

reality of the phenomenal world, which is illusory and *non est* being hypostatized by the mind laboring under the influence of nescience.<sup>10</sup>

One would hope at this point that the discussants would back-track enough to say that they could come to an understanding as to whether there was an independently existing objective external world. If there were no such world, what would language be about? Would it reflect the musings of a solipsistic organism in vacuo, something which any biologist knows is absurd? As a matter of fact, transcendental knowledge, the only kind worthy of serious consideration for such as Bhattacharya, it being for him the only knowledge that is not illusory, can be achieved only in the mood of ecstasy through indeterminate perception by virtue of highest mental discipline—if any of this makes any sense. With this so-called ecstasy, the entire phenomenal universe ceases to be. When one studies these comments by the Indian grammarians and philosophers one is led to treat with slightly more kindness what one had hitherto regarded as the ultimate trash of much linguistic philosophy. By comparison with the games being played in Indian pseudo-dialectics (pseudo because it deals with notions connecting non-existent entities and processes), contemporary linguistic philosophy, as intolerable as it is, and pervaded by idealism as it is, still seems to have a firmer grasp on *something*.<sup>11</sup>

B. Bhattacharya indicates his own tenuous grip on reality by stating that the Vaiyakaranas had to allow a limited reality to the *pada-sphata* (that is, a step towards ultimate reality) and limited reality to the sense expressed by it.<sup>12</sup> He assumes that there is really no categorical separation among words, sentences, and the reality to which they refer (even when it is not to themselves). Consequently he can never extricate the arguments nor show which ones are about physical and social

10 Bishnupada Bhattacharya, *A Study in Language and Meaning* (Calcutta: Progressive, 1962), p. 2.

11 Ernest Gellner's *Word and Thing*, a classic now, is still an enjoyable analysis of linguistic philosophy.

12 Bishnupada Bhattacharya. *op. cit.*, p. 17.

reality. The materialists in recent Indian philosophy make clear separation between material objects, thoughts, sentences, words, and letters. A notable exception to this includes the three realists whom we mentioned in Chapter 3: Haridas Bhattacharya, G. C. Chatterji, and Ras-Vihary Das. Yet there was still sometimes a touch of hard-core idealism even in their most outspoken defense of "commonsense" and "realism".

Subjectivists and other idealists constantly make category mistakes which lead them to the most outlandish conclusions not only about reality, but also about language. B. Bhattacharya, as we noted, is unable to clarify the matter, leaving us dangling and hoping for clarification and rearrangement at the end of the book. The book ends in a perfect stalemate with Bhattacharya cavalierly concluding with the thought:

For, an appraisal of the respective plausibility of the two Mimamsaka theories discussed in this chapter and their repercussion on other schools may well require a separate [sic] study.<sup>13</sup>

Why cannot he, Bhattacharya, make a judgment here and now? Why does he wait for someone in posterity to make a judgment? The answer must be that he cannot separate out the reality involved which implies a nebulous ontology.

#### DAYA KRISHNA AND THE CLARIFYING OF CONFUSIONS

Perhaps no other Indian philosopher today has absorbed more the insouciant style of the analytic and linguistic tradition, both of India and Britain, than Daya Krishna. It is his belief that:

...the function of the philosopher is neither to understand...articulate the world nor to change it. His function *qua* philosopher [Daya, like other Indian admirers of British mannerism, is intrigued by *qua*-ness] is merely to clarify certain conceptual confusions in which he finds himself involved when thinking about certain problems.<sup>14</sup>

13 *ibid.*, p. 186.

14 *The Nature of Philosophy* (Calcutta: Prakashan, 1955), p. 232. Compare Daya's definition with that of Mysore Hiriyanna, the Santayana

Or is it the confusions he finds himself in when he is *not* thinking about certain problems? Well, it doesn't really matter whether such problems appear to be important or trivial. Daya adds. By noting this, he is trying to counter the justified complaints of his opponents who maintain that much of the so-called "clarifying process" is trivial and without merit for it has no substantial place in social existence. By clarifying what "peace" means, we are not bringing belligerents to the peace table. For Daya Krishna, triviality or importance cannot be criteria for problems of philosophy. The criterion ultimately is whether anybody is interested in doing it or not—like throwing pebbles in the water or running a yo-yo up and down. This view may be neatly summed up as philosophy for philosophy's sake, the counterpart of art for art's sake which appeared in declining nineteenth century Europe. Philosophy for philosophy's sake is the tragic *cul de-sac* of super-specialization brought about by misapplying capitalist modes of rationalizing production to the intellectual life. This unfortunate development in the arts and philosophy creates the fantasy that philosophy and art are merely expressions of "personal feelings and sentiments, preferences, and free choice,"<sup>15</sup> according to A. K. Coomaraswamy. To a considerable extent analytic and linguistic philosophy (philosophies) are analogs of art for art's sake. No one gives a sharper explanation than Daya as to a reason for their appearance. He says:

It is time that philosophers dispel the general impression that they are on intimate terms with Reality a capital R<sup>16</sup> and on hobnobbing terms with the Absolute and

(in style) of the last generation: "[philosophy] is concerned with the ascertainment of the nature of philosophic truth and ethical goodness, the two chief among the higher values; and its final aim is the realization with their aid of the highest value of perfection." *The Mission of Philosophy* (Mysore: Kavyalaya, 1960), p. 6. Is this "philosophical" truth different from "truth"?

15 *Christian and Oriental Philosophy of Art* (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 29. The more the virus of anarchistic individualism has eaten into my students, the more they are outraged by Coomaraswamy's attack on art as a mere commodity.

16 Why not, since they are on intimate terms with reality throughout

the Good Almighty. The philosopher should not don the false plumes of the shaman, the priest or the prophet. If he is ashamed of his job, he may as well leave it, rather than deceive the people with regard to a function which is not his own.<sup>17</sup>

It is perfectly true that some old idealists acted like high priests who had special recondite knowledge, and not surprisingly that the abler of the younger generation found this quite intolerable. On the other hand, this was not true of all philosophers, especially those who espoused realism, naturalism, and materialism. In our own generation, the existentialists and phenomenologists, among others, carry on this tradition of *a priori* and transcendental knowledge. What Daya is doing is what the logical positivists who "got rid" of metaphysics did by smuggling in their own brand.<sup>18</sup> He is getting rid of philosophy through the agency of his own view of reality, for how can the one "clarify certain conceptual confusions" except by knowing ontological causes and relations of these confusions? Furthermore, these confusions arise from confusions about reality. Language is a reflection of reality in speech. Confusions must be about *something*—some thing. What the confusion is about, is more than likely about reality. One cannot dismiss reality by capitalizing it as Daya does although one can sympathize with his revulsion at the idealistic views of reality as something sacrosanct or enigmatics, Science, history, and philosophy all try to give an account of reality. If Daya believes that they do not, what is it that he thinks that they think they are giving an account of? And what is it that Daya is giving an account of—confusions floating in imagination? As Roy Wood Sellars used to ask: "What are Berkeley's sensations, sensations of?" What are Daya's confusions, confusions of? If we don't have their lives? This is an excellent example of the inverted elitism of some forms of idealism.

17 *Nature of Philosophy*, p. 233.

18 See J. R. Weinberg, *An Examination of Logical Positivism* (Paterson, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1960). A clearer account is that of Maurice Cornforth, *In Defense of Philosophy* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1950), or Cornforth's earlier *Science and Idealism* (New York: International, 1947).

sensations of, knowledge of, confusions of, then we are giving an account of merely subjective states. That could well be. Daya is really writing about the confusions of his own subjective states. Even then he is giving an account of *something*. But why should we pay any special attention to the subjective feelings of Daya, packaged up as philosophy? Is he a wise man? Is he an unconfused leader who is going to save us from confusions? Daya even says that "...philosophy is not merely the name of *analytic clarification of conceptual confusions*, but also of *those conceptual confusions themselves*."<sup>19</sup> Philosophy, on this view of Daya, is a collection of conceptual confusions. Daya, who is nothing if not poetic, is captured many times by the euphonious sound of his own voice. It is a melodious voice, as anyone who has listened to it will admit. He has a bedroom voice. But the voice is sometimes disconnected from its brain, a temporary disorder that poets can afford more than philosophers. But he goes on to say, on the next page, that :

Philosophical problems then, arise because of conceptual confusions and for their resolution, always require conceptual analysis. This, we submit, has been the nature of philosophical thinking in the past and in the present.

Yet, what about philosophy as intimacy with Reality, the Absolute, and the God Almighty? Well, that wasn't really philosophy. And what about philosophy as a description of reality? Well, that wasn't really philosophy either, because who can say what reality is? Philosophy here is going to be used to get rid of Daya's subjective confusions which arose when he thought he had got rid of reality!

If philosophy is going to clarify conceptual confusions it will have to know what is confused and confusing. This requires a philosophy. And that takes us right back to reality, science, and history. As it stands, Daya's *The Nature of Philosophy* is a lament, a beclouding sadness, a poetic mourning, of his belief that he cannot know reality. It is somewhat like T. S. Eliot's poems which complain that the world is inscrutable,

19 *Nature of Philosophy*, p. 228.

that the world is made up of our subjective states. With just a little more poignant sadness, with just a little more desolation, he could become the Baudelaire or the Verlaine of Indian philosophy. For above all, Daya is a literary artist.

But we have to grab the cow by the teats if we wish to have milk. Let us pursue this. Suppose that we admit for the moment with Daya that "confusions are conceptual and arise more because of the nature of concepts—not this or that concept, but because of the very conceptual nature of concepts."<sup>20</sup> Daya refines and hypostatizes concepts as if he believed in a kind of conceptual *nature*—perhaps something like human nature which is also hypostatized by nearly everybody West of Berlin and South of Samarkand. What is the nature of conceptual nature? "The confusions", Daya says, "have a certain kind of objectivity..."<sup>21</sup> Ah, but that is the stuff of madness. *Objective* concepts? Next he will tell us the chemical nature of concepts! Concepts and confusions are relations. Are relations objective? The nilgai is related to the water buck. That makes three. First there is the nilgai, then the relation, then the water buck. This is Platonism, pure and simple. *Something* has got to be objective even in Daya's dream world. Having got rid of reality and substituted the nature of concepts for it, it seems likely that Daya will be searching now for some subjective, idealistic, reality. Whenever a philosopher abrogates the real world he ends up making one up of his own out of bits and pieces of thoughts, concepts, confusions, relations, letters, words—an idealist jack-daw's nest substituting for reality.

Daya, subsequently, dabbles with his make-believe world much as the non-objective painter may dribble oil on his canvas as the mood strikes him—without a plan. Daya says: "...confusions have a certain kind of objectivity in the sense that anybody who can be sufficiently interested, will find himself holding, one after other [sic], almost all the classic positions of philosophy—albeit, in a crude manner."<sup>22</sup> Idealists never like

20 *ibid.*, p. 231.

21 *ibid.*

22 *ibid.*

"crude" manners because they indicate objective reality is being dealt with. It may well be that the subjectivist goes through the classical positions of idealism—but never of materialism—until he reaches subjectist idealism, teetering on the brink of solipsism. That is where Daya finds himself. He has never been a materialist, because from materialism you can never go back. The cure for subjective idealism is not objective idealism, but materialism and materialistic naturalism. According to Daya, confusions are lying in wait for us like dreadful television programs just waiting to be tuned in. One gets perversely interested in a philosophical confusion, gets hooked on it. After a while the philosopher gets tired of this and tunes in another one just for variety. It has been my good fortune to have been tuning in on philosophical confusions for about as long as Daya, but I find that I definitely prefer certain confusions to others, and even prefer no confusions at all to the best confusions that can be tuned in. I don't really care much for Berkeley's solipsism or Kant's subjectivism for that matter, or even Hegel's so-called objective idealism or Daya's form of solipsism although I love him dearly. On the other hand I like hisodiannat very much because I think that it reflects reality fairly adequately for our day and that it is getting rid of the confusions created by such idealists as Daya.

In determining which confusions were preferable I tried to decide in terms of the solutions based on objective, public, scientific, historical, evidence. Now, since no one has a sensation of a sensation but of a thing, Berkeley's ontology is simply wrong. Yet Daya is faced with this enormous problem: he must reject philosophical positions of purely formal grounds or on grounds of personal taste since he has no objective reality to compare them with. Even so, ultimately, even formalistic grounds, or grounds of taste, are decided upon *some* knowledge of reality. As much as Daya would like to do it, he cannot get rid of reality.

Daya Krishna is so interesting as poet that I want to pursue his views further. The last time I saw him was at the dinner table at the Rambagh Palace in Jaipur where he was in one of his sadly bitter but witty moods. This bitterness, comes, I

think, from his having lost reality. I hold linguistic and analytic philosophy responsible for this. In any event, he gives us an autobiographical account of his wrestling with philosophy, when he says:

The philosopher, by temperament, is one of those who, in the famous phrase of the Urdu poet, Ghalib, gets more and more involved in his attempt to unravel the problem till he gets caught and can find no end to the unending string he seems to be unravelling.<sup>23</sup>

This bourgeois parodying of philosophy was never surpassed even by Ambrose Bierce, the American Chamfort.<sup>24</sup> Daya, however, does not think that philosophy is simply trivial, but dangerous. In this, he parallels Tertullian who once said philosophy "...is the rash interpreter of the nature and dispensation of God. Indeed heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy."<sup>25</sup> This is a confession. Instead of coming to grips with reality, instead of recognizing the primacy of the natural, material existence, Daya admits that he is caught up in every gust of doctrinal and fashionable wind until he finally comes to an uneasy resting place, to collapse, into solipsism. British philosophy has been of no help to him, for as he says, G. E. Moore found no end to confusions,<sup>26</sup> and the others, also finding confusions everywhere kept an even keel only by tacitly accepting traditional British mechanical materialism. Moore actually increased the confusions by manufacturing his own, such as sense-data as fast as he thought he had clarified old

23 *ibid.*

24 *ibid.* Bierce once defined philosophy as "...route of many roads leading from nowhere to nothing" in his *Devil's Dictionary* (1906).

25 See Tertullian, *On Prescription Against Heretics* (c. 206 A.D.).

26 Moore, with his slight capital of confusions, was able to primitively accumulate, then reinvest them, until he had developed an empire of confusion. An example of this is his introduction of the concept "sense data" which, adds an unknown to the sensation of objects. At the same time, economists were developing their own confusions in Austria and copying them in England, such as marginal utility, another inexpressible, subjective whatnot. For analysis of this subjective whatnot, see Paul Crosser, *Economic Fictions* (New York: Philosophical, 1957), p. 56f.



ones. John Dewey, not to be outdone by Moore recommen-  
ded in his *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920) that :

...it will be seen that the task of future philosophy is to clarify men's ideas as to social and moral strifes of their own day....The social philosopher, dwelling in the region of his concepts "solves" problems by showing the relationship of ideas, instead of helping men solve problems in the concrete by supplying them hypotheses to be used and tested in projects of reform.<sup>27</sup>

It appears that Dewey would disapprove of Daya's abstract solving of confusions, although this is precisely what Dewey himself did by recommending reform to needed structural change. Dewey adds to the confusion himself by not pointing out that in the construction of hypotheses the relationship of ideas to each other and the relationship of these to material reality must be pointed out. Do the ideas relate to material states of affairs or do they not? That is the question.

Daya is worried about philosophy's role of "dictating the limits to either Science [sic] or religion—dictation that seems to have been its continuous task in every age and clime."<sup>28</sup> This view of Daya's is simply unhistorical. It is religion and religious institutions which have been dictating to both philosophy and science. Daya adds :

Philosophy is...the eternal watch-dog between the increasing articulation of all levels of experience, which is the task of Science, and eternal deepening and widening of experience, which is the task of religion.<sup>29</sup>

As a watchdog, on the Daya view, philosophy presumably barks at confusions. But in order to know what to bark at, philosophy will have to have a philosophy. And this is what Daya denies in his linguistic perversion of philosophy. Furthermore, his idealism is clearly exposed in his view of religion, where religion "deepens and widens experience" rather than constricts it as has been its historical role since the development of capitalism. And long before capitalism, religion

27 *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York: Holt, 1920), p. 192.

28 *Nature of Philosophy*, pp. 231-2.

29 *ibid*, p. 232.

became ruling-class ideology and thus restricted experience as we know from the history of the warfare between science and religion.

Daya is a pessimistic, subjective idealist (all subjective idealists are pessimistic because they have opted for remaining ignorant of the material world of reality and the social world of public knowledge). Philosophy for him is (1) to study confusion, (2) and to bark at religion and science.

Daya is also idealistic in his explaining past events. He says that :

...[p]olitics and Religion [sic] were...the basic factors for change in pre-modern societies. But these changes operated within a static framework provided by an almost unchanging structure of technology, population, and needs. It is these basic constants that have been disturbed in modern times, a phenomenon whose parallel we could find only in the times of pre-history when man really first discovered agriculture and made a radical break-through with the previous situation.<sup>30</sup>

But Daya certainly has the cart before the horse. According to J. D. Bernal, the most comprehensive philosopher of science in this century, since it is technology that is the major factor in innovation, changes in the productive base bringing about man's controlling of his environment. Religion and politics, for the most part, come dragging after these as the history of man's stages of development makes quite clear.<sup>31</sup> Religious and political determinism has not been taken seriously by non-idealistic scholars since the eighteenth century revelations of Gibbon. From religious determinism in pre-modern societies we move to the present when the cause of change and disturbance "...comes from the *perpetual revolution* in knowledge," says Daya.<sup>32</sup> From his earlier work, I believed that philosophy

30 *Towards a Theory of Social Change* (Bombay: Mannaktalas, 1965), pp. 165-6. This work should have been entitled *Towards a Meta-Theory of Equilibrium*.

31 See Lewis Henry Morgan, Bernard Stern, George Thomson, Leslie White and the refutation of the refutations of Morgan in Marvin Harris, *The Rise of Anthropological Theory* (New York, Corwell, 1969).

32 *My italics*. See *Towards a Theory of Social Change*, p. 166.

was going to be concerned with eliminating confusion, but in his book on social change, Daya has decided to tread the path of bourgeois sociology. Now, philosophy is concerned with theory, he says, which theory,

...has to build itself on the basis of a preservation of self-identity amidst changes required for survival and self-respect. It has to be built at each differentiated level of social functioning with an indication of the areas of construction and freedom introduced by the changes at different levels with respect to each other.<sup>33</sup>

One may well ask, what on earth is Daya driving at here? This is totally abstract and formalistic. We find neither social constants nor social variables. But let us see how he continues:

The innovating elite [is this elite-determinism?] at these different levels have to be differentiated and discriminated.... At another level, the distinction must be made between immanent innovation [here is a category that Hegel calls either negation of negation or semblance of mediation in the *Phenomenology of Mind*], creative assimilation, and imitative response in the changes which a society may undergo within a certain period of time.<sup>34</sup>

When Daya and the other bourgeois speak of "innovation" they usually are referring to some unhistorical semblance like "destiny", a great man, some particular manipulation, not consonant with reality. But let us look at more of Daya's abstractions: "Basically," he says:

...the life of both individuals and societies in an inter-play between constraint and freedom [Russell's freedom versus organization]...and the dialectical between them at each level of their existence. It is, ultimately, a story of the seeking for freedom [is a theory ever a story?] and how each attempt at seeding creates a new bondage [Hegel's view of things turning into their opposites as they lose their historical usefulness]...[It is also a story of the seeding for values and ideals, the attempt at the realization of which somehow gives rise

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 166f.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*,

to new disvalues which one tries to overcome once again.<sup>35</sup>

All this may be a paradigm of what occurs when a philosopher decides that the function of philosophy is merely to clarify confusions. We remember that Toynee tries to explain change in terms of challenge and response; now Daya tries to explain change in terms of constraint and freedom. But all this is totally abstract. When I pointed this out to Daya in a review of the book here being quoted, he was dismayed that I didn't really understand what he was trying to do. It was only too clear what he was trying to do. He was trying to put historical analysis on a totally abstract plane—more abstract, indeed, than the work of Hegel which was somewhat salvagable because he often put in concrete historical examples of what he meant. Wallowing in complete abstraction, how can Daya clarify any confusions? Also, as Brand Blanshard and E. A. Burtt pointed out about the so-called "clarifying" work of linguistic philosophers, they not only do not clarify any confusions but simply add new ones. We hope that by this time Daya has discovered that in order to "clear up confusions" one must have a point of departure, in other words, just an old-fashioned (or new-fashioned) philosophical position with a metaphysics (or dialectics), epistemology, ethics, logic, aesthetics, and a philosophy of history. That means that he will have to develop a theory of reality—for that is a major effort of philosophy.

#### P. C. CHATTERJI AND A REALISTIC ANALYSIS OF RECENT TRENDS IN BRITISH PHILOSOPHY

Chatterji, one of the few Indian philosophers to seriously try to assess the significance of analytic and linguistic philosophy, points out that much British philosophy has been emphasizing language since Russell remarked that the influence of languages has been profound but almost completely unrecognized up to his time. Russell's innovations, unfortunately have led to almost as many blind alleys as the works of Paracelsus. One of the linguistic-semantic developments that Russell accepted

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*

**Indian Philosophy  
Since Independence.**

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1979

**RESEARCH INDIA PUBLICATIONS  
CALCUTTA**