
4. Cf. J.N. Mohanty, *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning*, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, Third Edition, 1976.
5. In *Edmund Husserl's Theory of Meaning* I had suggested the importance of what I there called the Principle of Complementarity for a theory of meaning.

# Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya on Factuality, Falsity, and Contradiction

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My object in this paper is to elucidate and interpret Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's (KCB) thoughts on factuality, falsity, and contradiction. The three terms exhaust among themselves a considerable area of metaphysical inquiry. It would, therefore, be sheer pretence on my part to claim to attempt within the compass of a single paper anything more than a more or less sketchy consideration of the meaning of the terms in question as understood and expounded by KCB. The importance they have for him may be gauged—and this is specially true of 'falsity', which is KCB's one great preoccupation—from the simple fact of the enormous amount of intellectual labour that he has expended on the treatment of them. I have taken the liberty of offering some observations which, in my view, a sympathetic appreciation of a philosophical view sometimes demands and deserves. If but incidentally, I have also raised a couple of issues which seemed to me to arise from KCB's treatment of the subject.

The two key terms in which KCB's discussion of the above theme is anchored are 'belief' and 'thinkability'. All the three—fact, falsity, and contradiction—have to do with these two terms (or their lack) in one way or another. It would be of help if we begin our discussion with the concept of factuality and KCB's preliminary understanding of the term in relation to belief and thought.

KCB's initial view of fact is apparently quite unusual if not also downright obscure. Viewing fact solely in terms of or as equivalent to the given, as laymen and even philosophers are generally wont to do, would be to him plainly improper. Fact, he declares, 'does not admit of an impersonal definition' (p. 169).<sup>\*</sup> He links the notion of fact with that of belief and thinks them to be unseverable. The relation conceived by KCB between fact and belief is, however, no ordinary one. 'Fact', he says, 'means what is believed: what a person believes is fact to him' (p. 169). This may seem quite an

<sup>\*</sup> All page numbers within parentheses in the body of the article refer to K.C. Bhattacharyya's *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. II, edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya, Progressive Publishers, Calcutta, 1958.

extraordinary statement on the face of it. For even if one were to grant, as many would do, that fact is on the whole unintelligible apart from belief, a much less objectionable statement would perhaps be: *what is believed is taken to be fact*. This formulation has the advantage that it provides for the possibility, never in principle deniable, that a belief may turn out to be false and so need correction. It would be noted that the latter half of the above statement of KCB's—what a person believes is a fact *to him* (my italics)—seems to make amends for the view the first half articulates. It approximates to our formulation above. If we ponder the psychology of belief we will find that our predisposition always is to take as fact what we believe, even though this does not detract from the (other) fact that truth or falsity is not something beliefs 'wear on their sleeves'. Our beliefs are not self-evidently true even though we presume them to be so as a matter of course and even act upon them without feeling the need, unless otherwise warranted, to engage first in any elaborate reasoning process to back up our judgments. So when in the above KCB says, what a person believes is a fact to him, he seems to be saying no more, though also no less, than that there is a side to fact which cannot be understood except as a category of reflective (and not merely conscious) thinking.

Besides, as KCB himself clarifies elsewhere, his definition: Fact is what is believed, indicates the *use*, not the linguistic definition, of fact.<sup>1</sup> So what the statement in effect comes to is not that what is believed is for that reason always a fact, nor even that it is always facts that we believe. That would be to suppose KCB too naive. KCB's meaning rather is that there is a clear sense in which the logic of fact-talk or 'fact-stating type of discourse' cannot be fully understood apart from a reference to the use of the word, and its meaning-as-use cannot be fully understood in abstraction from all reference to the epistemic (or subjective) attitudes of belief and disbelief. And this is anything but denying facts their legitimate ontological status or their rightful place in the world.

If facts are tied at one end to belief they are tied at the other end to reality. And it can't probably be helped, given the nature of the case. The two-fold function which fact thus performs as a part of the belief-expressing speech-act can be understood as follows.

On the one hand the referent *p* of the fact-stating statement 'It is a fact that *p*' cries to be placed in the world and taken as existing (because of its setting up that claim) *independently* of the belief and the corresponding speech-act. On the other hand the same referent (along with its features described and symbolized as *p*) gets *characterized as a fact* by reason of its being believed to exist or to have taken place. Fact thus has a two-ended movement, one towards the world of objects and events and the other towards an

attitude—epistemic attitude—of the speaker. Some philosophers' attempt, therefore, to banish facts from the world altogether is misconceived and ends in failure. The world may consist of things but it consists of things which have facts holding about them. Facts, therefore, though belonging in a clear sense to the world, yet do not exist in the same way as objects and events do with the features that characterize them. This does not, however, mean that they (facts) are of a lesser reality. In one word, things acquire the title of facts as they are believed or asserted. It is a different thing though that acquirement of this title is always at bottom *provisional*. In saying 'It is a fact that *p*' I claim a certain status for the state of affairs represented by *p*. It is of course true that my belief that *p* does not by itself make *p* a fact; some further conditions, enquiry into which is beyond the muttons, are necessary for that to be the case. But this does not alter the fact that for something—whether true or false—to be asserted as fact it needs to be the object of a belief. We cannot in the same breath say 'I believe that *p* but *p* is not a fact' or '*p* is a fact (or 'it is a fact that *p*') but I do not believe that *p*'.

We have said that something asserted as fact points also in the direction of the real. Now this real, KCB would say, while it keeps at bay the unreal, must accommodate side by side with the existent, the possible too. Sometimes it is thought that the notion of fact, properly speaking, has only to do with the existent or the actual. Facts on this view hold only about those things—'thing' in the widest sense—which are actual. How can one speak of facts about something non-existent? Just as, as the corresponding theory has it, no predicate can legitimately be attributed to that which does not exist,<sup>2</sup> nothing true, it is urged, can possibly be meaningfully said or known of the non-existent.

KCB would here draw a distinction. The non-existent or non-actual would, according to him, be of two types. There is the non-existent which not only does not exist but concerning which no question of existence can actually be fairly asked either. This KCB calls 'false' or 'unreal'.<sup>3</sup> In fact, to KCB even its non-existence—the non-existence, e.g. of the snake when it has been discovered that it was actually a rope—cannot be called a fact for the simple reason that (to repeat) no actual question of its (possible) existence is ever raised (during disbelief). The other non-actual is that which although not actually existing is capable of existence. And what is capable of existence is a *possible* existent for the question about its existence can always in reality be asked or entertained. Both the existence and the non-existence of the possible existent are thus conceivable and therefore, if believed, so far facts. These latter are, in KCB's favourite phrase, facts which are 'thought' or 'thinkable'. Thinkability however need not be the defining characteristic of



fact. There may be things—for example the moral *ought* or freedom—which are neither classifiable as existent nor as non-existent but which are believed and are therefore that far facts. Such facts as such involve no question of existence and hence even though believed cannot, on KCB's conception, be called thinkable. Thus, barring such cases as these all such contents, concerning which the question of existence is askable, are believable and hence thinkable facts. 'What is thought is either the possible existent or the existence or the non-existence of the possible existent' (p. 169).

The upshot is that thinkability (or thought) has to do with the question of existence—with the real, in other words. A square circle, for example, cannot be said to be thought, not only because it does not actually exist but also because its existence or non-existence does not admit of conception. Which means, in other words, it is neither a possible existent nor a possible non-existent. One can entertain in thought the non-existence only of that whose existence also is conceivable or possible.

This restriction of thought's jurisdiction to contents as imply actual questions of existence is not without consequences. In the first place, it undermines the myth of the 'subsistent'. The subsistent is generally supposed to belong to some 'third realm' (beyond existence and non-existence) and therefore as not really involving the question of existence. And yet this circumstance, it is contended, does not prevent the asking of some other questions with regard to it—the questions for example relating to its compatibility or coherence with other thought-contents (within a system). KCB does not immediately deny this latter possibility nor does he deny that subsistents have meaning or thought-content. He queries however whether the said compatibility with other thought-contents is such that one could with justification cite it as an instance of a thought-content involving no actual question of existence. In his view this is impossible. This is further shown by a consideration of a contradictory thought. A square circle, for example, is a contradictory idea. But is awareness of its contradiction also thinking (or thought-content) proper? In a square circle there are two meaning-contents in clash with each other. The clash or contradiction itself however is not an additional meaning (p. 170). KCB concludes then that the subsistent is in fact a possible existent and hence a thinkable. A content loosened from its possible existence cannot even survive as a subsistent. And even when it is (if at all) thus loosened it ceases to be a meaning- or thought-content, though it can be called a 'significant speakable'. (That way even a contradiction—which too like the above is no thought—is a significant speakable.) It is an important tenet of KCB's philosophy

that the 'speakable' (—capable of being expressed at all—) is a category wider and more inclusive than the 'thinkable'. All thinkable is speakable but all speakable need not be thinkable.

Thought always chases the real. And it is to the real that thought repeatedly returns in its endeavour to find truth. Those who question this assumption owe it to themselves to explain how severance of thought from reality can become a possibility in the first instance, and further, how the existence question can be circumvented so unmindfully. Is thought's concern merely with the meaning-contents and their possible mutual relations such as a certain type of logic would have it? Does not thought impoverish itself by passing by silently the issue of existence or reality? Does not thought by undermining its relation to reality commit suicide? And if so, what remains of its *raison d'être*? What justification can thought offer for cutting away its umbilical cord—which is its relation to reality—which alone sustains it and provides it nourishment? These are important questions and seem to determine KCB's view of the essential business of thought. Thought cannot but be ontologically engaged—this seems to be the central teaching of KCB. And here he seems to agree with some other philosophers, especially the idealists.

Thought operates through judgments, and the latter cannot but be concerned with reality. (Relieved of this duty, a judgment remains a frivolous pretence.) All this follows from the simple two-fold consideration:

- (1) that judgements *must* be true or false, and
- (2) that this they cannot be in themselves but only through a reference to the real which is beyond them.

But there is another consideration which we can invoke to affirm thought's intrinsic relation to reality. This consideration gains in force and clearness as we ponder the fact (i) that we implicitly but unquestioningly believe that the world is in principle capable, however, partially or inadequately at times, of being known—'knowability' here meaning the same as availability to thought, and (ii) that the only way we can decide as to the relative adequacy or otherwise of a thought form in representing the form or structure of a corresponding fact is by scrutinizing the thought form. And we believe that the world is knowable because we find or believe that we find nothing in the world which, in principle, prevents its being known. The sum and substance of the preceding discussion is that existence, possible existence, and non-existence of a possible existent are all bound up with thinkability, and so is consequently bound up the notion of fact with these in so far as it relates to reality.

Let us now turn to consider KCB's conception of falsity and contradiction and their relation to belief. For the sake of convenience, we will first discuss contradiction.

We have seen that all thought implies, in one way or another, the question of existence. All existence, in so far as it lends itself to thought, is according to KCB, significantly speakable. All speakable content however need not be thinkable too. A speakable which raises no actual question of existence is no thinkable though it is not wholly unmeaning, for it is significant. This specially is true of the contradictory and the false. A contradictory thought like a square circle is no thinkable content—it involves no question of existence. It is not however wholly unspeakable and non-significant. We do after all speak of contradictories, and the idea of a square circle does elucidate what it means for two contents to be contradictory and so incompatible. And it is also thus that the idea of a square circle makes its unreality known. But is not the idea of a golden mountain also unreal? KCB would agree but point out that unlike the golden mountain the idea of a square circle demonstrates the unreality of content in terms of *incompatibility*. We try to combine in a single thought or at a single place the idea of a square and the idea of a circle but find we cannot do so. A contradictory thought (in the loose sense of 'thought') however, is a significant speakable and not simply meaningless like (e.g.) a random conjoining of letters. But though it is not meaningless, the contradictory being an unthinkable content bears no relation to factuality. No actual question of existence is askable in the case of a square circle. A contradictory content, though unreal like the false and the imaginary, is (KCB seems to suggest) unreal from the first. It is unreal from the first because it is unthinkable from the first. We don't even so much as imagine a square circle as existing though we imagine—in some sense of imagination—a golden mountain as existing. If a false or unreal idea has a reference to existence at all it is this possible or imaginary reference. The imaginary, however, like the contradictory, but unlike the false, is never believed as real. In the statement 'golden mountains are imaginary', 'being imaginary' cannot by any artifice be made into a property in the sense in which for example 'being finite' is the property of men in 'men are finite'. 'Golden mountains' cannot here by any chance be willed into existence as a subject of possible predicates.

In the above statement we only state that we imagine mountains to be made of gold and that no mountains are made of gold. No question therefore arises of accommodating golden mountains in the realm of being.<sup>4</sup> No actual question of existence is meant to be entertained here.<sup>5</sup> The difference between the imaginary and the contradictory cannot however be ignored. The imaginary entity, the

golden mountain, is a single (albeit unreal) idea. The contradictory, the square circle, on the other hand, does not yield one thought. We have an idea of the square and an idea of the circle but no single idea of a square circle. Our effort to *try to think*, that is, to conjoin in a single content the property of being a square and the property of being a circle ends in nothing but failure.

There is a sense according to KCB, in which the false and the imaginary, though without doubt they do not allow of an actual question about their existence, do admit of a possible and imaginary question about or in reference to their reality. With regard to the contradictory (like square circle) such a question or reference is not even imagined (p. 171). Thus even though KCB classes them all—the false, the imaginary and the contradictory—as forms of unreality or as no-fact, he thinks that a subtle and significant distinction does obtain between them.

At this point a question must be squarely faced—the preceding discussion makes it inevitable—regardless of how KCB himself might have responded to it. The contradictory, KCB has said, is unthinkable, and this is a proposition which I think is accepted on all hands. There is a clear support for it in the law of contradiction. The law of contradiction (as also other laws) is (are) supposed to hold in the realm of thought and language. The question now is: can that principle be also said to hold good so far as the actual world of things and objects is concerned? The overwhelming philosophical opinion would seem ranged against such a suggestion. How can a principle of logic which is supposed to regulate our thought and our use of language have ontological applicability? The very thought of it would be regarded as scandalous.

Our considered view however—which can be here only briefly stated without so much as any arguing out—is that there is nothing in the principle itself which should prevent it from exerting its relevance in the sphere of the world of fact too. That since it holds good of thought and language, it cannot hold good of the actual world, is a bad argument. If contradiction is only a regulating habit of understanding and rule of language, how is it that we encounter no samples of contradictions within the world. In fact it is possible that it is because we find no contradictions happening in the world that we come to look upon the contradictory thought as no thought. We shall not, however, press this point concerning genesis. What we mean is that the view which limits the field of operation of the above law only to thought and language should in principle be incapable of preventing contradictions from occurring in the world. We shall then possibly encounter contradictions in the world every other minute. But if we do not meet with them in the world, as I think we don't, it must be either because no contradictions take

place in the world as a matter of contingent fact or because the above principle obstructs our perceiving those contradictions which may actually be occurring. But would not this be a very lopsided kind of talent? What justification do we have for asserting this kind of partisan ability? Doesn't it seem quite amazing that while we should often succeed in spotting contradictions in, for example, philosophical argument or reasoning, we should congenitally fail to detect them in the affairs of the world? And it is a fact that we come upon no contradictions in the world. At least history preserves no catalogue of them. But this might (by sceptics) be called a pure chance implying that the possibility of contradictions starting to take place any moment from now cannot be ruled out. After all (it may be argued), there is nothing to suggest that if the world has been free from contradictions so far it will ever remain so, just as there is nothing to suggest that if the sun has been rising every day from times unknown it will continue to do so in all future. This contention, of course, has a certain appeal. We will not, however, counter it, though it can, I think, be effectively countered. Our point is different. It is that rejection of the ontological validity of the laws of logic just on the ground that they were intended primarily only to have force in the realm of thought is a dogma born of prejudice. To forestall any misunderstanding on this score, it needs to be emphasized that the fact that the actual world cannot bear contradictions in respect of its states of affairs would be due to the intrinsic nature of the world, and not because there is a law of logic which luckily happens to hold true of the world.

Our contention as to the applicability of the law of contradiction to states of affairs finds support from some respectable quarters. Repudiating the contention that the laws of logic are bare forms which we can so take in hand, F.H. Bradley observes:

The Principles of Identity, of Contradiction, and of Excluded Middle, are every one material. Matter is implied in their very essence. For without a difference such as that between the letters A and B, or again between the A in two several positions, you cannot state or think of these principles. . . . And the nature of these differences is clearly material.<sup>6</sup>

Opposing any wholesale sundering of logic and reality, Russell, Blanshard and others make in their own way a powerful case for the overall ontological relevance of the laws of logic. Russell explicitly calls the view that the law of contradiction is only a law of thought, 'erroneous'. 'The belief in the law of contradiction is a belief about *things*, not only about thoughts'.<sup>7</sup> Blanshard attempts to show how on all the three views of their nature put forth by Sir Karl Popper, the laws of logic must be seen as saying something about matters of

fact.<sup>8</sup> He goes on to argue that the ontological relevance of the laws of logic remains unaffected by the protest that they are not propositions but rules of symbolism. The logician for a start may stipulate any rules but once he tries to think out the implications of these rules he cannot help turning, for arbitration, to reality.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, Morris Cohen suggests in no uncertain terms that these laws even in their common formulation 'rather make affirmation of existence: whatever is, is; nothing can both be and not be; everything must either be or not be. Would it not be better to call these propositions invariant laws of being or existence?'<sup>10</sup> It would seem then that non-contradictoriness is as much a native and primal demand of reality as it is of thought.

But here another question crops up, and it is this: can the same be held with regard to possibility?<sup>11</sup> For KCB the possible too is fact—thinkable fact—in so far as the question of existence is entertainable about it. And the question of existence can properly be asked only with respect to a content which is thought capable of existence—even if as a matter of actual fact it does not (for some reasons) come to exist. The fact of being non-existent does not, in fact cannot, make such difference to the possible—even though it evidently makes some (important) difference—as to render any and every idea about its existence and character unentertainable in principle. For there is a point where possibility and actuality must meet. The pattern which a possibility as possibility and not as mere figment of the imagination exemplifies, as regards its existence or character, cannot be radically different from that exemplified by the actual. The possible is conceived—else it is not a possible—as to its basic determinations after the actual. The possible, for example, cannot be thought of as capable of existing in a fundamentally differently ordered spatio-temporal world.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, if actuality cannot appropriate contradictions as regards its existence or character then the possible too cannot bear contradictions as regards its existence or character. One cannot accept the former and reject the latter without incurring self-contradiction. This means that the contradictory cannot even exist as a possibility: the contradictory and the possible are, like the contradictory and the actual, irreconcilable. They cannot coinhere or co-exist. And so forth.

Compared to contradictoriness, the problem of falsity is a much more complicated affair. The contradictory is rejected from the first. There is never any question of entertaining it in belief and so never any question of assuming it to be real or fact. The false, on the other hand, is what once appeared or presented itself as real. What causes error is a large question and cannot be attempted here; there

is even the question of relevance. But, that misperception is an error on the part of the perceiving subject is questioned by none.

Now, to error attaches one great difficulty. There seems to be no third thing which falls or which we can choose between non-existence and reality. The false *as* false, on the other hand (as our philosopher would tell us), stubbornly refuses to be categorized as either. In misperception, for example, something appears and is taken to be real. This apparent content cannot be a contradictory content. The latter is never believed and is from the start excluded from the realm of the real. A false content, on the other hand, though finally unqualifiedly discarded, is superficially not at odds with reality in character and conception. Taken by itself it is perfectly conceivable and seems possible, and thus in a sense claims to exist somewhere. But when discovered as such, i.e. as false, it seems to lapse into God knows what. It then is felt to come from nowhere and cannot also be placed anywhere. It appeared—that is all we feel we are sure about and that is all we tell ourselves we have a right to assert. Saying anything more seems then to us to step beyond the bounds of legitimacy. But how can an appearance—and this is the most difficult question of all—which is once believed (and is accepted as fact that far) be declared, as it later on is on apprehension of its falsity, as a homeless something? How can the discovery of a content as false deprive it even of its character as objective content? These are some of the questions which we shall address as we now proceed to consider falsity.

In a way, the idea of falsity presents a quite different, even puzzling, picture. Here, according to KCB, no actual question of existence is ever implied or entertained: it is (for that reason) through and through unthinkable. It bears no concern with the factual, and so none even with the non-existent. The false is what is 'unreal', declares KCB. And though it is (he says) a speakable content it cannot be taken as a proposition which is affirmed or denied in a judgment. Falsity is no thought-content and is therefore beyond affirmative or negative judgment, the object of a judgment always being a proposition with a meaning or a thought-content. True, it is rejected but this rejection in itself is no conscious thought-content. If it is a negation ('negation' in a certain sense) it is a negation unaware of itself as a thought-content, unaware of itself as a negative judgment. And if it is sometimes (loosely) spoken of as a proposition, we, urges KCB, have to treat it as a merely 'speakable' proposition. And that is entirely different from being a thinkable proposition.<sup>13</sup>

In calling a content a merely speakable proposition what is meant is that the nature of that content is wholly exhausted in the *mere* speaking of it. We do not feel convinced that in order to exist it

need not be spoken of, or that its relation to our speaking of it is not a matter of accident. Specifiable only as the *what* of a state of awareness it foils all attempt at independent—independent, that is, of the epistemic attitudes—objective determination of itself. It thus resists contemplation in any objective mode of speech with the result that one does not feel interested (theoretically, not psychologically) in pursuing any enquiry into its actual ontological standing. No expeditions are launched or sponsored to find out the truth about it. In fact we feel persuaded that it does not even make sense to try to ask whether it falls outside or within reality.

A nagging question may however still persist. Why is it not a negative judgment to reject falsity expressly? Don't we here mean consciously to deny the reality of something which we think or discover to be false? KCB would here invite attention to the following consideration. Although (he would say) a negative judgment also implies rejection or disbelief, the rejection (or disbelief) here is never total or absolute. It is conditional and qualified. It is qualified in the sense that while something is denied something is asserted, while something is disbelieved something is affirmed (as/or believed). Denial of the existence or character of something is here at the same time affirmation of the existence or character of something. That is one major difference, KCB would point out, between falsity and negation (of a negative judgment). The judgments 'S is not p', while it denies the proposition 'S being P', also at the same time affirms the proposition 'S being not P'. In fact even in the negative existential judgment like 'A is not' the disbelief in the existence of A is a positive belief in the non-existence of A, 'non-existence being understood as a factual determination of the possible existent A' (p. 171). Similarly, in a statement like 'There are no dragons', the disbelief in the existence of dragons would be, to KCB, a positive belief in the non-existence of 'dragons'.

The assertion of falsity, on the other hand, implies 'pure' disbelief 'that is not equivalent to any belief' (p. 171). The content disbelieved, being not even viewed as a possible existent and so as (naturally) implying no question of existence, does not qualify as a thinkable or thought-content. Consequently it is neither affirmed nor denied in a judgment. It is, to repeat, the thought-content having a reference to the existence question which becomes the object of affirmation or negation in a judgment. This typical Bhattacharyyan view of thought's essential involvement with reality proclaims his idealistic bias, though we soon find him parting company with the idealists on the question of the nature of error.

The idealists do not deny, in fact they positively acknowledge, that there is error, even a good deal of it, in the universe. They also

agree or would agree—unlike, for instance, philosophers like Descartes<sup>14</sup>—that error is no privation. They will contend however that no error is so complete and so absolute as to deserve banishment from the all-inclusive reality. The distinction between truth and error is with Hegelian idealism one of degree rather than of kind. All error contains some truth, for it has a content which in some sense belongs to the universe. (Similarly every truth is in some sense infected by error and is therefore never absolute.) Error committed in and expelled from one world—and there are according to the idealists diverse worlds within the universe—as discrepant with that world finds a place in some other world by some sort of transmutation just as, for example, evil committed in the world gets (according to the idealists) transmuted so as to render the ultimate reality to be on the whole good in the end. All error thus becomes partial truth (or partial error)<sup>15</sup> and is accommodated alongside other truths within the one vast whole. An error with a pretence to absoluteness is intrinsically incapable of accommodation within reality and so must look for a place outside of that reality.<sup>16</sup> This, however, is inadmissible on the idealistic premisses.

The above account would not be acceptable to KCB. Falsity in his conception is neither here nor there. It is, as we remarked above, homeless. As such the false content raises no demand for its ontological determination. And KCB finds here nothing baffling. However, before we examine this aspect we need to understand KCB's overall conception of falsity in some further detail.

KCB addresses himself to that aspect of falsity—in fact to him this is the only form of falsity, properly speaking, can have—which is connected with disbelief, which later often takes the form of denial ('negation' in a certain sense) or rejection. This rejection cannot take place unless there is awareness of falsity, i.e., awareness of a content *as* false. We however find that this awareness of a content as false can in the nature of things only take place against the backdrop of a prior belief in that content. This is the one most important determination of falsity. Falsity as a fact about our cognitive effort or about the world has its *prius* in a previous belief. This is so in so far as disbelief is a giving up of, or ceasing to believe, a certain content.<sup>17</sup>

Rejection of a content does not here mean that the said content is as such unintelligible. It is very much intelligible but only in the way of a possible content. It is a possible content, however, not as belonging to the present but to the *past*. Were it a present possibility it could not have been treated as categorically false and so deserving of unqualified rejection. If it is rejected in the present it is rejected only as a content which was previously believed and exists now as a past possibility. To quote KCB's own succinct words:

When we disbelieve the content of a belief, we understand the content . . . not by itself but *as* what we believed. We are thus conscious of the belief as past but as the belief is now understood *only* as rejected, we may say that to reject it is to *have* it now in the mind as *past*. 'As past' means 'as rejected': the consciousness of the pastness of the belief is but the consciousness of the belief being rejected. (p. 198)

The foregoing reflections enable us to understand the well-known Bhattacharyyan thesis that since falsity attaches, if and when it does, only to the belief previously held, no present belief can, properly speaking, be *known* to be or *said* to be false. It is not that a presently held belief cannot *be* false. Correction arising from disbelief is therefore not of a false belief presently held: it is of a belief previously held<sup>18</sup> (but now discovered to be false). Correction of falsity or error does not therefore admit of being expressed in any single 'unitary form' (p. 196)—form here meaning only the content of thinking and not the thinking itself. It always needs two sentences (in the event, for example, of mistaking a rope for a snake): '*This was taken as this snake*' and '*What this was taken to be was no fact.*' And it is plain that it is impossible logically to combine the two into one (p. 182).

We are now in a position to appreciate why correction of falsity, though arising in the wake of disbelief, cannot be adequately logically expressed apart from the past believing of it. Reference to the subjective fact of a past believing is unavoidable—nay is a positive must—in any expression of correction in respect of the content of a believing. What is now known to be false (the snake in our example) is what was believed-as-this-snake. When we discover that what we thought to be a snake was in fact a rope the present experience which is belief in *this* being a rope cannot be, without incurring grave impropriety, described as disbelief in *this snake*. The reason, thinks KCB, is that for the present consciousness now there is no such thing even to disbelieve. The content *this snake* was true when there was belief in it (recall the words 'Fact means what is believed') and *is* now false in reference to the present belief (expressed as *this rope*). At the time of believing it there is no consciousness of the content *this snake* as being false; else belief loses its *raison d'être*. In other words, *this snake* was a unity in the past, in which was incarnated the previous belief as a single experience.

Error does not mean mere non-distinguishment. In correction we may not be exactly conscious of having experienced or felt a definite unity (of content) at the time of believing—a unity which was there to all intents and purposes; but it is undeniably true that we do not feel that we were aware of an indefinite content, i.e., that

we were aware of *this* and *snake* as *unrelated*. The real dilemma is different. It is: what was then believed as *this snake* cannot be 'said' to have been false and what is now known as false is not, rather cannot be, referable as *this snake* (p. 187). Now that I disbelieve I find it impossible to describe in objective terms what it was that I then believed. But neither can I aver that there was then only the subjective fact of contentless belief. The content is neither fact nor absolute nought<sup>19</sup> (p. 190). It is not characterizable either way. It may be protested, specially by the idealists (see above), that the false *this snake* is not so much rejected (even if it is thought to be rejected), as it is included and absorbed in the true belief *this rope*. And ideal inclusion, to be sure, need not be complete nonsense. There is however one fact which militates against this suggestion and that is that the incompatibility of the contents, specially in a perceptual situation, is directly felt. Besides, it is difficult to *show* that the true content is indeed wider and more inclusive.

We know that whatever its cause, for error there is nowhere else to be except in the erring subject. And since all error is a retrospective discovery, correction of error implies disbelief not only in the previously believed content but also in what we are now aware of having once believed. In other words, awareness (in disbelief) of falsity is awareness of the subject as having been in error. That is why the disbelief and the concerned correction of the subjective error—which latter characterizes the previous belief—takes a form which cannot be aptly called otherwise than by the name of reflective consciousness. This reflective consciousness already represents a higher plane of consciousness in comparison to that of the corresponding prior belief. The reflecting subject now (i.e., during correction) discovers itself as having been in error.<sup>20</sup> And since this discovery of error takes place against the evidence of the present (i.e., subsequent) belief or experience, the latter can oppositely be regarded as a higher-order experience which stands at one degree higher than the former. Beliefs may or may not be the result of reflection but disbelief, in KCB's conception, is always the achievement of reflection.

The above account of disbelief brings into bolder relief the truth and the significance of KCB's teaching that as always implying correction of a false content, disbelief is a positive mode of consciousness and is no mere privation of belief. Falsity therefore cannot be a content detachable from the believing of it, and the belief cannot in the present be contemplated without reference to the present disbelief. 'Disbelief, indeed, is a conscious reference to the prior belief but the prior belief can be spoken of at the time of disbelief only in reference to the disbelief' (p. 197). Little surprise then that KCB feels impelled to conclude that the consciousness of

the false and the consciousness of the subjective imply each other. The first part of this thesis KCB expresses thus: 'The consciousness of the false is consciousness of a content that is not speakable except as the content of a belief which, again, is not speakable except as that the content of which is false' (p. 195). And further: 'To be conscious of the false is . . . to be conscious of the subjective' (p. 197). This 'consciousness of the subjective', which consciousness of the false is said to imply, is not the ordinary introspective awareness of oneself as the subject of a certain psychic state. It is rather an acknowledgement, a confession if you will, of oneself as having gone wrong in one's judgment. It is not so much an indictment of the false content as it is of one's having believed falsely. And this has the consequence that the disbelieved content comes to be seen as really unassertable and so indistinguishable from the (subjective) disbelieving of it.

That was as far we were concerned to understand and explicate KCB's notion of falsity and our awareness of the same. We must now turn to the other critical question, namely what account, in strictly ontological terms, can be given of the false? In fact we find ourselves faced with a still prior question: is it possible even to talk of the ontology of falsity? In other words, does it make sense to ask the question of the ontological status of a false content and to try to determine its place in relation to reality?

There are a couple of statements of KCB's which give us an inkling of what can be reconstructed as his more or less precise position. KCB sometimes uses 'false' and 'unreal' as interchangeable and suggests: 'The snake can be . . . spoken of indifferently as false or unreal' (p. 172). His meaning becomes further clear from his view which explicitly denies that the false is but the objective fact of non-existence (p. 195). To be an objective fact of non-existence, the false has to be a possible existent regarding which an actual question of existence can be asked. The false, however, as we discover, is not a *present* possibility.

It would be wrong to read this to mean that KCB is oblivious to the distinction which exists between falsity and unreality—the term 'false' often being taken as a predicate assertable of a proposition and the term 'unreal' being often presumed as assertable of something in respect to which there is a possible question of existence. While not exactly meaning to deny the usefulness of such a distinction KCB doubts whether that is all there is to it, doubts, that is, whether the distinction can with reason be sustained even in the case of the perceptually false or the illusory. The perceptually false is a content once taken (or believed) as existent, this perception being expressed as 'This is a snake'. When however, the error is detected and the correction effected, the said

correction is of the false content. Which means, in other words, that it is the object snake as apparently perceived and no propositional judgment which is known to be false. The correct form in which the correction is then expressed is 'This snake is no snake', rather than 'This is not a snake'. It is the distinctive experience of perceptual annulment or cancellation which is symbolically expressed in the form of a judgment, this apparent judgment being in fact no judgment proper. The correction 'This snake is no snake', says KCB, is not a thinking denial of some proposition for the simple reason that the proposition 'This snake being snake' cannot be denied. To put it in more precise and specific terms, it is with respect to the correction proper that the falsity (or false thing) (corrected) can be spoken of as 'unreal'. In other words, the 'false' is properly characterized as 'unreal' only when this 'false' comes to be exposed as to its real character.

'Unreality', however, may well appear in other forms, so that 'unreal' and 'false' need not be regarded as synonyms. 'Unreality' surely is a wider term than 'falsity' and to this KCB is duly alive. It is not necessary for a content to be regarded as 'unreal' that it must have been previously believed or that the question of its existence must have been asked. The only requirement for qualification to the title 'unreal' is that the content in question should be disbelieved and that, further, no actual question of its existence should arise *during* the disbelief.<sup>21</sup>

Now this contingency of falsity being at bottom nothing but a species of the unreal may tempt one into believing that the false must have a being of some sort. And some philosophers indeed maintain that the unreal must in some sense exist.<sup>22</sup> Soon, however, we find, much to our chagrin, that the false frustrates all attempt at any definite ontological determination of itself. The earlier hopes of an either/or answer to the question of its existence or character are now felt upset by the rather unforeseen circumstance of the experience of failure. As believed a false content was existent but as now disbelieved it is declared non-existent. What kind of being then it may be said to be possessing such that its (previous) claim to serve as a subject of possible predicates could be regarded as justified. But, as it turns out, we discover that the false as now discovered in its falsity is describable neither as existent nor as non-existent, that it can now be only characterized, paradoxically to all appearance, as the objectively uncharacterizable 'what' of 'what was thought', which now cannot be taken apart from thought and projected as something—whether a something which exists or a something which does not exist. Earlier, the false content as *believed* proclaimed independent existence as one among the objects of the world (see above). Now, however, with the ascertainment of its false

character the content not only drops the previous claim but finds that it cannot break free from the believing of it and so cannot find independent residence in the world of fact. No more entertainable as 'is' or 'is not', the false content now puts to shame all further (ontological) enquiry and renders its winding up the only honourable philosophical course left. (One had better avoid embracing what one clearly knows to be forbidden.) The question, what was it that one believed when one believed falsely, now falls outside the bounds of legitimate inquiry.

#### SOME CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Is the above theory as an account of falsity adequate? Is it even exhaustive? How does the theory fair when called upon to explain certain other apparently genuine cases of false beliefs? Is it fair to regard the false as neither-existent-nor-non-existent? These are some of the questions which are certain to arise even on a superficial reading of KCB's doctrines. A full and detailed examination of these cannot, however (as we intimated in the beginning), be attempted within the limits set for this essay. I would therefore confine myself to making a few critical remarks and entering a few caveats.

(1) To recall some of the things KCB has said. KCB calls falsity a species of the unreal and this on the ground—which he seems to regard both as a necessary and a sufficient condition—that falsity properly attaches to a content which was previously believed (as real) but which is now (i.e., in the present) disbelieved and corrected. (Distinguishing the other unrels from falsity he says: 'An unreal content is properly said to be false if it was believed and hence could be the subject of an actual question') (p. 172). Disbelief is no disbelief if it does not involve rejection of a content which was once believed.

Now, we ask, is not this notion of falsity too subjectivistic? Are not the qualifications laid down for the title of 'false' somewhere arbitrary and one-sided? What I mean is that KCB's conception of falsity apparently fails to take care of certain instances which are by common consent recognized to be those of false beliefs. To illustrate: imagine a situation in which a person X believes that the sun revolves round the earth. Imagine also that he conveys this belief of his to a hearer Y who, however, does not agree with him and asserts instead that it is the earth which revolves round the sun. Suppose further that both X and Y categorically reject each other's beliefs in the light of their own respective beliefs, of the truth of which they are (somehow) convinced. Suppose also that since the time they can recollect, X and Y have held these very beliefs so that

in their respective cases the question of the rejection of a previous different belief in respect of the same state of affairs does not simply arise.

Now the immediate paradox is *not* that contrary beliefs are being held by two persons which, on KCB's teaching, will both be facts so far as these respective believers are concerned. It is rather that both *X* and *Y* are dismissing *as false*, contents which in the first instance they have themselves never believed. In other words, here is a situation where a content is being disbelieved and corrected without having ever been believed. But for something to earn the title of 'false' it is necessary, in KCB's view (to speak quite generally), that it be both the object of a past belief and of a present disbelief. Shall we then say that *X*'s and *Y*'s rejection of each other's beliefs is utterly without consequence so that the contents rejected are not false *to X* and *to Y*. (Note that at the moment we are not concerned with the question, which of the two beliefs is actually false.)

It is difficult to surmise how KCB would respond to this. But if they are fit examples of *awareness*, on both *X*'s and *Y*'s part, (of a content as false), then it is clear that the concerned contents (viz. 'The sun revolves round the earth' and 'The earth revolves round the sun'), since they (on KCB's meaning of falsity) are not characterizable as neither-existent-nor-non-existent, cannot also be regarded as unreal. Here, then, is a case of awareness (and rejection) of falsity which on the face of it remains unexplained on KCB's theory but which cries for explanation.

(2) Our philosopher holds that the false of an illusory situation, the snake in our example, belongs nowhere. It defies any attempt at ontological placing. No actual question of existence is asked about the false, and hence even its non-existence cannot be a fact. But, we ask, doesn't the snake exist? The question may be laughed away and the reply may be made that the reference here is to the snake which was *believed* to exist but which turns out to be actually absent or non-existent. To this we agree but we yet want to say—which again may to some seem platitudinous—that the snake, even if it is to be called unreal because of its false character (the quarrel here is not over terminology), differs from the two other unrels—the imaginary-unreal and the contradictory-unreal—in a very fundamental way. The imaginary and the contradictory, the golden mountain and the square circle respectively, are *never* believed. A question of existence is never entertained about them and hence they can be called unthinkable on KCB's notion of 'thinkability'. But, and this is the crux of the matter, they are unthinkable perennially: their unthinkable is not relative to any particular knowing subject. The case with the snake is, on the other hand, different. A snake not only becomes the object of wrong belief or

judgment; it can also figure as the object of true belief or judgment. Its falsity in a certain context is therefore through and through relative—relative to a misperceiver. It is not absolute or unqualified as is the case with the golden mountain or the square circle. The object called snake has its place in the world of objects and is, therefore, so far real. Its actual absence (or 'non-existence') in a certain context is tentative and precarious. *The content snake is not by itself an impossible aggregate of incompatible contents*. It remains (in misperception) a content presented and so is an apparent content which an imaginary or a contradictory never is. What is annulled or falsified is its *appearance* or, if you are very particular about a certain terminology, *presumed* existence, not its reality, when it was actually absent. Otherwise the snake is a real object, as real as the rest of reality or, in case one rejects the reality of the world, as unreal as the rest of the world. In fact, to permit ourselves this manner of speaking, it appears *because* it is real somewhere—as real as the rope. Presumably a creature of fantasy it is yet not fantastic.

(3) There is a related second point. An illusory content (snake) is of a fundamentally different order from that of a dream content. In a (perceptual) illusion something appears and is taken as real, in place of some really present thing. In dreams, on the other hand, though here also objects appear and are taken as real, they do not make their appearance in place of something. The explanation of falsity must then be that in a false belief one of the really present entities is mistaken for another equally real, though absent, entity. In other words, the appearance of an illusory content is, to put things in this way, a *real* appearance while the appearance of a dream object is an *apparent* appearance.<sup>23</sup> And thus, as it turns out, ironically and amusingly enough, it is the property of being real which differentiates one appearance from another appearance:

Our use of the expression 'real appearance' in the preceding may lead one to accuse us of misapplying a concept generally associated with the name of Leibniz. And it is true that one of the English equivalents of Leibniz's notion of *phenomenon bene fundatum* is 'real appearance'. I may, however, clarify (though my scholarship in this matter is not to be trusted) that Leibniz's term connotes—in contradistinction from ours, which means illusory and which is not interpersonal (or universal, say) and so not a well-founded phenomenon—an appearance which forms an orderly and uniform system of experience. This is not to deny that there can be, alongside private illusions, universal illusions too which affect the whole species of thinking beings. The difference, however, is—and this is critical—that the kind of dependable, systematic and uniform relationship universal illusions, according to Leibniz, enjoy with the fundamental and ultimate reality, individual illusions do not.



(4) Finally, there is a still more basic question. KCB tells us what it is to believe and what it is to disbelieve, what it is to be aware of a content as false, and what it is further to declare that content as ontologically indeterminable. His teachings on these and related issues contain rare insights and are valuable. KCB, however, does not intimate us, at least in clear and precise terms, what it is for a belief to be false? He does not tell us, in other words, what the falsity of a belief consists in; or what we mean when we reject somebody's belief or our own belief as false.

Differently stated, the question is: where are we to look up in our search for the basis or ground of falsity? That falsity must have an explanation cannot be denied. For in the absence of that we are left with nothing absolutely on the basis of which to pronounce a content as false. In fact, as it seems to this writer, both falsity and truth must have some common ground which alone makes determination of their content as false or true a possibility in the first instance. What could be that common ground? I think the following remarks should be of help here.

In the beginning we made the point that all belief makes an implicit claim to truth. And this implies that every belief commits us to the fact or the state of affairs it professes to represent. In one stroke the believed content seems to break loose from the believing of it and demands to be placed in the world. In one word, all beliefs claim or profess to make a reference to reality. Even if we quite generally reckon that beliefs sometimes turn out to be false and that therefore the possibility of a discrepancy erupting between the asserted content and the actual reality cannot in principle be discounted, the fact of a belief having a truth-claim built into its structure prevents explicit admission (during the belief) of that possibility's actualization. Now false beliefs are properly those beliefs which even though professing, *qua* beliefs, to refer to a certain object or fact, do not *really* do so. The profession or presumption in their case is characterized by a reference failure. An impassable chasm comes to exist between their claim and their achievement.

In the light of these considerations it seems certain that if falsity and truth are to have a common ground—and I cannot presently conceive of any other alternative—it can only be *reality* or (shall we say?) a belief's *relation to reality*. That the relation to reality both in case of false beliefs and true beliefs cannot be of the same sort, also seems certain. The working out of this relation is, however, well beyond the scope of this inquiry and can only be the subject of a future effort.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. This clarification KCB gives in reply to Rasvihari Das' criticism of his definition. Das' criticism appeared in *Philosophical Quarterly*, 7, 1932, pp. 387–96. KCB's rejoinder appeared in the same number of that journal, pp. 397–404. I owe this information to George Bosworth Burch (ed.) (with an Introduction), *Search for the Absolute in Neo-Vedānta: K.C. Bhattacharyya*, University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1976, pp. 16–17. It seems necessary to clarify here that for all practical purposes the word 'fact' as used in this essay means, unless otherwise indicated, only a certain class of them, called by KCB 'thinkable' facts (see below).
2. There is a principle—namely that in order to be something or to have any predicate it is necessary to exist—which modern western logic expresses in the form:  $Fa \rightarrow (Ex) (x-a)$ . See Bernard Williams, *Descartes: The Project of Pure Inquiry*, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1978, p. 92; J. Hintikka, 'Cogito, Ergo Sum: Inference or Performance?' in W. Doney (ed.), *Descartes: A Collection of Critical Essays*, Anchor Books, Garden City: New York, 1967, pp. 113–14, attempts to illustrate through an example—'Hamlet thought, but Hamlet did not exist'—the possible plausibility or consistency of 'Fa, but a does not exist'. For a reasoned reply to Hintikka see A. Kenny, *Descartes: A Study of his Philosophy*, Random House, New York, 1968, p. 61.
3. 'Unreal' with KCB also includes the imaginary and the contradictory. (See below)
4. Existence cannot also be a matter relative to a universe of discourse so that one could with justice maintain that golden mountains are real at least in so far as for example the fairy tale in which we find them mentioned, is concerned. The tale as a fact may be real; as a piece of writing it has its place in the actual world but not so everything imagined or stated in it, unless there are other reasons for thinking so.
5. The false, on the other hand, is, as we shall later see, what was once believed and taken as fact.
6. *The Principles of Logic*, second revised edition, Oxford University Press, London, 1922, Vol. II, p. 519.
7. *The Problems of Philosophy*, first edition 1912; reset 1946 and reprint, Oxford University Press, London, 1964, p. 89. (My italics) For details see Chapters VII and VIII.
8. Brand Blanshard, *Reason and Analysis*, Allen and Unwin, London, 1962, p. 25: '[T]he reality of which our thought is true is itself governed by logic. If contradictory assertions cannot both be true, it is because the reality of which they are asserted does not admit contradictory characteristics.'
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 424–27; also pp. 271ff.
10. Morris R. Cohen, *Reason and Nature*, second edition, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1953, p. 203.
11. However tempting, the question of possibility and its relation to actuality cannot be pursued here and this not only for reasons of space but also for reasons of competence. I therefore confine myself to offering just a brief remark which is perhaps nothing more than a commonplace.
12. Compare Scott Buchanan, *Possibility*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., London, 1927, p. 79: 'Pegasus may have his home in the sun and use the infinite sky for his pasture, but even there he travels the road, though it be of his own making.'
13. It is in contexts such as these that the compulsion of having to use language and the limits of language are at once both acutely felt. There is a saving factor, however. Language has a way of *indicating* what it cannot otherwise appositely bring out. It can point to, and speak of, what it yet cannot describe

or comprehend: hence the importance of the word speakable. Regardless of what KCB himself may mean to subsume under the category of the speakable, we are convinced that rightly or wrongly, or perhaps more rightly than wrongly, language has to provide for ideas (and also a relish for them) which even while relatable to the question of reality or existence, and so unfit to be called 'thinkable' (in KCB's sense of that term) are yet not for that reason wholly meaningless. (In fact, in coining the term 'speakable' KCB himself seems to share this view).

These ideas may include such things as the moral ought, freedom, etc. (regarded as facts by KCB) on the one hand, and fictitious things (or ideas) such as a golden mountain, dragons, and so on, on the other. After all, the possibility that all such things may at one time or another become the object of significant discourse, or at least communication, cannot be straightaway denied. In fact, it is possible even to regard them 'public' in some sense of the term, such that men often feel the urge to share their opinions about them. Any *absolute* banishment of these things from our language would mean undermining the very possibility of discourse about such concepts as 'impossibility', 'contradiction', 'falsity', 'unreality'. (Some of the above-mentioned things can at least serve to illustrate what it means to be impossible or contradictory.) After all, as we all know, even contradictory things or ideas are a conglomeration of properties, which even though incompatible, are, taken separately, instantiated by the real objects. I may add that a dogmatic attitude in this matter would even make unintelligible such a concept as that of 'meaningful falsity'. So it seems both necessary and proper to retain the category of the 'speakable'.

14. Thus, according to Descartes, '[E]rror is not a pure negation, but rather a privation or lack of some knowledge which somehow should be in [us].' Rene Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, with Selections from the Objections and Replies, translated by John Cottingham, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, Fourth Meditation, p. 38. Descartes goes on to affirm that it is privation 'which is all that the essential definition of falsity and wrong consists of'. Op. cit. p. 42.
15. Cf. Bradley's talk on degrees of truth (and degrees of error) and degrees of reality.
16. For a reasoned account of truth and error along the idealist lines see for example F.H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, first edition 1914, reprint, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1950, Chapter IX ('On Appearance, Error, and Contradiction'). Also see Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, second edition with an appendix, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1897, Chapter XVI.
17. The existence of disbelief as a fact is proved by introspection.
18. 'The false is what is corrected or disbelieved. Properly, "disbelief" should mean correction or rejection of what was believed', (*Studies in Philosophy*, p. 195) and not of what is merely suggested or imagined. This latter is only belief in non-existence.
19. Burch's complaint (op. cit., p. 57, note 32) that he does 'not quite understand' this statement of KCB's in view of his definition of 'fact' as what is believed, turns out to be baseless in view of the preceding explication of KCB's viewpoint.
20. It may be noted that 'reflective consciousness' as used here does not mean the same as the usual 'reflection' or 'self-consciousness' of the kind 'I am aware of such and such state', nor does it mean awareness of oneself as the subject of experiences.
21. This requirement, the reader will notice, is duly met by the imaginary and the contradictory too. When we refer to the entity golden mountain as an example

of the imaginary or to square circle as an example of the contradictory we already disbelieve them and regard them as unreal; the question regarding their existence seems settled for us from the first, and any suggestion to the contrary seems a pretension.

22. Thus F.H. Bradley says the following on the unreality of the contradictory: 'The self-contradictory, I suppose most of us would agree, is unreal. And yet since we discuss it, it is clear that the self-contradictory in some sense exists.' *Essays in Truth and Reality*, p. 269. This doctrine, variants apart, goes as far back as Parmenides: 'What can be said and thought of must necessarily exist.' Quoted by Jaakko Hintikka in his *Knowledge and the Known*, D. Reidel, Dordrecht, Holland, 1974, p. 23.
23. I would not be taken as very particular about the terms I am using so long as the difference pointed out is understood in the right spirit. These are the terms that strike me presently.

Some Reflections on Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's  
Vedāntic Logic with Special Reference to the  
Philosophy of Language

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I

The present paper deals with a critical and explanatory notice on some problems concerning philosophy of language as discussed in the *Āgama pramāṇa* portion of Vedāntic logic which is found in Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's (KCB) *Studies in Vedāntism*. An effort has been made to justify KCB's philosophical position on some aspects of Vedānta philosophy in most cases in the light of the traditional Advaita Vedānta system, though in some cases I am not able to agree with him. In these cases I have shown my own departure from him as well as from Advaita Vedānta. By way of doing this an effort has been made to bring out the significant contributions of KCB in the field of Advaita Vedānta.

II

KCB starts with the concept of *vākya* or sentence which is accepted as an independent *pramāṇa*.<sup>1</sup> In order to appreciate this *pramāṇa* the understanding of a certain theory of language is required. When it is said 'a word means a thing', what is meant is not that the word reminds of the idea of a thing. It is true that through this we remember or visualize the idea, but this remembering, according to KCB, is not understanding the meaning of the word. Any idea of which we are reminded by a word, is a part of its meaning. That is why it is said in the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* that the word directly refers to the thing, expresses the thing and touches it.<sup>2</sup> Hence, a free concept not only requires a name for its support but is identical with it.<sup>3</sup>

This view may be explained in the following way. There are two types of awareness: a perceptual awareness which, being purely private, cannot be communicated to others and another, perceptual awareness, which though not wholly manifested, cannot be denied fully. The latter type of awareness cannot be expressed, because there is no substitute (*vikalpa*) for expression. The 'concept' (in the sense of mental construction) of an object becomes a substitute for

expressing it. The mental constructions that are borne by 'pure object' (which is described by KCB as 'free concepts') are called concepts. Names, colours, universals, etc. are borne by an object and hence they are called 'concepts' (*dhāraṇā*). The 'pure object' is called the substratum (*ādhāra*) while the 'concepts' are called the superstrata (*ādheya*). The concepts serve as substitutes for expressing that 'pure object'. This phenomenon is well explained in the Buddhist theory of perception, according to which, 'free concept' means *svalakṣaṇas* having no name, etc. These *svalakṣaṇas* require some support in the form of name etc. for their expression. These are not only *kalpanā* as termed by the Buddhists but are identical with the objects. In any conception the determination of self and its objectification is highly essential. The determination of self gives the name and the concept a identical object-reference. This unity of name and the concept acts unconsciously everywhere, even in perception.

In the present context KCB has tried to develop a theory regarding the apprehension of the meaning of a word. If someone thinks that he gets the idea after the utterance of a word, he is not correct, because the concept does not come as a consequent idea, but is identical with the word. The 'actual object' or 'bare object', free from any name etc., is described by KCB as the 'presentative' element of perception and in the same way the name, *jāti* etc. (that are called *kalpanā* by the Buddhists), by which the 'real object' is represented is called the 'representative' element of perception. These are so called because without the help of these representation of the object is not possible. These two elements are identified.<sup>4</sup>

That the sentence refers to some object is known from belief. When a sentence is employed, a belief is generated to its object if the sentence is complete and bears certain conditions. This belief is associated with the cautiousness induced by experience. In this connection KCB has made a significant point: 'If it is only thought, it is at any rate continuous with knowledge. The mere absence of conflict with other evidence is sufficient to turn it into knowledge, we do not require a positive confirmation by other evidence.'<sup>5</sup>

This is a very philosophically significant remark, because it conveys to us the truth that if there is any thought or thought construction, it is surely knowledge. In order to confirm that it is knowledge, the absence of conflict with other evidence is sufficient. If there is conflict with evidence, it is not to be taken as knowledge, but *pseudo-knowledge*. This statement of KCB is similar to the Nyāya concept of *vādhitatva* which is described as follows: '*Yasya Sādhyābhāvaḥ pramāṇāntareṇa niścitaḥ saḥ vādhitaḥ*'.<sup>6</sup> That is, when the absence of *sādhyā* is proved by other sources of knowledge, it is

called *vādhita*. If someone says that 'fire is not hot', it is not true, because the absence of the heat in fire is proved through perception. As there is no conflict with other evidence, it is called knowledge, which does not require confirmation from other evidence.

In Advaita Vedānta also the possibility of such conflict with other *pramāṇas* is not ruled out. The phenomenon of *manana* is prescribed to be adopted only to remove such conflict. *Manana* is a kind of mental act which gives rise to some favourable arguments for justifying some conclusion if there is possibility of conflict with other evidence.<sup>7</sup> If the conflict is removed through favourable argument (*anukūlatarka*), the standpoint or knowledge is correct. If not, it is incorrect. This possibility of conflict with other evidence is not limited to the knowledge of the epistemic world; it may exist in any standpoint or conclusion adopted by the Advaita school. That is why the Advaitins laid much importance on the phenomenon of *manana*. Whether the conflict with other evidence can be removed with the help of some arguments or not is to be known through the process of *manana*. KCB perhaps made the above-mentioned remark keeping these points in view.

## III

'The understanding in judgment transcends them and points to the Ideas of the Reason or *noumena*'.<sup>8</sup> This point made by KCB needs some clarification. He said that the understanding in judgment transcends them. He has clearly pointed to the fact that as per Advaita theory self can be expressed through judgments. Self or consciousness expressed in judgments is *sopādhika* (having limited adjunct), because language can express only the 'limited' which comes to our awareness at the phenomenal level. As these are limiting adjuncts of the self, these are not the true nature of the self. Hence, judgment which expresses self after some stage transcends the same and points to the real self or consciousness which is *nirupādhika* (having no limiting adjuncts). Such consciousness is described by KCB as 'Ideas of the Reason or *noumena*', which are to be realized only in ecstatic intuition. The term 'Ideas of the Reason' borrowed by KCB from the West (particularly from Kant) stands for *noumena* or the absolute or *Brahman* in Vedānta. Just as 'Ideas of the Reason' pervade the whole world, *Brahman* does so which is evident from the etymological meaning of the term—*Br̥hatvāt br̥hanatvāt Brahma*)—that which is large in quantity or which can expand itself to any account is called *Brahman*. In the West it is believed that all our knowledge follows from Ideas of the Reason which pervade the whole world. It is

perhaps with this particular view in mind that KCB has described *noumena* as such. There is a type of intuition which is of the ordinary type by which 'necessary thought' of them is constructed. The name, generality, etc. are described as ordinary intuitions which give rise to the thought construction of 'Ideas of the Reason'. These ordinary intuitions are essential till 'Ideas of the Reason' are realized. These ordinary intuitions like name etc. are to be taken as the promoters or means to having such an Idea, but not the support or expression of such an Idea. From this statement it follows that KCB, by way of justifying the Advaitin standpoint, denies the name etc., or rather language as the medium of expressing the Idea. As language is very much inadequate to express it, there cannot be *vācya-vācaka-bhāva-sambandha*, i.e. relation between the expresser and expressed. In ordinary expression a conventional word gives some meaning which is identified with the thing. In the case of *Idea* language or conventional words are too inadequate to be conceived.

The Advaitins are of the view that only *Brahman* is real while others are false. The main spirit of the statement is that, when an individual is identified with *Brahman*, he loses his own identity and is submerged in *Brahman*. When *Brahman* is realized, it is not all external objects vanish. It is true that objects are there, but there is lack of awareness of their existence. A particular object at this stage is not seen as such, but as the manifestation of *Brahman*. Such awareness, being purely subjective or private, is non-communicable to others. Before the attainment of this stage an individual takes refuge of language in order to express his emotion and thought. When *Brahman* is realized, language becomes *vādhita* or contradicted, which will find support in the *Vedāntaparibhāṣā*.<sup>9</sup> In connection with the definition of *pramā* (valid knowledge) Dharmaraj Adhvarīndra has said that all objects become *vādhita* or contradicted or illusory after self-realization. In the transmigratory state there is no question of *vādhitatva* and hence language is inevitable due to the notion of duality. When this notion of duality ceases, there arises the falsity of language.<sup>10</sup> It is true that conceptual designations are usually denied of Supreme Reality, still they are necessary means and aids to the human intellect and help in preparing the ground for the latter's realization. Though language cannot give us a full picture of reality,<sup>11</sup> it can be index and pointer to the truth. All languages existing in scriptures etc. are taken as superimposed (*adhyasta*) after the realization of *Brahman*.<sup>12</sup>

KCB always maintains a distinction between a sentence revealing phenomenal object and that revealing the supersensuous. An ordinary sentence, though it seems to be impersonal having a direct objective intention, may be false or ambiguous if it refers to phenomenal truth, because the subjective personal element must

play a vital role in determining the meaning of the sentence. At the same time KCB does not overlook the basic presuppositions of Advaita Vedānta that a sentence belonging to *śruti* is always taken to be true (i.e. *svataḥpramāṇa*) as it is a statement about the supersensuous where the personal element is eliminated. As the Vedas are said to be the revealer of all true statements about the supersensuous, they must be true as these are true revelations. As the statements are true or sacred, this sacredness remains in every word or sound composing it.<sup>13</sup>

## IV

KCB considers a great philosophical question about whether word or sound is eternal or not. He explains the Advaita view that the system of sounds is not created but manifested. When someone utters a sound, it is not created but 'manifested in the sensuous form' (*dhvani*). That which is not created is called eternal. As a sound is produced, it is nothing but the recognition of that sound. Any sound when manifested is not at all new, but recognition of that sound.<sup>14</sup>

This view may be justified in the following way. Such a type of cognitive knowledge is accepted in Advaita Vedānta in a different way, which is similar to this argument. It is accepted in Indian aesthetics that any type of aesthetic pleasure (*rasa*) is the dwarf image of the Primordial *Rasa*, i.e. Supreme Reality as in the Upaniṣad. It is described as '*Raso vai saḥ*'. *Brahman* in the form of *rasa* is recognized in aesthetic pleasure. In like manner, the Advaitins accept the recognition of the primordial sound in any manifested sound.

When a sound is manifested, this manifestation is in time, but the sound-form is eternal. That is to say, though sound is eternal, its manifestation is temporal. The eternity of 'names' (*nāmarūpa*) has been admitted by KCB in spite of the impersonal reality of the word. He says, 'The manifestation alone is in time but the sound form is eternal. Thus the eternity of "names" (*nāmarūpa*) and the impersonal reality of the Word are intelligible'.<sup>15</sup> The Word manifested to us is to be regarded as word existing 'in previous cycles, now freely remembered and manifested by *Īsvara*'.<sup>16</sup>

The view mentioned above, I think, is not always tenable. While justifying the Advaitins' position KCB says that 'the manifestation alone is in time, but sound-form is eternal'. After this he accepts the eternity of 'names' (*nāmarūpa*). This is not logically consistent. The *nāmarūpa* of an object cannot be eternal, because all these names are imposed on the object by an individual conventionally. As these are imposed by persons, the change of name of the same object in

course of time may be justified. The names are meant for the *lokavyavahāra*, i.e. for verbal communication in this society. Hence, there may be a change of name of a word or a change of meaning of the same word. That is why, the Navya Naiyayikas have rejected the thesis that God or God's desire is the cause for generating the potency of a word.<sup>17</sup> There is, I think, no necessity of bringing God into giving the *nāmarūpa* of a word. The initial verbal usage of an object (e.g. the word 'jar') may be introduced by a particular person, which is followed by later generations. In fact, it is found in our everyday life that a new object is initially described by a scientist or researcher with the help of some name which is followed by others. Hence, for an explanation of the *nāmarūpa* of an object there is no logical basis to accept God. Hence KCB's position that word is manifested by God is not logically sound.

KCB's interpretation of the eternity of *nāmarūpa* may be justified if the notion of *nāmarūpa* is taken in a different way. Before the actual *nāmarūpa* which is known or manifested to us there might have been some notion of non-manifested *nāmarūpa*. The non-manifested *nāmarūpa* of an object may be eternal. It becomes non-eternal as soon as it becomes manifested to us. This is evidenced from his following statement. 'The question of the *primum cognitum* naturally leads to the theory of the eternal pre-existence of all differences that come to be manifested.'<sup>18</sup> Acceptance of 'the eternal pre-existence of all differences' presupposes a different type of *nāmarūpa* among the objects. Otherwise, how can the pre-existence of all differences be understood. At this level a different type of *nāmarūpa* is accepted for justifying the notion of *vahutva* (differences) which is eternal and non-manifested.

If the above-mentioned view is accepted, the problem is not resolved. For, the *vahutva* is known in terms of *nāmarūpa* which is non-manifested. If *nāmarūpa* is not manifested how can *vahutva* be established? If *nāmarūpa* is not manifested, the *vahutva* would certainly be non-manifested. How do we come to know the non-manifested form of *nāmarūpa* and also non-manifested *vahutva*? If in order to understand *nāmarūpa* which is at present the existence of another type of *nāmarūpa* is accepted, we have to accept another one for the justification for this. In this way, there would arise the defect of 'infinite regress'. The traditional Advaitins accept manifested *nāmarūpa* to describe something at the phenomenal level. When someone transcends this, he becomes free from name etc., i.e., language. When there is the realization of *Pārmārthika Sattā*, it is alien to all speech, *avācya*, as it is a kind of *aparokṣa-sākṣāt*. At this stage language is not enough to express the Absolute. Hence, the names etc., though *māyā*, may serve as promoters to the attainment of Absolute Reality. After the attainment of the goal,

language which consists of names and other words is not at all essential. When KCB advocates the eternity of sound or word, he wants to mean that there is at least one stage which is 'languageless', i.e. language without its manifestation. Language, if not manifested, is tantamount to languagelessness. If 'silence' is described as an eternal sound having no manifestation, there is, I think, no harm. Hence, KCB is very consistent in this matter.

v

KCB has emphasized on the fact that *lakṣaṇā* or implicative meaning is not the function of a single word but of the whole sentence. The sentence, he observes, reacts on each word that it contains.<sup>19</sup>

This view, I think, is not tenable. In some exceptional cases or under certain contexts implication may exist in the single word where something else is indicated. When someone says (in a certain context) the word '*dvāram*' (door), it implies asking to close or to open the door. In this case, though a single word is uttered (not the sentence), we get an implicative meaning. In like manner, when someone utters the word 'rickshaw' or 'taxi', it means 'rickshaw-puller' or 'taxi-driver' through implication. Though in most cases the implicative meaning lies in the whole sentence, it may remain in a single word, also as evidenced from the above discussion. Hence, KCB's view is not tenable.

The combination of words having *ākāṅkṣā* (syntactical connection), *yogyatā* (compatibility of meaning), *āsatti* (proximity of the parts) and *tātparya* (objective intention), constitutes a true sentence. KCB has said that *tātparya* is 'the capacity of a sentence to produce objective knowledge'. He added:

It is not the subjective intention of the person uttering the sentence, though in cases of ambiguity the subjective intention has to be taken into account. It is the objective intention which, in cases of ambiguity or the like, is not contradicted by the subjective intention. So a true sentence, even when uttered by one not understanding or misunderstanding it, has an intrinsic *tātparya*.<sup>20</sup>

This view is, I think, inadequate to express the theory concerning linguistic communication. In order to understand the *tātparya* of a sentence particularly used in Vedānta or *Śruti* the context under which it is spoken or the intention of the speaker who has said this has to be taken into the account. Any sentence may be interpreted as ambiguous, because there is a chance of interpreting as such. In fact, the *tātparya* of a sentence is to be known if there is chance of ambiguity. Had there been no ambiguity, the meaning of the

sentence could be known through *ākāṅkṣā*, etc. What is the use of accepting another condition called *tātparya*? When the sentence, 'Tattvam asi' is said, the inner import or *tātparya* cannot be known through *ākāṅkṣā* etc. alone. In order to know the main *tātparya* of the sentence, we have to look at the context and the intention of the speaker. Hence, *tātparya* is accepted in order to know the ambiguous sentence only. Further, some statements may seem to be nonsensical if *tātparya* in the sense of speaker's intention is not known. If the sentence 'Tattvam asi' is uttered by someone in the context of Vedānta, it means the absolute identity between *jīva* and *Brahman*. In other contexts it may not refer to this meaning.

In fact, a non-ambiguous sentence can give rise to meaning with the help of the *śakti* existing in words. When the direct meaning of it becomes inconsistent, the implicative or suggestive meaning is to be known. Whether the direct meaning or implicative meaning of a sentence is to be taken into account depends on the context (*tātparya*). For example, the word 'yava' occurs in both Aryan and non-Aryan speeches in different denotations (viz., barley and a wild grain called *priyangu* respectively) and one is preferred to the other in an expression on the basis of contextual and personal factors. The question of conveying meaning by either a standard form of a word or a dialectal form too refers to human factors. Thus, the context or the intention of the speaker is essential for the attainment of meaning. Hence, KCB's contention that *tātparya* is the capacity of a sentence to produce objective knowledge is not always true. *Tātparya* means the context in which a sentence is uttered or the intention of the speaker in uttering a particular sentence. Thus, not only in the case of ambiguity but in all cases the subjective intention has to be taken into account.

KCB is a little inconsistent between statements made in the beginning of the essay and at the end of it. At the beginning he says, 'Though every *vākya*, as having direct objective intention, has the appearance of impersonality, yet as it may be ambiguous or false . . . , a subjective personal element has also to be taken into account' (p. 84, para 115). At the end of the same essay (p. 87, para 121) he says that the capacity of a sentence is to produce objective knowledge, but the subjective intention is not to be taken into account. It may be taken into account only in the case of ambiguity.

From the two statements made by KCB it seems that he has accepted the role of the personal or subjective element for determining the intention of the sentence. To him, the impersonality is nothing but appearance, not real, because in each and every sentence there is the chance of ambiguity. In the latter statement it seems that he prefers to describe a sentence as having

a purely objective intention. The subjective intention is to be taken into account if and only if, there is ambiguity.

Though there is a slight inconsistency between two statements, the earlier statement, I think, is more logically tenable. Each and every sentence may always be ambiguous or false. If an individual wants to interpret a sentence in a different way under a certain context, he is at liberty to do so and the sentence also bears the potentiality of giving rise to such different meanings. As it is applicable to all the sentences under a certain context, the personal or subjective element plays an important role in determining intention. The other reasons for considering the subjective element in determining the intention of the sentence have been mentioned earlier.

## VI

Let us examine the contribution of KCB in the field of Vedāntic logic.

First, KCB has described *Brahman* as Ideas of the Reason or *noumena*, which is very novel and unique in Vedāntic literature. If all that exists in this world is divided, we shall get two parts—phenomenon and noumenon. Phenomenon is that which is seen through our sense organs. This is described by the Vedāntins as *prapañca*, which is opposite to *Brahman* or Absolute. *Brahman* or self is only non-*prapañca*, which cannot be realized by sense intuition. Phenomena can be expressed through sense intuition, but not *Brahman* or self. For understanding the same there must be some intuition which is not of the ordinary type. It gives rise to the realization of *Brahman*, which is described as Idea of the Reason. In the Upaniṣads there is evidence to describe *Brahman* as truth (*satya*), knowledge (*jñāna*), bliss (*ānanda*), infinite (*ananta*). The description of *Brahman* or Absolute as Idea of the Reason which is possible in the Advaita framework is first found in KCB's philosophy. In the West it is accepted that Idea of the Reason is the source from which all knowledge follows. *Brahman* or Absolute is metaphorically described as Idea of the Reason because *Brahman* is also the source of all knowledge etc. Like Ideas of the Reason *Brahman* is only noumenon.

Secondly, KCB, by way of substantiation of the Advaita position, has put forth the view of the Naiyāyikas. Though formally he has refuted their views, it is observed from his philosophical deliberations that he has taken some notions from the Naiyāyikas and Buddhists. When he says, 'With some *naiveté* with which we objectify our ideas in perception, we *objectify the word*' (p. 83, para 112), it reminds us of the Buddhist theory of perception. From this

the influence of Buddhism on KCB's thought is assumed. The details about this are discussed at the beginning of this paper. That he was influenced by the notion of *vādhitatva* as propounded by the Naiyāyikas is evidenced from his remark, 'The mere absence of conflict with other evidence is sufficient to turn it into knowledge'. It has already been explained in detail. Like other independent thinkers he has shown his own wider philosophical vision by synthesizing the logical aspects of all the systems in Indian philosophy. From this it cannot be taken for granted that KCB has only synthesized the conclusions of different systems of Indian philosophy. It is to be kept in mind that he has shown his departure in some aspects though he is influenced by some philosophical points given by others.

Thirdly, KCB has shown his respect to the Advaita conclusions and hence, he has justified their position with the help of some logic which was not explicitly present in the Advaita literature. The logical illumination of Advaita conclusions is one of the contributions of KCB. Though he has given justification for the ascertainment of the meaning of a sentence in various ways, he has accepted that in the case of revealed texts, the meaning is evolved through mutual criticism and *not* through any *pramāṇa*. He felt that the main essence of Advaita theory lies in the apprehension of the meaning of the revealed text. Though he has given emphasis to the apprehension of the meaning of the secular sentence, he has not forgotten that the apprehension of the meaning of the Vedic sentences is essential in Vedānta philosophy. That is why he has explored the possibility of the understanding of meaning in two ways. If someone wants to apprehend the secular sentence, he has to acquire it with the help of knowledge of the topic through other evidences. As topics of the Vedic sentence cannot be known through other *pramāṇas*, the meaning is to be known through their mutual criticism of the texts (*mīmāṃsā*), for, other *pramāṇas* fail to speak about the supersensible. KCB observes:

The ascertainment of the meaning of a sentence, however, may be aided by the knowledge of the topic through evidences, as in the case of sentences having secular reference. In the case of revealed texts, however, the meaning is evolved through *mīmāṃsā* of the texts themselves, i.e. through their mutual criticism and not through any extraneous *pramāṇa*; for no other *pramāṇa* can speak of the supersensible.<sup>21</sup>

In the above-mentioned passage KCB's interpretation of the term '*mīmāṃsā*' as 'mutual criticism of the texts' is novel in character, which reminds me of the meaning of the term as *vedārthavicāra*. From this interpretation he wants to mean that the *Mīmāṃsā* system

is not to be taken as isolated from Vedānta, but for understanding the Vedāntic conclusion about the supersensible the mutual criticism of the texts is highly essential. As meaning comes to our mind with the help of this, it does not come through other *pramāṇas*. Through such expression KCB has indirectly honoured to the intrinsic validity (*svataḥprāmāṇya*) of Vedic sentences particularly. In short, Vedic texts have the same intrinsic power, which through mutual criticism gives rise to the meaning. In these cases, KCB has accepted the conclusions of the Advaitins and these are substantiated through some arguments that are not found in the traditional Advaita texts.

Lastly, KCB admits three stages of subjectivity: (a) bodily subjectivity (b) psychic subjectivity and (c) spiritual subjectivity. In the first stage the self identifies with the body. In the second stage (which is called the psychic stage) two broad divisions, image and thought are admitted. At this stage the subject identifies itself with the psychic life—images and thoughts. A negation of this stage leads to the third stage of subjectivity—spiritual subjectivity. According to KCB, man's true nature is known in 'I-function'. He says, 'The self is known in the form "I am I" which is an analytic self-identity'.<sup>22</sup> Commenting upon the Vedāntic concept of self he says that waking life, dreams, dreamless sleep and ecstasy are attempts to point out the gradation of existence. In the lowest subjective stage self completely forgets the objective. In the ecstatic stage, self denies not only the existence of everything but denies the denial itself. It is the stage of 'pure subject'.<sup>23</sup>

KCB conceives the Absolute as what the subject 'I' is not. The 'subject as pure freedom' and 'the Absolute' are but different names of the same principle. The Advaitins have accepted the identity of self with reality as *Brahman* in the sentence, '*Tat tvam asi*'. KCB has accepted the complete identity between man in his transcendental aspect and the Absolute.

For KCB 'I' is expressible in the spoken word 'I'. The Absolute is not speakable, being completely indefinite. He observes:

If then we say that the Absolute *is*, we mean by 'is' not reality, but truth. Reality is enjoyed but truth is not. The consciousness of truth as what is believed in but not understood either in the objective or in the subjective attitude, as not literally speakable at all, but speakable only in the purely symbolic way, is extra-religious or transcendental consciousness.<sup>24</sup>

For KCB man is the 'free subject' while Absolute is 'subject as freedom'. Man is described as a stage which is prior to the Absolute. It has been already stated that man is the subject which is expressed



by the word 'I'. When this stage is negated, it will lead us to the Absolute.

These are, in short, the contributions of KCB in the field of Advaita Vedānta philosophy.

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10. 'Brahmasākṣātkārānantaram hi ghaṭādinām vādhaḥ, . . . Na tu samsāradaśāyām vādhaḥ yatra hi dvaitamiva bhavati taditara itaram paśyati'iti śruteḥ.' *Ibid.*
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## The Concept of Demand in Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's Philosophy

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Lexically the term 'demand' means to require, to need, to ask or call for as a right or with authority, or to claim or seek as due by right.<sup>1</sup> Taking into consideration these various literal meanings of the term 'demand' we are naturally faced with the questions: Why does a demand arise at a particular spatio-temporal point? What are the circumstances, physical or psychological, that cause a demand? What are the characteristics, necessary or accompanying, that constitute a demand in a given situation?

### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DEMAND

A demand is a mental state. Though it may be for a physical or a non-physical object yet it does not occupy a locus in the physical world. An attempt at a causal explanation of the term hints at certain peculiar psychological factors involved in it. (i) At first we demand something because we desire and therefore need it. The desire again is caused by a 'feeling of want'. Man's longings and cravings for the object, the want of which is felt at a deeper level, take the form of a need. But then we cannot demand anything simply because we need it. The poor may need all the amenities of life just as others do but cannot demand them. (ii) This suggests the second factor inherent in demand. We can demand something only when we feel that we deserve it or we are capable enough to have it. So while demanding something we are at the same time conscious of the capability that causes the awareness of the right towards its fulfilment. This element of right turns a demand into a 'claim made with authority', just like the 'demand' of a creditor for payment. The analysis suggests that (i) the feeling of want and so the need, and (ii) the awareness of right towards its fulfilment constitute the defining characteristics of a demand. These two psychological factors form the *sine qua non* of a demand.