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SPECIAL ISSUE ON
THE PHILOSOPHY OF K.C. BHATTACHARYYA

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understanding of basic doctrines of Vedānta and why he is rightfully—albeit slightly eulogically—called by Kalyan Kumar Bagchi, another student of his, 'the philosopher of Indian renaissance'.⁴ The term *renaissance*, however, not misunderstood as a simple unreflected revival of ancient ideas and values for the sake of satisfying some aesthetic sense of beauty or religious piety; renaissance understood in the way Kalidas Bhattacharyya, KCB's son and intellectual heir, does when saying: '. . . what happens in genuine renaissance is that under the impact of some powerful new ideas people with a living tradition adjust those ideas to that tradition. . . .'⁵

That living tradition to KCB was Hinduism as a way of living and thinking, a way of life, and the new powerful ideas that had come to India in the wake of western rationalism and its method of critical analysis. These two spiritual sources and forces have distinctively and decisively shaped KCB's *Weltanschauung*, and thus his published writings and a considerable number of those unpublished during his lifetime (written down, more or less, for the sake of self-articulation) are on the whole, studies in Vedāntism—as representative of KCB's firm rooting in Hinduism, and studies in Kant—as indicative of his critical approach to philosophical problems.

When now turning to his concept of philosophy, I refer to the article of the same title, first published in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*.⁶

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The first sentence of this article reads thus:

An explication of the concept of philosophy appears to me more important than the discussion of any specific problem of philosophy.⁷

Indeed, before having a clear and distinct concept of what a philosopher is doing when thinking, one could hardly judge any problem as being philosophical or non-philosophical, and hence without such a concept our business as philosophers would rather resemble a ragfare than a thoughtfully organized bureau of intellectual investigation.

There are, of course, different answers to the philosopher's self-reflection on what he is doing when philosophizing, these different answers constituting the history of philosophy—answers to the same perennial fundamental problems such as the nature of the self, the world *in toto*, the absolute, freedom of will, space and time, causation, unity and plurality—different answers given by different thinkers in different regions of the globe and at different times.

The answer KCB gives to the question of a philosopher's introspection of his philosophizing reads thus: Philosophy is the elaboration of different kinds of spiritual experiences, or, in another more modern terminology, philosophy is the systematic elaboration of symbolic concepts; and it is this concept of philosophy he develops against the backdrop of Kantian Idealism which he takes as that exemplary form of western rationalism that could help to throw new light on an unbiased interpretation of the Upaniṣads and their basic theme of the identity, the primeval and ultimate unity of *Ātman* and *Brahman*, the Self and the Absolute.

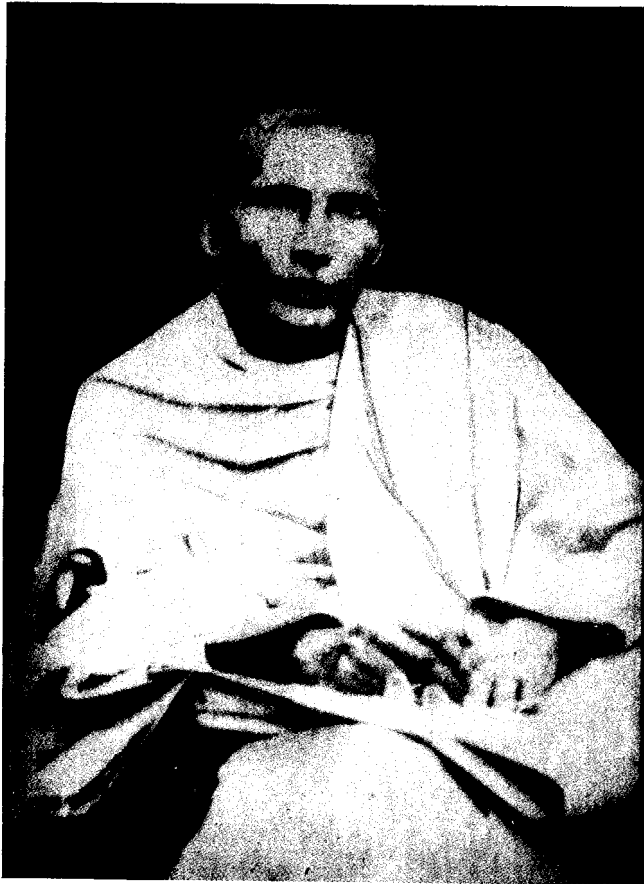
One difficulty to grasp the true meaning of KCB's statements in his highly economical, frugal use of language is the often untraditional and thus—at least to a western scholar—unfamiliar meaning he attributes to fundamental concepts, such as knowing and thinking. When he declares: 'My position is, on the one hand, that the self is unthinkable and on the other hand that while actually it is not known and is only an object of faith, though not necessarily only of moral faith, we have to admit the possibility of knowing it without *thinking*. . . .'⁸, then KCB takes range and content of the term 'knowledge' to be wider and more comprehensive than the term 'thought', which of course, is the Vedāntic view. For Kant 'thought' is the wider and more comprehensive concept. For him knowledge is the result of the relating of our *a priori*, subject-immanent forms of sensuous intuition plus the equally *a priori* forms of thinking, i.e. the categories, to a given thing which, subsumed under these *a priori* forms, takes the ontological structure of an object. This means that the so-called things as such, thought of as being unrelated to a knowing subject, is a mere thought without content, thinkable but not knowable; thinkable it is in analogy to the interrelation of objects as appearances within the mind, and in this sense even the transcendent comes symbolically close. That is to say, knowing without thinking makes no sense, is nonsense; or in the famous dictum of Kant: 'Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.'⁹ KCB's position is entirely different. Theoretic consciousness involving the understanding of a speakable—be it in the form of 'spoken of' as, for instance, in scientific judgements, informing about facts, or be it as simply 'spoken', meaning the self-evident manifestation of the self-evident—has four grades which are really grades of speaking:

- (1) Empirical thought (referring to an object perceived or imagined to be perceived), its content being facts.
- (2) Pure objective or contemplative thought (referring to an object though not necessarily a perceived one), its content being self-subsistent objects.

Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's Concept of Philosophy

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KRISHNACHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA

(1875—1949)

I

It was in 1974, when preparing a lecture for Max Mueller Bhavan, Madras, on *The Image of German Philosophy in Contemporary Indian Thinkers*,¹ that I dealt for the first time with the philosophy of Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (henceforth referred to as KCB), in particular with his *Studies in Kant*, based upon the lectures he gave at the Calcutta Philosophical Society in 1935–36; and although as a Kant scholar I was rather opposed to his interpretation of basic concepts and principles of Kant's Transcendental Idealism, I realized that here I had come across an original thinker, one of those rare specimens among the vast number of mere historians of philosophy occupying most of the university philosophy chairs in the East and West. However, since I was predominantly involved in my own studies on Kant and besides with a new edition of the main works of the great philosopher, mathematician and scientist, G.W. Leibniz, I missed the opportunity to read more of KCB's works.

The opportunity came with an invitation from the Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, to participate in the national seminar *Perspectives on Neo-Vedānta* (24–26 December 1990) and, if possible, to produce a paper on KCB. Thus I challenged myself to deal in greater detail with the thoughts and ideas of a philosopher whose relatively small number of publications, until recently scattered over various books and periodicals, had hardly been given the recognition they deserve; and yet, this philosopher, less talked about than others of a minor calibre, has shaped a whole generation of Indian academic philosophers.²

It would certainly be too bold an attempt to work out the main concepts, principles and ideas of KCB's thought system in one short essay, all the more since his is a very concise, condense style—in the words of Rasvihari Das, one of his disciples—a 'very terse and sometimes even cryptic' style, 'and one cannot always be very sure as to its proper import'.³ Instead I shall try in this paper to indicate the importance of KCB's concept of philosophy for a genuine

- (3) Spiritual thought (being subjective, without any reference to an object), its content being reality in the form of the real subject.
- (4) Transcendental thought (which has reference neither to subject nor object), truth being its content.¹⁰

Out of these four grades of theoretic consciousness, empirical thought is the realm of the sciences, whereas pure objective, spiritual and transcendental thought are the realms of philosophy. Accordingly we have three branches or disciplines of philosophy, these being in escalating order: philosophy of the object, i.e. metaphysics and logic; philosophy of the subject, i.e. epistemology; and philosophy of truth amounting to transcendental consciousness or consciousness of the transcendent. If all contents of theoretic consciousness are speakable, and if the so-called grades of thought are actually grades of speaking, it follows that all philosophy as theoretic consciousness must be speakable but obviously not only in word-language but also in the form of symbols or other semiotic ways. Does this then mean that all philosophy as principally speakable must also actually be spoken? To this KCB states: 'In philosophy, the content that is spoken is not intelligible except as spoken.'¹¹ This means, as I take it, that the highest form of communication as practised by sages and mystics, namely speechless communication in silence (as for example, referred to by Śaṅkara in *Brahma Sūtra-bhāṣya* III, 2.17, in the dialogue between Bādhva and Bāṣkali), is not philosophy but another form of experience or knowledge based on direct intuitive awareness of the absolute independent of perception and inference and any other means of theoretic consciousness. Philosophy for KCB is not a body of judgements like the ones that constitute science, 'Philosophy is self-evident elaboration of the self-evident. . . . The self-evident is spoken but not spoken of', the self-evident in the sense of 'what is independent of the spoken belief of an individual mind.'¹² And then comes what I would call his declaration of what he takes to be the essence of genuine philosophy (a declaration, for it can neither be called statement or proposition in the scientific nor in the logico-metaphysical sense): 'Philosophy deals with contents that are not literally thinkable and are not actually known but are believed as demanding to be known without being thought.'¹³

This means, if I am not mistaken, that logic, epistemology, ontology, metaphysics and ethics are but necessary instruments to be applied for showing what reality, what truth, what the absolute are not—instruments, well in Kantian sense, to make us realize the bounds, the limitations of objective knowledge (based on the testimonies of the senses and categorial inference); but at the same time they demand of us to look across these bounds—in a sort of

natural inclination, a natural need of man, *Naturanlage des Menschen* to speak with Kant—to firmly believe in the presence of something transcendent as the origin and final aim of the universe *in toto* and man in particular.

In this context the concept 'symbol' asks for some explanation. To quote KCB, 'Metaphysical reasoning is only the systematic exposition of symbolic concepts.'¹⁴ It seems to me that here the term 'symbolic' means pointing to something believed to be known in analogy to other theoretically conscious experiences. A symbol or sign is that which represents something to the cognitive faculty. We do not think or know facts, objects; we think and thus speak of facts and objects using symbols, be they words as in ordinary language or symbols as in symbolic logic, mathematics and the sciences. According to KCB the verbal form of thought, as understood by itself in logic and apart from its symbolizing use, is not thought in the strict sense. 'The logical forms are shadows of metaphysical symbolism and are as such themselves to be understood as symbolisms.'¹⁵ Kant's use of the term 'hypotyposé' can make this a little clearer. For Kant 'hypotyposé'—as he calls the sensualizing or illustrating of a concept—is either schematic or symbolic. It is schematic if a given concept has a corresponding *a priori* intuition; symbolic it is when though there is no such corresponding intuition we create one in analogy to perceived objects.¹⁶ Thus symbols are stopgaps, as it were, for lack of concepts of the real and the true, i.e. of the transcendent.

And what meaning is attributed to the term 'belief'? Right in the beginning of the essay we read that philosophy, as part of theoretic consciousness, 'presents beliefs that are speakable or systematically communicable';¹⁷ and a few sentences later we have the statement (which, as many other statements of KCB, reminds me in its harsh, categoric formulation of the early Wittgenstein): 'To speak is to formulate a belief.'¹⁸ The meaning of the term 'belief' may perhaps become more distinct with reference to the term 'absolute'. 'What is called the absolute is a positively believed entity that is not negatively understood. It is an entity that cannot be understood as it is believed, and is speakable only by way of symbolism', that is—as we have seen—by analogy.¹⁹

But here we have to question as to how the absolute can be called an entity if it is to be understood as the origin and ultimate goal of all entities, if 'absolute' in the traditional understanding of the term means being independent of anything, being self-sufficient, perfect, infinite and as such indefinite? The absolute as an entity seems a contradiction in terms, even so when KCB states that when saying 'the absolute is, we mean by "is" not reality but truth.'²⁰

In talking of the absolute as a positively believed but only negatively understood entity KCB seems to mean by 'believe' the intellectual presupposition of something which cannot be thought of nor be known as it is, yet must nevertheless firmly be taken for granted as being, if to talk of thinking and knowing should make any sense. The absolute means that which ontically lies at the root of and ontologically transcends all acts of theoretic consciousness, and in the form of being literally unspeakable it 'may be said to be self-revealing' or truth.²¹

Here we are confronted with theoretic consciousness as spiritual and transcendental thought, and these forms of knowing experience clearly show KCB's firm rooting in the Hindu world-view, for the aim of this world-view as *darśana* is not to satisfy one's intellectual curiosity or to discover (in the literal sense of uncover, lay open) reality; it is rather release from the bondage of *samsāra* and thus the attaining of *mokṣa*, leaving behind the illusory realm of *māyā* towards the reunification with the absolute as the identification of *Ātman* and *Brahman*.²² This is not a theoretical but a practical attitude towards life and world, finding its expression in the religious acts of direct (not sense-bound) intuitive awareness, that is to say, in existential (not merely intellectual) encounters with the absolute which cannot be encountered in any other way. 'Spiritual consciousness is not mere consciousness of reality but reality itself.'²³ In such consciousness we have a non-theoretical experience (I would prefer to say an existential experience) of self-abnegation, 'it is consciously *being* nought and not consciousness of *I* as nought.'²⁴

It is in such an existential encounter that all distinctions between I and All, subject and object, *Ātman* and *Brahman* make no sense, are nonsense and give way to the experience of the self as the basis and origin of any kind of knowledge as *vidyā* and is hence identical with *Brahman*. This identity of *Ātman* and *Brahman* the philosopher cannot attain as philosopher, but it is in the shape of religious reflection (which is not identical with philosophy of religion as a discipline of theoretic consciousness) that the philosopher can come closest to this goal, which is to say that only philosophy as *sādhana*, as the spiritual performance directed towards the attainment of liberation from any form of *avidyā*-based knowledge, can procure and realize the identity of *Ātman* and *Brahman*, can procure and realize *mokṣa*.

There is, however, a manifold of unique religious experiences as the individual's personal encounter with the absolute which cannot be systematized by reason; they can, of course, be presented in theoretic forms as philosophy of religion and according to the plurality of religious experiences we may have a plurality of

philosophies of religion.²⁵ This follows from KCB's metaphysical thesis that the universe is the unfolding of each singular being in all other singular items, each single item meaning every other item or the entire universe.²⁶ This reminds me strongly of Leibniz and his conception of 'monad' as individual substance, being an image of each other single substance and the universe *in toto*.

If, according to KCB, philosophy in the genuine sense is not confined to the realm of spatio-temporal things, but rather finds its highest, most sublime and most valid expression in the individual's direct intuitive, existential awareness of the self-revelation of the absolute (a revelation which, if at all, can only be communicated symbolically), then philosophy in this sense ceases to be philosophy, from which it follows that there is no such thing as *the* system of philosophy: 'There is no question of philosophy progressing towards a single unanimously acceptable solution. All philosophy is systematic symbolism, and symbolism necessarily admits of alternatives.'²⁷

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KCB refers to Kant's Critical or Transcendental Idealism as a shining example of agnosticism which he would like to 'tone down'. For Kant the cosmological idea (universe), the psychological idea (soul or self), the theological idea (god, absolute) are not constitutive, knowledge-providing principles but only regulative ones, i.e. in approaching these ideas reason is only used hypothetically and is thus meant to approximate (*naehern*) our knowledge to universality. 'That the self is believed in and is yet actually unknown is itself to me ground for holding that it is knowable without thinking and has to be known.'²⁸ Such and similar statements KCB uses in order to explain that the totality of beings, the self, the absolute we are able to know without being involved in antinomies, for otherwise the Upaniṣads would not have said that we should know them; they are simply spoken (not spoken of) in the sense of being uttered as a non object- or fact-bound spiritual insight. And when we read towards the end of his essay on the concept of philosophy that 'The absolute is conceived rigorously as truth in (Advaita) Vedānta'²⁹, and when KCB acknowledges this authoritative position of a sacred text, many a western thinker would immediately raise objections and point out that Hindu thought was thoroughly dogmatic, uncritical as relying on the unconditional belief in indisputable sources; that Hindu thinkers, even the most respected and reputed ones as Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja and Mādhva or Vivekānanda, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan or also KCB were mere commentators of sacred texts and no philosophers in the proper sense.

To this one could, of course, object that apart from the fact that there is not *the* concept of philosophy, those who hold the view that

Hindu philosophy has always been lacking in originality due to its being mere footnotes on certain authoritative scriptures (*Upaniṣads*, *Bhagavadgītā*, *Brahma Sūtras*) base their verdict on a complete misunderstanding of the meaning and character of *bhāṣya*. *Bhāṣya* is more than a commentary, an explanation and clarification of the wording of a given text, aiming at an easier understanding of its general outline and main doctrines. This a *bhāṣya* certainly also does, but it is not its essential character. A *bhāṣya* deals with the problems of a given text in a rather free and critical manner, thus revealing a good deal of original thinking. What T.M.P. Mahadevan has said with regard to the *Sūtra-bhāṣyas* can be applied to *bhāṣyas* in general: 'The commentators seek to explicate the meanings of the *Sūtras*. And in so doing, they allow themselves the freedom to expound their own philosophical perspective, systematically and consistently.'³⁰ This concept of *bhāṣya* is meant when KCB writes in the Introduction to *Studies in Vedāntism*.³¹ '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.'³² KCB certainly was a constructive thinker, to me one of the most original, innovative thinkers in twentieth-century Indian philosophy, and it is part of the trademark of such a thinker that his thoughts and the language, the specific terminology, the nomenclature used to convey these thoughts are not easy to grasp and understand. (Hegel is reported to have complained on his death-bed that there was only a single one among his students who he thought had understood him, but that even this one had misunderstood him.)

It may be due to my limited familiarity with the concept of philosophy among Vedāntins that more than once in preparing this article I felt somehow let down by KCB when coming across a statement which seemed to me doubtful and contestable, for instance that reality in the I, the ego, as being self-evident, must be distinguished from truth as the absolute. How, I asked myself, is this compatible with the demanded identity of *Ātman* and *Brahman*? And then he speaks of the absolute in plural, as three absolutes; but here at least I seemed to have found the explanation in his own words when reading: 'There is no sense in speaking of the absolute as the unity of truth, freedom and value. It is *each* of them, these being only spoken separately but not *meant* either as separate or as one.'³³ (Here I would have preferred to speak of three different aspects of the absolute.) How can we call the absolute in the first form truth, in the second freedom, in the third value? Is this not contrary to the Upaniṣadic teaching that the absolute—if spoken at all—can only be spoken *per viam negativam, neti, neti*? Is this not incompatible with

KCB's own thesis that the absolute is neither spoken of, nor simply spoken, nor at all speakable?

There seems to me also a certain inconsistency or vagueness in the use of such terms as 'symbol', 'belief', 'revelation', and as I have already indicated, there is no doubt a misunderstanding of the concept 'transcendental' as the key-term of Kant's philosophy. For Kant 'transcendental' does not mean the realm of non-empirical things in themselves as against the realm of empirical objects; there are for him no different realms of being, only different modes of our human approach to being, the most prominent and reliable approach named by him *Transcendental Idealism*, i.e. a thought system which is not so much concerned with things but with our *a priori* knowledge of things. When KCB, with reference to Kant, uses the term 'transcendental', what he mostly means is 'transcendent' in Kantian terminology; for if he would really use the term 'transcendental' in the sense Kant does, he would—like Kant in his understanding of philosophy proper as against the fortune-telling of traditional metaphysics—restrict all human knowledge to what is given as spatial and temporal and under the *a priori* categories of the understanding; and this restriction of human cognition marks precisely the point where KCB is utterly opposed to Kant.

What I have called a certain vagueness of terminology may partly be due to some vagueness of Upaniṣadic teaching itself, as for instance when speaking of *Brahman's* relation to the individual soul and the physical universe. But here we have to bear in mind that the Upaniṣads were not meant to be systematic treatises in philosophy. As to that vagueness T.M.P. Mahadevan writes that the sages whose intuitions are recorded in the Upaniṣads 'pour forth their findings in the form of stories and parables, informal discussions and intimate dialogues. The method they adopt is more poetic than philosophic . . . in many places symbolic expressions are employed which hide the meaning rather than make it patent. Sometimes there are puns on words and mystic explanations of certain abstruse terms.'³⁴ This being so, I think that it could be extremely helpful for an intrinsic study of KCB's work and for making its methods, means and aims more known, if someone would get down to register its main concepts and to explain their often analogous and (seemingly?) ambiguous meaning in the respective context.

In the concluding sentences of his Introduction to *Studies in Vedāntism* KCB says with regard to Vedānta:

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.³⁵

KCB's philosophy is Vedānta, making use of modern rationalistic and analytic methods and terminology, which is to say that it is an elaboration, explanation and evaluation of Upaniṣadic thought within and by means of the conceptual framework of our times.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. A slightly different German version has appeared in *Kant-Studien*, 70/2, 1979.
2. First edition of his collected writings entitled *Studies in Philosophy*, 2 vols., Calcutta, 1958; second revised edition, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1983. This, unfortunately, contains a number of disturbing, sometimes even severe, misprints, for instance p. 465: 'It' (namely the self-evident's independence of speaking) 'is not part of the meaning of a scientific content which is understood without reference at all to be linguistic expression of it.' It should, of course, read '... without reference at all to the linguistic expression. . . Or p. 470: 'All that can be achieved in this direction' (namely the philosopher's piecing together the results of the sciences into a world-view) 'is an imaginative description of the world, which would be not only actual knowledge but not even a hypothesis that is intended to be turned into knowledge.' This must read: 'which would be not only not actual knowledge. . .'
3. 'Logic, Metaphysics and Religion', *Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya Memorial Volume*, Amalner 1958, p. 48.
4. 'Tradition and Change in Indian Philosophy', *Indian Philosophical Annual*, 18, Madras, 1985-86, p. 185 ff. It should be mentioned here that Neo-Vedānta as a reappraisal and new critical interpretation and evaluation of the *prasthānatraya* must be seen as part of a more general movement which started early in the nineteenth century aiming at making the Hindus aware of their ancient spiritual values as the solid base of a free nation. This found expression in the Brāhmo Samāj, founded by Ram Mohun Roy in 1826, which especially under the leadership of Debendra Nath Tagore, pronounced itself as a religious and political movement for the revival of genuine Hinduism based upon the unquestionable testimonies of the Upaniṣads. As against and almost in opposition to this, Dayananda Saraswati founded, half a century later, the Ārya Samāj, a more radical and nationalistic organization, footing on the spiritual revelation of the Vedas. Both these movements received some unexpected support and encouragement from outside India when in 1875 Helena P. Blavatsky, a Russian countess of German descent, together with Henry Steel Olcott, a retired colonel of the American Civil War, called into being the Theosophical Society in New York, and after moving to India in 1879 made Madras (Adyar) their headquarters (1882). Helena Blavatsky wanted to convince the world that Hinduism and Buddhism were infinitely superior to all religions and philosophies of the West, a doctrine—however uncritical—which Annie Besant made use of to strengthen the self-confidence and self-respect of the Hindus in their struggle for spiritual and political independence. But an even more stronger support from abroad came from the academic disciplines of Comparative Religion and Oriental Studies with their special branch of Indology; and there it was first and foremost Friedrich Max Mueller, the

German scholar, operating from his academic abode at Oxford, whose first ever critical edition of *Rig-Veda* (6 vols. 1874) and *The Sacred Books of the East*, published with the help of an international team of experts in 51 volumes, out of which no less than 31 were dedicated to Indian texts, meant, *inter alia*, a boost, to the renaissance of Hinduism. F. Max Mueller was also actively engaged in contributing towards a dispassionate, unbiased understanding of India and Indianness in the West as also in India herself; of this his links with such great Indians as Debendra Nath Tagore, Keshub Chandra Sen, Lokamanya Tilak and Vivekananda—to name only these—bear ample witness.

5. Quoted from K. Bagchi's article, cf. note 4, p. 188 f.
6. Edited by S. Radhakrishnan and J.H. Muirhead, London, 1936.
7. All quotations from K.C. Bhattacharyya's works according to the 1983 edition.
8. Op. cit., p. 462.
9. *Critique of Pure Reason*, A51/B75. Kant writes in the second revised edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1787): 'We had established in the analytical part of our critique the following points: first, that space and time are only forms of sensuous intuition, therefore conditions of the existence of things, as phenomena only; secondly, that we have no concepts of the understanding, and therefore nothing whereby we can arrive at the knowledge of things, except in so far as an intuition corresponding to these concepts can be given, and consequently that we cannot have knowledge of any object, as a thing by itself, but only in so far as it is an object of sensuous intuition, that is, as phenomenon. This proves no doubt that all speculative knowledge of reason is limited to objects of *experience*, but it should be carefully borne in mind, that this leaves it perfectly open to us to *think* the same objects as things in themselves, though we cannot *know* them.' (B XXV ff.)
10. Op. cit., p. 464.
11. *Ibid.* One should compare KCB's distinction between the knowable and unknowable, the speakable and unspeakable with the distinction made by one of his most eminent students, N.V. Banerjee, in his posthumous work, *Knowledge, Reason and Human Autonomy*, 1985.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 465.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 474.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 462.
16. *Critique of Judgement*, p. 59, chapter entitled 'Of Beauty as a Symbol of Morality'. See also his essay *What are the Actual Progresses of Metaphysics in Germany since the Times of Leibniz and Wolff?* A 62 f.
17. Op. cit., p. 463.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Darśana* is rather inadequately translated as 'philosophy', the German term '*Weltanschauung*' in its widest range would be more appropriate—from the unreflected world-experience of the ordinary man, the scientific results of the fact-finding researcher, the analytic or speculative mind of the philosopher up to the revelations of the seer.
23. Op. cit., p. 476.
24. *Ibid.*
25. *Ibid.*, p. 477.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 473.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 477.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 462.

29. Ibid., p. 479.
30. *Invitation to Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi, 1974, p. 78.
31. First published by Calcutta University, 1907.
32. Ibid., p. 5.
33. Op. cit., p. 478.
34. Op. cit., p. 28.
35. Op. cit., p. 6.

The Concept of Freedom and Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya

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I

The concept of freedom expounded by Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (henceforward KCB) seems to me highly original and deserves careful consideration.¹ Though in this paper I primarily address myself to the view of KCB, it will not be my exclusive concern. In the process of examining KCB's view on the subject I propose to take other collateral views, especially the Kantian, the Vedāntic and the phenomenological ones, into account. KCB's assimilation and appropriation of others' views, as we find them, are not at all exegetical or documented. This significant style of delineation of the concept of freedom is an important feature of KCB's creative philosophizing. Unlike most of the contemporary approaches to freedom, KCB's approach is not mainly social, ethical or aesthetic. This is, however, not to deny its larger implications. His concept of freedom, one may perhaps rightly say, is basically ontological or metaphysical. Its dimensions range from the physical via the somatological and the psychological to the psychical and the spiritual. With amazing analytical skill and care he describes the disclosive process of freedom *in* the world, *in* our relation to the world of *objects*, *within* the contexts of psychological and psychical *subjectivity*, and *beyond* them. In brief, KCB is in search of what may be called reality of freedom, or, perhaps more appropriately, freedom as reality. Negatively speaking, to him the physical and other dimensions of freedom, though not unreal, are only transitional, facilitative of real freedom, not determined or negated by the 'lesser', real-unreal levels of freedom.

II

In order to explicate what freedom is KCB, to start with, makes use of such paired concepts as subject/object, meaning/meant and feeling/felt. The initial duality between subject and object, meaning and meant, etc., are intended to be shown gradually as

continuities, unities and finally sublated, vindicating the primacy of subject over object, meaning over meant, and so on.

The subject is said to be distinct and therefore distinguishable from all objects.² Unlike the object, the subject has a being of its own which, from the ultimate standpoint, has nothing to do with the former. But at no stage, initial or final, is this sort of absolutistic status accorded to the object. The subject is source of all meanings. 'Meaning' may be construed in two different ways, as an active process of meaning and as a self-contained and abstract product. Meaning may or may not lead to some object other than itself. Meaning itself cannot be meant as an object. The point may be clarified in this way. The subject may have a feeling of pain. But the object which is responsible for or is a referent of this feeling may not itself be present in the concerned pain-consciousness. The subject's pain-consciousness may be confined only to the feeling of pain itself and without reaching out to that object which is 'causing' it. In other words, the objectward consciousness of the subject is, in a relative sense, free from the causal compulsion of the objective world. This possibility is claimed to be indicative of the subject's ability or intrinsic character of disengaging itself from the world of causal objects, including *other* subjects as well. Subjects as other are quasi-causal and social, not physical, in their presence and influence.

The subject/object asymmetry has been shown in a somewhat different way by the Kantian.³ The constitutive apparatus necessary for the constitution of objects are *a priori* or independent of what is constituted by it. The forms of constitution are not open to the influence of the objective world. On the contrary, the causal impact on and orderliness in the objective world are to be found in the constitutive powers of the subject. It is plain that the objective causal world is not personal or private. Its intersubjective availability is to be ascribed to the regulative principles not peculiar to this or that empirical self. What is constituted is also regulated. The process of objectification is subject to two sets of principles, regulative and constitutive, subjective and intersubjective, empirical and transcendental, epistemic and ontic. Both the Kantian and KCB recognize the distinction between, as well as the relation of, the said two sets of principles. The acts of object-constitution are said to be sustained or regulated by the 'I-consciousness' or 'I-think' principle. While the Kantian highlights the distinction between the constitutive principles and the regulative ones, KCB emphasizes their unity. In this respect his position seems to be nearer to the Vedāntin's position rather than to the Kantian's.⁴ However, in fairness to the Kantian one has to admit that he also does recognize the importance of correlation and cooperation between the constitutive and the regulative in making object possible.

KCB takes pains to point out that 'I' as a word is self-expressive. But the same cannot be said of its (I's) meaning. Because, he argues, what 'I' means is not the word 'I', but 'I' as the subject, as self-expression, as the source of meanings. One has to draw a line of distinction between the linguistic 'I' and the ontological 'I'. The speaker's understanding of the meaning of 'I' is bound to be different from the hearer's understanding of the same. But the very fact that the hearer can grasp, though incompletely, what the speaker means by 'I', is based on the ontological identity of the speaker of 'I'. Linguistics and especially its semantic past are ontologically grounded. Otherwise unities of word-meanings and sentence-meanings and their more or less successful communication could hardly be accounted for. Meaningful compositionality of different parts of language is founded in reality itself.

The basic character of subject can be indicated in another way. It is known in itself, whereas object is known as distinguished from subject. Objectivity is admittedly subject-linked but subjectivity is not object-linked in the same way. Subject may be known by introspection, by inwardization of consciousness, which involves abstraction from object. But this abstraction is not total and therefore introspective self-knowledge remains in a way object-linked, accompanying a sense of knownness.

Consistent with his noetic dualism, the Kantian draws an important distinction between the *thinkable* transcendental subject and the *knowable* empirical subject.⁵ Again, he hastens to add that the thinkable and the knowable, the empirical and the transcendental, though distinguishable, are functionally or epistemically inseparable. Moving a step forward he adds further that knowing itself may be known by reflection, reflecting on what is known through intuition, imagination and understanding via their forms or categories. Reflection shows that the underpinnings of knowledge by reflection are simultaneously objective and subjective.

A similar line of argument is traceable in the thought of the Vedāntin. It is pointed out that 'I' as determined by body, bodily and mental dispositions, *vṛttis* due to *avidyā*, is differently manifested. But the different levels or layers of manifestation are grounded in and sustained by the self-same 'I' as reality. The transcendental subject is neither knowable nor thinkable. It is only realizable. The Vedāntin's accent is on what may be called knowledge by identity, as distinguished from knowledge by difference or empirical knowledge. Gradual inwardization of consciousness or step-by-step withdrawal from the objective modes and determinations of consciousness is symbolic of increasing self- or subject-realization, getting into being.

In the phenomenological types of philosophy, largely influenced by Husserl, one can clearly notice a line of thinking which stands

very close to KCB's construal of the relation between subject and object, meaning and meant, etc. The phenomenologist maintains that 'I', the transcendental self, is the main source of all meaningful activities, theoretical as well as practical.⁶ To put it differently, the main source of meaning-bestowing capacity is traceable to what is called transcendental subjectivity. However, this is not to deny that the empirical ego or self has also the power of meaningful object-constitution within it. All objective unities or meaningful unities are grounded in different levels of active consciousness, corporeal subjectivity, empirical subjectivity and transcendental subjectivity. At the corporeal level consciousness is primarily objectward and the objects available at that level are mainly hyletic or material-physical. This 'naturalistic mode of consciousness' remains present, of course in lesser degrees and transformed ways, also at the levels of empirical or psychical subjectivity. The unification and the reduction achieved by the levels of 'I-consciousness' are open-ended, open to higher forms of reduction and unification, *eidetic* and transcendental, for example. At the relatively lower levels consciousness moves both ways, *to* and *from* object. To the extent consciousness is immersed in the world of objects, it lacks in freedom. Conversely speaking, by deploying its higher constitutive powers when consciousness can disengage itself from the lower or the naturalistic modes of objective consciousness, it succeeds in achieving higher degrees of freedom. Freedom, both cognitive and practical, marks the passage of consciousness from the naturalistic mode to the transcendental one. It may be pointed out here that 'I' always works with, in and through others. Negatively speaking, its cognitive journey or practical exploration never proves solo. Even its freedom is not totally without the presence of others. Others' bodies, language and speech acts, historical and cultural specificity impart a sort of ambiguity to human freedom. This ambiguity, broadly speaking, is due to the corporeality, linguisticity and historicity of human consciousness.

As noted earlier, the Vedāntin also speaks of different ways of knowing or encountering 'I'. For example, the embodied or the corporeal 'I' is perceptible externally and 'I' as determined by *virtis* is perceived internally. Interestingly enough, neither the Vedāntin nor the phenomenologist draws any sharp line of distinction between the 'I' as perceived from without and the 'I' as perceived from within. They seem to agree that both the representations of 'I' are continuous. The phenomenologist may even go to the extent of asserting that when one perceives another's body one perceives at the same time another's mind as well. In a way it may be stated that perceiving 'I' is like perceiving a person, a unified individual, not a conjunction of body *and* mind, two different entities.

The whole matter may be put in another way. Perceptual apprehension of body may be taken as apprehension of body as marked by absence of mind in it. But this absence is indicative (and even inclusive) of absence of the reality of mind in it. It is distinctively an absence (of mind) in body. Body is like an image or representation of body. It is a determinate consciousness from distance, spatial or temporal. Or, this imagist consciousness apprehends mind in body in *absentia*. This apprehensive unity is differentiated, i.e. it is neither strictly unitarian nor purely differential.

Let us look at the issue from a Kantian perspective. 'I' as object in space, as empirical self, is intuitable. At the level of intuitive apprehension what is *not* given, i.e. negation, is derivative, derived from what is given. Positively speaking, it is not constituted. Intuition as a faculty of representation is weaker than imagination. While the former is basically concerned with the given, the latter as a productive or constitutive capacity within it can add something more to the given. That is why image is not what can be entirely culled out or derived from the intuited given. The imagist apprehension of 'I' is a sketchy, not concrete, unity. At a still higher level, at the inferential one for instance, 'I' is apprehended as a unity of the manifold of related judgements. Even this inferential apprehension is not the best possible one of 'I'. The Kantian is known for his extreme caution against any attempt to grasp what is not at all available in intuition. The metaphysical-transcendental not given through intuition is said to be illusory, totally unknown. But it is thinkable and presupposition of whatever is known as objective unity. It is graspable as self-shining and undeniable reality.

To pave epistemologically his way to the top, the subject as free reality, KCB is obliged to deal with different grades of non-perceptual knowledge, different modes of representation. Our bodily 'I' may be known from within and that knowledge need not be perceptual. Secondly, what our self is may be immediately apprehended from its absence. Absence here works as presence. Thirdly, memory also enables us to grasp in a way what self or 'I' is. Memory may fail us at times but it is not necessarily fallible. Fourthly, productive imagination can also take us to the realm of 'I', the subject proper. But the subject available in productive imagination is sketchy, in the form of glimpses only, not really concrete. Finally, the possibility of inferential knowledge of the subject has to be admitted. Though mediated, cognitive consciousness in its inferential form is not debarred from knowing the self. The interesting point to be noted here is that KCB speaks of perception as a standard point of reference in the context of different grades of non-perceptual knowledge. This is bound to remind one of the

Kantian caution and concern for the bounds of sense. Not committed to 'the primacy of perception' as understood by Merleau-Ponty, he is in favour of scaling the transcendental peak along the perceptual route, to start with. The assumption is clear. The path to freedom lies in and through transcendence, transcendence of the perceptual and also the non-perceptual modes of cognitive consciousness mentioned above.

To KCB, the transcendental-metaphysical, though seemingly illusory, is real. It is incompletely real and only as such available in different perceptual and non-perceptual forms of knowledge. While the Kantian says that it is the presupposition of different forms of knowledge, KCB asserts that it is 'known as unknown'. Even as unknown it is claimed to be a ground of further knowing, enlargement of the area and height of what is known. It is also symbolic of freedom in the world of objects—epistemic, ethical and aesthetic. KCB's paradoxical expression 'known as unknown' is a measure of his distance from the noetic dualism of the Kantian. In the world of consciousness he is not in favour of drawing a sharp line of distinction between the empirical and the transcendental, between the physical and the metaphysical.

The Kantian dualism mentioned above is more or less criticized by the Vedāntin, KCB and the phenomenologist. However, the considerations underlying their anti-Kantianism are more or less different. Before this difference is indicated, perhaps it is pertinent to point out that Kant's own dualism is substantially qualified partly in the *First Critique* itself, more so in the *Second Critique*, and explicitly in the *Third Critique*. In the very intelligibility of the causal world the Kantian finds the presence of freedom. More positively speaking, to him, freedom and nature exist together.⁷ To the transcendental self as noumenon, nothing (spatio-temporal) happens though it acts as the principle responsible for the intelligibility and unity of the phenomenal world. To put the matter differently, the objective fact of the causal world is backed up by its sustaining (from-behind) 'I think' principle. The natural domain of the causal unity seems to be teleologically informed of a transcendental harmony. Otherwise, one could not be a free moral agent under the causal influence of nature. Apparently, natural influence cannot take away one's freedom of will. To realize subject/object dissociation and thus to be free in will, one's will needs to be purged of all traces of unreason. However, on the Kantian's own admission, this realization is not easy to achieve. The necessary condition of making our will completely free, free from the influence of body and objective facts (subject to causality) cannot be easily satisfied. Somewhat similarly, it is not easy to cut out or judgmentally form aesthetic objects out of the materials gathered

from nature. All these assertions are unmistakably indicative of the Kantian's hidden dualism. But his elaborate arguments in support of the possibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments in ethics as well as in aesthetics are clearly purported to smoothen the rugged edges of his basic dualistic approach.

The perceptually insistent dualism between nature and freedom is sought to be overcome by all the thinkers I have here in view, viz. the Vedāntin, the phenomenologist and KCB. Of course their approaches are different, despite some kindred characteristics of their basic positions. The point will be clearer in what follows.

In so far as the Vedāntic position is concerned, the cut between the empirical and the transcendental is only apparent or practical and makes sense only from the end of the empirical self subject to *avidyā* (nescience). When the empirical self realizes (through identification) the transcendental self, the 'practical' cut-off line just disappears. According to this account of self-realization, the highest form of freedom is not achievable by will, not even by rational will. Because, it is argued, different forms of will and their follow-up actions generate some such dispositions and propensities (*vāsanā*, *vṛttis*, *saṃskāras*, etc.) in us, instead of facilitating our freedom, they make it difficult for us to be free. Rather, they bind us strongly to the empirical world (*samsāra*). By implication what is said is this, the world of ethics marked by the difference between good and bad, right and wrong, etc. is purely empirical. But, interestingly enough, this empirical world, though transcendently informed, is non-existence from the transcendental point of view. Strictly speaking, *mokṣa* (self-realization) is not an ethical end as ordinarily understood. It is like getting the goat. It is like knowing the known. Even these expressions are inadequate, but *not* absolutely inappropriate, to express what *mokṣa* or the reality of the highest freedom is.⁸

The distinction between the illusory, the practical and the transcendental alluded to by the Vedāntin is taken note of by KCB in his own way. He draws important distinction between what he calls objective fact, psychic fact and spiritual fact. The highest spiritual fact is *sui generis*, though it lends itself to be grasped in different, alternative but 'absolute' modes (*anekānta*), as truth, as *rasa* (aesthetic feel), as (objectless) subjective spirituality or freedom. This formulation of the different faces of the highest reality does not require KCB to deny the distinction, for example, between objective fact and psychical fact. On the contrary, it is necessary for him in order to relate his own concept of philosophy to the natural sciences and thus to enrich the former and unify the latter. Relative to objective fact, psychical fact is said to be more real, concrete and disclosive of freely appropriable reality. Briefly

speaking, object (nature) is an appearance to subject (psyche). Neither (Kantian) subject-object duality nor (Hegelian) subject-object unity is acceptable to KCB. Their duality is symbolic of their felt (mutual) dissociation. Their unity is an intellectual or surface construal of their deep underlying identity.⁹

At this particular point to recall the phenomenologist's view seems to be in order. According to him, the transcendental (subjectivity) is neither *a priori* nor anti-empirical. It is claimed to be 'surplus' over the empirical (subjectivity), making it available to us in the forms of knowledge, aesthetic experience and ethical consciousness. The difference between subject and object, between intending consciousness and what is intended, is said to be valid throughout the scientific line of enquiry, in the realm of ethical enterprises, etc. But these forms of difference are in no way quite promising in carrying out the programmes of eidetic and transcendental reduction. Within the highest domain of 'rigorous science' (science as philosophy) the difference and specificity of different forms of life, different modes of experience, historical epochs and cultural forms tend to disappear, because it is claimed that all forms of diversity and difference are increasingly appropriated and comprehensively constituted and reconstituted by transcendental subjectivity. Of course, what is thus appropriated and constituted is not fixed and permanent but internally assimilated and reassimilated and horizonally expansive, endlessly expansive. Unlike KCB's idea of the highest form of freedom (as reality), the phenomenologist's highest form of reality is knowledge in its essence. To KCB, knowledge is only one of the many faces of reality, one of the many roads to freedom. It is a sort of gradual disengagement *via negativa*.

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The question of disengagement (as freedom) is to be understood against the background assumption that subject at its sub-psychic, perceptual or bodily level, is intimately related to its environment. Undoubtedly it is a body among bodies, an object among objects of various types, physical, biological and psychological. But, KCB points out that among bodies as objects the percipient's body has a singularity, unique dissociatedness, of its own. For example, I cannot be conscious of my body in that way in which I am conscious of other types of bodies and those of other human beings. How I can or rather am obliged to single out my body, in spite of its association with other bodies, appears to be 'mystical'. The percipient's awareness of its singularity and dissociation is somehow (according to

KCB, mystically) informed of the underlying subjectivity. Subjectivity is not only psychical or psychological but also somatological.

This somatological awareness or feeling of one's own body is available from two different but related ends, inside the concerned body as well as from outside. Body-feeling is said to be sensuous but not perceptual. From this it is clear that KCB draws a distinction, however tenuous it may be, between the perceptual and the sensuous. In some cases at least, as it is in the case of our body-consciousness, the sensuous need not be perceptual. Felt body is like a presentation which is not tagged to some perceptual object. One's feeling of one's own body can thus be said to be non-perceptual. The difference between object and its representation is noteworthy. A presentative awareness (body-feeling, for instance) need not be representative of some object.

Another point to be noted in this connection is this. Our body-feeling is to be distinguished not only from the objective-representative fact, but also from the psychic fact. But the distinction between body-feeling and psychic fact is not sharp because the former holds out the promise of the latter. Somatological feeling may, not necessarily does, develop into psychic fact. For making this development possible introspection or a sort of phenomenological exploration is called for. Unlike the phenomenologist, KCB does not maintain that consciousness is necessarily active or projective. It can be so but it is not necessarily so. That explains how and why disengagemental forms of consciousness are attainable. In introspection our body-feeling starts getting resolved into psychic feeling. This is a sort of anti-projective or regressive 'withdrawal' of consciousness within a deeper layer of itself. The feeling of detachment or disengagement from object, in this case from body, provides us the 'first' or an inarticulate taste of freedom. The higher and enlarged forms of freedom are analogous to, and an outcome of, further deepened exploration of freedom from the felt body, from the level of sub-psychic consciousness.¹⁰

KCB's account of self-knowledge has a clear Kantian ring to it. Equally clear is its proximity to the Vedāntic line of thought. But a close perusal of his position brings to one's notice his assimilation of some Sāṃkhya insights, especially subject-object duality, at the initial stage of developing his own position.

The Kantian clearly asserts that soul cannot apprehend itself as quite dissociated from the object in adjoining space. Its self-encounter is therefore bound to be embodied and objective, mediated by its body in the world of objects. Freedom or dissociation of soul from body is stated to be a matter of degree only. Like 'pure matter', 'pure soul' is an abstraction. Soul is and works in communion with other souls. And this communion is mediated through the

representation of the material world. The proclaimed 'privilege' of one's self-knowledge appears to be confined only to the lesser degree of mediacy. This sort of mediacy, however, is not to be confused with immediacy. By implication, the possibility of immediate self-encounter is ruled out.

Self-experience without outer experience of object is impossible. The Cartesian view that except self nothing is immediately 'provable' is rejected by the Kantian. Self, being initially embodied as it is, cannot be proved immediately. This line of reasoning is a reiteration of the Kantian's commitment to dualism. All objects, objective bodies, including the embodied selves, are external to one another. This mutual externality is due to their spatial situatedness. More fundamentally speaking, in space everything is external to other things. But, interestingly, space itself is *in* us as a form of intuition. From this intuitional standpoint all things, both external ones and myself, may be said to be immediately self-witnessed, myself primarily in inner sense (time) and other things in outer sense. The immediacy argument, though understandably feeble at the level of sense, can perhaps be somewhat strengthened by recalling the fundamental Kantian view to the effect that when I say 'I sense', what in fact I sense (including the form of sensing) is backed up by the higher principle (in the form of) 'I think'.

The role of body in the context of knowledge in general is consistently ambivalent. On the one hand, it helps ourselves to know life in nature and, on the other, it proves a hindrance to our thought for the beyond. In a different form the Kantian thesis of somatological ambivalence is discernible also in KCB's theory. But, unlike the Kantian, he affirms that this ambivalence is only initial and not 'consistent' or final. On the said point of difference between the initial position and the final position KCB's own view is akin to the Vedāntin's and bears no distinct Kantian or dualistic imprint. The issue may be briefly indicated in the following way.

Body is said to be the enjoyer (*bhoktā*) of the empirical world (*samsāra*) and self witnesses it without being involved in it. This formulation of the Vedāntin is somewhat like that of the defender of the Sāṃkhya position. But the difference between the two, though not negligible, need not detain me here. The objects constructed by the embodied *jīva* (self) are in the nature of dream objects, i.e. cancellable in course of time. In contrast, the objects constructed by God are experienceable at the waking stage. Although more durable in character, God-made objects, like dream objects, are also corrigible. To explain the overlap between the said two types of objects the Vedāntin deploys such concepts as *citta*, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *antaḥkāraṇa*. Without using the resources contained in these concepts the origin and existence of the

empirical world remain an inexplicable enigma. *Brahman* is the *nimitta* (efficient) and *Prakṛti* the material cause of this enigmatic world. The projective and the suppressive powers of *māyā* conjointly with the powers of *prāṇa* and *avidyā* are claimed to be the ground of this world of sense, of the sense-perceptible object.

The distinction between body and self is sought to be clarified in terms of the analogies of sun and ray, *patākāśa* (boundless sky) and *ghaṭākāśa* (the sky 'bound' or available within a jar), etc. Also extensively used in this context is the *sarpa-rajju* (snake-rope) analogy of superimposition (not contact, not real relation). Self is both self-evident and self-evidencing. It is not object but it reveals all objects. While body as object is known through desire, memory, efforts and perception, self-knowledge is nothing but the negation of the knowledge of not-self. Like all other objects, body is merely a *vivarta* (appearance) of *Brahman*. With self-realization, as and when the identity of *Ātman* (self), individual self, with the *paramātmā* (supreme self) is realized, body (rather, our body-sense) gets dissolved.

Brahman alone is said to be supremely subject (and, strictly speaking, having no object for itself). *Jīvas* are objective subjects, or to put it differently, subjective objects. *Brahman* is nameless and formless. But in it is grounded all nameables and formations. Body is name-and-form (*nāma-rūpa*). *Jīvanmukti* (liberation-in-life) and embodiedness go well together. But *videhamukti*, the highest stage of self-realization, has nothing to do with body. Body, as locus of *vāsanā*, is needed for *karma* giving rise to the craving for enjoyment of the fruits of *karmas*, but has apparently nothing to add to our liberation (*mokṣa*). Interestingly, from the empirical point of view, without negation of and disengagement from this body, 'freedom of the subject' makes little or no sense.

Extensive use of such concepts as *mukti* and *mokṣa*, liberation and salvation, etc., may give one the false impression that the concepts of freedom that I am trying to delineate are basically theological. They are not. Careful attention would make it abundantly clear that the exercise is mainly ontological and epistemological. What is being attempted is to ascertain the relation, different grades of relation, between subject and object. In the process the properties of different grades of object and subject are being discerned and explicated.

For clarification of the issue let me take up once again the phenomenologist's approach to it. Naturally the idioms used for the purpose would sound secular and correct to those who are anti-theologically disposed. To the phenomenologist, body is a dynamic field of inertia (passivity). The simultaneous presence of dynamic and inertial properties in body often leads one to characterize

human body as systematically ambiguous. Body is credited as the main link of our consciousness to the world of objects. Its passivity and motility make it ideally suitable to work as the most effective linkage between the seemingly two worlds of our being, objective and subjective. Body is *self-grounded* and as such it is obliged to return to, and get itself replenished by, its own resource, its *self-source*. The projective character of the body is evident from its objectwardness, its enworlded orientation. Not only is it thrown into the world, but it also returns therefrom to its originary resource.¹¹

Even this formulation of the relation between body and world, bodily subjectivity and object world, may appear somewhat figurative. Let me, therefore, put it in a slightly different manner. The human body, being essentially consciousness as it is, has both intentional outwardness and self-affirming consciousness in it. Broadly speaking, object-referring and subject-returning movements characterize our somatic consciousness. In the forms of lack, absence, need, effort, will, etc., it goes out of us (to the world). In the forms of presence, availability, satisfaction, fulfilment, etc., it returns to itself. In the changing contents of willing and feeling our body not only goes out of itself but, at the same time, also explores varying depths and regions of its own consciousness. *Pari passu*, it surveys the area of its communion with other selves.

Negatively speaking, our bodily self is not, rather cannot, remain self-enclosed. Like other objects (bodies) self's own body is open as a possible object of knowledge in two different but complementary ways, both from within and without. From without, when as a simulated outsider I look at my body, I cannot grasp it without a sense of uniqueness attached to it. Even for myself it is difficult to ignore *totally* the uniqueness 'attached to' other human bodies. In a way I am ontologically obliged to recognize not only my own somatic subjectivity, but also the same of and in others. True, the articulate sense of uniqueness present in my own subjectivity is not there in my apprehension of others' subjectivity. In the latter case it tends to get more or less subdued or faint. But one thing is clear: I am not free ontologically, or really free, to ignore the uniqueness of others.

This brings out, among other things, my spatial spread-outness or community consciousness even at the somatic level. This 'outgoing' perception reveals and brings back an inward depth of its own at every stage. It is implicitly active all the time in the sense of uniqueness attached to our somatic consciousness. Even amidst others, other human beings of our own or of different cultures, we cannot completely cease to be what we are. Forgetfulness of self-identity beyond a point is impossible even at the level of body. With progressive exploration of this identity we start getting back to ourselves, gradually freeing ourselves from an alien sense of

objectivity, and slowly acquiring a taste of freedom as subjectivity in our own being.

This way of arriving at freedom, an intermediary stage of freedom, may be understood from another point of view. I mean the epistemological point of view.

Freedom at the level of thought is to be distinguished from that at the level of image. Image is intimately related to object whereas thought's relation to object is mediated by both image and sense-percepts. All images, productive or creative ones, of the poet and the painter, for example, are often found to be 'abstract' in the good sense of the term. Objective root or perceptual lineage of the creative image is not easily traceable. However, this is not to deny altogether the objective reference of this type of image. But, unlike image, argues KCB, thought is self-contained in a strict sense. It is 'detached', 'a completed product', and not tied to any space-time position. Thought can be said to be *meaning* in the sense that it is self-presentative and not representative of this or that object. For example, when one says 'I am trying to think' what one means is that one is engaged in grasping some meaning (of which perhaps he has only a very vague idea). In other words, 'trying to think' is a cognitive quest for meaning and not a search for a perceptible or positional object.¹²

The Kantian ways of explicating what image is are various. First, it may be a faded perception of an object. Second, it may be a schema, a mental anticipation, of possible object(s). It is a clue to objective application. Third, it may be a product of what is called reproductive imagination. This aspect of the Kantian theory of image has received very pointed attention by Coleridge both in his theoretical and poetical works.¹³ Fourth and final, image may be a product of *a priori* imagination. The form of imagination, which has no root in any perceptually ascertainable object, may also yield a definite image. The latter, unlike other sorts of image, does not have any space-time address or empirical lineage.

The Vedāntin's account of the relation between imagination and thought is also indicative of gradual disengagement or detachment of the self's consciousness from its objective moorings. Like the empiricist, he readily concedes that sense-perceptions leave behind them their traces (*samskāras*) to be found in our consciousness. With the passage of time these traces, unless reinforced by appropriate and repeated sense-perceptions, tend to fade away. But the more effective ways of removing these *samskāras* are meditation and contemplation. For the *samskāras* the meditative and contemplative consciousness proves to be an inhospitable habitat.

The whole process of epistemic freedom may be put very briefly in this way. From the material corporeality of the objective world our

consciousness can disengage itself step-by-step, through somatic consciousness, introspective (psychological) consciousness, essential consciousness and transcendental consciousness. Transcendental subjectivity or constitutive consciousness of the highest form appropriates and assimilates all 'lesser' forms of consciousness. This apparently regressive movement of consciousness is really intended to be progressive attainment of the higher levels of freedom-consciousness.

IV

Thought is fulfilled meaning. In KCB's philosophical scheme of thinking it symbolizes the high watermark of 'psychic subjectivity'. Beyond it is the realm of what he calls spiritual subjectivity. It is marked by the absence of object or what is meant. But this subjectivity is not itself meaningless. It has a meaning of its own which is quite dissimilar from objective meaning. When, for example, pointing at the book before me, I say, 'this book', the ostensive word 'this' is intended to ostend a particular book as object which is perceptually available to other normal human beings. But when I feel myself and use some such expression as 'I feel myself', the word *I* is not intended to ostend my body or a part of it. *I* does not stand for my body. Rather, I am different from my body. But, strictly speaking, unless a meaning, a more or less definite sense, could be given to the word *I* the derivative expression 'my body' cannot be given any meaning at all. Obviously it does have a meaning. Otherwise my identity, position, or address in the world could not be determined and, therefore, my relation with other subjects, family members, debtors, creditors and properties, could not be successfully determined. The indeterminateness of the said relations (marked by an element of indeterminateness) indicates that the word *I* does have a meaning. While the meaning of *this* is objective, that of *I* is unobjective or subjective. What *I* means is not necessarily either uniquely singular or general. It mainly depends upon the context of the use of the word. For example, what the utterer means by *I* is different from what the hearer understands, having heard the word. Again, in the books of English grammar *I* as a personal pronoun has a general meaning of its own which is not uniquely attached to this *I* or that *I*.

The introspective awareness of meaning is unobjective. So is our feeling. Positively speaking, feeling is subjective and what is felt as its content is believable even if it is unknown. While the content of thought seems to be distinguished from thought itself, the content of feeling, the felt, is not analogously so. This distinction between the two is evident in our introspective awareness. Feeling, though

bound up with thought and imagination, is characterized by the consciousness of its difference from these two modes of consciousness. In the cases of thought and imagination their objects are somehow present. But in introspection the presence of the felt in feeling is not known but remains merely symbolic.

While in feeling the subject's dissociation or disengagement from objectivity is nearly complete, in willing the subject's identification with objectivity is clearly evident. KCB thinks that at its initial stage willing is a free expression of feeling. But in feeling consciousness gets distanced from its objective content, however inarticulate that may be. In willing the objective content is sought to be won over or conquered. The possible way out from the blindness of objective 'conquest' and the possible error inherent in distant feeling seems to lie in knowledge. Knowledge has in it both consciousness of the unknown (in the form of feeling) and self-projective objectivity (in the form of willing). Also, it is more promising in being free from the blindness of feeling and the error of aggressive willing. Feeling is marked by its two stages, freedom from *actual* thought and freedom from *possible* thought. In actual thought self-being is present. But in possible thought self stands negated or is absent in a way. Possible thought is linked to actual thought. Conversely speaking, the former is an anticipation of the latter. Somewhat similarly, the feeling of self-negation is sustained by feeling and, additionally, is itself a feeling. Reflexively, feeling may be its own content. And therefore to speak of feeling of feeling is not mere verbiage. Through feeling the subject may explore and attain another feeling of a deeper or higher reach. But there are forms of feeling beyond the ken of thought or meaning. To use KCB's terminology, there are two levels of subjective exploration of consciousness, 'unmeant' and 'unmeanable'. He speaks of two types of unmeanable, 'meant unmeanable', self-contradicted knowledge, and 'mere function of meaning', knowing without object. The meant unmeanable is feeling of feeling and pure knowing function is a complete detachment from the felt content.

An analogous line of thinking is traceable in Kant. He speaks of 'aesthetic' and 'sensitivity' elements in feeling. He mentions also two types of sense-perception: (i) sensation (*Empfindung*), which informs us of the world and of our bodily states, and (ii) feeling (*Gefühl*), which is primarily subjective, not representation or information of particular objects. In aesthetic judgment two senses of feeling, subjective and objective, need to be united or fused.

Causal sensibility cannot coerce *human* will. Causality operates in a different way at the animal level. At this level sensibility can casually affect the concerned animal's will, need or want. On the degree of affection/affectivity depends the degree of its (possible) freedom.

It is reason which imparts the 'ought' (end) character to human will and thus lifts it above the level of causal necessity and puts it in the realm of moral necessity. For the sake of consistency the Kantian is obliged to admit that notwithstanding the animality of its bodily locus, there is 'something' in human will which makes its compatibility with embodiedness possible.

Feeling may be other-oriented without being self-abnegative. Feeling as self-reflexive is self-searching. That which is searched is objective in sense, a gradually dissolving sense, and that which is meant gradually gains in objectivity. The latter however continues to remain grounded in subjectivity. That partly explains how the subject as artist can form aesthetic objects which are judgeable and inter-subjectively sharable.

The Vedāntic way of explicating bodily feeling, as indicated earlier, has two aspects, viz. body as affected from without and body as getting gradually freed from its objective co-relates' pressure. Body-feeling, both subjective and objective, is psychically and spiritually informed, though at varying levels. It can neither be completely autonomous in the ideal Kantian sense, nor totally assimilated in our inward psychic consciousness. Human consciousness is obliged to put up with the obduracy of body-feeling. At the same time, it is conceded by the Vedāntin that our body, human body, despite its material character and psychical composition (*nāma-rūpa*), is suffused with a higher-level consciousness. Feelings, particularly of pleasure and pain, affect will (*vāsanā*). The object-linked *vāsanās* make our nature, psycho-somatic nature, more and more active (*karma*), gluing us more and more to *karmaphalas* (fruits of action), whereas the *vāsanās* devoid of pleasant/painful character lead the self to perform *niškāma karmas*, actions without cravings of fruits/effects to be enjoyed (or suffered). *Niškāma karmas* also successfully induce the self to search itself more and more deeply. In a way it paves the way of freedom (*naiškarmyasiddhi*). Depth of freedom gets increasingly broader in horizon. Traces of objective determination or negation start gradually disappearing. Self thus gets restored to its true and own self-shining nature (freedom as reality).

The phenomenologist's construal of freedom, like Kant's, rests, at least to start with, on a sort of dualism between the nature studied by different physical sciences and our free will as explored by psychology—phenomenological or spiritual. The element of dualism appears less articulate in the works of the Vedāntin and KCB. If the first is called dualism, the second may be called duality. Like all modes of human consciousness, will is also characterized by what Husserl calls intentionality or objectwardness. Taking cues from Husserl, thinkers like Ricoeur speak of a sort of initial antithesis

between 'the voluntary' and 'the involuntary'. The former designates the realm of freedom and the latter that of nature. To speak of (in terms of) confrontation between freedom and nature would be unnecessarily dramatic, dramatizing the compatible, if not complementary, relation between human freedom and the natural world within which it is available.¹⁴

The basic locus of freedom is man or, one may even say, fallible man. Phenomenologically described, our will seems to disclose at least three different stages. To start with, willing is a type of *decision-making*. In decision one forms a *project*. When I say, for example, 'I will', what I do is to form a project, a project of action with a direction or goal built into it. This first part of chalking out the project largely depends on my abilities, propensities and dispositions. Secondly, I cannot will without willing something, i.e. it must have its object or content. Will cannot be emptied of all contents. Of one's will it can perhaps be plausibly said that 'will can will itself', but the point to be borne in mind is this: what is willed, the will as content, is different and distinguishable from the acts of willing of this or that person. One should be extremely cautious in accepting Hegel's well-known criticism of Kant's notion of Good Will as 'will that wills nothing'. Will may well entertain or will *form* or *structure* (of action) as its content. One may not be conscious of this or that specific action falling within or exhibiting a particular form (as content).

Will to act and to act are quite distinguishable. Wilful or active consciousness tends to culminate in actual action, irrespective of the latter's consequences. On the consequences of my action my will to act may not have a direct bearing or relation. This brings to the fore the third stage of the relation between the voluntary and the involuntary, between nature and freedom. The main reason why one's proposed course of action or project cannot be fulfilled to one's own satisfaction is the insistent presence of *other* as nature, *others* as human beings, or, as it happens in most cases, both. The relation between one self and the other self, even between one self and the physical nature around it, knows no permanent and fixed boundary line.

The elaboration of the last point brings out the role of self, or subject, endowed with will in the formation and execution of its project. For example, the natural scientist does not encounter or discover a readymade object. In effect he encounters the object of which he himself is an author or co-author. This authorship or constitutive agency is not confined only to the natural object but also extends to our own bodies as objects and minds as objects. However, it has to be admitted that our ability to objectify physical objects, somatic objects, mental objects, cultural objects, etc., is not

uniformly or unilaterally determinable by our self, by our will. For, as already pointed out, the realm of the involuntary cannot be appropriated and assimilated without residue within the voluntary. In other words, objects cannot be totally internalized or transformed into subjective entities. In a sense freedom remains always more or less limited. But its limits can well be pushed behind, i.e. the horizons of freedom can be endlessly expanded.

v

In order to understand KCB's account of what he calls spiritual subjectivity one of the steps which appears most advisable to me to bear in mind is as follows: While the existentialist-phenomenologists like Ricoeur always speaks of (i) the *objectwardness* of consciousness (a variation of Husserl's thesis of 'consciousness of. . .'), and (ii) the *reciprocity* of subject (as free will) and object (as nature), the former at all different stages (of course with varying accent) reminds us of the detachmental or disengagemental character of the subjective consciousness. Further, by implication, given the basic thrust of his concept of freedom, KCB is not required to harp on the idea of reciprocity. Nor is he obliged to fall back upon the Kantian thesis of teleological harmony for the purpose. After all, KCB, unlike Husserl and Ricoeur, was not working under the Kantian burden of undoing the double effects of noetic dualism and ontological dualism.

Introspective awareness reveals that subjective fact is distinct in itself and at a level lower than feeling it brings out the dissociation of the knowledge of the fact from the object. At the level of feeling one becomes conscious of this dissociation. Introspective awareness of feeling, notwithstanding the known distinction obtained within it, is recognitive or self-identificative in character. Pure subjectivity stands for not only conscious absence but also impossibility of meaning. To quote KCB himself on this very complex and important point: 'Introspection is a subjectivity that is detached both from being and from negation, being positive as freedom.'¹⁵ It is taken to be the first person *I*, identical with the function of believing or meaning, itself neither believed or meant nor even meanable, and as such not doubttable. In feeling, in the psychic fact, the distinction between 'I' and its felt body is present only in a 'ghostly' manner but not totally annulled. However, the *possibility* of total annulment, complete detachment, starts sending its signals at this psychic level.

Elaborating the point, KCB once again brings out the difference between Kant's approach to self and his own. The self, to Kant, is the thinking function, thinking of a thought or 'accomplished meaning'. The speaking or meaning function is to KCB more fundamental than thinking. The introspective self is not only

detached from thinking and feeling, but also undeniably self-knowing. Secondly, one can hardly fail to note another difference between Kant and KCB *vis-à-vis* their modes of denial of the objectivity of the self as first person *I*. Kant's denial of the self as object is total because, according to him, it is in the self that the very possibility or constitution of object is grounded. But when KCB states that *I* is neither meanable nor unmeanable the statement is to be understood as follows. It is 'not meanable' in the way different objects, different bodies, for example, are meant. It is 'not unmeanable', i.e. meanable, in a special non-problematic sense. If we take, as KCB does, *meaning* as 'the thinnest presentation of object', the introspective self can be said to be meanable. For example, when as a speaker I call myself *I*, this word *I* is understood *qua* word and not through its meaning. Here the word is credited to have a meaning function or *I*-function, not a meaning (as such). In Kant's philosophy, *I* as thinking *I* is said to be capable of thinking itself, the speaker's self. But, KCB maintains, *I* as an expression of introspection or a linguistic use has nothing, not even negatively, to do with thought. While to me *I* as the speaker is introspectively available, to the hearer it is available differently, as awareness of a possible introspection, introspection of how the speaker introspects.

In quest of spiritual subjectivity beyond introspection, KCB points out that the word 'I' is simultaneously symbolic and symbolized by the introspective self. This meaning-value or symbolic-value of 'I' as used by the speaker is indicative of a higher grade of consciousness than one's actual introspection. Actual introspection as unrealized knowledge is only self-evidencing (to another) and not self-evident (to itself). The *missing* self-evident character of the self is indicative of the necessity of a spiritual enterprise for (higher or the highest possible) self-realization. Actual introspection is implicitly social. It is self for other. Others' knowing of the self and the self's knowing of others are co-present in self-evidencing introspective awareness. The self-evident character or level is still elusive. But it is possible for the self to grasp this missed, elusive and higher-level character of self-consciousness. The introspective awareness of the possibility of a higher-level self-consciousness is half-dissociated from the introspective self. Complete dissociation of this awareness is achieved when its content, a subjective state, is grasped as illusory and not merely missing, absent, elusive or possible. Somewhat like (but not *quite* like) one's illusion about the objective, one may be under illusion even about the subjective. When my present subjective state discovers that my previous or another subjective state (in relation to its object) is mistaken (because of the discovered mistaken identity of the concerned object), even then I am obliged to have 'faith' in my present subjective state which is

corrective and sublative of the mistaken or illusory one. It is true that in principle my corrective subjective state may itself be corrected by a subsequent and another corrective and appropriative state of (introspective) subjectivity, but this corrective/corrected or appropriative/appropriated distinction available in the introspective awareness of self-identity does not appear to be open to the charge of infinite or indefinite regress (*anavasthā doṣa*). In order to fend off the possible objection on the point KCB argues that illusion-detectivity or the appropriative function of the introspective self is not essential but only an accidental, and therefore 'eliminable', feature of the self's self-identity. To this self-identity the distinction between itself and subjective fact is unknown. In brief, this intuited self-identity, when actually intuited, is self-evident and is in no need of any other evidence to sustain it. But until and unless that stage of intuited self-identity is attained, a very faint trace of distinction is present in the self-revealing self. The vanishing distinction is, in a sense, a subjective illusion and as such it is both 'something' to be recognized and superseded. As and when '[t]he non-being of [this] distinction is finally understood . . . the conception of the absolute self [as freedom]' is also understood.

It is in and through its progressive-regressive movements that the introspective self, conscious of a demand to know itself as subject, cognitively goes up annulling step-by-step its distinction from the bodily self, the psychic self and different grades obtained within them. Essentially subjective in nature, introspective awareness of the subject is neither thought nor meant, neither feeling nor its absence. It is not even to be taken as distinct as the subject to which it reveals itself. It is not in the nature of mere negation, nor is it the awareness of an indefinite. Though definite and positive, it cannot be said to be not known in any ordinary sense. As actually undissociated from object it cannot be claimed to be known either. Only the awareness of dissociation provides glimpses of 'I (the subject) as (the realm of) possible freedom'.¹⁶

From the above it appears that KCB's phenomenological way of delineating the concept of freedom has been influenced, among others, by the Vedāntin's sublative and transcendental method of *neti neti* ('not this', 'not this'). In the subject's way of achieving its freedom (as reality) it has to negotiate several turns, positionally objective, bodily subjective, object-related image, objectless image, objective feeling, feeling as such (without object), known object, knowing subjectivity, etc. At the higher stage of subjectivity, in feeling, for example, one arrives at the *faith* in the achievability of freedom. In introspection even the feeling of achieved freedom gets negated and the subject knows for the first time the possibility of freedom. Every turn of the subject's consciousness of the object

and object-related itself is attended and impelled by a *neti* ('not this') consciousness. It is in this way that different grades of perception/percept, image/imagination, representation and presentation are grasped and transcended. Bipolarity of the objective and the subjective is both recognized and sublated by and in the subject's higher-level subjectivity. The recognition of the distinction is a prelude to its annulment. But one annulment gives rise to another higher-level distinction, to be annulled again. But every stage of distinction and its annulment is informed of a consciousness which itself is not marked by distinction or duality or bipolarity. At the highest level freedom is available in 'my' consciousness and its revelation in 'me' must not be taken as qualified (*upādhi*) by my 'I' or self. At that level freedom is 'de-individualized but not . . . indefinite'. It is, affirms KCB, absolute and self-evident.

From the positional or spatio-temporal specificity of object to de-individualized and indeterminate freedom as reality is a long journey. The Vedāntic way of tracing it, as we have already noted briefly above, is to a great extent anticipative of the view defended by KCB. After we briefly recapitulate it and recall the Kantian approach to the matter, I would like to indicate my own view on it.

The specificity of object is due to *vṛiti* of *antaḥkaraṇa*, but the general form (*ākṛti*) of object (*viśaya*) is due to *buddhi* (intellect) grounded in self-consciousness. Both the objectivity of object and the subjectivity of subject more or less lack what may be called a permanent clearcut character or bipolarity. *Antaḥkaraṇa*, *buddhi*, *ākṛti*, etc., underlying the available forms (rather formations) not only of object but also of subject undergo change and, in the process, the subject-object relationship changes too. For example, the object of feeling, the felt, does not remain fixed irrespective of the modes of its representation to the self. In the primary stage of sympathetic feeling object seems to stand apart from subject as it were. But when sympathetic feeling reaches the level of contemplative consciousness, object starts losing its sharp distinguishing edge, the *saṃskāras/vṛttis* of its subject start dissolving, and gradually freedom starts dawning on our self-consciousness. The origin of this 'dawning' is not from without the self but lies within itself.

Rasas (aesthetic feeling), particularly *sāntarasa*, the feeling of quietude, though disputed, know no sharp distinction between subject and object. At a lower level, *rasa* may be enjoyable in relation to an object but its essence is claimed to be an eternal feeling or an eternal value. At a relatively higher level of sympathy, the self though conscious of the concerned *rasa*'s objective content, is more or less free to enjoy it, partly because of the

endless variety of words and sounds (*ukti-vaicitrya* and *dhvani-vaicitrya*) of its presentations and partly because of the self's 'heart-universality' (*sahṛdayatā*), the ubiquity of sympathy. Beyond the primary (object-linked) sympathy and the relatively free subjective sympathy, there is contemplative sympathy. The first is marked by expression, the second by detachment and the third by eternity. At the third or the final stage all distinctions get immersed in the contemplative *I*-consciousness. It is freedom in feeling, aesthetic feeling *par excellence*. In *rasa* space-time difference and subjective-objective distinction gradually disappear. In this sort of feeling distance is significantly annihilated, difference substantially reduced or even altogether abolished, and human intersubjectivity is restored in the form of universal self-identity. It is self-expressive in a unique way. Its mediumistic aids and adjuncts (like meaningful words, sweet and rhythmic sounds, beautiful colours, their forms and composition), though they appear merely useful to start with, are indispensable indeed at the level of 'penultimate' communication. Ultimately, however, through self-consciousness as *rasa* the self becomes self-fulfilling and free.¹⁷

It is indeed very interesting to note that not only the analysis of the structures of our cognitive and moral experience, but also that of the structure of our aesthetic experience provides a deep insight into the nature of freedom. The point has been convincingly brought out by Kant in his *Critique of Judgement*.¹⁸ In this work the main thrust of Kant's argument is to show that in our aesthetic judgement, which is reflective in character, the relation between the felt object and its appropriate concept always leaves room for free play of imagination. The object that pleases me, my aesthetic taste, is not (cognitively) peculiar to me but its beauty satisfies all others endowed with aesthetic sensibility. What lifts the object from its 'positional specificity' and makes it universally enjoyable is the joint effect of our imaginative and cognitive powers brought to bear upon the concerned object. The titillating pleasantness of the aesthetic experience is rooted in the harmony between the given object and the 'elusive' concept.

When the basic or categorial features of the judgment of taste (quality, quantity, relation and modality) are clarified. Quality is to be understood here as (object-affected) subjectivity. But our feeling-response or affection is in a way disinterested, not fastening us to it as an object of desire, and free from the question of existence or non-existence, of reality or imaginary nature, of the object. Secondly, it is indefinite, neither singular nor general (in the ordinarily accepted logical sense). The 'positionality' of the aesthetic object cannot be empirically singled out. An element of ideality or generality is inherent in it and that at least partly explains

both its positional indefiniteness and its intersubjective availability (availability in others' feeling). Thirdly, the aesthetic judgment is marked by a seeming teleology. One feels that the structure or form of the object is purported to promote a harmonious interplay of imagination and conception. Teleology or purposiveness, according to Kant, exists wherever some will is found to be satisfying or exemplifying some object. Aesthetic purposiveness may be attributed to an object even if it is not known to have a concept imposed upon it by some will. It brings out the *as-if* or supposed character of teleology. What makes the conformity of object to concept possible, to what their harmony is due, may remain theoretically unknown, and yet we are aesthetically *free* to contemplate it (provided of course the formal unity of the object is borne in mind). Finally, modally speaking, the aesthetic judgement is *necessary*, in the sense that it ought to be shared by everyone. This intersubjective sharability or universal communicability of aesthetic feeling is sought to be transcendently grounded by Kant in what he calls a 'common [aesthetic] sense'.¹⁹

One can easily liken, not without justification, KCB's theory of aesthetic intersubjectivity, on the basis of 'heart-universal', a term used by him meaning a sort of non-intellectual sympathy, to Kant's concept of aesthetic commonsense. Kant has been accused of not having at all a 'phenomenology of the knowledge of others' and also of cluttering up his concept of commonsense with various epistemological considerations.²⁰ This pro-Husserlian criticism of Kant as formulated by Ricoeur seems too harsh. However, this is not to deny the importance of the pains taken by Husserl to develop an elaborate theory of the constitution of the 'Other'. The Husserlian way of *constituting* the Other proves understandably incompatible with the empirical realism of the Kantian and therefore unacceptable to the latter. The Kantian and the Husserlian accounts of the transit route from the empirical object to the transcendental self (or subjectivity) are considerably different. While to the Kantian the self is a thing-in-itself and as such (as a regulative principle) supports from behind the empirical self's knowledge of all objects, including the embodied self itself and other selves, to the phenomenologist even the transcendent self (or subjectivity) is self-constitutive and the acts of self-constitution and other-constitution know no fundamental division between them. To account for the categorial unity of phenomenal objects Kant is obliged to draw rather heavily on the presupposed resources of the synthetic unity of apperception. Strictly on *theoretical* or speculative grounds it is difficult to explain the transcendental unity of selves-in-themselves, but without this intersubjective postulation not only (a) the universality, harmony and objectivity of *aesthetic* judgement and (b)

the *practical* unity of the kingdom of ends, but also (c) the objectivity of natural science remain puzzling. Husserl's phenomenological approach dispenses with the Kantian division between the theoretical and the practical reason, between phenomena and noumena. But the conclusion regarding the nature of transcendental subjective or intersubjectivity they arrive at is bound to remind one of Leibniz's law of continuity between perception and apperception and the view of both intramonadic and intermonadic harmony.

Without the harmony between the monads, says Leibniz, this world cannot be logically regarded as the 'best possible world'. Without the harmony between the ends of different selves, asserts Kant, the universalizability requirement (of the moral law) cannot be satisfied. Without transcendental subjectivity, argues Husserl, the constitution and availability of a unified and rigorous philosophy (as science) remains an unrealizable task. Without *heart*-based (but not-totally-unrelated-to-head) sympathy, possibility of togetherness (*sym*) of *pathos* (suffering or joy), the harmony of aesthetic judgements of differently accultured persons remains a mystery. Whatever is achievable in common by differently situated selves, be that known or knowable (truth) or feeling or felt content (value) or willing or willed content (reality as freedom), cannot be ascribed exclusively either (i) to diverse, discrete and unrelated objects or bodies, or (ii) to mutually unintelligible, unsympathetic and socially non-communicative selves. It is through appropriation, recognition and/or negation of the former, i.e. multiple objective unities, that the latter, i.e. mutually intelligible, sympathetic and communicative selves, can grasp truth, realize value and be free.

VI

Roads to freedom are said to be diverse. KCB himself speaks of three different and alternative roads. In Sāṃkhya and Vedānta freedom has been construed in cognitive terms. Freedom as self-realization has been portrayed by Sāṃkhya as discernment (*viveka*), discernment of self (*puruṣa*) from nature (*prakṛti*). Being inactive as it is by its very nature, the *puruṣa*'s freedom is a sort of reflective awareness and not the attainment of a goal actively explored and attained. The Vedāntin thinks, as already indicated before, *mokṣa* or ultimate freedom is not an alien goal to be reached. Positively speaking, it is the very nature (*svarūpa*) of self itself. The self is required to know by *sādhana* that its sense or feeling of bondage is illusory. Though its *sādhana* is primarily cognitive in nature, it does not necessarily exclude the secondary role of *karma* (action) and *bhakti* (devotion). The other road to freedom lies through feeling,

devotion and surrender. Many Christian mystics have also spoken of freedom in terms of mysterious feeling. According to Yoga and Kant, freedom is primarily in the nature of willing, while in Yoga the road to freedom has been described, rather paradoxically, 'as will not to will', 'as freedom from willing', or 'will to *nivṛtti*' and not to '*pravṛtti*'. The highest form of freedom is spiritual, not intellectual, and spiritual activity itself consists essentially of *nivṛtti*, arrest of the hedonic propensity of will (*bhoga*). The Kantian formulation of the freedom of will highlights the rational activity of the self to purge its will of all sorts of natural inclinations. For, the Kantian argues, the surrender to somatic-hedonic inclinations makes the self highly individualist, if not egoist, consequently making it impossible for the self to be the author of what is called the *universalizable* moral law. In fairness to Kant, it has to be admitted that his concept of goodwill as the ground of universalizable moral law does leave room for emotion and feeling in it, provided these do not prove inconsistent with the universality of the fundamental moral law.

The talk of 'roads to freedom' in terms of number, one, two, three or more, makes no sense to KCB. These are all said to be figurative expressions. One who can be free in knowledge can also be so in feeling or willing. The other interesting point highlighted by KCB is that the realization of freedom, irrespective of the nature of the road (cognitive, emotive or conative) leading to it, is spiritual and super-religious. Strictly speaking, a Vedāntin or a Vaisnava need not be religious in the accepted sense of the term.²¹ While some thinkers, not necessarily philosophers, prefer to speak of freedom in religious idioms, others are inclined to use spiritual, secular or neutral idioms in this context. Naturalists like the followers of Sāṃkhya and the modern science-friendly thinkers are generally found to be interested in explicating the concept of freedom without offending the naturalistic sensibility or directly questioning what may be called scientific images of rationality. The reason for my consciously using the word 'images' is to remind ourselves that the concept of rationality has not been used by all naturalists or scientists in a unique way. For example, in defence of freedom Sāṃkhya found it necessary to posit the ontological dualism between the self (*puruṣa*) and the not-self or nature (*prakṛti*).²² Kant, on the other hand, finds it necessary to speak in terms of tripartite reason, of theory (knowledge), of practice (willing), and of feeling because, he feels that without the bounds of theoretical reason the glory of freedom cannot be fully vindicated.

A comparable, essentially pro-Kantian, line of thought is discernible in Wittgenstein. Somewhat like Kant, the latter points out why the future of human actions, not subject to the sweep of causality, cannot be predicted or described. The world consisting of

the totality of facts and as determined by the facts has nothing to do with our will(s), my will or your will. The limits of one's own language set limits to one's own world. Since our everyday language is claimed by Wittgenstein to be in perfect logical order, such expressions as 'my world' and 'my life' are quite legitimate. But 'the self' which lends sense to the above expressions is neither the human body, soul or being, rather the 'philosophical' or 'metaphorical subject'. As per the Tractarian language this subject, its feeling, willing, their contents and values cannot be said to be in this world and cannot even claim to be logically sayable. Like life itself, the problems of life are not part of the world and cannot be put into the words of scientific philosophy. Yet, Wittgenstein concedes, the problems of life, death and values make themselves *mystically* 'manifest'.²³

It is a set of particular views about philosophy, logic and language which makes it impossible for Wittgenstein and his followers to allocate any place to life, death and values in 'this' world as defined by him. But one can always challenge the correctness of the views unilaterally propounded by him by raising some pertinent questions. 'Must philosophy be necessarily scientific?' 'Must truth-functional logic be allowed to dictate the boundary lines between "the sayable" and "the unsayable" or "the mystical" and decide what is a genuine problem and what is not?' 'Must we be prisoner of one particular image of science which Wittgenstein or anyone of the like had in the back of his mind?' 'Must the meanings of such logical constants as "and", "or" and "not" be identical in all logico-mathematical systems?' 'Are we all fated only to watch "ghostly" or "mystical" shadows on the walls of the Platonic cave while the Reals are eternally away in the transcendental world?' Those who, like me, are inclined to answer the above questions in the negative are not obliged to accept the Wittgensteinian 'unsayables' as really unsayable. Śabdādvaitavādins or Sphotavādins like Sureśvara and Bhartrhari have a very simple and positive answer to the questions. I do not like to enter into this view here. My own view of freedom has been worked out elsewhere.²⁴

Kant breaks the boundary in one way. Schopenhauer does it in another way. How do Sāṃkhya and Vedānta tackle the related issues we have already briefly alluded to. Even Wittgenstein feels obliged to take cognizance of these 'manifest' issues of life. But whereas science-friendly philosophers like Kant and Wittgenstein make a long detour to express (without firmly committing) themselves on the fundamental problems of life and their possible solutions, or at least ways of tackling them, the Vedāntin and philosophers like KCB show admirable ingenuity and dialectical competence to indicate how the immense resources of human consciousness as available in

philosophical concepts and theories may help us to break the barrier between theory and practice, between science and non-science. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that most of the Indian philosophers refuse to accept the dramatized distinction between the above pairs of concepts and their cognates. For example, Sāṃkhya, Buddhism, Vedānta, as well as contemporary thinkers like Sri Aurobindo and KCB never fail to take note of what we call the empirical or scientific world (*samsāra*). To most of them science-friendliness does not mean negation or denial of the persistent issues of values like freedom.

The main motive-force behind KCB's philosophy has remained steady and almost uniform throughout his life.²⁵ Thoroughly opposed to 'the illusion of the identity between the mind and body', he painstakingly defends 'the true theory of being' or metaphysics based on self-knowledge in *life*. This early view ('Mind and Matter', 1906) is found to be reiterated in his later works like 'The Concept of Philosophy' (1936). To him '[p]hilosophy is . . . [a] self-evident elaboration of the self-evident.' Obviously, this concept of philosophy, very akin to his concept of freedom, is not likely to be endorsed by the modern pro-scientific philosopher, although I have already mentioned why it should not be interpreted as anti-scientific. Further, there is no compelling reason why the hegemonistic concept of rationality found in a currently ruling paradigm of science has to be accepted by all alike irrespective of their domains of study or areas of interest. One who, like KCB, is basically interested in the ontology of freedom, need not enter into a subsidiary alliance with other-evident natural science or even sociology of knowledge. Although, as I have briefly suggested, KCB's concept of freedom is not inconsistent with science, at least not in principle, one can easily assert in a more positive vein that, but for the existence of the causal nature recognized and studied in science, the question of realization of freedom makes hardly any sense. The road to freedom runs through landmarks like '*not* physical nature', '*not* bodily nature', '*not* mind', '*not* verbalized language', '*not* psychic subjectivity', and '*not* introspective self-awareness'. Now there is no gainsaying the fact that this *via negativa* method, though not opposed to science and society in principle, puts its focus elsewhere and that its recognition of science and society is purported only to derecognize the same later on, as initial steps on the road to objectless subject as freedom.

Even within the unitarian, complementary or dualistic frameworks of science KCB's concept of freedom cannot be fitted in without emasculating it. If reality is taken as a causal *unity* of physical, biological and mental or cultural objects, freedom cannot be placed in it. Secondly, taking both mind or self and matter as equally real,

freedom cannot be accommodated together with them. For in the process one has to either place freedom within the realm of mind, implying thereby that the realm of matter knows no freedom in it, or to admit straightaway that they are not ontological at par, i.e. not equally free. Thirdly, that the (body-mind or matter-mind) identity theory is absolutely inhospitable to freedom has been affirmed by KCB and therefore rejected by him. Fourthly and finally, even a weaker version of dualism like the theory of complementarity, although it may be claimed to be free from the blemishes of the straightjacketed unitarian image of science, cannot be shown to be positively hospitable to the type of ontological theory of freedom defined by KCB. Whether these irritants in the relation between some contemporary theories of science and the concept of freedom primarily presented in this paper are good enough ground to give up the latter is a large question, too large to be taken up here.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB), *Studies in Philosophy* (Vols. I and II bound in one), edited by Gopinath Bhattacharyya, second revised edition, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1983. Though for the purpose of my paper I mainly followed his long paper, 'The Subject as Freedom', originally published as a monograph in 1930, a close reading of my exposition of his position would make it clear to the reader that I have freely drawn upon several other relevant papers included in the above volume.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 385-89.
3. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by Norman Kemp Smith, Macmillan, London, pp. 143-44, 210-11, 219ff, 336-37, 450ff, 455ff, 515ff, 546-47, 550ff, 564ff, 645ff. See also, Jonathan Bennett, *Kant's Dialectic*, Cambridge University Press, 1974, pp. 260-80.
4. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 135-61, 362-72, 381-83, 450-54, 515-18, 564-70; see also, KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, pp. 382-87, 663-68, 702-11; and Samkara, *Vākyavṛtti*, translated by Swami Jagadananda, second edition, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1953, pp. 26-34; *Vedānta Sūtras* with the commentary by Śamkara, translated by George Thibaut, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1968, I.I.1 to I.I.10, pp. 3-60; *Upadeśasāhasrī*, translation and summary by Swami Jagadananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1949, pp. 8-13, 33-44, 88-91, 101-27.
5. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 136, 141, 153, 158, 161-62, 270-71, 380-83.
6. Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vols. I and II, translated by J.N. Findlay, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1970, pp. 143, 540-49, 561-62; *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology (Ideas)*, translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson, Collier Books, New York, 1962, pp. 48-50, 53-57, 91-113, 331-49, 374-77; *Cartesian Meditations*, translated by Dorion Cairns, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, pp. 25-26, 44-53, 83-90, 148-57; *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology (Crisis)*, translation and introduction by David Carr, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1970, pp. 106-11, 116-17, 153, 170-72, 178-89.
7. J.N. Findlay, *Kant and the Transcendental Object*, Oxford University (Clarendon) Press, 1981, pp. 61-62, 170-75, 302-06, 308-10, 312-13, 336, 371; see also,

- Roger J. Sullivan, 'The Categorical Imperative and the Natural Law', in *Proceedings of the Sixth International Kant Congress*, Vol. II/2, edited by Gerhard Funke and Thomas M. Seebohm, (eds.) Centre for Advanced Research in Phenomenology (CARP) and University Press of America, Washington D.C., 1989.
8. *Katha Upaniṣad*, Section III.3-14. For *Śamkara-bhāṣya* see, for example, Som Raj Gupta, *Wisdom of Śamkara: The Word Speaks to the Faustian Man*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1991, pp. 333-43.
9. KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, pp. 392, 404.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 420-25, 429-30.
11. Husserl, *Ideas*, pp. 39, 53-54; *Crisis*, pp. 106-08, 161-63, 216-19, 331-32; see also, Paul Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, translation and introduction by Erazim V. Kohak, Northwestern University, Evanston, 1966, pp. 86-88, 214-16, 231-307, 463-69; KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, pp. 412-23.
12. KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, pp. 428-33; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 182-84, 242-47; Findlay, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-43, 327-28; see also, Donald W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1974, pp. 75-77, 87-90, 117-21. The word *imagination* has been used in different senses in Indian philosophy. In one sense it is construction (*kalpita*) in terms of *nāma* and *rūpa* and due to *buddhi* (Śamkara, *Upadeśasāhasrī*); in another sense it gives rise to different alternatives (*vikalpa*) due to *māyā* (*Gaudapādakārikās*). In a still different sense it is simply a misconception (Śamkara's *Chandogyopaniṣad-bhāṣya*). Buddhists like Dignāga, Vinītadeva, Dharmakīrti and Śāntarakṣita have also made use of the concept of *kalpanā* in order to distinguish its content from that of non-erroneous perception (*abhrānta pratyakṣa*) as valid knowledge (*samyagjñāna*). See, for example, in this context, Satkari Mookerjee's *The Buddhist Philosophy of Universal Flux*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1980, pp. 273-91.
13. I.A. Richards, *Coleridge on Imagination*, London, 1950. See also, KCB's 'Objective Interpretation of Percept and Image', in *Studies in Philosophy*, pp. 627-29 and 'Studies in Kant' in *Studies in Philosophy*, pp. 671-72, 697-700.
14. Ricoeur, *op. cit.*, pp. 348-53; and KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, p. 673.
15. KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, p. 443.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 452-54.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 354-57. See also, K. Krishnamoorthy, *The Dhvanyāloka and Its Critics*, Kavyalay Publishers, Mysore, 1968, pp. 138-42, 218-24; V.M. Kulkarni (ed.), *Some Aspects of the Rasa Theory*, Bhogilal Leherchand Institute of Indology, Delhi, 1986; D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *Rūpa, Rasa O Sundara* (Bengali) [Form, Aesthetic Feeling and Beauty], Riddhi India, Calcutta, 1980.
18. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, translation and introduction by J.H. Bernard, Hafner Publishing Co., New York, 1972.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-77.
20. Paul Ricoeur, *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology*, translated by Edward G. Ballard and Lester E. Embree, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1967, p. 196. Findlay also observes that Husserl's 'treatment of intersubjectivity remains covertly solipsistic', *op. cit.*, p. 366.
21. KCB, *Studies in Philosophy*, p. 289.
22. Gerald James Larson and Ram Shankar Bhattacharyya (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies*, Vol. IV; *Śamkhyā: A Dualist Tradition in Indian Philosophy*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1987, pp. 369-71 (from Aniruddha's *Śamkhyasūtravṛtti*) and pp. 382-87, 399-400 (from Vijñānavikṣu's *Śamkhyābhāṣya*).
23. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, translated by D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinness, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1972, pp. feeling/ *Gefühl*

- 61232, 645; mystical/*Mystische*, 644, 645, 6522; say(ing)/*sagen* 3031, 4115, 561, 562, 651, 653; *aussprachen* 3262; *aüsdrucken*, 55151; value (*Wert*), 641; will (*Wille/wollen*) 51362, 5631, 6373, 6374, 6423, 643.
24. D.P. Chattopadhyaya, *Knowledge, Freedom and Language*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1989. See especially chapters 6, 7, 8, 11 and 15.
25. Kalyan Kumar Bagchi, 'An Indian Interaction with Phenomenology: Perspectives on the Philosophy of K.C. Bhattacharyya', in *Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy*, edited by D.P. Chattopadhyaya, Lester Embree and Jitendranath Mohanty, Indian Council of Philosophical Research and Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, and Suny, Albany, 1992.

Dissociation, Reduction and Subjectivity

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Perhaps, it is not impossible to discover a phenomenological trend in Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya's (KCB) philosophical investigations. In his famous philosophical treatise, *The Subject as Freedom*, he speaks of a spiritual progress which proceeds to the realization of the subject as free.¹ The study of such progress is called spiritual psychology by him.² He thinks that the task of spiritual psychology is to 'interpret empirical psychology in terms of the positively felt and believed freedom of the subject from objectivity, and next to elaborate modes of freedom that have no reference to object at all.'³ In the objective attitude the object appears to be known or felt as positive. Knowing or feeling appears to be its problematic negation. In the subjective attitude the matter is reversed. Freedom is positively felt. The relatedness of the object to the subject appears as constructed. It does not appear as belonging to the object, as change belongs to it. It is understood as the self-negation or alienated shadow of the subject. In the objective attitude *this* or object is thought to exist beyond its *this-ness* or relatedness to the subject. In the subjective attitude the transcendent is rejected as meaningless. *This-ness*, which means the so-called psychological entities, knownness or feltness appears not to be given as distinct to introspection. It is thought to exist only as distinguished or constructed. The distinguishing or constructing is felt as less certain than the self-evident subject behind it. From the standpoint of spiritual psychology the transcendence of the object is meaningless. According to KCB, 'the attitude of metaphysics like that of the sciences including psychology is objective. It seeks to know reality as distinct from the knowing of it, as objective, at least in the sense of being meant.'⁴ In KCB's opinion, metaphysics is the quest of a chimera. He points out that the facthood of knowing function and of subjective function in general is believed though not known. It is elaborated into a system of symbolisms in a new philosophical study 'which may be called spiritual or transcendental psychology'.⁵ He says further that spiritual psychology symbolizes the subjective attitude by the attitude from which it seeks to be freed. It is stated clearly by him that the modes of subjectivity are the modes of

freeing oneself from the modes of objectivity.⁶ It is said by him that all so-called metaphysical problems are symbolisms for modes of freedom to spiritual psychology. These are the forms of spiritual discipline by which the objective attitude is to be renounced. The positive subjective functioning has to be reversed in direction towards the realization of the subject behind it.

In describing the nature of spiritual psychology KCB mentions that there is a specific discipline or consecutive method of activity for realization of the self. The consciousness of perfection, freedom or salvation as the end is a demand for some kind of activity of the subject towards itself. He calls it the cult of the subject which takes various forms. But all these forms involve a feeling of dissociation of the subject from the object. It is an awareness of the subject as what the object is not. The specific activity which is demanded primarily is the inwardizing direction. Secondly, it is in the direction of creating objective or social values. There is one demand among other demands and all such demands are absolute. It is the demand that the subjective function of knowing of the object as distinct from it be known as fact. It is to be known as the self-evidencing reality of the subject. This would be called the cult of the subject *par excellence* by KCB. It is a spiritual discipline of the theoretic reason and a method of the cognitive inwardizing.⁷ Its possibility is not ordinarily recognized.

KCB wants that the possibility of such a method has to be exhibited in spiritual psychology. A method involves a series of consecutive steps for the realization of an end. The steps in this case would be a gradation of subjective function which are modes of freedom from the object. We are first of all identified with our body. Our freedom from the perceived object is in actuality realised in our bodily consciousness. But this freedom is imperfectly realized. We can call our bodily consciousness conscious body. There is no dissociation of the subject from the body at this stage. But the extra-organic object is known to be distinct from it. In the next stage of freedom the perceived object including the body is distinguished from the ghostly object which appears in the form of the image, idea and meaning. These may be called presentation. Consciousness may be undissociated from such presentation. But it is dissociated from the perceived and felt body and may be called presentational or psychic subjectivity.⁸ We come to the next stage of freedom when the subject or consciousness is dissociated from presentation which is conceived as a kind of object. The three broad stages, according to KCB, would then be the bodily, the psychical and the spiritual. Each would have sub-stages. We are wedded to our body and as such, actual freedom is felt only in bodily subjectivity. But the freedom in higher stages as suggested by psychology is believed not to be actual,

but as what has to be achieved or realized. The different grades of subjectivity imply the different kinds of objectivity; the terms are to be understood in a reactive sense. The psychical is objective to spiritual subjectivity and the bodily existence is objective to psychic subjectivity. The extra-organic is objective to bodily subjectivity. At a particular stage the objective is known as distinct from the subjective next to it. But this subjective is not known as distinct from the objective, but only felt and believed to be free or dissociated from it. KCB concludes his discussion on 'The Notion of Subjectivity' with the remark, 'The elaboration of these stages of freedom in spiritual psychology would suggest the possibility of a consecutive method of realizing the subject as absolute freedom, of retracting the felt positive freedom towards the object into pure intuition of the self.'⁹

We may note the following elements in KCB's notion of subjectivity.

- (1) Object appears to exist beyond its *this-ness* or relatedness to the subject. This is the objective attitude in which the knownness of the object appears to be positive.
- (2) In the subjective attitude the relatedness of the object to the subject appears as constructed. Freedom is positively felt.
- (3) From the standpoint of spiritual psychology this transcendent object is simply meaningless.
- (4) The modes of relating are the different modes of freedom from objectivity. The different modes of freedom are the bodily subjectivity, the psychic subjectivity and the spiritual subjectivity.
- (5) These modes of freedom are realized by dissociation from object, presentation including body, and psychic subjectivity. The grades of subjectivity which are realized are the bodily subjectivity, the psychic subjectivity and the spiritual subjectivity.

In addition to the points stated above KCB says that object is what is meant which includes the object of sense-perception as also all contents that have reference to it. Object which is meant is distinguished from the subject or the subjective. There is an awareness of the subject which is different from the meaning-awareness of the object. In his opinion the subjective cannot be a *meaningless* word. To be distinguished from object it must be a significant speakable. But if it be a meant content, 'it would be but object'.¹⁰ It can then neither be asserted nor denied to be a meant content. What cannot be denied need not be assertable. Thus, 'Apparently the significant speakable is wider than the meanable: a content to be communicated and understood need not be meant.'¹¹

This idea of the object as beyond *this-ness* or transcendent is similar to Husserl's thesis of the natural standpoint. He says,

Our first outlook upon life is that of natural human beings, imaging, judging, feeling, willing, 'from the natural standpoint'. I am aware of a world, spread out in space endlessly and in time becoming and become without end, I am aware of it, that means, first of all, I discover it immediately, intuitively, I experience it.¹²

Husserl says further that corporeal things somehow spatially distributed are *for me simply there*. I precisely 'know' that they are there. He goes on stating that he finds continually present and standing over against himself the one 'spatio-temporal fact-world' to which he himself belongs. This 'fact-world' is found to be out there and is taken just as it gives itself to us as something that exists over there.¹³ But now Husserl wants to alter his standpoint, and he proposes to do it radically. Following Descartes he thinks that the attempt to doubt any object of awareness in respect of *its being actually necessarily conditions a certain suspension of the thesis*.¹⁴ Husserl thinks that this alteration of standpoint is quite unique. The thesis which is adopted may not be abandoned. There is no change in our conviction. Yet the thesis undergoes a modification. Whilst remaining in itself what it is 'we set it as it were "out of action", we "disconnect it", "bracket it"'.¹⁵ In Husserl's words, 'the thesis is experienced as lived, but we make "no use" of it'.¹⁶ 'We are dealing with indicators which point to a definite but unique form of consciousness, which clamps on to the original simple thesis'¹⁷ and the thesis is transvalued in a quite peculiar way. Husserl points out, 'This transvaluing is a concern of our full freedom and is opposed to all cognitive attitudes.'¹⁸

An examination of Husserl's natural attitude and suspension of that attitude reveals that he begins with what is objectively real. But consciousness in its freedom can be discovered, once we have changed the attitude of natural standpoint and replaced it with the attitude of suspension or disconnection of what is believed to be there. The thesis of the natural standpoint may continue to be as it is itself like the bracketed in the bracket, like the disconnected outside the connected system. But no use is made of the thesis. In KCB's notion of subjectivity the subjectivity has to be dissociated or disconnected from the object. But he will not say that the consciousness of the object continues as lived. Rather, he will say that the knowing of an object is only in being distinguished from it, as relating. It is not distinct from the distinguishing as the free reference of the subject to the object.¹⁹ The subject, he thinks, is free from the object in the sense it is known by itself and not as

related to the object either in the way of identity or distinction.²⁰ The subject, according to KCB, is felt as freedom in dissociation or disconnection from the object. This dissociation, as we have seen before, takes various forms—dissociation from the object, from the psychic entities. Husserl also speaks of his phenomenological bracketing as various forms of disconnection from the transcendent object of the naturalistic standpoint, scientific theories, theories of history and culture to reach the transcendental subjectivity. The world and the different objects including body, material nature, animal nature, psychic reality, are constituted by transcendental subjectivity. In KCB's opinion the relatedness of the object to the subject appears as constructed. It is understood as the self-negation or alienated shadow of the subject. This idea of the object appears to be similar to Husserl's idea of constitution. With these ideas of dissociation and construction KCB speaks of a method of spiritual or transcendental psychology which exhibits a phenomenological trend in his philosophy, though his idea of spiritual subjectivity differs greatly from Husserl's transcendental subjectivity. We shall mainly be concerned with KCB's concept of bodily subjectivity and show how it compares with Husserl's phenomenological constitution of the body. This will give us an idea of both the philosophers' quest towards the subject as freedom, for freedom is felt in its subjectivity first at the level of the body.

Before we come to a discussion of KCB's notion of bodily subjectivity we would like to see how Husserl reaches the pure ego through a series of disconnections. In both KCB and Husserl the quest is for the pure self, or transcendental subjectivity, though the nature of the self may be different. Husserl thinks that his design is to discover a new scientific domain through the method of disconnection or bracketing.²¹ As he says, the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint is put out of action. This entire natural world which is there continually for us, present to our hand, and will ever remain there, is a fact-world of which we continue to be conscious is put in brackets. The sciences of the natural world are also disconnected, even though they stand on a firm foundation as ever. He does not make any use of their principles and laws and does not apply any of these propositions as his own. Not only the sciences, but also the transcendence of God is suspended. The phenomenological reduction is extended to this 'absolute' and to this transcendent.²² The region of religious belief remains disconnected. Husserl states further that to every sphere of individual being there remains an ontology; to physical nature, for instance, an ontology of nature, to animality an ontology of animality; all these whether maturely developed or disciplines set up for the first time, succumb to the reductions.²³ He would include

even formal logic and the entire field of Mathesis generally in the disconnecting epoché. He would claim nothing that cannot be made essentially transparent to ourselves by reference to consciousness.²⁴ Thus the whole world as placed within the framework of nature and presented as real in experience has no validity. Similarly, all theories and sciences, positivistic or otherwise, which are concerned with this world, no matter how good they may be, are subjected to the same fate.²⁵

These steps are, according to Husserl, necessary steps towards the attainment of the end, the discovery of the essence of 'pure' consciousness. In our natural experience individual consciousness is interwoven with the natural world. In respect of this intimate attachment with the real world what is meant by saying that consciousness has an essence of its own?²⁶ In what way is the material world to be excluded from consciousness? How can consciousness separate itself out from that within it of which we are conscious, namely the perceived being, 'standing over against' in and for itself? In this case perceiving is simply considered as consciousness. Apart from the body and the bodily organs it appears as something in itself essenceless, an empty looking of an empty 'ego'. It is directed towards the object itself which comes into contact with it in some astonishing way. Husserl comes to think that consciousness and real being are in no sense co-ordinate forms of being. In his language,

Between the meanings of consciousness and reality yawns a large abyss. Here a being which manifests itself perspectively, never giving itself, absolutely merely contingent and relative; there is a necessary and absolute being fundamentally incapable of being given through appearance and perspective patterns.²⁷

Consciousness, in spite of all talk of a real being of the human *ego* and its conscious experience in the world and of all that which belongs to it in respect of psycho-physical connections, has a purity. It is to be considered 'as a self-contained system of being, as a system of absolute being into which nothing can penetrate and from which nothing can escape'.²⁸ It has no spatio-temporal exterior and can be no spatio-temporal system. It cannot experience causality from any thing or exert causality upon any thing. It is presupposed that causality involves the normal sense of natural causality as a relation of dependence between realities. The whole spatio-temporal world has a mere intentional being. It is a being in the secondary relative sense. It is a being which is posited by consciousness in its own experience.

Husserl establishes that all real unities are 'unities of meaning'. They presuppose a sense-giving consciousness which is absolute and not dependent on sense 'bestowed on it' from any other source. If the concept of reality, Husserl thinks, is derived from natural realities, and we consider 'universe', 'nature as a whole', as the totality of *being*, to make it absolute is simply nonsense. Reality and world as used by Husserl are just titles for certain valid unities of meaning, namely unities of 'meaning' related to certain organizations of pure absolute consciousness. This consciousness dispenses meaning and reveals its validity in certain *essentially* fixed ways.²⁹ Husserl shows that phenomenological reduction, as a method of disconnecting us from the natural standpoint and its general thesis is possible. When it is carried out, the absolute or pure transcendental consciousness is left over as phenomenological residuum to which it is absurd to ascribe reality.³⁰

Husserl advises us to reduce till we reach the stream of pure consciousness. But after carrying out the reduction we do never stumble upon the pure ego as an experience among others within the flux of manifold experiences. 'The ego', Husserl writes, 'appears to be permanently, even necessarily, there and this permanence is obviously not that of a solid unshifting experience, of "a fixed idea"'.³¹ The ego in his opinion remains self-identical. Every *cogitatio* can change in principle. But in contrast the pure ego appears to be *necessary* in principle and it remains absolutely self-identical in all real and possible changes of experience. It cannot be in any sense reckoned as a *real part* or phase of the experiences themselves.³² If the pure ego remains as a residuum of the phenomenological suspension of the world and empirical subjectivity that belongs to it, we should not be free to suspend it. But for many inquiries the problem of the pure ego can remain *in suspense*. The pure ego can be considered as a phenomenological datum. It is given with pure consciousness whereas all theories concerning it should be disconnected.³³

It has been pointed out by Jolm Scanlon in his foreword to the English translation of *Ideas II* that *Ideas I* had emphasized the absolute character of pure consciousness. It appeared that all concern with the real world of human life was neglected. Though the world was bracketed, Husserl wanted to restore what he had lost through constitution of meaning or noemata. But *Ideas I* had focused only on the elementary instances of the constitution of perceptual objects. 'The world of the natural attitude', Scanlon observes, 'preserved as modified referent of complex noematic sense within the reduction, might seem to have been attenuated to mere, theoretically conceived nature, to spatial phantoms alone'.³⁴ According to Husserl, once we have emancipated ourselves from the

previously unnoticed blinders of the naturalistic version of the natural theoretical attitude, we know what they can disclose.

In *Ideas I* Husserl had shown that consciousness can be worldly only by having a body. The body has a special role in the constitution of the 'full intersubjective world'. In *Ideas II* he elaborated for the first time the theory of the body and provided a constitutive analysis of the body. The constituting role of the body is also elucidated for giving an idea of the constitution of nature. In his *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, the importance of the body was recognized. In our life-world everything has a bodily character. The life-world depends on the fact that we are unities of body and mind, 'so that our experience of the world is ultimately mediated by our senses and the functions of the sense-organs'.³⁵ In Husserl's opinion consciousness is transcendental in the sense that everything transcendent is constituted 'in' and 'for' consciousness. He thinks that there are two ways for consciousness to be inserted in the real world: (1) through bodily incarnation and (2) through perception.³⁶ It is through bodily incarnation that consciousness is integrated into the world. He says, 'only through the empirical relation to the body does consciousness become real in a human and animal sense, and only thereby does it win a place in nature's space and time—the time which is physically measured'.³⁷ Absolute consciousness, it is thought by Husserl, is involved in the real world in and through the body. It is incarnated in the body and in this way it is manifested as the state of consciousness of a real human being. But the epoché suspends the incarnation of consciousness. Through the suspension of the incarnation the thesis of the world is put out of action. Consciousness becomes unworldly, pure experience. The world is no longer the real world; it is a mere constituted phenomenon. The epoché brings to man his absolute subjectivity which was so long concealed in the natural world through an attachment to the body. Man's natural existence, though not unreal, is a mere constituted phenomenon. From the point of view of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology the body is a constituted phenomenon. It is constituted in the acts of transcendental consciousness.³⁸

Husserl establishes that the intuitive qualities of the material thing are dependent on the body. The qualities of the material things as they present themselves intuitively to me are dependent on the qualities of the experiencing subject. They are to be related to my body and my sensibility. The body is in the first place the medium of all perceptions. It is the organ of perception and is necessarily involved in all perception. Body, as Husserl points out, is the zero point of orientation. It is the bearer of the here and now.

Out of this here and now the pure ego intuits space and the whole world of the senses.³⁹

The body is revealed as an organ of perceiving. To understand what this revelation is we can shift our attention to the local sensations which the body bears. The case of double contact is the most revelatory. In touching my left hand with my right my body appears twice, once as what explores and once as what I explore.⁴⁰ The touch sensations are localized in the hand, but they are not its constitutive properties. To speak of it as a physical thing I have to abstract from these sensations. If they are included the physical thing is not only richer, it becomes the 'body'. Hence, Husserl says, the 'body' is originally constituted in a double way. It is a physical thing, *matter*. 'Secondly, I find on it and I sense "on" it and "in" it.'⁴¹ Sensation announces its belonging to a psyche and reveals the body as mine.

Touch, Husserl thinks, has a privileged position. The eye does not appear visually. The same colour cannot show both the object and appear localized as sensation. There is no 'seeing-seen' like 'touching-touched'. I do not see myself, my body, the way I touch myself. What is the seen body is not something touching which is touched.⁴² Then the kinaesthetic sensations reveal to me my freedom of movement, not the ownness of the body. It is as if the ego, indistinguishable from this liberty, could, on the kinaesthetic level move, the material thing called 'the body' with immediate freedom.⁴³ Body is also to be seen just like any other thing, but it becomes a body as it incorporates tactile sensations, etc. The visual body also participates in the localization, as it coincides with the tactual body.

Body as a field of localization is its distinctive feature of setting it as distinguishable from all material things. In particular body is an *organ of the will, the one and only object*, which, for the will of my pure ego, is *movable immediately and spontaneously* and is a means of producing a mediate spontaneous movement in other things.⁴⁴ Ricoeur points out that the sense of the body revealed by tactile sensations is that of a sentient body which 'has' sensations. The psyche 'shows itself spread out in the lived through spatiality of the body and reciprocally the body is lived through as the field of localization for the psyche'.⁴⁵ The subject which is constituted as a counter-member of material nature is an ego. It is to it that the body belongs as a field of localization of sensations.⁴⁶ The ego has the faculty to move freely through this body. It is able to perceive the external world by means of it.

Other sensations participate in the constitution of the corporeal subject. Sensual feelings such as tension and release, pleasure, sadness, agreeableness, disagreeableness, etc. are the material of

intentionive subjective processes. Values are elaborated in these processes. These affective processes are charged with a dual function. They carry on intending towards. . . . At the same time they exhibit an immediate though diffuse corporeal localization. Thus they reveal their immediately intuitive belonging to the body as owned body.⁴⁷ The whole material infrastructure of consciousness gives itself as immediately localized. The intentional moments or conscious states are not immediately localized, as the intentionive subjective processes do not form a stratum of the body.⁴⁸ The very sense of consciousness, its intentionality, is indirectly localized by the material structure.

In discussing Husserl's constitution of the body Ricoeur maintains that to perceive a body as thing is also to co-apprehend its sensoriality. Certain sensorial fields belong to this body-thing. This belonging is an application of the relation of dependence. The hand is 'apperceived' as a hand with its sensorial field and with co-apprehended sensorial 'states'. Husserl sees no opposition between the body as seen and the body as lived through. To understand an animate body we have to grasp it as a thing impregnated with a new stratum of extra-sensorial properties. They make it a physical, aesthetic unity. In respect to it the physical and the aesthetic are only abstractions. The body, as Ricoeur suggests, is the thing as which 'has' localized sensations. In virtue of sensations it is the bearer of the psyche.

The animate body remains a quasi-reality. It has properties that almost conceal its intra-mundane character. In the first place it is the 'zero-origin' or centre of orientation. It is the 'here' for which all objects are 'there'. Under the solipsistic perspective my body is not somewhere in an objective place. It is the original 'here' for 'there'. It is impossible for me to vary the angle, side or aspect under which my body appears to me. I cannot step away from it. We are thus led to the ambiguity of the psyche. It participates also in objectivity, since it is the soul has its body. It participates also in objectivity, since it is the body-thing which has sensations. This body is a part of things and the psyche which inhabits it is the centre around which the rest of the world is grouped. The psyche, Ricoeur remarks, is open to causal relations, and yet it is the point where causality emerges from the physio-psychic order moving towards the ideo-psychic order.⁴⁹

We have seen how the body is constituted through the acts of transcendental consciousness in the phenomenology of Husserl. The body is both object and subject and thus we reach an idea of the body-subject. In KCB's *The Subject as Freedom* we find an analysis of body-subjectivity. It is shown how the body is realized as subjectivity through dissociation. It has been pointed out earlier that

the idea of dissociation may be treated as similar to Husserl's notion of phenomenological reduction. We will now try to show how KCB reaches the idea of body-subjectivity.

KCB states that the body as externally and internally perceived, as observed and felt, may be regarded as the subject in relation to the environment. In psychology we have to start with this bodily subjectivity.⁵⁰ It is mentioned that materialism cannot account for the unique singularity of the body. Objectivity of other perceived objects is constituted by their position relative to the percipient's body. The body is felt as *mine*. It is true that everybody's body is felt in the same way. Even so, the feeling of the body as being *mine* cannot be dismissed by an objective interpretation. The percipient as his body is dissociated from the external world. The world as perceived is distinct from his body. But he imagines himself as included in the world of objects, though his body may be a privileged object.

One's own body is half-perceived and the rest is filled by imagination. To imagine the unseen half of his body another observing body is placed differently. In this respect also one's own perceived body is uniquely different from other perceived objects. The world is constructed out of the perspectives of many observers. But it is a world organic to a subject that feels dissociated from his body. Even if the subject is taken as nothing but one's own perceived body, it involves the knowledge of something unknown in the object. It cannot be understood in terms of the perceptible objects in the merely objective attitude. It implies the mystic awareness of dissociation from the object in which subjectivity consists.⁵¹

One is aware of one's body from within, besides its being perceived from outside. It is the feeling of the body. The bodily feeling is but the felt body. It may not be known to be other than the perceived body. Yet the felt body is distinct from the perceived body, as the former is an 'interior' that is never perceived.⁵² The felt interior of the body may be regarded as the prototype of the observed interior. The awareness of the body from within is sensuous. But it cannot be called sense-perception. It is only not denied to be perception, though the perceived body is distinguished from the body as felt as within. The perceived and imagined body is always an exterior. It may be felt, but the felt interior can never be imagined as perceived. There cannot be any introspection into body-feeling, as we are not aware of it as dissociated from the perceived body. Body-feeling and felt body are only verbally distinct. There is no conscious duality of presentation and object in body-feeling. Body-feeling may not be regarded as psychic, but its potentiality. The problem of dissociating it from the objective body

has not yet arisen, but the possibility of dissociation is there. In the actualization of such body-feeling there is a transformation into psychic fact. As KCB remarks, 'Actually in body-feeling we are not interested in withdrawing from the environment; it is only an interest derived from higher stages of subjectivity that suggest such withdrawal'.⁵³

Body-feeling may be considered in relation to psychic fact. It may also be considered with reference to the perceived body and the perceived object. The perceived body is potentially dissociated from the perceived object. There is no explicit dissociation from the object. As position relative to the body is a constitutive character of the object, it may not be analysed in perception. The object being half-distinguished from the body, the body is only potentially dissociated from it. But the object is fully distinguished from the felt body. Corresponding to the full distinction from the felt interior, there is actual but imperfect dissociation or freedom of the felt body from the perceived environment. But the felt body does not appear even imperfectly dissociated from the perceived body. The perceived body is only half distinguished from the felt body, as one who observes his body as exterior may not feel it.⁵⁴

The perceived body is fully distinguished from the imagination of the body. There may be consciousness of the body as *mine*, and at the same time as not other than *myself*. But the consciousness of the object which if felt as *mine* is felt not as *me*. The felt body is only half distinguished from the psychic fact. It is the feeling of the body on the one hand and is not actually dissociated from the perceived body on the other. Psychic fact is only potentially or implicitly dissociated from the felt body. In introspection into psychic fact, this potential dissociation becomes actual. There is no awareness of the psychic fact which does not involve bodily feeling at all, though bodily feeling as the felt body is other than the psychic fact. The felt body begins to get resolved into a bodyless psychic feeling in introspection. It may be fully resolved, when introspection is realized as assured knowledge. Our awareness of the felt body in ordinary introspection is not other than the perceived body from which the psychic fact is felt to be completely detached. It is the awareness of a psychic fact felt as detached from the perceived body. It is half-detached from the felt bodily interior which is also half-detached from the bodily exterior.⁵⁵

Subjectivity is constituted by this feeling of detachment which is freedom. It is in the feeling of the body that the first hint of freedom is reached. When the perceived body is distinguished from the felt body, we have an explicit feeling of freedom from the perceived object. KCB thinks that the first given feeling of freedom in body-feeling is involved in all freedom of higher grades.

Subjectivity without spiritual discipline is rooted in bodily feeling and is only imagined as dissociable from it. Psychic fact is fact because of the knowledge of object or the presentation which it involves. It is not detached from the felt body, though detached from the perceived body. In introspection there is the initial detachment from the felt body. But introspection is also a fact only as a fringe of some psychic fact, as it is undetached from the felt body. This initial detachment is only imagined. The felt body has not yet been transformed into a psychic feeling. Introspection is only the faith that the detachment can be realized. 'The realization of this freedom from the felt body is the pre-condition of all distinctly spiritual activity', KCB concludes.⁵⁶

We have tried to establish that KCB's investigation into the nature of bodily subjectivity moves on a similar transcendental plane as that found in the phenomenology of Husserl. In the constitution of the body both refer to the sensations of feeling, the felt body in KCB and the sensation of touch and kinaesthesia in Husserl. The latter speaks of the body as the organ of will. In both we find a series of dissociations as remarked by KCB and reductions as understood by Husserl to reach the point of freedom. Body is the psyche where freedom begins, but the goal of freedom is the pure transcendental subjectivity which can be arrived at through the gradual stages of the bodily, psychical and the spiritual subjectivity, as we find in KCB and the absolute pure consciousness through different types of successive reductions, as we find in Husserl. But Husserl does not make an end of his journey, after reaching the pure subjectivity. We can say that his journey towards the subjectivity has an upward and a downward direction. After reaching the pure subjectivity he tries to show how from the subjectivity we can reach the world and the sciences through the constitution by the transcendental phenomena. But KCB, once he reaches the spiritual subjectivity which is the subject as freedom, wants to remain in eternal meditation and enjoyment of the pure self. His is a spiritual quest, where the epistemological enquiry is just the ladder which helps the upward climbing. But once the top is reached, the ladder is thrown away. In Husserl, however, the epistemological inquiry leads to the realization of the absolute subjectivity in which is constituted the objective world, self, other beings and nature. Husserl wanted to complete the journey which was started by Kant in his Copernican revolution. But Husserl pointed out that Kant recognizes the objectivity of the objective world as a 'subjective accomplishment because he overlooks the abstractive and interpretative character of sciences at the most fundamental level'.⁵⁷ A similar criticism against Kant is also found in KCB who says that epistemology is not so much a branch of transcendental psychology to Kant, as a prolegomena to

it, concerned not with the personation of subjective fact, but with the meaning of the preposition *of* in 'knowledge of object',⁵⁸ the facthood of which is implicitly taken for granted. The transcendental turn in Husserl and KCB are a quest for the pure subjectivity though the attainment of such and its nature are not same in all respects.

However, such discussion is also possible on the notions of psychic subjectivity, and spiritual subjectivity which are higher grades of freedom, as found in KCB's *The Subject as Freedom*.

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Ontological Argument and Ontology of Freedom

A perspective on K.C. Bhattacharyya's
theory of subjective freedom

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1

Traditional ontological argument has been equally traditionally discredited. Traditions, however, die hard; and so, in spite of all disclaimers issued by the proponents of the argument, the prejudice against the argument lingers on. The jejune criticism of the argument runs thus: if the argument is ontological, it is no argument, and if it is an argument it is not ontological. Arguments are concerns for logic, and logic is ontologically neutral. Or, in the Kantian diction, bereft of the undoubtedly important logical point in Kant's refutation of the argument—existence is no part of a definition—the argument does no more warrant the passage from the definition of God to reality of God than there is any warrant in the transition one may attempt to make from the thought of hundred 'thalers' to their actual existence. St Anselm's or Descartes' theological interests apart, Kant's logical point apart, all the critiques of the argument have cast a suspicious eye on the attempt to conjure 'being' out of 'thought'. But though it may be freed from its theological trappings, the argument yet exudes a kind of confidence which smacks of a distinctive philosophical atmosphere, viz., the atmosphere of rationalism, in which 'thought' or 'reason' *par excellence* is knowledge and knowledge is not merely ontologically rooted, grounded in reality, it *is* reality. In the natural or 'clear' light of reason, *à la* Descartes, one is face to face with reality. Reason clarified and distinct *is* reality; 'confused' reason, *à la* Leibniz, is materiality and not rationality, i.e. reality.

Now, one of the different ways in which Kant would 'discipline' reason, clip its wings, is by demonstrating the ridiculous procedure of the argument in question. But a 'critical' philosopher as he was, Kant did not stop short with questioning the argument. The argument was bred in an atmosphere which he questioned no doubt, but then he took upon himself the task of bringing home to philosophers the fact that the argument was just a symptom of a deep malaise

inherent in human cognitive enterprise, viz., the congenital incapacity of knowledge to make access to anything *extra-cognitive*, although to all appearances *and* to all intents and purposes, knowledge is nothing if not *of* something objective. The inaccessibility of 'being' to 'knowledge' was, for Kant, the instructive failure of rationalism.

It is not, however, too late in the day for an Indian student of philosophy to see how the argument can be revived and reformulated from the point of view of one native tradition of his, viz., Vedānta; and in this matter, he can do no better than to seek light from Professor Krishna Chandra Bhattacharyya (KCB). In his thought, as we have tried to interpret it here, 'knowledge = being' This would be his solution to what has been regarded as the 'knowledge problem'. (The *problematic* of the problem has to be clearly brought out, as we have tried to do.) And if this is his solution to the knowledge problem, then it embodies in its own way an ontological argument.

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As the 'knowledge problem' *vis-à-vis* Kant has been discussed in his book *The Subject as Freedom*,¹ we shall mainly concentrate on that book. But then since a philosopher has to be understood as a whole, we shall have to refer to KCB's other publications and writings. If one ignores these latter and interprets KCB as just a Vedānta philosopher on the basis of the book, which itself expressly declares in the preface that the 'subject' is conceived there 'after Vedānta', one not only fails to understand him as a whole, but also mistakes that there is no whole to understand, *and*, what is more, one forgets that the task of a philosopher is vastly different from that of a mere historian of philosophy. To adopt what KCB himself said in another context, here 'exegetical interpretation shades off into philosophic construction'.²

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So we now turn to the knowledge problem. But to appreciate the *problematic* of the problem, a brief account of the machinery of knowledge after Kant should be given.

There are two sides to knowledge, viz., receptivity of the materials of knowledge and interpretation of those materials. The materials are received in sensibility; and interpretation is the work of understanding. Not that they are two faculties: 'sensibility' is the receiving of the materials and 'understanding' is the interpreting of those materials. Their distinction comes to light only in a reflective analysis of knowledge. In the Kantian diction we have been

familiarized with, 'intuition' *cum* 'categorization' as knowledge. Materials of knowledge are received or 'intuited' in sensibility and interpreted or 'categorized' in understanding. *But*—and this is a big but for the Kantian theory,—what is *not* received in sensibility, what is not 'intuited' is not 'categorized' and so not 'known'. If there is anything out of all relation to sensibility, if there is a 'thing-in-itself', it is not 'intuitable', so not 'categorizable', so not 'knowable'. The suspicion of there being a 'thing-in-itself' arises because, according to Kant, even in receiving the materials, sensibility confers on them its own forms (space and time). It is a form-matter complex which is 'intuited' material to be 'categorized'.

The spectacle of an inaccessible 'thing-in-itself', refusing to be brought within the boundary of knowledge with its categorial or interpretative network, would not haunt human knowledge if it were not for the duality of 'intuition' and 'categorization' with which Kant starts. Sensibility can only intuit, understanding can only categorize; sensibility cannot *categorize*, understanding cannot *intuit*. Were there or if there is a supra-human intelligence which should or which can combine 'intuition' and 'categorization', which in intuiting could *intellectualize the materials* of knowledge or in *intellectualizing could 'intuit'* those materials, then for such supposed intelligence the Kantian problem would not arise. It certainly did not arise for Kant's rationalist predecessors for whom reason *par excellence* becomes so 'clear and distinct' (to use the Cartesian terminology) that it immediately, i.e. intuitively, grasps reality. So, too, the Kantian problem did not arise for Kant's great successor, i.e. Hegel, for whom, to the extent sensibility progressively, i.e. 'dialectically', advances, it realizes or actualizes the hidden rationality in it, so that when such actualization becomes complete there remains no longer anything 'other' to 'reason'. Bosanquet, Hegel's great follower in England, put it thus: 'Ultimate judgement is the whole of reality predicated of itself.'³ To Kant, however, there is no such welcome possibility of a way out. But why?

The foregoing statement of Kant's view of the machinery of knowledge would appear to be just elementary, naive, bald and all-too-simplistic *if* the Kantian duality of 'intuition' and 'conception' does not help the Kant-interpreter bring out that:

- (i) the knowledge *problem* that Kant felt was the expression of an 'aching void', as it were; and
- (ii) the important consideration that weighed with Kant, viz. that of *fixing the boundary or frontier of knowledge in order to forestall the introduction of metaphysical considerations in the epistemological or noetic context.*

Constituted as it is, human 'intellect' cannot cross the boundary of 'sense'. Fixing the boundary of knowledge in order *not* to allow anything *a-noetic* from the *other side* of knowledge amounts to, what Kant calls, Transcendental Idealism; and, we may add, it is *Transcendental Idealism on the objective side*. One cannot rest content with just conceiving the 'bounds of sense' and ridiculing the doctrinal fantasies of Transcendental Idealism as Peter Strawson does.⁴ One cannot take half a fowl for cooking. One *either* appreciates that Kant's 'aching void', his doctrine of the duality of 'intuition' and 'categorization', his doctrine of human intelligence failing near the transcendent or failing to step out of the 'bounds of sense', etc., are interwoven in his general doctrine of Transcendental Idealism; *or* does not appreciate Kant at all. The Kantian *problematic* has to be 'empathetically' (if we may say so) understood.

We have seen that the Kantian problem,—knowledge problem specifically—does not arise for philosophers who, so to say, intertwine epistemology and metaphysics. There are, however, philosophers of a different mien altogether, viz., the sceptics who might be said to have raised the problem. Scepticism has different varieties, but almost all the sceptics are concerned with such questions as to whether our knowledge of the external world with its things and its persons *other than ourselves* and with its past and future has good grounds, whether we can draw any legitimate distinction between 'knowledge' and 'belief', etc. These questions raised by the sceptics have often been sought to be answered by considerations of verification, pragmatic success, coherence within our belief-systems, etc. But none of these considerations can dislodge the sceptic from his position, for it may be said that success, verification, etc. are after all criteria suggested with an eye to the knowledge of the world which itself is suspect.

Into the long-drawn controversy between the sceptic and his critics in the history of philosophy, we need not go. As Kant is engaging our attention for the present, let us see what Kant's reply has been to the sceptic. And we can formulate the reply on these lines: the world of our knowledge, with reference to which the sceptic wants to find unflinching assurance, is after all 'constructed' by the principles which belong to an order that is different from the order of our knowledge. The two orders are differently named by Kant, viz., 'transcendental' or 'a priori', and 'empirical'. Our empirical enquiries regarding the world with its things, persons, history, etc. are different from our philosophical enquiry regarding how such enquiries could at all be possible. Philosophy is concerned not so much with our knowledge of the world as with the *way* we

know the world. Philosophy is 'criticism' of the knowledge of the world, and knowledge can be known by going behind and beyond it.

The Kantian reply to the sceptic, distinguishing between the orders of our enquiry regarding the external world and our enquiry regarding the construction of the knowledge of the world, goes on to uncover, so to speak, the constructive, *a priori* presuppositions of our knowledge. They are called 'transcendental' in the important sense that they are 'non-empirical'.

IV

Now, the very important lesson that we derive from Kant's critique of scepticism is the need for distinguishing the two orders of enquiry indicated before. Recognizing the importance of the distinction in the context of transcendental philosophy—which will come into clearer relief to us when we turn to the understanding of KCB—we may at this stage raise a two-fold question:

- (i) Has Kant succeeded in burying the sceptic ghost?
- (ii) Does Kant's answer to scepticism resolve his own problem concerning knowledge?

In trying to answer these questions, the importance of KCB's reconstruction of Kant will emerge. Thereby the rather long discussion on Kant *vis-a-vis* the sceptic will be found to be quite relevant to our principal task and to be not at all any digression on our part.

The two-fold question may be sought to be answered both through a *historical study* of Kant's text and an *immanent philosophical study* of the Kantian problematic. In answer to the first question, we may observe that, what to speak of the sceptic, Kant himself has a haunting suspicion that our knowledge fails in respect of an independent thing-in-itself. And this lurking suspicion about this latter acting as a *foil* to our knowledge from outside throws overboard the insight behind the Kantian problematic; and so we perforce return a negative answer to the second question. Is it not a standing fact that Kant, while replying to the sceptic, 'deduces' the *a priori*, transcendental subjective functions constructing 'objects' of knowledge and yet *retains* the notion of a thing-in-itself which is plainly contrary to the spirit of his professed *noetic* enquiry?

But what accounts for such *inharmony* within Kant's *Critique*? And here we try to account for it: the knowledge problematic cannot consist merely in *stating* the problem, 'how does knowledge, professedly objective, yet fail in respect of the *independent* thing-in-itself?'; it must also ask, '*why does the knowledge problem arise?*' This and *this* problem uniquely determines the problematic and

constitutes an immanent study of it. And as soon as we raise this 'why' problem, the Kantian problematic assumes a new dimension as it does in the hands of KCB.

V

The transcendental or 'critical' problem, clearly brought out by Kant, is rooted in the necessity to distinguish the 'order' of our knowledge of objects and the 'order' of the objects that are known. This is the quintessence of the Kantian contention against scepticism. When we see how Kant who makes so much philosophical advance follows it up with the lurking suspicion about the thing-in-itself, we can only say that what he gives by one hand he takes away by the other, and then we have to account for the deep malaise in Kant's thinking.

Kant's malaise persists and the 'critical' problem persists, even after his 'deduction' of the constructive subjective 'functions', because the appearance of 'objectivity' (into which 'object' *per se* is resolved in Kant) persists. In the appearance itself KCB finds the way out of the Kantian problematic.

The primordial consciousness of 'objectivity' is, as KCB points out, the subject's immediate, intuitive, indubitable awareness of itself as 'I' or 'I am'.⁵ My self-consciousness is incarnated in 'I am'. And it is on this immediate awareness of self intertwined with the primordial awareness of 'objectivity'—in so far as self is aware of itself in the word 'I'—that KCB insists upon founding 'critical' philosophy. Thereby 'objectivity' is shown to be rooted in self's incarnation. Its alien appearance which frustrated the solution of the Kantian problematic goes, and 'critical' philosophy now appears in a new hue altogether: it gets transformed in the hands of KCB, the Vedānta philosopher, into the 'spiritual' problem of (i) self's objectifying or incarnating itself and (ii) freeing itself from such incarnation. In self's symbolizing consciousness, in its objectifying itself, all sceptical, i.e. a-noetic considerations are forestalled. A-noetic considerations intrude upon Kant's philosophy because he does not, as KCB, does, fix his philosophy on the firm foundation of the immediate consciousness of self as 'I'.

VI

It may, however, be insisted that Kant does forestall a-noetic considerations in, what he calls, the 'transcendental deductions' of the subjective 'categories'. 'Deducing', taken in the juridical sense of 'justifying', consists, for Kant, in *arguing back* to the synthetic subjective functions which have to be presupposed if we are to account for the object of knowledge as a 'unity'.⁶ In fairness to Kant, it ought to be admitted that he takes the principle of the 'deduction' to be 'transcendental', i.e. a principle governed by *noetic*

considerations. Thus, according to the 'deduction', what has to be admitted in order to account for 'object' (as a unity) is what makes it 'object' for knowledge. To account for 'object' accordingly, synthesizing subjective 'functions' have to be admitted. The synthetic structure of knowledge presupposes the synthesizing subjective functions, viz. those of 'synthesis of apprehension in intuition', 'synthesis of reproduction in imagination' and 'synthesis of recognition in concept'.⁷

The question arises, 'can knowledge of object as a synthetic structure confer upon the subjective, constructive functions the kind of immediate certitude which, as KCB shows, is involved or implicated in self-consciousness as symbolized or "incarnated" in "I"?' Suppose the entire structure of our knowledge comes to be suspect to a Martian. How can Kant settle accounts with the Martian? Structure-bound knowledge may have internal coherence, adequacy, comprehensiveness, etc. and a thousand other excellences. But it cannot be a substitute for self-knowledge, for self's immediate, felt, intuited certitude. It would be absurd to say that self-knowledge or self's immediacy is owing to the 'structure'! In so far as it has immediacy, it does not owe its immediacy to anything else; if it does, it has no immediacy. If the question is raised, 'what is the logic of the entire structure?' it cannot be replied that logic is 'internal' to the structure and so one cannot ask an 'external' question about the 'logic' of a 'logical structure'. For the question really spills over to the demand for getting at the 'immediacy' of self-(knowledge) with which the 'critical' problem begins.

VII

One way of still insisting that Kant remained steadfast to his original 'critical' or noetic intentions may lie in distinguishing his enquiry from Hume's. As he shows, even the Humean 'associational' principles (for binding the 'impressions' of the senses) are to be accounted for by his 'synthetic' principles rooted in the unity of the self-conscious subject.⁸ Now, while we may thus distinguish between the two enquiries by referring to their different modes—'cognitive' synthesis in Kant and 'associational' synthesis in Hume—and by also referring to their principles—'transcendental' in Kant and 'empirical' or 'associational' in Hume—and while we may also insist, following Kant, that 'habitual' synthesis itself is to be *certified* in self-consciousness, we yet find some shortcomings in Kant's 'transcendental deduction'. The 'deduction' proceeds in this manner: 'if knowledge of object is a unity, it must presuppose the self-conscious unity of the subject'. But there are two objections to this way of arguing back to the self-conscious subject

which—admittedly for Kant—is the ‘transcendental’ or ‘noetic’ principle of knowledge of object. *First*, in a philosophical enquiry what is philosophically first (here the ‘self-conscious subject’) should be accorded precedence over what is historically first (here ‘knowledge of object a unity’). *Secondly*, is it not Kant’s shortcoming that he ends with the self-conscious subject as a *presupposition*? The first objection may indeed be countered by saying that Kant’s enquiry is precisely philosophical, not historical. It is not more historical or factual than the procedure of an inferring agent who may for himself state the conclusion first in the order of time and the premises later (again in point of time), whereas what is important, *logically speaking*, is that he understands the logical relationship between the premises and the conclusion. So too Kant—it may be said—understands the structural relationship between our knowledge of object as a synthetic unity and the self-conscious unity of the subject. But why this laborious task? What has become of the self-conscious subject in such procedure? Is it from the *logic* of the structure of our knowledge that we go to the self-conscious subject? It is said by many philosophers of mathematics that in mathematics the logical structure is determined by the basic primitives. *Given the latter*, the entire structure can be derived. Mark the proviso ‘given the primitives’. It is clear that no logical structure as such is self-evident. Self-evidence, whatever it is, lies elsewhere, not inside a structural or logical relationship.

VIII

An extension of our point relating to the philosophical precedence of self-consciousness over the (supposed) logical relationship between the conclusion of Kant’s transcendental deduction (i.e. our knowledge of objects as a unity) and the premises (i.e. the self-conscious unity of subject) concerns itself with Kant’s professed agnosticism of self; and on this score we make our second objection to the ‘deduction’. Self is not ‘known’ for Kant, there being no ‘intuition’ of it. We hold, following KCB, that because Kant’s philosophy does not start with the actual knowledge of self—which is, *à la* KCB, self-symbolizing in ‘I’—Kant has to end perforce with self as ‘presupposition’ of our knowledge of the objective world. There is indeed some basis, in Kant’s philosophy itself, for the interpretation of his ‘Transcendental Argument’ in terms of what some Indian philosophers regard as a *pramāṇa* or means of knowledge, viz., *arthāpatti*.⁹ Appeal to such *pramāṇa* is made to resolve some puzzle in our experience as when, for example we *assume* the fact (*artha*) that Devadatta must be taking food at night when we find that he is getting fat and yet does not take food at

daytime. *Similarly*, it may be said, to explain the unity of our knowledge of objects we must *presuppose* the (Kantian) synthetic unity of self-consciousness. Indeed, many of Kant’s arguments are of this form. To take up some of these at random: ‘Geometry is a body of synthetic *a priori* judgments; so it must presuppose space which is (independent of geometrical demonstration of course) synthetic *a priori*’; ‘Time which is synthetic *a priori* must be presupposed to account for arithmetic as a body of synthetic *a priori* judgements’. And then of course the very general argument in the ‘deduction’, relating to the presupposition of our knowledge of objects, which have been engaging us throughout.

A bit more on Kant’s shortcomings and instructive shortcomings at that. The *a priori* presuppositions to which Kant *argues back*, as we have said, to account for our knowledge of object as a ‘unity’ are called by him ‘functions’. And it is just here that Kant’s shortcomings afford the basis for further advance in the direction of ‘spiritualizing’ the critical enquiry, a point hinted at already following, KCB. Now, the *a priori* presuppositions are ‘functions’ because they are not *at par* with the objects of knowledge which they construct. But if so, i.e., if they cannot be understood in objective or *non-subjective* terms, the only alternative way is to understand them as the functions of the subject’s symbolizing itself, symbolizing its consciousness of itself in ‘I’, or ‘I am’. *If the Kantian ‘functions’ are thus understood as but the self-symbolizing of subject, following the lead of KCB, then not only is the subject of which the Kantian a priorities are ‘functions’ more intimately related to the subject (than they are in Kant’s philosophy) but also the subjective point of view is pinpointed. Self-consciousness is understood thereby as necessarily symbolizing consciousness, and the symbol (of objectivity) is no longer the a-noetic object which frustrates the Kantian transcendental programme. Illuminating indeed is KCB’s description of the transcendental programme, viz., it is subject’s ‘experimenting’ with itself. To quote KCB: ‘. . . the transcendental procedure is an experimental knowing, the experiment being consciously made with the self itself. . . . It is . . . a matter of . . . realizing of the objective fact as being bodied forth by the subject’¹⁰*

IX

It now becomes clear to us that *transcendental enquiry has different directions in Kant and in KCB*. In Kant, the direction is from our knowledge of object to subject as ‘presupposition’; whereas in KCB the direction may *indifferently* be taken from the self-conscious subject to its incarnating itself in ‘I’ as it may be taken from *what appears first as a-noetic towards the self-symbolizing of the subject*. And if

this two-fold (latter) procedure is understood as involved in transcendental enquiry, then we may say that the whole exercise (in making such enquiry) is one of *phenomenology of the self-conscious subject*. So it is that Kant's apparent *logical* procedure of arguing back from our knowledge of object (as a unity) to the self-conscious unity of subject as its 'presupposition' is reinterpreted by KCB by saying that the 'so-called "deduction" is not inferential' but is 'more symbolization by logical form of what is immediately believed "as spiritual fact"'.¹¹

X

We have said that Kant, who did envisage 'transcendental' enquiry, could not *phenomenologize* his enquiry. And we have pinpointed the reason of his failure; he could not, as KCB could, entertain the idea of self being aware of itself by symbolizing itself. What inhibited this insight for Kant was the context and tradition in which his thought moved. So to understand Kant's shortcomings we have to understand his intellectual biography. But we would not thereby dabble in history. What will appear to be *philosophically* important after we understand the historical context of Kant's thought may be indicated: working within the Newtonian scientific context, *Kant could not clearly distinguish between 'epistemology' and 'philosophy of science' and that is the reason, according to us, why Kant failed to sustain and consolidate the subjective point of view and accordingly to phenomenologize his enquiry.*

Under the influence of Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry, Kant took it as though he were writing a grammar of Newtonian physics and Euclidean geometry for which the presuppositions were to be listed (i.e., the different judgments about the principles of 'conservation of energy' and 'conservation of matter', the different judgements about space, etc.). In modern terms, Kant was writing a philosophy of science. *But Kant remained a philosopher independently of his being a philosopher of science.* Who else but a philosopher could *at least envisage* a transcendental enquiry?

Unfortunately, however, *Kant failed to distinguish between his task as a philosopher of science and his task as a philosopher.* But in faulting him on this count, we do not imply that a philosopher cannot have any concern with science. He may try to understand the very *concept* of 'science' and that would be a philosophical enquiry. While a philosopher of science, or, a scientist turned reflective in respect of his enquiry, may study the presuppositions of the scientific enterprise, a philosopher *qua* philosopher, may understand the *constitutive* presuppositions of science. And a study of the constitutive presuppositions of science is a philosophical study, not of science but *about* science. It is *more than* philosophy of science. It is not dictated

by the internal structure, aim, requirements, etc. of science. So it is *beyond the confines of science*; and the presuppositions it studies are shown to constitute science. Now, the need for a philosophy of science which studies the axioms, postulates, methodological principles, etc. of science is felt *after* science goes about its task. Maybe the scientist wants to recall the steps he has taken, maybe he gets stuck somewhere and so has to *reflect* upon how he proceeded in his task; or, one may reflect upon the scientific procedure in an interest which is not *overtly* scientific. Such a reflective study may be called a *second-order study supervening upon* science. Here 'reflection' is nothing but 'review'. 'Review' may, and often in fact does, involve passing judgments (upon the scientific activity in question). But still the reviewer here does not go on to ask, as does a philosopher, 'How is science possible?'

As different from the second-order activity of 'reviewing' science, a philosophical study of the constitutive principles of science is a *first-order activity*. It is *consciousness' unrolling of itself* in the forming of science, to show how science as a conscious enterprise is 'constituted'. It is consciousness' introspectively viewing how, to adapt the Husserlian expression, its 'mundaneity' in which science is rooted, is 'constituted'.

XI

Now, we would expect Kant to distinguish between these two ways of understanding science, between a *review* of science and a *reflection* on science, between a philosophy of science and, what may be called, a phenomenological or introspective elaboration of the constitution of science. Kant, in fact, does not clearly distinguish these two. On the contrary, Kant the philosopher of science almost invariably gets the edge over Kant the phenomenologist of science (implicitly so, if the unachieved aim of sealing the *a-noetic* infiltrations into his enquiry is taken into consideration). His 'epistemology' is of course conceived to be a *philosophical* study. Philosophy, says he, stands in need of a science of the *a priori*. And epistemology is just *that* science. It is, an enquiry into the constitutive or 'categorical' presuppositions of science. *But still the enquiry into the 'categorical' presuppositions of science, with all its overtones of 'transcendental deduction', is hedged in the concept of 'science' or the idea that knowledge is 'categorization' of what is 'given'.* What cannot be given and 'categorized' is not known. The insistence upon the materials of knowledge being 'given', the idea of the 'categories' being *applied* to object (of course, through being 'schematized')—all these are coloured by the idea of science which is world-centric. What does not conform to the scientific idea or

requirement of knowledge is not 'known'. No wonder, Kant is led perforce to the agnosticism of self.

XII

Close attention should be paid to the two points: (i) the scientific idea of knowledge that influenced Kant considerably, and (ii) Kant's agnosticism of self, if not for anything but for the only reason that the former positively determines the latter. Moreover, it seems that Kant conceived science of knowledge, i.e., epistemology as patterned after knowledge of science. It will not do to ignore that science itself has a conception of knowledge: knowledge, according to the scientific idea of it, consists in seeking information regarding the world around us,—whatever it is that information may consist in, for example, describing, defining, law-formulating, predicting and so on. In this world-centric conception of knowledge, in this 'mundane' attitude of consciousness, self is as though immersed in the world. No wonder, one who is under the spell of the scientific idea of knowledge (as Kant was) is led to agnosticism of self and fails to elaborate the processes in the formation or 'constitution' of the objective or mundane attitude.

XIII

The foregoing observation might indeed be countered. It may be asked, 'What harm is there if one does not understand the "constitution" of science?' Again, 'need a critique of science necessarily amount to phenomenologizing the scientific or mundane attitude (*à la* Husserl)?'; 'Is not a decision made already in favour of phenomenologizing the Kantian critique in derisively characterizing scientific activity as mundane?'

Our reply is: the theory of the constructive *a priori* functions must be placed in its proper perspective, viz., the transcendental programme of stalling *a-noetic* considerations in epistemology. And, as we have been insisting throughout, such a programme in respect of the *a-noetic* or objective side can only be achieved by understanding the *a priori* functions as rooted in the subject's self-consciously symbolizing itself objectively. Critical philosophy cannot merely list the *a priori* functions; similarly, a philosopher grappling with the knowledge-problematic should not rest content by merely stating a problem and trying to solve it. The knowledge problematic demands not so much to be solved as to be dissolved through the exercise of reconciling the immediate certainty of self (symbolizing itself as 'I') with the apparent independence of 'object'. Such exercise amounts to consciously recognizing 'object' as subject's objectivity. Hence the demanded reconciliation which is woven into the knowledge-

problematic is not theoretical or intellectual but introspective, i.e., a matter of deepening our self-consciousness. Unless the apparent independence of the object, in respect of which the immediate certainty of the subject is not available, is at least conceived to be resolved into the self-symbolizing activity of the subject, unless the Kantian *a priori* 'functions' are at least understood to be subject's introspective deepening functions, scepticism or agnosticism will continue to stare us in the face. KCB himself admits, 'After the resolution of the objectivity of the object into the knowing function, the independence of the object becomes inconceivable though it continues to be believed'.¹² But such a belief cannot also be rejected.¹³ 'Realism should, therefore, be held as suspect though idealism is only a faith and not a knowledge. But the faith has to be cherished and there should be a subjective discipline to get rid of the persisting realistic belief.'¹⁴ We claim that by phenomenologizing the critical enquiry, a philosophical discipline that articulates the 'faith' can be founded. 'Critical philosophy' is, at bottom, as KCB re-christened it, 'spiritual psychology'.¹⁵ From its viewpoint, the knowledge problematic of Kant's theoretical enquiry is but the felt tension between the subject as immediately believed fact and the object appearing as alien to the subject. As it is, the felt tension cannot be dismissed. To borrow KCB's expression in his 'Śaṅkara's Doctrine of Māyā'—of course the context of discussion there is different—it is a contradiction that is 'given',¹⁶ not a logical contradiction that is not given. A logical contradiction demands to be solved, but the kind of contradiction we are confronted with now, viz., the contradiction between subject as 'immediately believed' and object as 'alien' to the subject which yet clings on to it wants to be dissolved. The 'felt' contradiction affords the breakthrough to a wider possibility; it is but the subject's inchoate or inarticulate introspective or reflective enquiry, viz., 'how, being free, am I yet glued to object?' And the solution is implicit in the question itself: the 'object', which provokes the tension, is the self-conscious symbol of the subject and being so it points the way in two directions in which the subject's freedom works: it is the subject's 'free efflux', *Lilā*, which the subject has sportively put forth, but *māyā* or *moha* which the subject chases in absolute self-forgetfulness, an attitude which Husserl called 'mundane' or 'naturalistic'.

XIV

The failure on Kant's part to find a subjective solution, in the way indicated above, to his critical problem has given rise in contemporary times to some theories which conceive of *a priori* principles by dissociating them from the Transcendental Idealistic context. While Kant's shortcomings are undoubtedly responsible for

this watered-down version of the *a priori*, in dealing with them we shall see how KCB's viewpoint comes into bolder relief than before.

C.I. Lewis conceived of the *a priori* as 'a stipulation which might be made in some other way if it suited our bent or need'.¹⁷ Lewis is not for anything sacrosanct or fixed about *a priori* principles. Felix Kaufmann once spoke of the 'principle of permanent control',¹⁸ exercised over the structural principles of science which might be revised or rearranged in the light of varying empirical situations. From these viewpoints, the *a priori* may not have anything more than 'operational significance', as Bridgman put it.¹⁹ And nowadays we are told that we can as continuously revise our conceptual schemes as we can operate with our inherited schemes, even as we can repair a boat—we do not burn it—while undertaking a voyage. Relative to our demands, we can revise our conceptual systems.

Well, surely we do not have to burn our boats! But why the continuous revision of our conceptual schemes if it is not for a *lurking suspicion* about our intellectual enterprises? It may indeed be said that as continuously are our doubts (regarding conceptual schemes) laid to rest as they arise: so that there is no *general* doubt about our intellectual enterprises as such. Doubts arise in a sphere of enquiry, they are resolved and new doubts may arise regarding *other* parts in our intellectual enquiry and they too may be resolved in the way previous ones were, or in a new manner according to the requirement of the enquiry concerned. There can therefore be no *general* scepticism, no scepticism about our intellectual enterprise as such. Such supposedly general scepticism regarding our intellectual enquiries is absurd.

To this the reply would be two-fold. *First*, pragmatism, operationism, relativism, etc. are all *symptoms*. By describing a symptom, one does not explain a disease or its etiology. *Secondly*, what is urged by the foregoing alternatives to subjectivism is true, but *beside the point*.

Why do pragmatism, operationism, etc., arise? What is their *etiology*. They arise because we demand certainty or assurance (with reference to some field of enquiry). But *in respect of what* do we demand certainty? We *misplace* certainty in trying to find it in anything *non-subjective*. Doubtless, certainty belongs to me or to you, it is either *my* psychological state or *your* psychological state. But the basic or primordial certainty is, it is not too late in the day to recall Descartes, 'I am', the certainty of self as *being*, and not of any mental *state*. The demanded certainty in all intellectual enterprise is but the reflection of the subject's immediate certainty. The subject as a unique speaker of 'I' cannot be doubted. Nor can 'I am' be doubted, for 'I' = 'am' = 'subject as speaker', so that 'I am' is no

proposition which is asserted nor therefore doubted or denied (of this more later on).

x v

How does 'I am' which we have pressed into service from KCB's viewpoint, how does this which was *overlaid* by Kant's agnosticism, go on all fours with pragmatism, etc.? It does *not*. It is not intended to be so. For pragmatism, etc. have nothing to do with immediate certainty of self as symbolized in 'I am'.

Yet the point of discussing pragmatism, etc. in the context of KCB is this: the theories in question (i) *introduce a-noetic considerations* in (ii) denying (by implication though) immediate certitude of 'I am' which is *absolute*, being indubitable (the difference between 'I am' as viewed by Descartes and 'I am' as viewed by KCB will be brought out later); and those considerations do not fit in with our transcendental programme. Of course, it may be replied that (i) does not follow from (ii). Epistemology, it may be said, may be relativized, contextualized, 'naturalized' (cp. Quine) and for such a relativizing programme 'I am' is of no worth.

Now, here we are back to the point we made before, viz. the considerations which are urged on behalf of pragmatism etc. are true but irrelevant. Those theories are quite consistent within their defined considerations. Changing human interests, success in achieving aims in life, progress or lack of it, etc. are the constraints upon the pragmatic success of theories, contextualistic revision of them, relativizing our theories and so on. But why at all the search for relative, contextual certainty at least? The search cannot be explained with reference to what is intended to be sought or to the results of the search. The search for certainty, in whatever context, is the search for 'I am' = 'Am = Am' = 'Being'. I am incarnated in 'I' or 'I am'—which means I am not spoken of, *not a meant* content, *not distinct* from the speaking of it: 'I' 'annuls' all distinct being. In so far as 'I' annuls all distinct being, 'I' is the fixed point for Transcendental Idealism to encounter scepticism.

To bring the distinction between 'subject' and 'object' into sharper focus, KCB introduces a two-fold consideration:

- (1) The subject is the 'unique speaker' of 'I'.
- (2) The subject as unique speaker of 'I' cannot be doubted or negated.

To explain and elaborate (1) and (2): We have said, following KCB, that the subject is the 'unique speaker' of 'I'. *As used, it is always user-specific*,²⁰ that is, when it is used by a speaker, it is *that* speaker, *that* 'I' which is expressed. *No two persons use the word in the*

same sense. When a speaker uses the word 'I' to express himself he wants it to be conveyed to his hearer as the expressing of himself; and he surely does not convey a 'meaning', that is, he does not convey to the hearer that he is an *instance* of a general 'I'! So it is that for KCB subject is the 'unique speaker' of 'I'.

More acutely speaking, the subject is not even the speaker of 'I'; it is the speaking 'I', the speaker who 'incarnates' his 'self-consciousness' in the word 'I'.²¹

Subject as 'I', we have seen, is no meaning, no 'generality'.²² It is not spoken of in 'I', being the speaking 'I', so no *padārtha*, no *viśaya*. And because subject as unique speaker of 'I' cannot be asserted or negated as an object or a meant content can be, so strictly speaking, subject is not known (object). But 'subject is not known' is not a negation. Negation, like affirmation, is an assertion. But subject as 'I' cannot be asserted to *exist* nor (therefore) be asserted *not* to exist. Truly speaking, 'subject is not known' = 'subject is not meant'. But again, 'subject is not meant' is not the same as 'subject is unmeanable like *avracadabra*'. 'Abracadabra' is not believed. But subject is believed. It is 'believed' but not 'known'. We have a 'believing awareness' of the subject which yet is not knowing, i.e. is not an awareness of 'object'. To say, we have a believing awareness of subject is to imply that we have a feeling of *being* 'I'.

XVI

We pointed earlier to the need for phenomenologizing the 'critical' enquiry. Phenomenologizing the critical enquiry is not just building upon the immediate certainty of self-consciousness as incarnated in 'I': it must also bring out how the transition from the 'mundanized' self to the immediately evident self is made. In his book *The Subject as Freedom* both the *hint* of such transition is given and the *actual transition* is delineated. And both are indicated in the observation of KCB's that the subject is the unique speaker of 'I'. The subject's self-consciousness is 'incarnated' in 'I'. 'I' is not, as used by the speaker, a word like other words used by him/her.

Does the word 'I' have a 'meaning'? It does. This ninth letter of the alphabet stands for a word which 'means' 'a speaker or a writer who uses this word to refer to himself'. But KCB distinguishes between the 'meaning' of 'I' and 'I' 'as used by a speaker'.²³ When I use the word with reference to myself, I am of course understood by the hearer, but then he understands me 'not through the meaning' of the word but 'through the word'.²⁴ He takes 'I' as used by me to be a subject 'expressing itself'.

While the subject as speaker is indicated by the word 'I', the word 'this' may be taken as 'symbol of the object or what is meant'.²⁵ An

objection is here anticipated by KCB himself. If 'I' as *used* is not a 'meaning' and 'this' is 'symbol' of 'what is meant', then there cannot be any occasion where one can say 'this is I'. But, as KCB himself points out, "this" may stand for myself who *spoke* the word *I*; and in answer to the conceivable question "who is this speaker", I may say "This is I". Here KCB's answer is that 'This is I' *stultifies the suggestion of 'this' being distinct from 'I'*. As he says, "The answer would imply not a judgement but a correction: it would mean "this" speaker is not *this* or object to myself, *this* as distinct from "I" is false, the fact being *I*."²⁶ Again, '*I spoke*' does not amount to any judgment like 'A past I spoke' or 'There is an identity between the present I and the past I'. For *first*, identity is a *relation*. It is a relation *between* terms which are in some ways different. Now, for *another person* there is an identity between my past I and my present I, i.e. between *the two objective situations* in which he meets me. *But for me*, there is no such difference. And since there is no such difference *for me*, there is, *for me* again, no question of asserting the identity between a (supposedly) *present* I and a (supposedly) *past* I. *Secondly*, it cannot even be said that 'I spoke' can be rendered by me into a judgment about my personal identity of some such form, viz., 'I who *spoke am* I who is *speaking*', or 'The I who was present then *is the* I who is present now'. For *in the first place*, as already pointed out, it is only for another person that there is any question of asserting my personal identity. *For me*, there is no question of asserting my identity in a judgment. *In the second place*, for me there cannot be any 'the I'. For 'I', as used by me, is no indicative expression, but a verbal symbolization of my self-consciousness. 'The I' is but '*this I*' for any speaker. *In the third place*, there is *for me*, no 'present' I or 'past' I. The present 'I' is but the 'presently speaking I', not a subject which belongs to the present temporal context. *In the fourth place*, since there is also no 'past or then I' *for me*, 'the then I' is *not even tried to be conceived to be different from* 'the present I'; and, therefore, *no Cartesian doubt about self arises for KCB*. 'I am', therefore, is viewed differently by KCB from the way it *was* viewed by Descartes. There is, for KCB, no question of *abandoning* the attempt to doubt the existence of self (as speaker of 'I') *after* it has proved a failure. 'Am I the same I', or 'There must be a demon who dupes me into believing that the *then* I is the *present* I', cannot be formulated by me because of the reason indicated, viz., 'I' cannot be tried to be *meant* by me. To doubt (or negate) me, I as speaker must be able to conceive my 'I' as at least *speakably different*, which is not possible. Again, to formulate a significant negation 'I am not', I as speaker must at least speak *of* 'I' as the *negatum*. But there is for me, i.e., for any speaker, no 'I' *apart from the speaking* 'I'. Thus negation of self is unmeaning.

Lest KCB's intentions should be lost sight of, there should be a word of caution here. Russell once spoke of 'ego-centric particulars'.²⁷ Egocentric words, said he, 'can be defined in terms of "this"'.²⁸ And about 'I' he wrote, 'I means "The biography to which this belongs."' ²⁹

From KCB's point of view, our reply would be that not every 'this' does or can belong to a biography and *the* 'this' that *does* belong to a biography can belong to it only by virtue of its being *a part of autobiography*. If so, we are back at KCB's point that 'I' as used is no 'meaning'.

What about 'I am'? Truly 'I am' = 'Am = Am'. For, '*am*' is *neither predicative, nor attributive here*. 'I am' is an apparent judgment, not a false judgment, not even a pseudo-judgment, not again a degenerate judgment (*à la* Ayer) of which 'am' might be said to be a 'sleeping partner'; for '*am*' is *a necessary facade for the subject 'I'* which *demands to dissociate its existence* from object and yet symbolizes itself in objective form.

KCB's imagination finds in that pithy 'I' or 'I am' the hint towards larger construction. In my '*ahambodha*', in my feeling of *being 'I'*, in my incarnation in 'I', I not only distinguish myself as 'I' as unmeant, indubitable, as immediately certain; I also symbolize myself in objectivity. The subject's self-consciousness is not just a matter of being expressed in 'I' or 'I am'; what is *far more important than such verbal points*—verbal if the self's incarnation in 'I' is not understood—is that the subject, through being 'I', freely symbolizes itself in objectivity and by so symbolizing itself achieves the other side or the other aim of phenomenologizing the critical enquiry, viz., *removing the distancing of the object per se*. What a brilliant example of the insight of a philosopher starting with the apparently innocuous word 'I' and then proceeding towards larger construction, i.e., a new interpretation of 'critical' enquiry according to which it is the elaboration of the freedom of the subject as symbolizing itself in objective life (which, therefore, is the starting-point in the elaboration of the stages of subject's freedom), *a metaphysic of experience* in short!

Phenomenologizing the Kantian 'Critique' as he does, KCB finds his roots in his native Vedānta tradition. He himself writes in the preface to *The Subject as Freedom* 'The subject or subjectivity is conceived here after Vedānta as conscious freedom or felt detachment from the object.' Now, we have seen that the phenomenologizing programme has both an *objective* side and *subjective* side: the object is felt by the subject as *its* symbolizing in 'I' or 'I am'. So we may say that though he supplements Kant with Vedānta, KCB parts company with the transcendentalistic version of Vedānta which inculcates negativism in respect of the objective

world. KCB finds a metaphysic of experience of which the ground plan is 'I am'; and to all appearances, this is contrary to the orthodox interpretation of Vedānta according to which Vedānta is *Māyāvāda* in respect of the objective world.

So is Vedānta of Śāṅkara *compromised* in KCB? All depends upon how KCB understands 'object' within his re-interpretation of Vedānta. Here we may hazard the opinion: KCB brought his Vedānta heritage to re-interpret the 'Critical Problem'. As we have already seen, the 'critical' problem is this: Self is immediately certain, "not meant" (in KCB's language), but "object" is "meant", they cannot be combined. But the fact remains that they *are* combined in our normal experience. There is a *wonder* how 'I' the subject, could be related to object. What is there in the object to make it known? Such a statement of the 'critical' problem has a strange echo in Śāṅkara: *Satyāṅṛte mithuniktṛtya aham idam mama idam iti naisargikah ayam lokavyāvaharah*.³⁰

To what extent does KCB's idea of subject symbolizing itself in experience square with Vedānta? This is the question of questions in the present context. *Does KCB introduce an element of realism in Vedānta?*

No, KCB is quite positive that Śāṅkara is an acosmist.³¹ But apart from his interpretative work on Vedānta,³² his own philosophical formulation adds a new dimension to the school. The idea of metaphysical reality being symbolized in experience is what he wrings out of his Vedānta studies, and this is where *exegesis and philosophical construction meet*. After all, philosophical study is no historical study.

Here is a string of quotations from KCB which appear to be quite in tune with the Vedānta spirit.

'The object . . . appears as a contradiction—an emanation of the self and yet a mere idea. . . .' The remark is made with particular reference to the 'Critical' problem.³³

An illusion, unlike a thinking error, *excites wonder* as it is corrected. One's apprehension of something as illusory involves a peculiar feeling of the scales falling from the eyes. To be aware of our individuality as illusory would be then to wonder how one could feel as an individual at all.³⁴

The notion of *adhyāsa* or the false identification of the self and the body would never occur to a person who has no experience of himself as a spirit and of the object as distinct from the subject . . .³⁵

It is only one who felt such a distinction of the self and the body that would wonder at his own implicit belief in their identity.³⁶

The notions of the individual self, of the individuality of me as false, and of the eternal self as the I that is never me are born in one and the same spiritual consciousness.³⁷

The individuality is understood as *me*, i.e., as the illusory objectivity of the subject . . .³⁸

The spirit of the foregoing quotations permeates, what KCB calls, the 'epistemology of illusion'³⁹ from the analysis of which a three-fold point emerges: (i) the illusory is *given*⁴⁰ or presented, (ii) all given reality is illusory,⁴¹ and (iii) truth is *ungiven*, self-shining.⁴²

The point that emerges out of an exegetical and interpretative study of the foregoing quotations *may indifferently be described according to the idioms of exegesis and philosophy*: (i) Brahman is immanent in our experience and (ii) a metaphysic of subject is the self-symbolising elaboration of freedom.

Really, what KCB presents is a *hemeneutics of Vedānta*.

XVII

And reverting specifically to the philosophical vein we can say that in KCB's thought metaphysic of experience reaches a new dimension which makes it fundamentally different from Kant's. KCB's is not an 'immanent' metaphysic of experience as Kant's was. KCB *pinpoints a demand* which is woven into our experience and is the foundation of metaphysic. Here KCB's *exegesis* on Śāṅkara's doctrine of *Māyā* helps him derive the point that illusion is something positive, that the self-shining reality of *Brahman* is hidden in normal experience and detects itself consciously. From this he goes on, as a *philosopher*, to formulate his theory of *metaphysic as symbolizing the demand of experience to deepen itself to attain self-clarification*. Here what is important to note, in view especially of the context of the philosophy of the recent past, is that *philosophy for KCB is no mere clarification of language or concepts, not even 'deduction' of the 'categories' of experience (cf. Kant) but consciousness' self-clarification pari passu with conceptual or linguistic clarification or 'deduction'*. In the light of such a conception of philosophy, the transcendental programme of philosophy consists in the reflective or introspective exercise, (i) progressively *getting rid* of the 'naturalistic' attitude of the apparent independence of object, and (ii) *maturing* self-consciousness to the extent that consciousness is not just conscious of self, but self is realized as *real*, as 'annulment' of and free from all distinct being. This is 'Freedom' with a capital 'F'—Freedom that is not 'meant' and that is therefore not doubted. There being nothing distinct from it, nothing to foil it, it is necessary.

Thus KCB's book *The Subject as Freedom* proceeds to formulate a theory of necessary freedom, Freedom which is, in Vedānta diction, eternal (*Nitya*). Though it is absolute freedom, in the sense that no scope is left on this level for *any further move* towards freedom yet within its structure there is always a *process* of achieving it. *The idea is that though as an ideal limit consciousness' absolute freedom has to be conceived, yet there goes on, within the limiting framework of freedom, consciousness' continuous process of achieving self-clarification and self-deepening*. In Kant, too, freedom remains an idea of reason; but then, *Kant does not entertain the idea that freedom is continuously being actualized*. And that can be explained by *Kant's failure—contra KCB's success on that score—to found a phenomenology of consciousness' actualizing its freedom*, his failure to phenomenologize the 'critical' programme. In KCB, *the transcendental programme not only conceives ideally but also achieves actually the unity of consciousness' freedom and what continuously foils it, i.e., the object per se and what as continuously is taken up into the unity of freedom and objectivity, i.e., its objective expression*. So *re-understood Kant's Transcendental argument gets transformed in KCB into ontological argument*.

XVIII

Before we close, we have to refer to one important European philosopher whose views on freedom have not only similarity with KCB's but, what is much more important than the facade of similarity, appear to be kindred in spirit. We refer to Nicolai Hartmann. It was in Hartmann that freedom and necessity were linked. Hartmann was thereby combating Kant's theory of practical reason. I am, says Kant, phenomenally determined but noumenally free, i.e., free as a member of the ideal, rational or intelligible world. So at the end of the chapter freedom remains with Kant an idea of reason. Hartmann, on the contrary, insisted that practical reason is ontologically grounded. According to Hartmann, values or 'oughts' have an 'ideal', 'modal' self-existence; by holding that they have a 'modal' existence, Hartmann prepares the ground for establishing that they *demand*⁴³ to be real.⁴⁴ The traditional theory of modality—which distinguished between possibility, actuality and necessity—was mainly 'gnoseological'.⁴⁵ But since values demand to be real, since the ought-to-be is through and through *Ought-to-be-real*,⁴⁶ the 'valuableness of a content must indicate its necessity detached from any reference to real possibility or impossibility, at the same time floating free'.⁴⁷ Only in Ought-to-be, only in the axiological sphere, there is detached, 'free necessity'.⁴⁸

Now, while making the comparison between KCB and Hartmann, one must be on one's guard against stretching it too far. For the

contexts and the considerations of the two thinkers are different. Hartmann's thought moved in the context of Kant's theory of practical reason and the theory of, what he calls, the 'modal structure of the ought'. KCB's thought moved in the context of Kant's 'critical' philosophy and his native Vedānta tradition. Also, it is evident from the foregoing quotations from Hartmann that he emphasizes the *freedom of necessity*, while KCB emphasizes the *necessity of freedom*. Yet the fact remains that when they link freedom and necessity they have the same kind of conceptual considerations although these have different dictions in the two thinkers. Thus KCB distinguishes between the subject as 'freedom' and the object that is 'meant'. And Hartmann writes: '. . . the valuableness of a content must indicate its necessity detached from any reference to real possibility or impossibility.'⁴⁹ KCB maintains that the subject is no 'meaning'. Of course, the modal category of 'necessity' (also of 'asserting' and 'problematic') and the semantic category of 'meaning' are different, rooted as they are in different kinds of considerations. But Hartmann goes beyond the traditional theory of modality when he characterizes it as 'gnoseological' which therefore needs to be transcended for building up his philosophy of values and the philosophy of ideal being.⁵⁰ So too, KCB goes beyond a mere semantic analysis of 'meaningful' propositions—freedom for him is not 'meant as unmeanable'. And the kindred thought that binds them is this: freedom is not 'meant', not object (KCB), not 'real' but 'ideal' (Hartmann), therefore not dubitable (KCB), a 'must-be', a real not-to-be-escaped-from; a cannot-be-otherwise (Hartmann).⁵¹ The conception of freedom that is necessary as 'must-be', indubitable as 'unmeanable' binds the two thinkers. In the light of this comparison, we may revert to KCB's main concern and restate it thus: *Transcendental Idealism is the philosophy of transcendence or freedom which is 'ideal' and not 'meanable'*. That absolute 'freedom' is the 'annulment' of all that is 'distinct' from subject, i.e. all that is 'meaning', is the point with which KCB winds up his discussion on subjective freedom in the two concluding chapters of his book *The Subject as Freedom*. Once more, combining exegesis and philosophy, we may conclude that *Brahman* of Vedānta is no *viśaya* of Nyāya, no *padārtha*, but *a-padārtha*; or absolute freedom is transcendent of all 'meaning'. *The ontology of freedom is the process of consciousness' achieving self-classification—its becoming self—through the meaning-categories by reflectively discovering the constitution of the meaning categories: it has thus at once the side of 'meaning' and the reflective side of meaning-constitution*.

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