

## A Main Subject-Matter of Contemporary Philosophy

Andre Mercier

1. The fact that philosophy of science builds a main part of contemporary philosophy can be seen from various view-points.

Above all, the increase of scientific activity among the human race has produced a shift of utmost importance which can be illustrated by the following comparison. During the Middle Ages, people—at least in Europe—received from the Church the teachings according to which their daily behaviour in practically all situations should form itself. Religion, as embodied by the Church, was the great teacher of what was considered true, beautiful, good and holy. But the Church is an anonymous body; it is difficult to say whether it is a community of men, a structure of some sort, a collection of dogmas, or what have you? In short, it appeared to the people as a kind of super-person endowed with the necessary authority to take over the lead of the life of the individual as well as of the community, not only in religious, but in other respects as well.

One of the main changes which replaced the Middle-ages by a new age is the fact that the Church lost pretty quickly that very authority which was taken over by another kind of super-person; the latter came to be the political state. At the beginning of the new age, there was a manifold of such "states" as conducted either by princes or by republican or other bodies, but by and by the idea of the State grew above the differences of the primitive working units, until it finally became—say at the time of Hegel—the very notion of that super-person assumed to be endowed with the necessary authority to simply take the lead in the determination of all behaviour, creed and other spiritual activities of the members of any organized community of men. In many cases, the State swallowed even the Church, whereas it can be said that in the Middle Ages the Church had assumed those tasks which a still inexistent state might have assumed. Nonetheless, the State is no less anonymous than the Church. It can be written with a capital S just as a capital C is used for the Church.

The assumption by a super-person of such a leading role is presumably in the long run fatal to that very super-person. A detailed historical analysis would be necessary to prove this, but a quick glance at the historical facts seem to me to show that this has

been the case for the Church and that it is already the case for the State. However, as long as a leading super-person is alone reigning, its system may go on for a long time in a kind of growing scholastic which becomes more and more a mere habit. The loss of the quality of a super-person can follow, either by a process of natural decay leaving room for anarchy, or by the rise of a new super-person (either of the same, or of a different kind) who will dethrone the decaying one, or eventually by both. The latter was the case in the change from the Middle Ages to so-called modern times: The (Roman) Church was partly dethroned in Europe by the Reformation, but still more by the State, and there was too something like a decay.

It seems to me—and this is the analogy I intended to draw—that a similar replacement is taking place, say since the 20th Century and especially in our days: The super-person called State is being dethroned by a totally new one, whose name is Science. In a way, the State as a concept was already somewhat more abstract than the Church. Science is still more abstract. But this does not imply that the same increase of abstractness happens on the practical level as on the conceptual one, for Science in a way involves and affects man still more by its applications than does the State, which mainly restricts its workings to the application of the laws and the planification of economy.

At the same time, i.e. parallel to the rise of Science as the new bearer of leadership, the State is becoming more and more mere scholastic. One may even say that one of the great struggles of our times consists precisely in the competition between the dying giant and the rising one. Sometimes, this competition is—artificially or dogmatically—transfigured into a voluntary synthesis, as is e.g. more or less the case within countries ruled according to the doctrine of dialectical materialism. But even there, I believe that—not later than one generation or so from now—Science will take the lead as everywhere else in the world, and that the State will decay both as a concept and as an actuality, especially in front of a universalization which—mainly owing to Science—will compel barriers, frontiers and national prides to collapse. Already now, we feel strongly the grasp of Science upon our lives and everybody is readily inclined to receive from Science rather than from the State some sort of instructions as to how he is to behave, e.g. in the case of the anti-baby-pill. The State is contested. Science *qua* science is not—or is it? (It is contested, I believe, only inasmuch as it is, falsely, identified with Technic and its possible evils. See however my book "Science and Responsibility", in *Filosofia*, Torino 1969.) I am attaching no particular moral value to that statement, especially since the deep reason for which Science *qua* science is not contested does not root in scientific objectivity *versus* some contrary character of the State, but roots in the efficiency of Science



as well in the prudence exhibited at present time by most of its representatives. Objectivity is simply the character of what is scientific and thus it defines science from the point of view of epistemology; but it is in no case the criterium for the choice of Science as the leading principle or super-person or authority, though many a philosopher is inclined—wrongly—to believe that objectivity is that criterium.

For, it might very well be that, not Science but, e.g. Art would take over the lead and act with the same authority. Yet Art is not an objective enterprise: Neither can art as an activity be undertaken and entertained by any objective approach, nor is it subject to any objective judgement. As a matter of fact, during the European Middle-Ages, Art shared to a certain degree with the Church the authority in matters of general behaviour, though it did so under the leadership of religion. In this respect, it would perhaps be clearer to speak about Religion rather than about the Church, for the Church was the bearer of a particular religious conception, viz. Christian religion. This conception implied in particular two claims of considerable extension, (i) to be the only authentic one (all other so-called religions being paganism or superstition), (ii) to possess unchallenged authority (and therefore to outrule anything like ethics, science or art not submitted to the teachings of the Church).

In our days, and in many countries, the State makes the same claims: to assume the only authentic ethics and to rule over art and science and even over religion (if such is recognized—otherwise it rules it out). Yet there are at least a couple of different realizations of a state in the world, and their very distinction shows that at most one of them can be the realization of the pretended sole authentic form of the State. However, when trying to discuss these matters with sufficient detachment, one gets a strong feeling that a state or a church can in no case be finally said to be the one authentic and sole form of the Church or of the State, and that it in no case assumes authority to judge about the totality of human activities.

Now, if Science is to take over the lead from the State, will several ways of dealing with science, say Science A, Science B etc., establish themselves, one or the other claiming sole authenticity and authority? One would not think so in view of the objective nature of science; but I am not so quite sure of the answer. Physics is a part of science. Biology another part. There can hardly be two physics: do not all physicists agree? Well, yes they do—at large, but we still remember the time when quantum physicists looked upon the theory of General Relativity as a more or less vain undertaking in view of its lack of applicability; we still are confronted with various schools of interpretation in the field of quantum physics itself... Are there various biologies? Perhaps yes; there have been at least the mechanistic, the vitalistic and other ways of dealing with biology. Psychology too has

been dealt with genetically, behaviouristically and otherwise. Such diversities are not quite alien to the diversities of religions or of the political structures of states. Still, biology tends to become one, psychology may do so too.

But there remains the case of sociology. People will generally agree that sociology is also a part of science: the particular science dealing with society and societies. If sociology could develop in close analogy with physics into a discipline in which new experiments are constantly made in order to adapt theories to an ever truer description of the nature of certain things (societies are things from this point of view), then we might hope that no distinct sociologies A, B, ... would arise. But sociology cannot for the present and will presumably not be able for ages to proceed like that. Psychology does not either.

Experiments are not mere observations. Astronomy was up to now not an experimental science, but an observational one for, we do not dispose of the celestial bodies. Its inclusion into physics offers some difficulties which we shall not discuss here. Physics proper has the possibility of disposing of things and it acts accordingly by preparing experiments at leisure, arranging such and such conditions for the performance of experiments. The last component of an experiment is an observation, but an observation alone is not a complete experiment.

Already biology is not so much at leisure. There are for instance societies for the protection of nature who object to biological experimentation, and, by their very nature of being living beings the objects of biology are endowed with a power to escape at least partly the grasp of experimentation undertaken by men. Often, experimentation kills these beings, so they are no more the beings envisaged. Actually, every experiment destroys a state of affairs and changes nature from its "natural" course.

Psychology is for the same reason still less in a position to experiment. Of course, psychologists try to include the resistance opposed by tested people in their argumentation about the tests performed and to eliminate it then by some reasoning. Tested beings, whether human, animal or even stones, are "in captivity", not free.

Sociology is so to say unable to test, i.e. to experiment, unless the accepted doctrine claims that society is to be handled towards a scientific enterprise called sociology including all the requirements of science. But it is doubtful whether men, as individuals and/or as communities—not to say anything about mankind as a whole—do wish to be handled as objects of experiments.

Dialectical materialism might seem to make the claim that society is to be experimented upon scientifically. However, it makes a slightly different claim for, it says rather that society must be changed and transformed into a structure, of which it pretends to have a clear picture. But by the very fact that it has pictured this picture before-



hand, this picture cannot be but a prejudiced one; therefore, dialectical materialism as a sociological doctrine is unavoidably doctrinary. Now, any doctrinary "science", e.g. sociology, is unscientific, so it must be ruled out of the field of science, and a main pretention of the doctrine turns out to be contradictory. Maybe a scientific sociology is in a way unfeasible, unless it is done like astronomy by allowing so much time for observations as was done for astronomy, until thousands of observations on societies under the most various (historical) conditions are made in order to get at well verified theories of the behaviour of societies.

2. At this point of the argument, let us make a stop and look back at our starting point, by asking: what is philosophy of science? Is it a reflexion on the practice of science as an activity, a theory about the possible structures of science, a view about science as knowledge, or is it merely the methodology of science...or what have you? A preliminary question as to what science itself is might be asked, but would that not be a question of the philosophy of science too? Yet answering it is not either easy. We might say that according to some suitable categories a first classification would yield precisely the four cardinal sciences of physics, biology, psychology and sociology. (Mathematics and logic are taken on purpose out of the classification. See later.) One need not declare oneself an adept of classical positivism to make that classification.

But when looking at the kind of work people make who claim to be philosophers of science, we see that nearly all the stuff they write is concerned with logic, mathematics and eventually physics, whereas a regular philosophy of biology is so to say unfortunately missing, a philosophy of psychology, if at all, usually reduces to a doctrine as to what is the correct psychology, and a philosophy of sociology is in our days an indiscriminable business... Science as a word sounds like a great unit, it appeals therefore as a unifier endowed with a power to unify, and yet when we look at it carefully, we find very little trace of this unification, except very general ideas like causality and structurality.

In view of this vagueness about the precise scope of philosophy, I should rather for my part try to set up a program, postulating approximately this: Philosophy of science is to clear up (i) on the one hand (this is the *practical*) what in all sciences is knowledge and what is doctrine and (ii) on the other hand (this is the *theoretical*) what is pure knowledge and what is made historical by the intervention of man (like artifacts which are not naturally found in the world). These two distinctions run parallelly. By saying that the first one is made on the practical plane, inspite of the seemingly theoretical nature of doctrines, I mean that since actualities are the manifestation of praxis, one

has to look for what among these actualities is of cognitive relevance, and what is the actualization of doctrinary views not supported by cognitive undertakings but introduced by arbitrary intervention. By saying that the second one is made on the theoretical plane, inspite of the seemingly practical nature of the human intervention in history, I mean that since knowledge *qua* knowledge is a theoretical quest, one has to find out what in history is of pure cognitive relevance and what is the result of the application of theoretical knowledge towards the invention and/or the fabrication of devices, be they of the importance of space-ships, be they mere gadgets of very little consequence.

Unfortunately, because philosophy of science in our days reduces more or less to an analysis of the structural constitution of mathematics and logic, the above program is far from being undertaken. It is even generally ignored.

The reason may be found in the following consideration. As my teacher Niels Bohr once said, science distinguishes itself from philosophy among other things by the fact that science puts solvable problems, whereas philosophy does not; therefore, philosophy should not attempt at all at putting problems. This is a very deep argument, though it sounds so simple. In particular, philosophy of science as a particular field of philosophy is not expected to put any problem (about science). Hence it cannot be the science of science and should for this reason distinguish itself from an epistemology, if epistemology is meant to be a regular theory of science. Now, since the tendency is spreading among thinkers to reduce knowledge to scientific knowledge, epistemology will accuse the parallel tendency to reduce to the theory of science, which is not a philosophy of science in Bohr's sense.

But another tendency is also spreading, viz. the tendency to formalize all argumentation.

What is there then left for philosophers of science to do? Not much else than to produce an ever more elaborate formalization of the structures of science, and this amounts to inserting the structures of successive (meta-) languages into one another and so to reduce philosophy of science to a business of formal logic.

The idea of a theory of science conceived as a specific activity along which the methods and aims of science generate each other, has been — as far as I am aware — introduced for the first time by H. Törnebohm. He does not claim it to be a genuine philosophical reasoning. Rather he thinks, I believe, that it can be considered as preliminary to scientific activity proper and hence, on the discursive level, as prolegomenary to scientific epistemology (to the theory of scientific knowledge). There may be other attempts than his in a similar direction; I shall not endeavour to quote them here. In my opinion, such "theories of science" are, inspite of their name, relevant to the practical aspect of science, not to its theoretical aspect, for they



are concerned with the ways science works, which is typically of pragmatic nature. This, I think, is eminently different from the kind of work done by epistemologically minded logicians, we might say perhaps complementary to it, for the logical analyses do not tell us how science works, but how it is made. The work of the logicians is concerned with the theoretical aspect of science, with science as a theory if you will, i.e. a construct. A study of science as a praxis — meaning that both science and its study are practices — as actuality if you will, had long failed until such attempts like Törnebohm's were made. But much remains to be done before we possess an elaborate machinery of that sort.

I am personally not of the opinion that knowledge reduces to scientific knowledge alone. But since I am concerned in this paper with science as distinguished from (rather than as interconnected with) other cardinal undertakings of the human mind like art, morals or religion, I may insist upon the fact that we know today that science is not simply a product of theoretical reason. Kant has missed an important point when he tried to establish a one-to-one relation on that line and excluded science from the workings of a practical reason. Science is both theoretical and practical. But practical is in no way identical with ethical (and ethics is far from being a business of practical reason alone).

Of course, already dialectical materialism claimed that every activity, including the scientific one, is to take place on the plane of praxis, — and pragmatism had opined that science is pragmatic like everything else. So all this as a general idea is not very new. But such opinions were not accompanied by parallel analyses of the two characters, theoretical and practical, of science.

Much rather, the extraordinary efficiency of science in its applications (which are not to be confused with Technic as I have defined the term in several publications) has progressively promoted a situation in which science has in our days come to be experienced as a praxis by nearly everybody in all parts of the world where it is cultivated. However, this experience is not in itself a philosophy of science. A main contribution to the philosophy of science will be achieved when one shall succeed in elaborating a dialectics relating and synthetizing both aspects — theoretical and practical — of science not only around physics but including all main sciences from physics to sociology: science as a construct and science as an experience.

If this can be achieved, logic and mathematics will, I believe, more than ever reveal themselves to be different from sciences proper. For, as I have explained repeatedly in other publications, mathematics is not a name for what we *know*, it is a name for what we *can* (best — or rather most correctly) know. So it is a *power*; it is even the theoretical aspect of power.

Its counterpart as a power of practical nature is experience, known more precisely as experiment in the (experimental) sciences; but as a power it has structures of its own which precisely can be explicated with the help of a "theory", an "experimentology" which is the pragmatic aspect of the theory of science named further above.

By the way, just as there is this theory of experiment (or of experience — to put it more generally), there is an "experience of theory" upon which I have also called the attention of philosophers in some earlier papers. But unfortunately no one has ever, to my knowledge at least, attempted to give a further and detailed characterization of this strange experience (except perhaps Einstein in some suggestions of his).

3. These considerations help to understand, I believe, that Science may assume the role of a superperson as has been described in sec. I further above. Indeed, in order to assume it, it must afford both possibilities of theoretical and practical nature, for the human nature does have these two components and is never content if only one is involved in the fulfilment of human life: Man is not only *homo sapiens*, he is *homo faber* too. He thinks and he works; his reasoning must be completed by action, and his activity sustained by reason.

The cases of the Church and the State illustrate this. They are both institutions incorporating each a fundamental activity of man, religion and politics respectively (see further below the slight distinction to be made.)

Politics may stand for morals in a certain sense: The State is a main realization of morals through the channel of politics. It has an abstract background founded on some theory of law and explicated in chartas and other constitutional texts; it has a concrete basis in all the institutions like parliament, government, court, ministries, secretariates, schools... In certain countries, the adopted system is such that nothing of the life of the community is private, on the contrary everything is common, it is a concretization of the ideal of communism. Another concretization might also integrate everything, though in a different way, viz. a State of absolute monarchy where the monarch disposes of all. Both cases are extremes for which the theoretical background degenerates into a doctrine encompassing every possible situation, with the consequence that practice does as a corrective not interact anymore with theory (the doctrine) and in a mutual connection of reason and experience. Power is here usurped by theory, and its application is rendered arbitrary even if abstractly consistent.— Anarchy, to take another extreme, is seldom realized as the state of a State, but if it were, it would amount to the ignorance of reason and consequently degenerate into the concretization of pure experience without any understanding; this is the renunciation by man to act as



*homo sapiens* and therefore the usurpation of power by something like instinct or pure will.

The Church is a realization of religion in the community of men. It has an abstract background resting on the acceptance of dogmas which work like axioms of a more or less elaborated theology, and it finds a concrete realization in all the practices like rites and their performance by priests within various material conditions. Extremes are also known. For instance the Quakers or members of the Society of Friends drop so to say all the theoretical apparatus and live in religion as if in a pure experience, allowing in a sense for a complete anarchy in the sense where anarchy means the absence of leadership, i.e. the absence of power (here of theoretical power). Another example is to be found among hermits; but hermits may have to wait for tame birds to bring food and share it with them. At the other extreme, all forms of scholastic—should I say scholasticism?—tend to ignore the religious experience and to plunge into mere abstraction, which also an usurpation of power, however, *mutatis mutandis*, an usurpation by theoretical reason, allowing for an arbitrariness against which the mystics have always reacted.

These comparisons justify, I believe, the kind of prediction made at the beginning, making it more than an expectation or a presentiment, viz. that Science will indeed be in a position to fully succeed the State in assuming the tasks of leadership, both practically and theoretically, of mankind. But there remains the difference consisting in the fact that Church and State are institutions, whereas science like religion and morals are proceedings of the human mind, and politics (between morals and the State) is a procedure. Between religion and the Church, we could name the cult as a procedure analogous to politics.

What are then—we might ask—the procedure of science and its institutionalization, analogous to politics or the cult and to the State and the Church? One might be tempted to identify the procedure of science with Technic. However, this would not do. For, technic does not arise within a single proceeding of the human mind, but in an encounter of two such proceedings, mainly between science (or a science, or a part of such) and morals (or a part of such), in which both partners have to come to a mutual equilibrium and to proceed along a common and combined procedure called Technic. So the procedure of science is to be looked for elsewhere. In fact, it is found in the very participation of men engaged into the development of science: By this participation, these men find themselves filled with a satisfaction because by science, they know more and they can more; it is an enlightenment comparable with what was meant by the Encyclopedists of the French 18th Century.

Yet, finally, if I were asked: who is the super-person who does,

now, or will, later, embody and perform science, like the State embodies morals through politics or the Church performs the cult for the sake of religion, I must confess that I would be at a loss. This super-person or body is not (yet) visible. In old days, scientists gathered into academies; there are also in our days institutes of advanced study beside university departments. We may still be in a situation comparable with the one reigning at the beginning of the rise of the State, when the manifold of principalities, republics and other units did not yet integrate into the body of a conceptual State. The communist countries have already replaced the disused conception of old-fashioned academies by a completely new one in which all scientific research *qua* research (in contradistinction to teaching science) is done in its various divisions, whether pure or applied, for they make no difference. In that sense, such academies of research are like armies; their head scientists are comparable with active officers of high rank. Only, up to now, scientific service, in contradistinction to military service, is not (yet?) compulsory. Officially these academies stand still under the control of the state; actually, they begin to control the state, and often the leaders of the state (of the "party") have arisen out of the scientific career, say, out of the "academy" as if Plato's claim of a State ruled by philosophers would come into being.

Who knows what will follow and how the workings of the new super-person will be organized in the year 2000? Let us just hope, that it will neither degenerate into scholasticism nor claim sole authenticity and authority over human conduct.

4. I might stop here, in the assumption that what has been said talks, on the one hand, for itself thanks to the sober nature of its exposition. Yet, the inevitable imperfection of my presentation might, on the other hand, awake among the readers or listeners the impression that I approve of something like the totalitarian impact of Science upon human life, and that I rejoice in, the prospective that Science will lead, that it is "good" so ... in short that I am an adept of scientism.

Nothing would be more wrong than this latter interpretation. Anyone who has had the opportunity to read some of my works knows that on the contrary I have always pleaded for a well balanced flourishing of all human possibilities, and if I may remind of it here, the theory I advocate assumes that science is not more than one of the four cardinal enterprises of the human spirit; the other ones are of artistic, of moral and of mystic nature. So, from the point of view of my theory of knowledge, it would be necessary, for one to be comprehensive, to develop a critical analysis of the situation described further above, followed by an evaluation of the consequences it may have as



well as by an estimation of the possibilities and chances of weighing down such eventualities as might have been shown by the critical analysis to lead to some sort of degenerate situation.

However, I shall not attempt to do it here, because I should have to repeat too much of what I have expounded in earlier publications.

In short, it would require the exposition of a theory of knowledge which begins by separating man as a subject which is being judged upon, from man as a subject who judges by himself, yielding two fundamental modalities: A modality through which knowledge is obtained in spite of a refusal of judgement (by the subject), and a modality, called modality of judgement. The first modality identifies itself with mystic knowledge and is as authentic as any of the modes of the other one. Then, the second of the two fundamental modalities allows — for reasons which will not be repeated and analyzed here — of three modes, viz. objectivity or the scientific mode, subjectivity or the mode of art, and communitivity or the mode of morals.<sup>1</sup>

Now, precisely — and this will serve as an abrupt conclusion: If a Church claims to endow the first of the modalities alone with authenticity and authority by the adoption of a totalitarian system of dogmas and practices, it simultaneously destroys arbitrarily the autonomy of the modes of judgement and is due to degenerate into scholastic and to render in the long run spiritual and practical life unbearable.

Exactly the same applies if one single of the modes within the modality of judgement makes the same claims: The State has finally done so along the mode of morals; the superperson embodying Science may go so far along the objective mode and fall into the same mistake.

Objectivity has its limits. It is not the prime and sole criterium of wisdom, but one among a few others. Whoever ignores or contends this, is himself ignorant and lacks education. He may never know, what tolerance is in the most comprehensive and generous sense of the word.

1. These things can be read e.g. in one of the following books: A. Mercier, *Thought and Being, An Inquiry into the Nature of Knowledge* (Basel 1959), A. Mercier, *De l'amour et de l'être, Essai sur la Connaissance* (Louvain et Paris 1960), A. Mercier, *Erkenntnis und Wissenschaft* (Bern und München 1968), A. Mercier, *Science and Responsibility* (loc. cit.)

I agree with much that Mr. Mercier has said about science, about the church and the state, and with his repudiation of scientism. My main criticism of his presentation is that it leaves some things unsaid which are relevant to his subject.

But first a few small points. (1) Mr. Mercier rightly emphasises that experiment is more than observation. But in the social sciences, he argues, there is no scope for experiment, hence their different character. I think that one ought to say here that there are other and even more valid methods for testing scientific theories. Prediction is one of them, and it may very well be used in the social sciences.

(2) I don't think there is much of lasting value in traditional subdivisions of the scientific enterprise, e.g. the "four cardinal sciences": physics, biology, psychology and sociology. This is just as arbitrary as the ancient and medieval subdivisions of the *trivium* and *quadrivium*. In all these cases, the boundaries are not clear and there are many other sciences and kinds of science (what about, say, cosmogony, linguistics, history, cybernetics?).

(3) Mr. Mercier produces a typical example of a widespread bias among philosophers and in particular philosophers of science, viz., the pretence to be in a position to judge the sciences on external criteria. Whence this privilege? It would be valuable if a philosopher of science could disentangle what is knowledge and what is doctrine, or what is historically determined and what is not, in the sciences (in fact, I don't know of a single example of this having happened). But what else is it that scientists themselves do? Even if a philosopher were to find such a distinction, this would be itself a scientific discovery, not a philosophic one.

(4) Why does philosophy not put solvable problems? One rarely knows this in advance, unless one can show (as sometimes in logic) that certain problems are unsolvable. Most philosophic problems seem to me to be solvable (I do not say: verifiable, testable, provable), and some have in fact been solved.

(5) I doubt that the distinction between the so-called empirical sciences on the one hand, and logic and mathematics on the other, can be made to stick. There is a lot of discussion on this, mostly in line with Quine's famous repudiation of that distinction.

(6) I profoundly sympathize with the desire to go beyond science, though not beyond objectivity, which would mean: into the realm of



subjectivity, error and falsehood. As earlier pointed out by Mr. Hick : if Hindus believe in transmigration, they believe that that doctrine is objectively true. Art, morality, mysticism are either also concerned with the realm of objectivity, or lie elsewhere, not beyond it. It think it is disastrous to follow Augustine, who, having rejected the scientific spirit of Manichaeism, prayed to his Christian god as follows : *etiam vera dicentes philosophos transgredi pro amore tuo* ("for the love of you I have gone beyond the philosophers even when they spoke the truth"). But to go beyond truth is to lie. Luckily, in Hinduism and Buddhism there is less of a contradiction between philosophy and religion than in the western monotheistic religions.

It would take more space than the framework of a comment would warrant, to expound on what I find missing in Mr. Mercier's paper. It briefly is this. What is most fundamental in science is the construction of theories. This cannot be done merely through generalizations on the basis of data, whether of observation or of experiment. Such theories are neither verifiable (as the Vienna School claimed), nor falsifiable (as Popper holds). They have in some general sense to pass tests of empirical adequacy, inner consistency, and simplicity (whatever that means). They can only be rejected in favour of better theories.

I find Mr. Mercier's apparent dislike of logic slightly distressing. It leads to minor contradictions here and there, of which I shall mention only one. In the title of his paper, Mr. Mercier happily juxtaposes the indefinite article "a" and the uniquely identifying definite adjective "main". As for myself, I can only either find "a treasure", or find "the main treasure". I cannot even look for "a main treasure".

In Theaetetus, Plato refers to a discussion between Socrates and Theodoros about the old story of the Greek Philosopher Thales who fell into a well while moving about star-gazing and was mocked at by a 'clever witty' maiden from Thrace for seeking knowledge of celestial things while being ignorant of things close at hand. There is a similar story about Gautama, the high priest of the Nyāya System, who fell into a well while walking, lost in philosophical reflection. There is no reference here to any one mocking at him; but it is said that through divine dispensation he got eyes fixed to his feet to enable him to continue his philosophic pursuit without having to face a similar risk in the future. The two anecdotes bring out two aspects of the philosophical quest. While the Indian version stresses the importance of the quest, the Greek counterpart of the story emphasises its nature, namely that the philosophical quest is not other worldly and that ignorance of the world is not its necessary adjunct.

Plato seems to use this story to focus attention on the position of the philosopher in relation to the world around him. From his kindly reference to the maid as 'clever and witty' and not rude and unmannerly one suspects that there was a mild approval of her mockery and that he even felt that ignorance of the world need not be natural in a philosopher. Is it suggested that the philosopher finds himself a misfit in the world of everyday life, where the dominant values are wealth, power, efficiency and satisfaction of bodily needs and gets away from the madding crowd to pursue values of a different kind? Is it further suggested that the work-a-day world is real and since the philosopher no less than others has to live in it, there is nothing surprising in the world laughing at the philosopher or in his being the butt of ridicule?

Even in modern times the outlook for the philosopher or for philosophy is none too pleasant. To many minds philosophy seems airy speculation, futile and impractical. The modern man finds his attention fully taken up with the satisfaction of his personal needs, professional, economic, domestic and natural. Now and then he may think about social and political problems, such as unemployment, the country's foreign policy, the political scene at home and abroad, the prospects of world peace and of collaboration in space conquest. Occasionally philosophical questions like 'What is man?' 'What is his destiny?' 'Is there any progress in the world?' are debated. While in dealing with personal problems such as profession, one may be



led on to a chain of questions of wider import. Talking of the legal profession, for instance, one may have to touch upon the basis of legal obligation, the principles of professional ethics, the nature of justice, the source of law and the like. Even everyday problems may take one far beyond the workaday world to a vastly different domain; likewise, the philosopher, pondering over ultimate questions would have to deal with matters relating to life as they impinge on him. The common man and the philosopher often proceed, from their respective spheres to that of the other. From this it may follow that the Thracian maid was not altogether wrong in her banter; but on behalf of the philosopher may it not be said that if he was unmindful of the immediate environment, he was preoccupied with things which count more to man than food and raiment?

The history of thought shows that some philosophers have tried to avert laughter at their expense, by narrowing down the gap between the two sets of values and stating that philosophy is no intellectual luxury, but a useful occupation serving everyday life. Bacon, for example, said that philosophical knowledge is an instrument for promoting scientific discoveries and inventions. Descartes rejected the speculative philosophy of the ancient and advocated a practical philosophy whereby we may become the 'masters and disposers of nature'. These attempts to present metaphysics as purposeful have had the unintended effect of discrediting it. Among contemporary philosophical trends, the analytical and existential philosophies that have dominated the scene for nearly half a century, though highly critical of one another, have, each in its own way, discredited metaphysics which is their common foe. Rudolf Carnap, one of the leading exponents of the positivist school, criticised Heidegger's brand of ontology as senseless. With its fanatical adherence to hard facts and approved form of evidence, positivism accused metaphysics as making illegitimate incursions into the domain of the unknown. From Heidegger's side came the counter attack that positivism is unmindful of being itself, but he did not hesitate to charge all philosophical thinking involved in analysing and breaking up ideas, concepts, as a betrayal of true philosophy and as wasted endeavour. Linguistic analysis treats philosophy as just language analysis.

Again, the breath-taking achievements of science and technology have encouraged many to believe that the sciences which are lighting up the different parts of the world would before long have brought under their domain what was hitherto unknown and have discovered all the truths about the world, and that philosophy may find its occupation gone.

In spite of the achievements of science and of the suicidal tendencies in the domain of philosophy itself, it would be abundantly clear that metaphysics is inescapable and most essential. As new areas

of the unknown are annexed by science, there comes the conviction that the known and the knowable make up but a thin mystery crust over a sphere of infinite dimensions. The residue cannot be ignored; it is what matters most. The main function of metaphysics is to inquire into the real nature of the world in its entirety, the deeper significance of things and events in nature and the ground of the universe: problems which none of the sciences raises. In the language of the Upaniṣads, it seeks knowledge of the Real of the reals (*satya-satya*), the wisdom by knowing which what has not been thought becomes thought, what has not been understood understood. *Ekavijñānena sarvaṁ vijñānaṁ*—the one knowledge which includes all knowledge. To put it differently, once the ultimate cause of all things, the ground of all being is known everything proceeding from it is known. When the guiding principle of the universe, the Ādeśa, is understood everything is understood. Hence the Upaniṣadic injunction: *kāraṇam tu dheyat*. As Kant says "that the human mind will ever give up metaphysical researches entirely is as little to be expected as that we should prefer to give up breathing altogether in order to avoid inhaling impure air. There will always be metaphysics in the world".<sup>1</sup>

There could be no objection to man seeking to understand nature and the laws of its working and to make it an instrument serving his purposes; only that study and investigation is not called philosophy. Philosophy is not just another science dealing with a given area and using techniques and procedures which science has developed and found useful, intended to make his worldly life successful and efficient.

Philosophy is concerned neither exclusively with the empirical nor wholly with the transcendental, but it starts with the empirical and is led to what transcends it in the search for the ground of common experiences. The frontiers of the known are pushed farther and farther. The philosophical quest, says the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad*, is a pious duty cast upon every one interested in the wise direction of his life.

The preceptor named Nāka Mauḍgalya enjoins the pursuit of philosophy and the propagation of ultimate truth—learning and teaching of the Veda—as constituting true *tapas* (austerity) *svādhyāya pravacane eveti nāko mauḍgalyaḥ; taddhitapas, taddhitapas*. If conducted with earnestness and humility and reverence, the quest may enable the seeker to perceive the world as part of a wider reality and to find his completion and fulfilment in the Supreme from which he has been alienated; the 'roots' are seen in their proper setting in the tree as a whole. He passes from the part to the whole and from the whole to the part. The synthetic vision brings about a 'transvaluation of values' and when he returns to the world 'remade' a 'new' person with his narrow loves and hates and limited outlook shed, he does not look upon the world as something to be utilised to further his selfish



ends, but as the creation of the Supreme Spirit meant to be 'the vale of soul-making'. He no longer looks upon others as means for the satisfaction of his desires but as "persons" like himself rooted in the Divine.

The philosophical quest is not a mere speculative venture intended to satisfy intellectual curiosity but also an intensely serious exercise in moral and spiritual excellence. As Thoreau says "To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but also to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity and trust". Indian systems of thought have considered philosophy as the pursuit that includes the metaphysical inquiry into the nature of reality as a whole and the moral and spiritual endeavour to realise it. They have accordingly been called *darśanas*. *Darśana* signifies the aspect of vision, actual realisation of the truth in one's own experience. *Weltanschauung* would be better rendering of it than a system of thought. The impulse to philosophy came not so much from intellectual curiosity, the need to resolve metaphysical doubts and uncertainties as from the more urgent practical need to transcend *saṁsāra*, to overcome evil and suffering which afflict all mankind. Man attempts to overcome metaphysical evil in the effort to conquer the ills of life.

The celebrated Nyāya thinker, Udayana, says at the outset, in his *Kusumāñjali*, a classic of Indian theism, that he enters upon the intellectual inquiry called thinking (*manana*) or reflection not with the primary aim of proving what has not been proven already, but as an act of supreme piety.

*nyāya carceyam īśasya mananam vyāpadeśabhāk  
upāsanaiva kriyate śravanam antarāgatā*

The logical inquiry, called *manana*, consists in reflecting on God, his *svarūpa* and *svabhāva*, is calculated to lead to an experience of the Divine, and just because it is achieved through persistent and logical effort, it is expected to dispel all doubts and uncertainties in this regard. Being the expression of the intellect in its highest reaches, it is a source of bliss (*ānanda*).

The Vedānta, like the generality of Indian philosophical systems, considers metaphysics as an effort of thought to understand the nature and significance of the Real (*Sat*), the Truth beneath the seeming, the abiding amidst the transitory — an understanding in the sense of a direct vision (*darśana*—*samāñjāna*) with a view to securing release from the sorrows of *saṁsāra*. The understanding that is expected as the fruit of rigorous thought is not indirect knowledge but direct insight. In a word, the object of the quest is a clear picture of the Real (*Tattva*), the goal of life (*puṁśārtha*) and the way to the goal (*hita*). It has a theoretical and a practical aspect; it is a view of life intended to

furnish a sound basis for the good life. Dealing with the broader and deeper aspects of things and their relevance to the good life, its emphasis falls on values rather than on facts.

The Upaniṣads declare that knowledge is the means to final release. "He who knows Him becomes immortal here; there is no other path for the attainment of final release."

*tamevaṁ vidvānamṛta ihabhavati  
nānyaḥ panthā vidyate'yanāya.*

This saving knowledge, *vedana*, is according to Rāmānuja, the same as *upāsana* (worship). Knowledge, alternately referred to as *upāsana*, meditation, worship, adoration, involves continual reflection on the truth leading to clarification. As Pascal said, "contemplation, although the highest form of the human intellectual life, is nevertheless not entirely human, but superhuman." It gives clarity and conviction and *nididhyāsana* is steady remembrance culminating in direct apprehension. The liability to error could only be corrected says the Vākyakāra, by work and worship. Thus the quest is not merely intellectual, but it involves the will and the emotion. The goal is reached as a result of the spiritualisation of cognition, conation and affection. All knowledge is of Brahman; all action is *kainkarya*, service of Brahman; and all emotions are centred in Brahman. It is significant that the Gītācārya proclaims "To those who are constantly devoted and who worship Me with single-minded love, I grant concentration of understanding by which they could reach Me." What he assures is not mere intellectual learning but the yoga of Wisdom (*buddhi-yoga*).

*teṣāṁ salatayuktānāṁ bhajatāṁ prītipūrvakāṁ  
dadāmi buddhiyogaṁ taṁ yena māmupayanti te. (X. 10)*

After *śravaṇa* comes the conscious and thorough reflection (*manana*), then *dhyāna* and it becomes *ānanda*. *Dhyāna* is to be followed by practice of concentration, meditation, which leads to renunciation, which, in its turn, leads to peace. The *Bhagavad Gītā* refers to *dhyāna* as pleasurable (*susukhaṁ kartuṁ*).

A special contribution of Vedānta is its comprehensive scheme of practical life intended to develop harmoniously the whole man with the three phases of mental life — cognition, conation and affection — in obtaining experience of Brahman, the home of the highest values, Truth, Goodness and Beauty.

Avoiding one-sided approaches, intellectualist, voluntaristic, it recommends a triune path where *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* are involved — *karma* prepares the ground for *jñāna* and *jñāna* blossoms into *bhakti*. As Yāmuna says the three are closely intertwined and mutually interacting — *trayāṇāṁ anyonya sangamah: Gītārtha saṅgraha* (st. 24).



The *brahma-jñāsu* does not pursue philosophy as a mere academic study, but as a spiritual endeavour in close association with disciplined living — an association that persists at all stages. Just as one could look through water only when the surface is absolutely calm and unruffled, one could get a vision of the Divine only when, through proper discipline, the mind has achieved mastery over the clamorous instincts and impulses. Without a discipline in right living, truth will not dawn upon the mind; and yet without knowledge to light up the path, conduct cannot be refined. Knowledge and action are intertwined, each influences and is influenced by the other, and in its highest form *jñāna* flowers into *bhakti*.

The discipline is not for the pleasure-seeker who does not hearken to the call of the higher life, but for the person who feels that a life of sensuality is unworthy and ignoble and is anxious to take the steps necessary for right living. The Śruti and Smṛti have prescribed for his guidance a variety of duties pertaining to family, society and religion. He is also required to perform certain karmas of the *nitya* and the *naimittika* variety, and to avoid certain others (*pratiṣiddhakarmas*). After fulfilling these obligatory duties, he feels free to pursue worldly ends, such as wealth, power, position and the like, so long as that is not detrimental to social well-being. By recoiling from a life of sensuality, he sublimates the baser tendencies of his nature; by performing the duties to which he is called, he functions as a useful member of society. It may be noted in passing that Vedānta does not recommend a flight from society. On such general foundation, is built up a discipline designed to lead the aspirant step by step from animality to spirituality and ultimately to divinity. Sooner or later, he realises that he cannot be both a man of God and a man of the world, but must make a choice, and he chooses the higher ideal ignoring the seductions of the lower.

The first step in the spiritual journey is initiation into the nature of the self intended to supply a theoretical basis to back up the practical efforts. The aspirant learns from a competent preceptor the scriptural teaching that the soul is an eternal, conscious principle tenanted a body and set in a world, the instrument and the field, both born of *prakṛti*, and held prisoner, as it were, by *prakṛti* working with the *guṇas*. The self has inherited tendencies, which are the result of his own past deeds and which generate, in their turn, *avidyā*, *karma*, *vāsanā* and *ruṇi*. Though subject to their influence, he has discrimination (*viveka*) to know, and the freedom to act on, the true nature of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and shape his life in the direction of achieving liberation from the clutches of *prakṛti* and its evolutes and reaching his true home in the Divine Spirit. He can use the freedom to act on this knowledge and ascend to the summit of God-realisation or ignore it and sink to the level of animal nature. Incidentally, it may be noted

that the ultimate truth is to be learnt through a study of the revealed truth at the feet of one who has known the truth. One can drink only from the living fountain.

The next step, the *sādhaka* has to take is to follow the ideal of *niṣkāma-karma*. *Niṣkāma-karma* is neither desireless nor 'disinterested' action; for there could be no action that is not prompted by some desire or other. As Kumarila says not even the dull-witted enters upon action without some end in view (*prayojana*). Again, "disinterested" is suggestive of indifference which ill goes with any meaningful account of duty. What is meant is that while most of our actions are prompted by desire to secure some selfish advantage or material gain, duty does not spring from any selfish desire. Every action does inevitably lead to some specific result or fruit (*phala*); but duty is not performed for obtaining for oneself that fruit. So much for the negative side; positively it is actuated by regard for spiritual excellence, and it is performed with a sense of dedication as an offering to God or as sacrifice. The good man performs the duties pertaining to his station in life without any thought of selfish gain and for fostering spiritual growth. That duty is not prompted by any selfish desire is seen from the fact that the moral hero, *karmayogin*, would not shirk his duty even if it were to lead to personal disadvantage or unwelcome results. The really significant feature about an act is the attitude with which it is carried out, and not the overt act.

A possible objection to this insistence on a life of action—*karma-yoga*—as a means to the blessed life is: How can Vedānta with its unshakable belief in the *karma* doctrine, prescribe a life of action—*karma-yoga*—as a means to the blessed life? Every action, besides leading to the particular result to which it is directed and the attendant pleasure or pain, tends to establish a tendency (*vāsanā*), a habit, predisposing the agent to repeat similar actions in the future; and especially in the case of undesirable actions, it also clouds the natural intelligence of the soul and gives rise to delusions. The conclusion seems inevitable that every action tends to bind the individual closer to embodied existence rather than liberate him therefrom. Vedānta seeks to resolve this difficulty with the aid of the concept of sacrifice. All actions other than those done as sacrifice or for sacrifice bind. Hence the exhortation (to Arjuna) to perform duty as sacrifice, without attachment to the fruits of action (*B. Gītā* III. 9).

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yam karmabandhanaḥ  
tadārtham karma kaunteya muktasangāḥ samācara.*

Actions as such do not bind; only work done for securing personal advantage or selfish gain inevitably bind the soul to matter; unselfish work alone is capable of giving rise to freedom of the soul. It is the motive that makes a difference to the act. When performed as a



sacrifice or for the sake of sacrifice, it does not implicate the individual in *samsāra*.

What does sacrifice signify? We may first indicate what it is not. It is not what is commonly known as the five great *yajñas* (*pañcamahā yajñas*) nor is it any of the semi-magical rites involving a kind of commercial transaction with the gods whereby we bargain, yield up something in order to get some big advantage—give a small fish to catch a big fish, as it were. What really constitutes sacrifice is indicated in a remarkable way in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. The Lord, it is said, brought men into existence along with sacrifice and said ‘By this shall ye bring forth and this shall be unto you that which will yield the milk of your desires’. That means man was told that sacrifice is the means by which he could work out his spiritual destiny. By propitiating the gods, the cosmic powers who are the manifestations of the Supreme Deity, by sacrificing to them, the worshipper gets such objects as he desires. These rewards or bounties are intended to be used for further sacrifices or acts of worship. But he who enjoys these benefits and gives nothing in return is verily a thief. Like rights which have no significance except as correlated to obligations, whatever objects and advantages have come into one’s possession, must be ploughed back into the sacrifice to augment the resources for further sacrifice. The sacrificer who eats of the remnant of the sacrificial offering for his maintenance, and that too only as a means for further sacrifice, is freed from impurities and sin and progresses spiritually; while those who cook food for their own sake ‘eat sin’. In other words, whoever employs his talents for selfish ends feeds upon sin. This is analogous to the conception of a person earning in order that he may offer it up in sacrifice — *tyāgāya sampr̥tārthāya*. To those who sacrifice in this spirit, sacrifice is verily the mythical cow of plenty that grants men whatever they may desire; and it is truly a means of achieving spiritual mastery. Thus ‘sacrifice gets an extended significance, referring to any duty totally free from selfish, utilitarian motives. Even the motive of maintenance of life would degrade the activity. Any activity prompted by this spirit is a sacrifice. There is no bifurcation between the sacred and the secular; since all duties rendered in the spirit of sacrifice acquire a sanctification.

The greatest act of sacrifice is the offering of the ego to the Supreme, *ātma samarpana*, the surrender of the individual self to its true owner.

What does it all boil down to? Shorn of all reference to cosmological forces, to semi-magic ritual and to super-natural garb, it means that the gifts, opportunities and facilities that life offers to man are not the products of chance or accident, but what have been brought on by his antecedent moral deeds. Their proper utilisation consists in dedicating them to further sacrifices, disinterested deeds,

for general welfare. That actions performed in this spirit do not bind need not be further elaborated.

The two ideals of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* — the active and the contemplative ideals — are blended so as to preserve the excellence of both while avoiding their mistakes. A classic formulation of this ideal is found in the oft-quoted verse from the *Bhagavad Gītā* —

*karmanyevā’dhikāras te mā phaleṣu kadācana |*  
*mā karma phalāhetur bhūḥ mā te saṅgoṣṭvakarmaṇi |* (II, 47)

To action alone hast thou a right, and never to fruits thereof; so let not the fruit of action be thy motive. Never allow thyself to be drawn into the path of non-action.

This involves four ideas. (1) The aspirant is under an absolute obligation to do his duty. (2) He should renounce completely all thought of gaining the fruits for himself; because actions springing from desire for fruits bind, while those inspired by respect for the moral ideal, meant as sacrifice or offering to God, do not bind. (3) While engaged in duty, he should never entertain the idea that he is responsible for the deed or of its fruit. This is intended to curb egoistic tendency which is an enemy to true spiritual life. (4) One should be ever vigilant and give no quarter to the seductive call of inaction.

The path of selfless devotion to duty is by no means easy to traverse. The obstacles to the performance of *niṣkāma-karma* are many, and they could be overcome only by constant practice and by meditation. One such is contemplation on God and this cosmic creation. Though He is perfect, self-fulfilled and has no need to work, and is not obliged by *karma* to act, He is ceaselessly active and ever engaged in the work of remaking souls. Again although He is absolute master and could create as He likes, He pays due regard to the past karmas of souls in fixing the respective lot of souls. He is the best exemplar of ceaseless and selfless duty, performed with zest and inspired by love. Contemplation on these aspects of the divine creation of this mysterious world would inspire the seeker to follow the path of duty, and achieve significant spiritual progress.

The mind that follows the wandering senses carries away the Reason of man with it, as the gale bears away the ship on the ocean.

*indriyāṇām hi caratām yaṁmano ’nuvidhīyate*  
*tadasya harati prajñāṁ vāyur nānvāmivāṁ bhaṣi* (II, 67).

Lust, anger and greed are the three gateways to hell, by them one’s self-ruin is brought about; therefore let these three be renounced.

*Action and contemplation two aspects of the same situation.*

Continued contemplation and practice are needed to fight these foes and establish control over senses by reason and will. When



utilitarian and egoistic consideration lose their hold over our action, there comes a stage in the aspirant's life when his understanding of the nature of the self as transcending its physical setting and as enjoying moral autonomy is steady and he acts with enthusiasm all the time, but not for personal profit; he performs duty in the spirit of sacrifice. His karmic load is burnt out, as it were, by the fire of understanding. Although intensely active, he may be said to be a man of knowledge, to be inactive. Paradoxical as this may seem, his actions are inspired and informed by his understanding of the soul's transcendence of the body which it inhabits even as God transcends the universe which He pervades, sustains and controls. His understanding tells him that he cannot but act; and he engages in various duties. They are *jñāna* energised, concretised.

*karmany akarma yaḥ paśyed akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ  
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu sa yuktaḥ kṛtsna karmakṛt* (IV, 18)

"He who perceives non-action (*akarma*) in action, and action in *akarma*, is among men the knower of the *śāstra*, is fit for release and carries out all the prescribed duties."

The term *akarma*, literally what is other than *karma* (action), denotes knowledge of the *ātmā*. While performing action, it is informed and inspired by the thought of the true nature of the *ātmā*. Thus action gets a thought aspect, is spiritualised; and the thought of the *ātmā* by entering into the *karma* attains an action-aspect; it is such a person that comes in for praise here as one of exceptional understanding.

Of one whose actions are all done without desire for fruits and without confounding the *ātmā* with the body and its *guṇas*, wise men say his *karman* (past good and bad deeds) are burnt up by the fire of thought (of the *ātmā* as he is). If one does action in this manner, even though he may be fully engrossed in action, he verily does no action (st. 20). He is only practising the thought of the *ātmā* as he is. If the thought of the *ātmā* is at the back of every action done as *karma-yoga*, in due course, true knowledge is realised.

Spiritual understanding is an essential factor in one who is proficient in *karma-yoga*. *Jñāna* which, according to common consent is essential for spiritual advance, is practised in *karma*. Moral action is no mechanical act or blind activity, but has understanding as its centre—through unwearied cultivation, it blossoms into the ultimate goal. While acting, the aspirant is seeking to advance in knowledge through reverent study and discussion with those proficient in philosophic wisdom.

At no time is he to give room to doubts and uncertainties, purified by the fire of knowledge, he is steady-minded and is fit to intuit the self. This illumination he gets of the self enables him to perceive all

other selves also as essentially alike in their purity. He knows further that God dwells in them all and they dwell in God, that they are also holy like God, and that there is similarity of nature in all souls making for a unified outlook.

"He who has firmly realised unity and worships Me as abiding in all beings howsoever he be engaged is a *yogī* and abides in Me."

*sarva bhūtasthitam yo mām bhajaty ekatvam āsthitāḥ  
sarvathā vartamāno'pi sa yogī mayi vartate* (VI, 31)

*Karma-yoga* finds its fulfilment in direct vision of the self, in self-discovery which is joy. The duties he has been performing all along out of regard for moral excellence, as sacrifice, as worship of the Supreme, the Lord, and Inner soul of all becomes joyous service, *kainkarya*, even as work for the beloved is never felt to be a task.

The man of action comes to be man of contemplation, without ceasing to act. The vision of the essential unity of all beings transforms his outlook so greatly that his subsequent experience gains a higher spiritual tonality. He rises above the dualities of pleasure and pain, loss and gain, success or failure and the like. Unlike the common man who is deeply engrossed in matters that concern his welfare and disposed to be indifferent to the welfare of others, the knower of the self works enthusiastically for the welfare of all (*lokasaṃgraha*). How, it may be asked, could the person so unattached work with zeal for the welfare of all beings? (*sarvabhūtahiterata*). The secret of his enthusiasm is that with the elimination of narrowness altogether, the stumbling block to whole-hearted work is removed; and the perception of Divinity in all and constant reflection on the self and its perfections, strengthen his inner resources for altruistic conduct. Examination of sense objects and worldly pursuits convinces him of their worthlessness; and this enables him to persuade, and not force, the mind to desist from running after what is base and vulgar.

Intuitive perception of the self is an essential prerequisite for entry into the path of *bhakti-yoga*—the quest for God. Already self-knowledge has shown that the self is grounded in the supreme spirit with which it is intimately bound by bonds of love, *Bhakti* involves service to, meditation on, and love of the supreme Puruṣa. There is nothing carnal in this. This is no emotional orgy, but *prema*, the flowering of knowledge of the infinite Enchanter, the very embodiment of Love. Love of God develops in intensity to the point of feeling that one cannot exist without the object of love. It prompts complete surrender of self to its owner and intensifies the yearning for realisation of union. *Viśaya kāma* gives place to *niṣkāma-karma*, which finds fulfilment in *ātmakāma*, which in its turn, leads on to *Bhagavat kama*. The spiritual journey records right through progressive advance in knowledge, action and feeling; and at every stage they grow through mutual action and interaction.



Set on the road to the realisation the supreme self, the seeker realises that man and nature constitute the two-fold powers or *vibhūti*s of the Lord, that *prakṛti* on account of its wonderful changes is rightly known as *māyā*, that the Lord is not only the ground and the creator of the universe but also the loving protector who, out of compassion, takes repeated births in order that man may avoid births and deaths. Immanent in man and nature, he is also transcendent. Though the Supreme self and the universe of men and things are inseparably related to each other as soul and body, the imperfections of souls, and nature's liability to change do not affect Him. Men and things are sustained in existence and controlled by Him; they acquire value, in fact, their very being from Him. As the Inner Soul of all, He is nearer to man than breathing and yet transcendent, being the home of all and perfections. Blissful Himself, He makes others blissful. He is easy of access to the devotee and has infinite resources and boundless concern for their well-being. Of his devotees, the *jñānin* is the foremost; he seeks God alone and seeks Him as an end in itself. For him God is all, is his very soul. God feels that the *jñānin* is His very self. 'For I am dear to him and he is dear to me. Unlike others who seek certain ends, the *jñānin* seeks Me alone.' He has *ekabhakti*. He is a *paramaikāntin*.

*priyohi jñānino'nyartham aham sa ca mama priyaḥ*

For I am suppassingly dear to him, and he is dear to Me.

While all these are indeed noble, the man of integral wisdom who loves God for his own sake and not for getting advantages of one sort or another, while others seek to use God to realise their ends, the *jñānin* belongs to God to be used according to His will. He says "Thy will, not mine, be done". 'At the end of many lives the man of wisdom resorts to Me knowing that Vāsudeva is all; such a great soul is hard to find.' As Professor Raghavachar puts in "that God is the Soul of all is a metaphysical truth; that the true lover of God is the very soul of God is a truth of Love". The Upaniṣad *siddhānta* is that God is the soul of all souls; *Bhagavad Gītā* brings out the complementary truth that *jñānin* (the *paramaikāntin*) is the soul of God.

The centre has shifted from the self to God. All activity is service of God and this augments love and when it comes to the highest pitch, the Lord, through grace, reveals His form to the devotee.

With his lower nature fully burnt out the soul in full possession of his inherent perfections, stands in God adoring, serving and meditating on the infinite glories of the Supreme, and having ever new experiences of the Divine.

*bahūnām janmanām ante jñānavān mām prapadyate  
vāsudevaḥ sarvaṃ iti sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ VII. 19.*

1. Prolegomena to any future metaphysics, Mahafy's translation, p.138.

## Morality and Spirituality: Some Models

K. J. Shah

### Introduction

In this section I first give an outline of the paper and then make some methodological remarks.

#### A

*An outline:* Let me explain what I am trying to do in the paper. In the first section, I consider whether certain changes in behaviour, e.g., change from obedience to parents to disobedience at least in some respects, represent moral adaptation or moral degeneration—an advance of materialism and Kaliyuga. One consideration, perhaps more than others and perhaps more emphatically than the others, in favour of the view that such changes in behaviour represent moral degeneration is the religious or the spiritual point of view as against the materialist point of view.

Can changes, which on other grounds are considered to be moral adaptation, be regarded as moral degeneration on spiritual or religious grounds? To put the same question more pointedly, is the spiritual or the religious reason an additional reason (additional to the other reasons) in favour of or against the view that certain changes in behaviour are moral adaptation? Perhaps the answer to this question will depend on our conception of such a life. In order to meet this possibility, in the second section, I distinguish several, but focus mainly on two, conceptions of religious or spiritual life. One of the two conceptions emphasised is that of an active life represented by Janaka or Gandhi. This kind of life, both before and after the realisation of the religious goal, is in full or maximum contact with the world, its concern with the world of action is a moral concern, and this is an intrinsic part of such a religious life. The other conception emphasised is one of a life represented by, say, a yogi in the Himalayas. This kind of life has a minimum contact with the outside world after the realisation of the goal, and whatever moral concern this kind of life has had earlier, the role of such a concern here is different from that in the former conception. The moral concern here is not a constitutive part of the religious life; at best it is instrumental in securing the religious goal. Then I go on to consider how the two conceptions of the religious life combine with the evaluation of change as moral adaptation or moral degeneration from the spiritual point of view.

In the third and the last section, I formulate some tentative conclusions. (The conclusions are tentative because I feel that I must go over the argument once again from the point of view of the



conclusions.) We find that spirituality or religion does not provide an additional ground for regarding a change either as moral adaptation or moral degeneration. To think so would only distort our moral and religious sensibility. An attempt is made also to show that the discussion does not prove that one kind of spirituality is superior to another. The only basis for such a distinction could be that a particular kind is more likely to degenerate in certain circumstances.

## B

*Some methodological remarks:* Before going on to a discussion of the foregoing issue, I should like to point out some general limitations of the paper. Even from what I have mentioned so far, it should be clear that I am not keen on defining my terms; it might even be accused that I am sloppy. My defence is that at present I am interested only in these limited aspects — if religion has the kind of forms that I have mentioned, it is not necessary at this stage to worry about distinguishing between religion and spirituality. There is at least a sense of the one and a sense of the other which are more or less alike. Without this, one would be cramped by the already existing conceptual structures. The second point I should like to make is that the types I have imagined are hypothetical and not actual e.g. if Janaka or Gandhi do not really exemplify what I make them to exemplify, it would only show that I was mistaken in the choice of my illustration, not that the example was not plausible, nor that the considerations put forward by me were irrelevant. Third, the argument is not as sophisticated as it could be and perhaps, should be. My only defence for this is:

- (i) Even when there is no sophistication, I think it worthwhile, to put the issues in a pattern which is more meaningful here.
- (ii) If some ground is prepared for higher sophistication, in this context, such sophistication will 'naturally' follow.
- (iii) If I succeed in relising these objectives even to some extent, I shall be quite happy.

## I

### *Moral adaptation vs moral degeneration*

There are times when a mode of behaviour which has been regarded as moral may cease to be so regarded and may come to be regarded as even immoral (e.g. obedience to parents and teachers); and the behaviour which has been regarded as immoral may cease to be so regarded and may come to be regarded as even moral (e.g. divorce). Such changes in behaviour pose many problems: What factors have brought about this change? What other changes is this

change likely to produce? etc. But the problem we are concerned with is: is this change in behaviour to be regarded as moral adaptation or as moral degeneration? The manner of presenting the change seems to presume that there has been change in the moral ideas of the people and there has been moral adaptation. But here there is room for doubt: Such a change may take place when there is moral degeneration.<sup>1</sup>

The example I propose to take in order to consider the issue is a simple one. It is hypothetical and schematic. It assumes that at one time obedience to parents was regarded as moral behaviour or morally obligatory behaviour. To take a specific issue, it was thought that, if the parents so desired, one should stay with one's parents rather than go out in search of a better job. Suppose that it is no longer felt morally obligatory to follow one's parents' desires in such a matter. This change in the behaviour regarding obedience/disobedience to parents in this respect is considered schematically with reference to three factors: job satisfaction and marriage satisfaction in the case of the moral agent, and the satisfaction of the financial and sentimental needs of the parents. The following table sums up the case for obedience and disobedience, then and now:

A. Now	B. Then
<i>I. Disobedience</i>	<i>I. Disobedience</i>
1. is more likely to secure the job one likes or the job one is trained to do.	1. was no more likely, maybe, it was less likely, to secure a more suitable job outside home than at home.
2. is more likely to facilitate a more suitable choice of a marriage partner.	2. was no more, maybe, it was less likely to secure a more suitable bride.
3. enables one to help the parent financially, but not sentimentally.	3. not satisfactory for the point of financial help to parents and did not help parents sentimentally.
<i>II. Obedience</i>	<i>II. Obedience</i>
1. is likely to force on one an unsuitable job.	1. enabled one to have a suitable job.
2. is likely to force on one an unsuitable bride.	2. enabled one to have a suitable bride.
3. enables one to help parents sentimentally and also to render some financial help.	3. enabled one to help the parents financially and sentimentally.

How is this change in behaviour from then to now to be described or understood? Certainly, the circumstances have changed,



e.g., the easy communications, the diversification and specialisation of jobs, etc. These changes make it both possible and necessary to seek a job away from home and then incidentally also to seek a bride away from home. In the light of this, the change in behaviour may be regarded as moral adaptation. As against this, it might be said that this is not a case of moral adaptation, but a case of the blatant pursuit of one's own interests at the cost of the real moral value of devotion to the parents and their needs. In fact this is the manifestation of Kaliyuga. It is a case of moral degeneration.

In the face of this controversy, the easy way out seems to be to take refuge in the truism that it reflects the differences either in temperament or in circumstances of the individuals holding the different views. There is hardly anything else that can be done about it. To adopt this line of thinking is to evade the problem and not to tackle it. In order to tackle the problem, one must look at the cases a little more closely. If we do so, we find this: if we look upon obedience to parents merely or mainly as a matter of devotion to parents there is little scope for discussion about whether the change in behaviour is moral adaptation or moral degeneration. But if we remember the three factors which are related to obedience/disobedience, we find that though there is change from obedience to disobedience, there is no significant change in what obedience or disobedience secures. Disobedience now secures all that obedience secured then except that the sentimental satisfaction of the parents derived from the son being at home is not secured by the disobedience now. In fact, if obedience to parents were to continue, there would be more change than if disobedience were to replace obedience. Now, if all these three factors were to be regarded as of value then we should be inclined to talk of moral adaptation rather than of moral degeneration.

But this argument in favour of the view that the changed behaviour is moral adaptation may be questioned. First, it may be said that the element which is absent from the present-day disobedience—namely, satisfying the sentiments of the parents is the truly moral element; and the other elements of value which we have accepted, at least implicitly as morally valuable, are not really so. The securing of a suitable job is a material value (*artha*) and the securing of a suitable bride—a psychological value (*karma*); second, even if one grants that these other elements have a moral value, the moral value of the sentimental satisfaction of the parents is predominantly greater than the value of these other factors. It is wrong, therefore, in this case to talk of moral adaptation, really it is moral degeneration.

Let us first consider the objection that the securing of a suitable job or of suitable bride is not a moral value at all. What is the ground for this denial of moral worth to these factors? The presupposition seems to be that an act which might be valuable if it is in the

interests of others, is not morally valuable if it is in my own material or psychological interests. There is no doubt that if some act is in one's own interests, one must be careful in claiming that it is moral—especially when it conflicts with a recognised or accepted moral value. But now the question is whether these interests, even when they are mine, have any moral worth at all.

One can press several considerations in favour of the view that these interests have a moral worth: (1) There is hardly anything even in one's own interest which does not have a social aspect, e.g. my interest in securing a suitable job is relevant also to the employer and to the whole society. (2) If one's own interests are valuable, it might be asked, why were they not emphasised earlier? The answer to this question perhaps is that the need to emphasise certain values is partly a matter of circumstances. These values were realised in the traditional set up without much difficulty. But circumstances have changed, and the realisation of these values is not something to be taken for granted. And yet their realisation is important. Hence the need to emphasise them. (3) Another factor which shows that the significance of these interests is not individual but social is that the need to emphasise their interests is restricted to a few individuals; it is general.

But do these considerations succeed in showing that these values are moral? To such a question one might respond in one of two ways. One might put forward a criterion of moral value and show that the values in question satisfy the criterion, or one might say that the kinds of considerations we have put forward are regarded as relevant in moral situations, but it is difficult to derive a formula on this basis. Each of these approaches is inadequate in its own way. The former approach has the merit of being precise and rigorous but it is not clear that there is any general agreement (let alone universal agreement), and without a general agreement, whether the values satisfy the criteria or do not do so, one will be open to the charge of begging the question.<sup>2</sup> The latter approach, even if there is agreement that the considerations are moral considerations, lacks formulation and is not rigorous enough. For the present, since our problem is not the formulation of the criterion of moral value, I shall be happy to claim merely that these considerations are generally agreed to be morally relevant.<sup>3</sup>

If the considerations we have mentioned show that it is not right to deny moral worth to actions in one's own interest, they also show that the question of greater moral worth is also not necessarily decisively against these kinds of actions. It will have to be decided in the light of the circumstances. If we are right in this, it is wrong to say that in the change from obedience to disobedience we have only moral degeneration.

Suppose we accept, on the considerations mentioned by us, that it



is wrong to deny moral worth to personal interests just because they are personal interests, or even to attribute to them a moral worth less than that of devotion to one's parents. Yet there is another presupposition which will bring about the same result. This presupposition is clearer when we consider the claim that the only element of moral worth in the situation is the regard for the needs of the parents. The presupposition may be formulated by saying that only that is of moral worth which is embodied in a rule traditionally accepted or supported by religion. But is there no basis for the rule except in tradition or religion? If so, there is no question of adaptation of morality. In the context of religion or spiritual needs, any change in this behaviour is only degeneration. But does religion/spirituality require such a rigid unchanging morality? We shall consider this question in the next section.

## (II)

*Morality and religion/spirituality*

In considering the question we raised at the end of the last section, we must remember that the answer to the question may not always be the same; it may depend on the form of spirituality, especially when the form is understood with reference to the role of morality in the attainment of a spiritual/religious life. The role of morality in this context may be conceived in at least three ways: First, morality may be regarded as an intrinsic constituent of spirituality. Second, it may be regarded not as an intrinsic constituent, but only as an instrument for attaining the spiritual goal. Third, morality may be regarded as irrelevant to the attainment of the spiritual goal. Of these three different ways, the last one is not relevant for us: in this case there is no question of a change in the accepted moral behaviour coming into conflict with spiritual requirements. It is in respect of the first two that we have to ask if change in the prescribed moral behaviour conflicts with spirituality is moral degeneration from the spiritual point of view. But before doing so, I should like to explain what I mean by the two kinds of relationship between morality and religion/spirituality. This I shall do by arranging some forms of spirituality in series with these two forms at the two ends.

At one end of the series we have the form of spirituality in which morality is not merely an instrument but an intrinsic element of religious life. In such a spiritual life, one is necessarily concerned with the moral issues in the affairs of the world. The illustrations of this kind of spirituality are provided, say, by the life of Gandhi in modern times and by the life of Janaka, to take an instance from Ramayana. At the other end of the series we have the form of spirituality in which morality is only an instrument. Once the instrument has served its purpose, the goal does not involve any interest in the affairs of the

world. Any interest in these affairs is reduced to a minimum. The illustration for this kind of spirituality is provided by a yogi in the Himalayas. In between these two forms we can distinguish several forms of spirituality according to the degree and kind of interest in the affairs of this world. Next to Janaka and Gandhi, we may mention a life like that of Sankara. It might be noted that though Sankara was very active in relation to the world, he was perhaps not so much concerned with the material welfare of the people and the moral issues related to the attainment of this welfare as with their spiritual welfare. Vivekananda may be said to be in between Gandhi and Janaka on the one hand, and Sankara on the other. He preached not only be attainment of spiritual goals but also the attainment of the material goals of the people. A further withdrawal from the affairs of the world is represented by Ramakrishna and Aurobindo. They did not go from one corner of the country to another like Sankara, but spread their message through those who came to see them. Further, in a case like that of Ramana Maharshi, one feels that even if he had no visitors, he would not have bothered about spreading his message. The different forms of religious life are represented below in a series.

A	B	C	D	E
Janaka	Sankara	Ramakrishna	Ramana	Himalayan
Gandhi		Aurobindo	Maharshi	Yogi

With reference to the spectrum of the forms of spiritual life, I should like to make the following comments:

1. The use of the two terms—religious and spiritual—as if they are freely interchangeable is atrocious. But my defence is that there is at least one sense of the term religion and at least one sense of the term spirituality such that these two are more or less one. This is seen in the fact that the lives we have used as illustrations could be described both as spiritual and religious. It is also obvious that I am not using the term religious with reference to any denominational religion. And for my purpose it is not necessary to go into the distinction between religion and spirituality.

2. This account of each of the categories is sketchy and the particular cases may not illustrate the category as described. Further the illustrations for the different categories may not be easy to distinguish in actuality. This, however, does not affect the main argument about how far a change in prescribed moral behaviour conflicts with spirituality.

3. What is the basis of lumping these cases together as cases of spirituality? The basis is, first, that these cases are regarded as such. Second, if we want to formulate the basis, we can perhaps say that in



all the cases there is 'self-realisation', however different the meaning of the term may be in the different cases.

Having described these two forms of spirituality, let us ask how far changes in the prescribed moral behaviour, which on other than spiritual considerations can be accepted as moral adaptation, come into conflict with spirituality and are therefore to be regarded as moral degeneration? This we shall do by considering the effect on spirituality of (a) the view that what according to other considerations is moral adaptation is, from the spiritual point of view, moral degeneration, and (b) the view that what according to other considerations is moral adaptation is, from the spiritual point of view also, really so. Thus we shall have to consider four possibilities:

1. Suppose the Janaka type of spirituality is combined with the idea what on other considerations is moral adaptation is, from the spiritual point of view, moral degeneration. Then by hypothesis, there will be moral out-datedness and stagnation. But what will happen to spirituality? Will it be saved or will the goal of spirituality itself be defeated? For this kind of spirituality, morality is its constitutive element. This element will be distorted, and directly or indirectly through failing to contribute what moral concern contributes, the goal of spirituality, will also be defeated.

2. Suppose that the spirituality of the Himalayan Yogi is combined with the idea that what, on other grounds is moral adaptation, is on spiritual grounds, moral degeneration. Once again, it is obvious that morality will be outdated and stagnant. But what will happen to spirituality? In so far as morality is not a constitutive part of spirituality, and it is only an instrument, apparently, spirituality will not be affected. But can an outdated instrument help the attainment of spiritual goals?

The answer to this question will depend on whether morality is a necessary instrument or only one possible instrument for the attainment of the spiritual goal. If it is the former, then it has a definite sort of function, say, the disciplining of emotions in the attainment of the spiritual goal. If so, an outdated morality cannot perform this function and, therefore, it cannot serve as an instrument of spiritual attainment. But if morality is only one of the instruments, besides such other instruments as tantric practices etc., of attaining the spiritual goal, no clear answer can be given if an outdated morality will help attain the spiritual goal. But in so far as this is so, from the spiritual point of view, the distinction between moral adaptation and moral degeneration becomes irrelevant.

3. Suppose now that the spirituality of the Janaka type is associated with the view that the change in behaviour is moral adaptation, and not moral degeneration, even from the spiritual point of view. Then clearly morality will not be outdated and distorted, and in so

far as morality is a constituent of spirituality, spirituality too will not be affected. This does not mean that when moral adaptation is accepted a such even from the spiritual point of view, there is no difficulty for the attainment of spirituality. There may be, and, in fact, there is. Suppose that the changes in the circumstances are very rapid (as they are in the advanced countries) and suppose further that there is continuous adaptation or there is continuous need for adaptation, the demands of adaptation may pose a danger for the spiritual needs of the individual. The danger comes from the fact that the unity of the individual may be lost in the process; and this perhaps is a necessary element in the spiritual goal.

4. Let us now turn to the last combination: the combination of the Himalayan Yogi type of spirituality with the view that moral adaptation is such also from the spiritual point of view. In that case, once again, there is no danger of moral distortion. Nor is there danger to the contribution of morality as an instrument in the attainment of spirituality. But here too, there is danger from too continuous a demand for adaptation. Further, in so far as there is this continuous adaptation recognised as such from the spiritual point of view also, the distinction between morality as a constitutive element of spirituality and as merely an instrument for the spiritual goal, tends to disappear.

### III

#### *Some Tentative Conclusions*

From the foregoing account we can formulate the following conclusions

(1) If a change in behaviour is moral adaptation on the basis of other considerations, and it is regarded as moral degeneration from the spiritual point of view; not merely morality is distorted, but also spirituality—whatever be the form of spirituality. If on the other hand, what is moral adaptation on the basis of other considerations is regarded as such also from the spiritual point of view, then by hypothesis morality is not distorted and spirituality need not be distorted on this count, though it may be distorted on other grounds—e.g. the continuous demand for adaptation. If we are right in this, then spirituality does not determine whether certain change is moral degeneration. It does not determine the content of morality. It is really morality that determines the content of spirituality either directly as a constituent of spirituality, or indirectly as a necessary instrument of spirituality. This means that if disobedience or divorce can be shown to be moral on other grounds, then they need not conflict with spiritual ends.

(2) If we are right, the two forms of spirituality on which focussed, must equally be concerned about morality at least before the spiritual goal is attained.

(3) (i) Both the types of spirituality may agree or disagree with



the evaluation of change as moral adaptation. In agreeing or disagreeing, both the kinds of spirituality are equally at an advantage or at a disadvantage. There is, therefore, no reason for choosing one or the other form of spirituality on the ground that it enables one to adjust to changing circumstances. Then is the choice between the two only a personal one? Before we give up the problem at that stage, we need to consider the possible grounds for preferring the one to the other.

(ii) Sometimes it is claimed that one form of spirituality is superior to the other because it is either more complete or more perfect or more pure than the other. By the more complete or the more perfect example of spirituality, I mean that spirituality in terms of which the meaning of the term is to be understood. The other example or examples are either truncated or impure. But is it possible for us to make such a distinction between the two forms of spirituality with which we have been mainly concerned? On this basis argument can be advanced in favour of either form of spirituality. It might be said that the Janaka type is more complete and the yogi type is incomplete. Just as the movement of hands as if practising tennis is understandable only in the context of the existence of a game of tennis, so also the point of the life of a mystic or a yogi is intelligible only in the context of a life like that of Janaka. On the other hand it might be said that the yogi type is the pure type of spirituality and the other type is only a concession to social needs and to that extent it is impure. It is wrong to think that this type is only a truncated form of the Janaka type, in fact it is quite possible that that was the original type and the Janaka type was recognized as a possible extension only later on.

But there is nothing in the nature of these forms of spirituality which necessitates the logical dependence of one form on the other. Each is intelligible without the other. And historically also it is doubtful if one can be claimed to be temporally prior to the other.

(iii) Sometimes it is said that even if all the cases in the series may be said to have equal spiritual value; A, on account of its social value, on the whole, more valuable than E. On such a suggestion, one can make two comments: (a) even so A is not spiritually more valuable, and (b) the social value of E is difficult to compute. Once again, therefore, we have no basis for grading the forms of spirituality.

(iv) But then is it a matter of merely personal choice? Though the role of the personal factor cannot be ruled out, one can suggest circumstances in which one form of spirituality is generally superior to the other. For example, when the times are changing fast, a form of spirituality which is more 'flexible' is likely to be generally superior to the other. But is one form of spirituality more flexible than the other? From the nature of the cases, it need not be so. But actually it may happen that one form is more responsive than the other—whatever the

reason for such responsiveness. For example, one might say that the yogi type of spirituality is less responsive to the changes. And for this reason, this kind of spirituality may be said to be degenerate and the Janaka type of spirituality the more acceptable form of spirituality.

(4) If these tentative conclusions can be sustained on further examination of the arguments in this paper and of other arguments; it might perhaps help our discussion of these issues as they arise here in India and as they arise in a comparative study of Indian and European thought on these problems.

1. It might be said that the description one chooses—moral adaptation or moral degeneration—will partly depend on whether the change is general or limited to a few individuals. If the change in behaviour is general, one is more likely to say that it is moral adaptation, and if it is restricted to a few individuals, one is more likely to say that it is moral degeneration. But it must be borne in mind that moral degeneration can be general and moral adaptation individual. One must, therefore, seek one's understanding of moral adaptation and moral degeneration either independently of, or in other factors besides, the general or restricted nature of change.
2. There are several attempts to arrive at an agreed criterion, not only as a method, but also in terms what is to be regarded as morally valuable.
3. It must not be forgotten that the kinds of difficulties that arise in the case of one's material or psychological interests arise also in the case of showing the moral worth of satisfying the financial and sentimental needs of the parents.



J. F. Staal

This is a very clear and well-argued paper, and not at all sloppy as Mr. Shah too modestly suggests. However, I find myself in almost total disagreement with two of his theses. (As a matter of fact, I could not very well disagree with them had they not been so clearly expounded.) My disagreement, it should be stressed, is subjective, and I do not dare to say that Mr. Shah is wrong and I am right. The reason is that this entire discussion seems to me to be based not upon established truths, but upon speculation and upon personal opinions and preferences. Let me explain.

(1) Whatever the advocates of absolute morality have said, they have never produced a single argument that I found cogent. I therefore adhere to the opinion that morality is relative. But since we obviously have to adopt some principles (though on insufficient grounds), I like to adopt the principle that people should be as free and independent as is possible without conflicting with the freedom and independence of others. It follows, among other things, that children should not obey parents (unless they have independent reasons to do what their parents tell them). This applies of course to parents themselves. If parents wish to be sentimentally satisfied by their children, they are not free or independent. It therefore is an accessory benefit of the freedom and disobedience of children, that they may thus help to also set their parents free.

(2) I happen to believe that spirituality and morality have nothing to do with each other. Morality is set up to better the world, to help others, to satisfy our feelings of guilt or shame, or to make the institutions of society function smoothly. It depends on the state of society, therefore, and is hence relative. Spirituality on the other hand deals with the basic relation between man and his god, or the absolute, or the universe. By definition it is concerned with what is permanent in man, and not subject to the vagaries of his social and historical surroundings. May be there is no such permanent thing, in which case it becomes difficult to argue for spirituality (as the Buddhists found). But if there is, spirituality is concerned with it, and therefore is absolute: I chose to define it so. Now there can be no dependence of the absolute on the relative. In particular, none of the finite, causal, conditioned actions in the realm of morality can affect the unconditioned area of spirituality. I think this has been well argued by Suresvara against the *karmajñānasamuccayavāda*. But this point of view, if it is right, and as Mr. Shah has himself stressed, prevents the issues he has raised from being raised.

## Pre-Rational Harmony in Heidegger's Essential Thinking and Ch'an Thought

Chang Chung-yuan

In recent Western philosophy we find two leading thinkers who have changed their approaches to truth and adopted methods that are opposite to those they previously employed. One of these thinkers is Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose analysis of language led him to reject philosophical analysis and to devote himself to "the concrete and actual, dissolving the distinction between subject and object."<sup>2</sup> In his study on *Wittgenstein: Language and Philosophy*, Warren Shibles makes a direct comparison between Wittgenstein's thinking and the teachings of early Chinese Ch'an masters such as Ma-tzu, Nan-chuan, Lin-chi, and Chao-chou. Both the Ch'an masters and Wittgenstein emphasize the limits of language and reject language which analyzes and distorts, creating differentiations between subject and object.

Another thinker who originally pursued a subjective, analytical approach and then changed his method to a more direct, poetic approach is Martin Heidegger. In 1929, when Heidegger published his famous work *Being and Time*, he himself confessed that his detailed analysis of the ontological structure of human experience had difficulty encountering Being. In his "Letter On Humanism" he comments:

The necessary...comprehension of this other way of thought — the thought that abandons subjectivity — is made more difficult by the fact that at the publication of *Being and Time* the third section of the first part, entitled "Time and Being" was suppressed. Here, the whole thing is reversed. The section was suppressed because the thinking failed to find language adequate to this reversal and did not succeed through the aid of the language of metaphysics.<sup>3</sup>

The reversals in the methods of thinking of Wittgenstein and Heidegger are both worthwhile to study. My paper today will concentrate on the recent approach of Heidegger and its relation to Ch'an Buddhism. My topic is "Pre-Rational Harmony in Heidegger's Essential Thinking and Ch'an Thought." Heidegger's essential thinking is also called "meditative thinking." It is the "other way of thought" referred to above. In order to discuss this "other way of thought" we may follow the comparison between Hegel's thinking and Heidegger's thinking which Heidegger himself has drawn in his *Identity*



and Difference. Heidegger says that for Hegel, the "matter of thinking" is the Absolute Concept which develops to its highest essential freedom as the Absolute Idea, or Reason. This Reason contains within itself the entire logical-dialectical process which unfolds in the actual world. Heidegger points out that near the end of his *Science and Logic* Hegel says "Only the Absolute Idea is Being, imperishable Life, self-knowing Truth, and it is all Truth."<sup>4</sup> In short, the matter of thinking for Hegel is "the developed fullness in which what has been thought has been and now is thought."<sup>5</sup>

For Heidegger, on the other hand, the matter of thinking is not what has already been thought, but "what has not yet been thought, from which what has been thought receives its essential space."<sup>6</sup>

Hegel's thinking has the character of the Absolute Concept. In his system, previous thinking is included into "a still higher development and systematization" which surpasses it. Thus, according to Heidegger, Hegel's thinking has the character of "elevation" which "leads to the heightening and gathering...of truth...as absolute...in the sense of the completely developed certainty of self-knowing knowledge."<sup>7</sup>

Heidegger's thinking, however, is "no longer an elevation, but the step back." This step back "points to the realm which until now has been skipped over, and from which the essence of truth becomes first of all worthy of thought."<sup>8</sup>

The step back does not mean an isolated step of thought but rather...the manner in which thinking moves and a long path.<sup>9</sup>

Following the step back, Heidegger says, "our thinking...leads us away from what has been thought so far in philosophy. Thinking...brings what is thought into a confrontation in which we behold the history of this thinking, "with respect to its source."<sup>10</sup> For Hegel, this is a traditional problem; but for Heidegger, it is "what has remained unasked in the history of thinking."<sup>11</sup>

In Chinese Neo-Confucianist philosophy we encounter thinking which is similar to Hegel's rational thought. For Neo-Confucianists, thinking evolves or develops rationally. It is universal and transcendental, and is called *li*, or Principle, or Reason. *Li* is the timeless totality of all truth in the universe and is sometimes called the Ultimate, or *T'ai Chi*. In short, *li* is absolute conceptual Reason which is close to Hegel's Absolute Idea. A School of *Li* has developed in China from the twelfth century until recent times. The discovery of the reality of *li* enables man to attain to an eternal, pure, and ideal world.

In contrast to the Neo-Confucianist School of *Li*, there is the School of Ch'an in Chinese Buddhism, which stresses non-conceptual

and non-analytical thinking in an intuitive approach to reality. Ch'an's thinking is neither cognitive nor abstract but is intuitive, concrete, and factual. The thinking of the School of *Li* creates the dichotomy between the knower and the known. In the School of Ch'an, the knower and the known are one. This oneness is the root which is prior to all dichotomies.

In his reply to Hu Shih's letter in *Philosophy East and West*, Daisetz T. Suzuki discusses Ch'an epistemology. He says that we can have two kinds of information about reality. The first is called "knowable knowledge" and is knowledge *about* reality. The second is called "unknowable knowledge" and is that which comes out of reality itself. Knowable knowledge involves the distinction between subject as knower and object as known. All knowledge which is based on this dichotomy is knowable because it is public and accessible to everyone. Unknowable knowledge, on the other hand, is individual knowledge which is the result of an inner experience. Yet the man who has such private knowledge is at the same time convinced of its universality. He knows that it is inherent in everybody, but everybody is just not aware of it.<sup>12</sup>

Knowable knowledge is relative knowledge. Unknowable knowledge is absolute knowledge which cannot be communicated through words or ideas. It is the knowledge one has of himself directly and immediately, without any mediation between himself and his knowledge. It is the origin of all knowledge and "is not knowledge itself."

According to Heidegger, the nature of truth always appears to metaphysics in the "derivative form of the truth of knowledge and the truth of propositions which formulate our knowledge;"<sup>13</sup> truth as unconcealedness, however, may be prior to all metaphysical truth. The knowledge to which Heidegger refers is the "knowable knowledge" of Ch'an Buddhism. It is the manifestation of unconcealedness which belongs to metaphysics, but not to the origin of metaphysics. The thinking of metaphysics is what Heidegger calls representational thinking which is the traditional, logical thinking of metaphysics. It cannot reach the origin of metaphysics which is the nature of its truth. What is needed to reach this origin is a more rigorous essential thinking which is not logical or rational but is an intuitive return to the origin of metaphysical thought. In Heidegger's words:

If our thinking should succeed in its efforts to go back into the ground of metaphysics it might well help to bring about a change in human nature, accompanied by a transformation of metaphysics.<sup>14</sup>

In *Identity and Difference* Heidegger's thinking is directed to a realm "which the key words of metaphysics—Being and beings, the ground and what is grounded—are no longer adequate to utter."<sup>15</sup> These



words refer to what differs between Being and beings. The origin of the difference cannot be thought within the realm of metaphysics. Here, Heidegger's thinking is "on its way" to the path into the origin of metaphysics. It achieves the step back "out of metaphysics into the active essence of metaphysics."<sup>10</sup> The step back must yet pass through the difficulty which lies in language. For Heidegger, "Western languages are languages of metaphysical thinking." What is needed to accomplish the step back are "other possibilities of utterance — and that means at the same time of a telling silence."<sup>11</sup>

Once man accomplishes the step back and "a telling silence" he will attain to his real or authentic nature which is the "higher activity" of meditative thinking. Essential thinking is the means discovered by Heidegger to achieve a "direct and immediate reference beyond man to Being."<sup>12</sup> "Releasement toward things" and "openness to the mystery" are two essential aspects of this way of thinking. Through them, man will attain "a kind of transmutation" of himself which will enable him "to pass out of bondage to what is clear and evident ... on to what is ultimate, however obscure and difficult that may be."<sup>13</sup>

We can also understand Heidegger's "releasement toward things" and "openness to the mystery" in Ch'an terms. In Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* we read: "Zen in its essence is the art of seeing into the nature of one's own being."<sup>20</sup> Zen "points the way from bondage to freedom;" it makes us drink right from the fountain of life and liberates us from all of the yokes which make us suffer in this world. In Ch'an, releasement toward things and openness to the mystery mean "isness" or letting things be themselves; that is, letting the flower be red and the willow green. It means to shiver in the winter and to enjoy the breeze in the summer. Through such releasement, in Heidegger's words, we are "taking a stand which reveals Being;" that is, we are "in-dwelling" or "dwelling in Being."<sup>21</sup> In Ch'an this means to abide in the Tao and to be open to the reality of things.

Prior to his recent approach of essential thinking, Heidegger tried to work out the question of Being through an analysis of the ontological structures of man's Being, i.e., the primordial whole of Dasein, in terms of the ground of temporality. For Heidegger, man is essentially historical. However, he does not conceive of history in the relative sense as "the connectedness of motions of Objects," nor as a "free-floating sequence of experiences" of subjects. History is more primordially interpreted as the entire "context" of events and "effects" which draws on through the past, present, and future."<sup>22</sup> As John Anderson says in his *Introduction to Discourse On Thinking*, history is "a mode of knowing, it is a return to origins in the sense in which intelligibility must have its roots in what is prior to thought."<sup>23</sup>

The possibility of history lies in the fundamental historicity of man's Being. Historicity is the ground for the understanding of Being which is handed down to us through human history. Historicity is grounded in historicity which constitutes the Being of man in its very basis. The "hidden basis" of authentic historicity, in turn, is authentic temporality. Thus, the primordial basis of man's historical Being-in-the-world is temporality.<sup>24</sup>

For Heidegger, temporality or primordial time is not ordinary, relative time which is accessible to the ordinary understanding. Ordinary time is a "pure sequence of nows" in which the now, or present is separated from the past and the future. Primordial time, on the other hand, is the basis of authentic existence. It constitutes the unity of past, present, and future and is the source of all ordinary or "derivative" time.<sup>25</sup>

In Ch'an Buddhism we also find the conception of primordial time which is not merely "contentless form" but is identified with Being itself. In Ch'an this means that time does not have a separate substance, but is identified with existence. That is, time is existence, existence is time. As Dogen, the founder of Soto Zen in Japan in the thirteenth century says; "The time we call spring blossoms directly as an existence called flowers. The flowers, in turn, express the time called spring. This is not existence within time; existence itself is time."<sup>26</sup>

In Ch'an, primordial time is also distinguished from ordinary or "specific" time which is expressed as "this time" or "that time." Specific time is separated into past, present, and future while primordial or "basic" time, as in Heidegger's thinking, is the unity of past, present, and future. It is the source from which ordinary time arises and to which it returns.

Although we do find similarities between Heidegger's primordial time and primordial time in Ch'an, what we have said indicates that we are still in the realm of conceptualization. The thinking in Heidegger's later approach is "beyond activity and passivity" and does not conceptualize in such terms as time or temporality.

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics* Heidegger discusses the traditional differentiation between Being as object and thinking as subject. What Heidegger seeks to understand is "the origin of the differentiation," in which the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity is abandoned.<sup>27</sup> For Heidegger, Being and thinking are "one and the same." The unity that is meant in this "self-sameness" is "the unity of the belonging together of antagonisms. This is original oneness."

Being and thinking thought together in this way in Ch'an Buddhism is *i nien*, or one-thought viewing. It is the thought that "abandons subjectivity" and is called the "mind of no-mind." It is thinking that is free from objective limitations as well as from subject-



tive orientations and distortions. One-thought viewing signifies our inner awareness of ultimate reality, and not knowledge that is intellectually acquired. Through it, we break loose from the bonds of relative knowledge and are able to view things in one thought.<sup>29</sup> Thus, we see that Heidegger's thinking is similar to the one-thought viewing of Ch'an. Through one-thought viewing or essential thinking, in Heidegger's thought, man's essential nature is achieved.

The nature of essential or meditative thinking is man's "in-dwelling releasement to that-which-regions;" that is, man's opening to Being itself. In the conception of that-which-regions we see a further illustration of the identification of opposites. That-which-regions is conceived as the "nearing and distancing." The approach through meditative thinking, Heidegger says, is a "coming into the nearness of distance."<sup>30</sup> That-which-regions "regions all, gathering everything together and letting everything return to itself, to rest in its own identity."<sup>31</sup> It is "the nearness of distance, and the distance of nearness."<sup>32</sup> In his "Conversation On A Country Path" Heidegger expresses the experience of thinking during the "Conversation" as "coming near to and so at the same time remaining distant from that-which-regions." Or, as he says: "Releasement lies ... beyond the distinction between activity and passivity."<sup>33</sup> It is a "higher activity of thinking" which is beyond relative distinctions. "Higher acting is yet no activity" according to both Heidegger and Ch'an. Affirmation simultaneously followed by immediate negation is the approach of *chen-kung miao-yu*, or real void and subtle reality.<sup>34</sup> According to Ch'an, when we say that something is real, we do not mean relative reality. When we say that it is void, we do not mean a relative void. What is real is void, what is void is real. This identification of the void and the real is achieved by the absolute mind, or one-thought viewing which is free from all dichotomy. It is the emergence of constant consciousness which is conscious of itself, and yet is not different from the ordinary mind. The emergence of this consciousness may be identified with Heidegger's conception of *lichtung*, or clearing and lighting.<sup>35</sup>

Ch'an Buddhists define this mind of consciousness which is free from subjectivity as "neither Being nor Non-being and simultaneously neither not-Being nor not Non-being." This mind is achieved by the refined approach of the San-lun School (the Chinese Madhyamika School) called the Double Truth on Three Levels. The double truth is a common truth and a higher truth. For example, Being is the common truth and Non-being is the higher truth on the first level. The common man sees things in their Being and knows nothing of their Non-being. For Buddhists, all things are Non-being. On the second level, Being and Non-being are the common truth; the higher truth is neither Being nor Non-being. On the third level, the common truth

is both Being and Non-being and neither Being nor Non-being. The higher truth is both not Being and not Non-being and neither not Being nor not Non-being. At this level, one of the earliest Ch'an Buddhists says: "not only are the means of expression destroyed, but the roots of mental activity itself are cut out." This is what Ch'an Buddhists call the mind of no-mind which is free from the bondage of subjectivity. Although these three levels form a refined dialectic, their purpose, according to the San-lun School, is to free the mind from logical bondage. I wonder whether this logical approach which is yet free from logic would be acceptable to Heidegger, who says: "that-which-regions is the nearness of distance and the distance of nearness ... a characterization which should not be thought of dialectically."<sup>36</sup>

Both Heidegger's meditative thinking and one-thought viewing in Ch'an indicate man's ontological experience. That is, through such thinking man experiences his own true nature which is identified with the truth of Being itself. For Heidegger and for Ch'an ontological experience is identified with aesthetic feeling. As Heidegger says: art is "one way in which truth happens."<sup>37</sup> In Ch'an, ontological experience is identified with the highest aesthetic achievement. Thus, what we have said concerning Heidegger's "openness to the mystery" and "releasement toward things" may be concretely exemplified through a comparison of the basic aesthetic principles of Heidegger and Ch'an.

As we know, Kant's great step is to identify the realm of aesthetics as a domain of human experience which is as high as the cognitive and the moral. The three realms distinguished by Kant, i.e., nature, morality, and art, are each governed by their own a priori principle: nature by the principle of conformity to law, morality by the principle of final purpose, and art by the principle of purposiveness. Kant maintains that there is a fundamental ground of unity between the realms of nature and morality which makes possible the transition from ordinary understanding to higher moral reason. The idea of this ground of unity is contained within the aesthetic principle of purposiveness. According to this principle, the aesthetic judgment forms the mediating link between morality and nature.<sup>38</sup> It follows that the beautiful, as the object of the aesthetic judgement, is a symbol of the morally good. The sensible element in beautiful art is always in harmony and conformity with the moral ideas. Thus, as Croce says: the teleological judgment in Kant's philosophy is "the basis and condition for the aesthetic."<sup>39</sup> That is, at the basis of the form of beauty there is a logical concept of purpose. The beautiful is merely an ornament through which to express the logical concept. Thus, for Kant, aesthetical perfection is not as high as logical perfection.

Kant divides the world into the realms of sensible appearance and



supersensible reality, or things-in-themselves. Human finite knowledge and experience are limited to the sensible realm. Man cannot know or experience the transcendental things-in-themselves, but can only think them in the transcendental ideas of reason. Kant's aesthetics belongs to the sensible world of appearances, and cannot attain to transcendental reality. Thus, as Croce says:

He (Kant) finds no place for imagination among the powers of the spirit, but places it among the facts of sensation. He knows a reproductive imagination and an associative, but he knows nothing of a genuinely productive imagination...<sup>40</sup>

Hegel went beyond Kant in his conception of a mental imagination which is both imagination and intellect. This mental imagination is capable of attaining to the highest Idea or reality, while for Kant, imagination is merely sensible and therefore limited to the appearances of the sensible world. For Hegel, as Croce comments:

Artistic imagination does not work in the same way as the passive or receptive fancy. It does not stop at the appearances of sensible reality, but searches for the internal truth and rationality of the real.<sup>41</sup>

For Kant, art and beauty cannot be identified with the ultimate or absolute. Aesthetics is merely a symbol of morality or the sensible illustration of supersensible ideas. For Hegel, art and beauty are raised to the level of the Absolute. Beauty and truth are one and the same. Truth is the Idea as Idea; beauty is the Idea in its appearance. In art, the sensible form and the spiritual content interpenetrate and form a unified whole. As Hegel says: "An ideal content must gleam through the sensible form; the form is spiritualized by this ideal light."<sup>42</sup> Thus, "no successful work of art can issue from light and careless imagination."<sup>43</sup>

Thus, Hegel places art in the realm of the Absolute Spirit. This is perhaps the greatest merit of his philosophy, but it also brought him to difficulty. Art is merely a transitory phase in the developing and self-unfolding of the Absolute. In Hegel's words:

We have assigned...a very high place to art: but...neither in content nor in form can art be considered the most perfect means of bringing before the consciousness of the mind its true interests. Precisely by reason of its form, art is limited to a particular content. Only a definite...grade of truth can be made visible in a work of art; that is to say, such truth as may be transfused into the sensible and adequately presented in that form, as were the Greek gods.<sup>44</sup>

For Hegel, art is the earliest and lowest phase in the self-unfolding of the Absolute Idea, and can never reach as high as philosophy. Philosophy is able to express a deeper truth than art. Thus, Hegel maintains:

Thought and reflection have superceded fine art  
...Art in its highest form is...a thing of the past.<sup>45</sup>

The difficulties of aesthetic achievement encountered in Hegel's system are eliminated in Heidegger's thought. Hegel wanted to identify beauty and truth, but he made beauty a lower form of truth. For Heidegger, however, beauty and truth are perfectly identified. Indeed, art is "an origin of the establishment of truth."<sup>46</sup> The art to which Heidegger refers is the origin of art. The truth of this art is not merely the truth of a particular thing, but a revelation of the being of all that is.

Heidegger's identification of beauty and truth is quite close to the identification of aesthetic feeling and ontological experience in Ch'an. To identify aesthetic feeling and ontological experience is a basic contribution of Ch'an art, and may be expressed in the saying: "Heaven and Earth and I share the same root; ten thousand things and I belong to one body." When nature, or spirit and man are identified, the difficulties of the dichotomy of art and spirit are resolved.

In his essay on "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger says that when we stand before a great painting, such as Van Gogh's painting of a peasant woman's shoes, the painting speaks to us. "In the vicinity of the work we are suddenly somewhere other than we are accustomed to be."<sup>47</sup> We are removed from our usual condition and enter into the truth that is disclosed by the work, thus bringing our own essence to a stand in the truth of what is. The "somewhere other" to which Heidegger refers is close to what Laurence Binyon, a critic of Asian art, calls the "rarer atmosphere" into which he was drawn while gazing at an ancient Chinese landscape painting. For Heidegger, Van Gogh's painting reveals the truth of the peasant woman's shoes. The shoes emerge into the unconcealment of their being. The truth of the work of art happens as the "primal conflict" between "lighting and clearing," or appearing and concealing.<sup>48</sup> The essence of truth is in this "conflict" in which the "Open" is achieved in which the truth of what is is revealed.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the art work is the "conflict" in which the unconcealment of what is takes place, and the truth of things is revealed.

For Heidegger, the thinking which is involved in the work of art lets us "turn toward the entity, think upon it in itself in regard to its being, but...at the same time let it rest upon itself in its essence."<sup>50</sup> This is the essential thinking which is expressed in Heidegger's poem



'From the Experience of Thinking' in which we read:

The poetic character of thinking is still veiled;  
where it shows itself, it resembles for a long time the  
utopia of a serene, poetic mind. But the thoughtful  
thinking is in reality the topology of being.<sup>51</sup>

The unconcealment of the truth of things in meditative thinking reveals the origin of art. This origin may be the meeting point between Heidegger's essential thinking and Ch'an thought. Based upon this meeting point, let us examine how "essential thinking" takes place in Ch'an art. First, let us hear what the famous Chinese painter Ch'i Pa-shih has to say.

According to Ch'i Pa-shih, his method of painting proceeds in such a way that it is between similarity and dissimilarity. If his painting were entirely similar to the ordinary object, he said, it would be vulgar. If it were entirely different, it would be cheating the world. In terms of the self-identity of opposites which we have found in both Heidegger and Ch'an, Ch'i Pa-shih's painting is free from the opposites of actuality and the void. This absolute freedom of the mind in producing great art is a basic contribution of Ch'an philosophy. This process of creativity in art may be illustrated in the following Ch'an poem:

The wild geese fly across the long sky above.  
Their image is reflected in the chilly water below.  
The geese do not mean to cast their image on the  
water. Nor does the water mean to hold the image  
of the geese.<sup>52</sup>

This poem indicates that aesthetic feeling and ontological experience are identified as one. This identity takes place in the absolute moment which cannot be conceived as ordinary time. It is primordial time which creates a great work of art. In the absolute moment the mind of the artist is free from limitations and distortions. It is that which is beyond all opposites and diversities. In the Chinese expression, this is Absolute Oneness which is called *wu* or Non-being, or Nothing in Heidegger's sense. When this Oneness or Non-being takes place in the mind, it is one-thought viewing. From one-thought viewing, ten thousand things are produced. For Heidegger, through meditative thinking man opens to the being of all that is. In Chuang-tzu we read:

There is an ultimate reality in things. Things  
in their ultimate reality are curved without the help  
of arcs, straight without lines, round without  
compasses, and rectangular without right angles. In  
this manner all things create themselves from their  
own inward reflection and none can tell how they  
come to do so.<sup>53</sup>

When inner reflection takes place, the process of manifesting ultimate reality is fulfilled. This process is direct, immediate, and spontaneous. The curve simply reflects its curve, the line its straightness. The flower blooms in the spring and the moon shines on the lake at night. It is as the wild geese flying over the water; they cast their images upon the water completely without intention. This spontaneous, direct, reflection indicates the absolute moment in which aesthetic feeling and ontological experience are identified. This absolute moment leads to self-realization of the highest affirmation of Non-being, or Nothing.

From what we have discussed above, we may now come to the fundamental question of the meaning of Non-being, or Nothing which may be the chief contribution of Buddhist philosophy, particularly with respect to Ch'an in this paper. In "The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics" Heidegger asks: "Why is there any Being at all and not rather Nothing?" He does not give an immediate answer, but inquires further: "How did it come about that things take precedence everywhere and lay claim to every 'is' while that which is not understood as Nothing, though it is Being itself, and remains forgotten?"<sup>54</sup> For Heidegger, "Being and Nothing hang together."<sup>55</sup> Heidegger defines Being as: "This, the purely 'Other' than everything that 'is,' is that-which-is-not ... yet this Nothing functions as Being."<sup>56</sup> What, then, is this Nothing in Heidegger's thinking? Perhaps we may better understand it by comparing it with the Nothing as described in Ch'an.

Firstly, Heidegger's Nothing is not a purely negative Nothing. In "What Is Metaphysics?" Heidegger asks:

Does Nothing exist only because the not, i.e.,  
negation exists? Or is it the other way about? Does  
negation and the not exist only because Nothing  
exists ... We assert: Nothing is more original than  
the not and negation.<sup>57</sup>

For Heidegger, then, "the very possibility of negation as an act of reason, and consequently reason itself, are ... dependent on Nothing."<sup>58</sup> Therefore, he says: "May not the apparent nonsensicality of the question and answer where Nothing is concerned only rest on the blind obstinacy of the ... intellect?"<sup>59</sup>

Ch'an's Nothing is also not merely negation. In Suzuki we read:

If we want to get to the truth of things, we must  
see them from the point where ... the consciousness  
of this and that has not yet been awakened and  
where the mind is absorbed in its ... serenity and  
emptiness. This is a world of negations, but leading



to a higher or absolute affirmation — an affirmation in the midst of negations.<sup>60</sup>

This higher affirmation is the origin of negation and is prior to all processes of reason. Therefore, "when Zen denies, it is not necessarily a denial in the logical sense. The same can be said of an affirmation."<sup>61</sup> What Suzuki refers to as "higher affirmation" may be close to Heidegger's "more original" Nothing which is neither the not nor negation.

Secondly, Heidegger's Nothing is not an abstract concept or any category of the negative. It is not merely the "conceptual opposite of what-is." Nothing is rather "at one with what-is."<sup>62</sup>

In his essay on "The Characteristics of Oriental Nothingness" Keiji Hisamatsu of Kyoto also says that Nothing is not an abstract concept, or "Nothingness in general" as opposed to "somethingness in general." Hisamatsu refers to the abstract, logical concept of Nothing in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel's Nothing is an absolute concept which is unified with the Idea of Being to form becoming. Ch'an's Nothing, on the other hand, belongs neither to being nor to nothing, but is beyond conceptualization. As Suzuki says: "Zen ... being free and absolute, knows no limitations and refuses to be handled in abstraction."<sup>63</sup>

Thirdly, Nothing in Heidegger's thinking is not "imaginary Nothing." When we seek the Nothing, he says, "we can think of the whole of what-is ... and then negate what we have thus imagined. In this way we arrive at ...imaginary Nothing, but never Nothing itself."<sup>64</sup>

Nothingness in Ch'an is also not imagined Nothingness. Nothing is not a passive contemplation or imagination; rather Nothing is beyond activity and passivity. That is, in Nothing activity and passivity are one. In Suzuki we read: "When Zen experience ... is brought to conceptualization, it is no more the experience itself; it turns into something else."<sup>65</sup> That is why the Nothing is revealed in daily activities, whether picking tea leaves, or sweeping the floor, or hoeing the fields. This Nothing is not imagination, but is concrete, living activities. In the Ch'an expression: "Carrying water, chopping wood: therein is the Tao."

In a more positive sense, Nothing for Heidegger may be considered the basis and potentiality of creativity. As he says: "Nothing is that which makes the revelation of what-is as such possible for our human existence."<sup>66</sup> Further we read in his "Memorial Address: "

If releasement toward things and openness to the mystery awaken within us, then we should arrive at a path that will lead to a new ground and foundation. In that ground, the creativity which pro-

duces lasting works could strike new roots.<sup>67</sup>

This "new ground" in Heidegger's thinking may be illustrated by the Ch'an analogy of water and waves. From the ordinary point of view, creation is represented by the waves, and the water is neglected. From the Buddhist point of view, the real creator is the water itself, which is one with the waves. We see the increasing and decreasing of a thousand waves and think that it is the real process of creation. We neglect that within the thousand waves there is the water, which is the real creator. The water never increases or decreases, nor comes into being or disappears. This water, according to Ch'an Buddhism, is the mind of man or the Self-Nature or Nothingness. It is the real origin of creation. The power of this new foundation of creativity is further expressed by Suzuki who says:

As long as it remains in itself, all is quiet. The mountain remains a mountain, towering up to the sky. The river flows along as a river, singing its way down to the ocean. But as soon as a tiny speck of cloud appears in the blue, it in no time spreads out enveloping the whole universe, even vomiting thunders and lightnings.<sup>68</sup>

Thus, according to both Heidegger and Ch'an philosophers, to be free from the confusion of external conditions, to be rid of the perplexities of life, and to be fully charged with primordial creativity is to attain the Nothing through essential thinking or Ch'an thought.

Not long ago, Nishida Kitaro of Kyoto, the leading philosopher in modern Japan, wrote:

In contradistinction to Western culture, which considers form as existence and formation as good, the urge to see the form of the formless, and to hear the sound of the soundless lies at the very foundation of Eastern culture.<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps if Nishida had read the "Conversation On A Country Path" he would have recognized this same "urge to see the form of the formless" in Heidegger's search for the nature of essential thinking. What Heidegger discovers in essential thinking is releasement, within which "a higher acting is concealed.. than is found in all the actions of the world."<sup>70</sup> This "higher acting is yet no activity" and is the nature of essential thinking or the "mind of no-mind" in Ch'an. In both Heidegger's essential thinking and the mind of no-mind in Ch'an, man achieves the "step back" into his origins and awakens to his true self.

In our comparative analysis we have seen that the basic elements of Heidegger's essential thinking and Ch'an thought are coming towards each other. As William Barrett says in his Introduction to Suzuki's *Zen Buddhism*:



Certainly Heidegger's philosophy in its tone and temper and sources is Western to its core, and there is much in him that is not in Zen, but also very much more in Zen that is not in Heidegger; and yet the points of correspondence between the two... are startling enough.<sup>71</sup>

If my study is not incorrect, we might say that Heidegger's recent approach of essential or meditative thinking may serve as one of the bridges that will bring the philosophies of the East and the West together.

1. Ch'an: Zen in Japanese.
2. Warren Shibles. *Wittgenstein: Language and Philosophy*. Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Book Company, 1969, p. 88.
3. Martin Heidegger. "Letter On Humanism." In *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken. New York: Random House, 1962, pp. 279-280.
4. Martin Heidegger. *Identity and Difference*. Translated by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1957, p. 43.
5. Heidegger. *Identity and Difference*. *op. cit.*, p. 42.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
11. Heidegger. *Identity and Difference*, *op. cit.*, p. 50.
12. Daisetz T. Suzuki. "Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih." In *Philosophy East and West*. (April 1953) Volume III, No. 1, p. 33.
13. Martin Heidegger. "The Way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics." In *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century*. Edited by William Barrett and Henry D. Aiken. New York: Random House, 1962, p. 209.
14. Heidegger. "Letter On Humanism," *op. cit.*, p. 209.
15. Heidegger. *Identity and Difference*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
18. Martin Heidegger. *Discourse On Thinking*. Translated by John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1959, p. 25.
19. Heidegger. *Discourse On Thinking* *op. cit.*, p. 13.
20. Daisetz T. Suzuki. *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (First Series). New York: Harper and Row, 1949, p. 11.
21. Heidegger. *Discourse On Thinking*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
22. Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1962, p. 430.
23. Heidegger. *Discourse on Thinking*, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
24. Heidegger. *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-42.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 377.
26. Reiho Masunaga. *The Soto Approach to Zen*. Tokyo: Layman Buddhist Society Press, 1958, pp. 68-69.
27. Martin Heidegger. *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. Translated by Ralph

- Manheim. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Company, 1935, p. 122.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
29. Suzuki. *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, *op. cit.*, p. 123.
30. Heidegger. "Conversation On A Country Path." In *Discourse On Thinking*, *op. cit.*, p. 86.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
32. *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.
33. Heidegger. "Conversation On A Country Path," *op. cit.*, p. 61.
34. Chang Chung-yuan. *Original Teachings of Ch'an Buddhism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969, p. 13.
35. Heidegger. *Being and Time*, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
36. Heidegger. "Conversation On A Country Path," *op. cit.*, p. 86.
37. Martin Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art" In *Philosophies of Art and Beauty*. Edited by Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns. New York: The Modern Library, 1964, p. 647.
38. Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by J. H. Bernard. New York: Hafner Publishing Company, 1966, p. xxxii.
39. Benedetto Croce. *Aesthetic*. Translated by Douglas Ainslie. New York: The Noonday Press, 1968, p. 274.
40. Croce. *Aesthetic*, *op. cit.*, p. 277.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
44. Croce. *Aesthetic*, *op. cit.*, 302.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 302.
46. Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art," *op. cit.*, p. 647.
47. Heidegger. "The Origin of the Work of Art," *op. cit.*, p. 664.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 680.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 684.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 661.
51. Martin Heidegger. "Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens." A pamphlet published in twelve poems, 1965.
52. Chang Chung-yuan. *Creativity and Taoism*. New York: Julian Press, 1963, p. 57.
53. Chang. *Creativity and Taoism*, *op. cit.*, p. 66.
54. Heidegger. "The way Back Into the Ground of Metaphysics," *op. cit.*, p. 218.
55. Martin Heidegger. "What is Metaphysics?" In *Existence and Being*. Translated by R. F. C. Hull and Alan Crick. Chicago, Illinois: Henry. Regnery Company, 1967, p. 346.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 353.
57. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
60. Daisetz T. Suzuki. *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1962, p. 33.
61. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
62. Heidegger. "What Is Metaphysics?" *op. cit.*, p. 338.
63. Suzuki. *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, *op. cit.*, p. 338.
64. Heidegger. "What is Metaphysics?" *op. cit.*, pp. 334-335.
65. Suzuki. "Zen: A Reply to Hu Shih," *op. cit.*, p. 43.
66. Heidegger. "What Is Metaphysics?" *op. cit.*, p. 340.



67. Martin Heidegger. "Memorial Address." In *Discourse On Thinking*, *op. cit.*, p. 57.
68. Daisetz T. Suzuki. *Eranos-Jahrbuch*. (1954) Volume XXIII, p. 280.
69. Nishida Kitaro. "A Study of Good." Translated by V. H. Viglielmo. Japan: Printing Bureau, Japanese Government, 1960, p. 211.
70. Heidegger. "Conversation On A Country Path," *op. cit.*, p. 61.
71. William Barrett. "Zen for the West." Introduction to *Zen Buddhism* by Daisetz T. Suzuki. New York: Doubleday and Company, 1956, p. xi.

## Pure Thought and Pure Action

G. Misra

The question of the nature and relation of pure contemplation and pure action is a special case of the more general question of the nature and relation between body and mind. The human body and the human mind have been conceived as being entirely disparate in nature. The two are conceived in such a way that whatever forms an item in the one cannot form an item in the other. Mind is regarded to be non-extended and non-spatial, conscious and cogitating whereas the body is regarded to be spatial and extended, unconscious and non-thinking. The body moves and obeys the mechanical laws. It cannot initiate action; it is inert and lacks spontaneity; it moves only when it is moved; it can't plan and decide where to move and how to move. But the mind is regarded to be capable of initiating motion; it thinks and plans, decides which course to follow for attaining its goals. My body moves only when my mind executes an act of will; my mind executes an act of will only when it has clear ideas of the goal to be achieved and the means for achieving it. In other words, my mind must tell my will what is the case, what kind of situation is obtaining around me, what kinds of objects and persons are around me whose existence I would take note of, in case I decide to follow one course of actions rather than another. And then my will, so informed and enlightened by my thought, decides what action to be performed. And once a decision has been made by my will, my body moves in accordance with the plan and decision of my will. In this picture, the body is seen to be moving only when it is moved. The stone moves when it is kicked out or pushed out, similarly my body moves only when my will pushes it to move. But nothing pushes my mind or, if at all, only I as a self-conscious being and agent think and decide and then give a kick to my body to move in the way that will help me to achieve my purpose. This picture of self being the active agent which can start thinking and deciding and then producing changes in the world, is a more specific form of the world-picture of God who thinks of producing changes and brings about things to happen, creates a world of things and persons in accordance with his decisions which are based upon the reasons known to Him. In the case of God, His thoughts are initiated by Him and then He decides or wills in accordance with His reasons to create a world. God's mind is completely active both in His thinking and in His willing. He is, in other words, *actus purus*. But in the case of man, it is believed that ideas and impressions are imposed upon him and he receives them passively and, once these materials are available, his mind can start thinking and



reasoning about the situation and then his will decides what to do. God starts thinking without receiving ideas from outside; but man thinks only after he receives ideas. For man his situation is already defined in relation to which he can start thinking, and in which alone he can decide to bring about change; but in the case of God, there is no such thing at all. He only does what He thinks to do. Thus there is a sense in which the concepts of 'pure thought' and 'pure action' apply only to God, and to nothing else. But man's thoughts and actions cannot be pure in this sense. In the case of man, pure thought and pure action is based upon another model. A thought is said to be pure if a self-conscious being performs it in his own private sphere of self-consciousness. An action is said to be pure if it happens to the body, uncontrolled by the mind, in a public world of physical objects in accordance with purely mechanical laws. Such a picture is the picture of an action not consciously willed and designed. Thus, an agent's thoughts and wills are pure if they are spontaneously done and self-initiated; and his action is pure if it is not consciously designed and not self-initiated. So the concepts of pure thought and pure action are different in the case of God from those that apply in the case of man. But in course of what follows in this paper it will be clear that the two sets of concepts are muddled and unintelligible.

I will begin by examining the concepts of pure thought and pure action in the context of a human being who is born to a world which is already there. In this context pure thought belongs to the world of inner life, an inner theatre. Pure action belongs to the sphere of outer world, an outer theatre. One is completely private, the other is completely public though both are similar in being occurrences in created world. And since both are created, there seems to be a point of identity; but since the two are completely different, there is no point of contact between the two. The ideas of identity and difference are conflicting ideas and therefore a problem arises as to how to explain away the difference or how to explain away the identity. The identity can be explained away if the difference is so accentuated that the thinking being, by a process of self-discipline, can stop its changing moods, thoughts and desires. At that time it will be at peace with itself, it will be an eternal life of pure consciousness unruffled into the forms of waves and foams—a conscious life of stillness and undisturbed peace is a life of liberation for the pure self. This is more or less represented in all philosophical systems where liberation is the only dominating goal to be attained. The self is identical with itself, withdrawn to itself and is at peace with itself. Similarly the outer world of non-thinking bodies is pushed into its proper place where it obeys the mechanical laws which reign supreme. The unconscious nature goes on operating according to its own mechanical and natural laws undisturbed by the purposes and interests of a foreign conscious

agent. The separation is complete on both sides. Such a world ceases to be a world created by God. The nature is God in its own sphere. It is purely mechanical. Its matter and energy are conserved within itself. God does not create it nor does He destroy it. Similarly the conscious agent on the other side is withdrawn to itself. It has found its liberation. There is undisturbed and eternal peace in it. A liberated soul is neither created nor destroyed. He does not stand in the need of a creator which can guide him. It is its own self entrenched in its own bliss. It is its own God or God himself. It is the *Brahman*. But there can be another move. We can use the picture in another way. We can accentuate the identity in such a manner that all differences would disappear. The conscious self can be pulled down to the unconscious nature and is allowed to be dissipated there. There is only mechanical activity everywhere. There are not two worlds of ghosts and machines, but only the world of machines. In this rendering, man is merely a machine, a mere body. His actions are no more than the behaviours of machines. They obey the same mechanical laws. All his actions are strictly determined mechanically. There is nothing which an intelligent man does which a machine cannot do. Intelligent and deliberate actions are only more complicated types of mechanical actions. Reality is one and the same every-where. All changes in it obey the same uniform laws. Such a world can go on for ever, governed by its own laws, standing in the need of no divine intervention. In such a world there is no place for God, because the ideas of pure action with which we started to construct it is completely different from the idea of pure action which is attributed to God. Ideas of pure action and pure thought which are the frames of reference in the case of man and his surrounding world being different from the ideas of pure thought and pure action in the case of God necessarily leaves us in a Godless world. When these frames of references are clearly seen in their proper light we have not to wonder why philosophical thinkings—whether in the East or in the West—became progressively Godless. Philosophers are bound to produce either two worlds each autonomous to itself or one world completely autonomous in itself. Philosophy asserts the autonomy of reason pure and simple or it asserts the autonomy of reason which is the same thing as the autonomy of scientific knowledge. Philosophy produces the picture of two worlds autonomous in themselves. In one, spiritual progress, self-realisation and liberation of the soul seem to be possible whereas nothing can be achieved in the other world which is concurrent with it or philosophy will produce one world where mechanical laws reign supreme and scientific knowledge is the only guide, where material prosperity can be achieved which is the same thing as where machines work more efficiently and drive man to degeneration and unbearable dullness, to a life of slavery and uncreativity. When the world-picture produced



by philosophy are so disquieting that it creates *either* men of retiring temperament who are indifferent to bodily pleasures and pains and who are ascetic in temperament *or* it produces men who are mechanised, go on operating machines having no time to enjoy a leisure, do not find occasions to engage in creative activity and are compelled to lead a life of drudgery, the cry comes to bring the ascetic down to the world and to relieve the machine-man of his burdens.

But the question is: how can this be done? So long we keep on to the frames of references, of pure thought and pure action, there will be either ascetics or machine-men. In one tradition, man is left uncared for to himself; in another man is compelled to work to whatever limit this compulsion can be conceived, and there is no limit to it. If I have a machine, its efficiency will lie in its output of work. The more a machine can work, the more perfect it is as a machine. If the machine stops working at any time I am to effect repairs in it so that it can go to further work at once. If man is a mere machine he can be put to work without restriction. If at any time he is found not to be able to work he has to be repaired, his health is to be examined, he is to be given better food so that the human machine can go to further work. Eastern culture grew in one tradition. It accepted one type of philosophy and this philosophy produced ascetics. Planning is bound to fail in such a society — a society arranged in one philosophical tradition resulting from an exclusive notion of pure thought and pure action. Western society has accepted the other philosophical tradition.

This confusion of cultural patterns results from our sharply distinguishing between the mental and the physical in case of the human individual. The picture of the man's mind being extremely personal and private, is an absurd picture. Our thoughts and feelings, desires and emotions, hopes and wishes, decisions and *intentions*, are not occurrences of a private world. If they were such private items of a private world, they could not be intelligibly talked about. A private language referring to such items in a person's inner theatre, is logically impossible. If I use a word to stand for a private item which is on principle unobservable by others, my use of the names cannot be checked by anybody else. No body can point out whether I am using the name correctly or incorrectly, since he has no means of knowing and identifying whether and when such item is occurring in my private world. All that I am left with in this case is my personal subjective impression that I am using it rightly or wrongly. Where subjective impression is the only thing that I can fall back upon, the distinction between appearance and reality, right and wrong disappears. On this account no intelligible discourse about this supposedly private occurrences is possible; but the fact that we do talk about thoughts and *intentions* of people rules out the possibility of such

private occurrences. The supposition that such private occurrence might still be there even though we cannot talk about them in our language, is a contradictory supposition. The assertions that there are things about which we know nothing is an empty assertion. So the story of an inner chamber, the story that we have a private life in an ethereal world of nonphysical mental occurrences a life of pure conscious existence, is less than a myth.

But rejection of the inner world does not mean that man is simply a body or a mere machine. An intelligent behaviour of a human being is different from that of a machine. A machine acts efficiently or inefficiently. It is perfectly in order or has gone out of order. But it cannot act intelligently or stupidly. A human being acts intelligently or stupidly, plans ahead and makes decisions, acts resolutely or loses interests and relaxes, feels interested or disinterested. But this is not what a machine can do. A machine cannot act stupidly and therefore cannot act intelligently either. It cannot lose interest and so cannot pick up interest either. It cannot refuse to act because it is not convinced about the rightness or wrongness of actions. It can clash against another machine, but cannot decide to go to war. It can stop work, but cannot hesitate, cannot doubt and cannot look for advice and counsel. It cannot raise legal issues and frame laws nor can it amend and repeal laws. This difference is supposed to be explained by the account that an intelligent behaviour on the part of a man is due to the behaviour being caused by intelligence. Similarly a man's intentional behaviour is supposed to be a behaviour caused by a mental act of intention or will. His attentive behaviour equally also is supposed to be due to an inner act of attending preceding the behaviour and so on. His stupid behaviour is supposed to be, on this account, a behaviour without intellection, it is a behaviour which is mechanical. Similarly, a wilful behaviour is distinguished from an unintentional behaviour by supposing that an unintentional behaviour as such is purely a mechanical behaviour. But since we have already pointed out that the machine's behaviour can neither be intelligent nor stupid, it is neither intentional nor unintentional. The picture employed here is a misfit. A stupid behaviour of a human being is still a human behaviour and not a mechanical behaviour. We criticise a man for being stupid. We chastise him for not being mindful, we blame him for wilfully doing a thing which is wrong. Nobody will think of rebuking a machine for a stupid action nor of sending it to jail for a wilful wrong action. A machine's behaviour is neither intelligent nor stupid, so also it is neither intentional nor non-intentional. The picture of assimilating human action to machine's behaviour is a wrong picture. Similarly, the question as to what makes a human behaviour intelligent or stupid, intentional or non-intentional is not a question looking for a causal explanation. When I am asking what



makes an action intelligent I am not looking for an operation, a thought, an act of intellection which, operating upon the bodily machine, makes it intelligent. Similarly when I ask what makes a human action intentional, I am not asking for an identification of the little operator, the agent which has operated upon the human body and guided its course of action towards the goal intended by the agent.

'What makes a human behaviour intelligent?' is a criteriological question. The word 'makes' in this question, is a metaphor. We decide whether an action is intelligent or not, not by reference to the occurrence of a non-physical mental item. We decide whether a student is intelligent or not by comparing his performances with those of others. A man's action is judged to be intelligent by studying his behaviour and not because of an inner occurrence. We decide whether a man has wilfully done it or not, not on account of the occurrence or non-occurrence of an act of will; we decide whether he has deliberately done it or not by examining the situation, taking note of his previous history, asking questions to people in immediate surrounding or his close associates, searching for his personal correspondence and diary entries.

Similarly when a patient is given anaesthesia, the doctor may ask the nurse whether the patient is still conscious or not. In asking this question he is not asking the nurse to open up the inner theatre of the man to get a peep into his non-physical mind to see whether the stream of consciousness is still flowing there. The doctor is asking the nurse to see whether the patient can count fingers, can identify persons and respond to questions. Whether a man is conscious or not is not a question as to whether the stream of consciousness is flowing in the person's non-physical mind. It is a question as to whether his behaviour has certain observable marks or not. Or, let us change the situation. Let us take the case of a parrot who has been trained to welcome visitors by uttering the sentence, 'Come, be thou seated.' We do not credit the parrot with any intelligent understanding of the meaning of the sentence, because it goes on mechanically repeating the sentence irrespective of the type of persons who come. It will utter the sentence not distinguishing between a beggar and a guest, a stranger or an inmate of the family. It will not ask for the identity and the purpose of the visitor and will not discriminate between who is to be welcomed and who is to be asked to keep out. But a human waiter, instructed to welcome guests will not admit visitors indiscriminately like the parrot. The characteristic behaviour of the waiter will show that he is intelligent while that of the parrot will show that he utters sentences mechanically.

The thoughts and intentions of a man are not occurring in a non-physical world which is perpetually screened off from the public

scrutiny. They are all there where his actions are, what thoughts have prompted a man to embark upon a course of action will be known by studying his present behaviour as well as past behaviour. A man is not a composite being of two sorts of things of an entirely different nature. He is not a soul and a body glued together somehow, so that when a separation will take place, the soul will be wandering in a non-spatial, non-temporal world and his body will perish or continue in accordance with physical laws. A human individual is different from a machine, not because it is composed of two types of materials of an entirely different character, whereas the machine is composed of the elements of one type. A human individual is distinguished from a machine because of its characteristic patterns of activities distinguishable from those of the machine. A human individual is a unitary being not a composite being.

A man's thoughts and actions do not develop independently and there is no logical necessity as to which one should be first. A man learns while doing and acts more efficiently because of his previous learning. A child, while exploring the objects, learns how to behave towards them. It begins to know that fire is to be avoided and sweets are to be welcomed. While doing he learns to identify objects and because of his previous learning he knows how to react towards them. Because of what he knows his action becomes directed and efficient. The more he succeeds in distinguishing and identifying objects and persons from one another, the more he begins to identify himself as one distinct individual among others. He takes care to keep himself away from certain things and persons and selects those with whom to work. Self-identification is possible in course of identification of others and this double form of identification becomes more and more sharpened in course of actions in varying situations. The self-identification is not possible in the case of a man who has not lived in a society of other persons and who has not been taught what to do and what not to do. Self-individuation and other-individuation go together. If I do not discriminate others from me, I cannot discriminate myself from others. In order that this discrimination of things and persons might be done by me, I must have means of identification. In other words, I must have a language consisting of both referring and descriptive words. I must be able to distinguish individuals from classes of individuals (either objects or persons) in relation to me. In such a language there must be referring words and descriptive words and also self-referring words. These are the minimum requirements of a language. The richer is the language the sharper is the possibility of discrimination and identification and more efficient are the people who act intelligently and efficiently which is the same thing as their discriminating and identifying the necessary details, assimilating and classifying by over-looking unnecessary details.



Details become necessary or unnecessary according as they are or are not related to human purposes. No classification, therefore, is sacrosanct or ultimate, nor are there limits to man's power of discrimination.

Now it may be clear why the idea of a self-conscious God reasoning and acting all by Himself and unrelated to any situation gradually failed to gain human recognition. If my thoughts and actions are interdependent and if both also are dependent upon the institution of language and since language by its very nature is bound to be public, the ideas of a God thinking and acting by Himself and having no means of communication with others is patently an unintelligible idea. A God who has no means of formulating His ideas by means of language cannot think. Similarly He cannot act as action must be aided by thought. He must know what to do. But if He acts without thinking and without deciding He is no longer God, but an inanimate object in a world of other inanimate objects. He cannot bring about changes; only changes happen to Him. If again it be supposed that there are many gods who could develop their ideas in communication with one another, it becomes only an unnecessary duplication of the human world. Polytheism is unnecessary and monotheism is unintelligible.

Our talks about self-identification in the context of human beings may suggest the picture of a soul having a life of pure consciousness, bereft of the body which is its accidental outer form. People have tended to create this picture because of certain linguistic considerations. A person can be identified when one of his legs or hands is amputated. He may be identified even when both the legs or hands are amputated. In this sense, no one limb or a set of limbs is essential for the purpose of a person's identification. From this some philosophers have jumped to the conclusion that a person can be identified even when his entire body is gone. The picture of a soul which survives the death of the body is an unintelligible picture arising out of the misunderstanding of the functioning of our language. Another source of the picture of a self-conscious, self-luminous, eternal soul, is the peculiar role that the word "I" plays in our language structure. It is an 'index word' like 'you' and 'he'; but this indexing, when it is directed to another person, takes as its referent different people at different times. But the word "I" always refers, throughout the life-history of its user, to one unchanging, constant person. This creates the illusion of an eternal ego, a self. Since a man's discriminating of other things and persons are always done with reference to his own situations the self of the individual is regarded as occupying a central position in one's scheme of discrimination. This creates the illusion that the self which is the knower of all objects cannot itself be known. To attempt to know knower would be to effect, what Prof.

A. C. Mukherjee calls the 'transcendental dislocation of the self'. But there is nothing mysterious about it. As Prof. Ryle says, the indexing finger cannot point at itself, but this does not mean that the other fingers cannot point at it. We can illustrate this linguistic fact in another way. Everything that can be said about me can be stated in the descriptive part of the first person declarative sentence. The 'I' which is the subject in such sentences, if pushed further and further to the border as all its descriptive contents are squeezed out more and more to the descriptive part, the contentless 'I' in this usage is seen to be belonging to the periphery of the language structure. It belongs to what Wittgenstein calls the limit of the language and is no part of the language. It is the pure syntactical 'I' having no semantic functions at all.

We can take another argument from Indian philosophy. It is argued that the objective experience of waking life changes into subjective experience of the dreamer, and the dream experience also in its turn changes into dreamless-sleep experience. Since the objective experience can change into the subjective experience which, in its turn, changes into the formless pure conscious state of the dreamless sleep, it is argued that the relation between the states of consciousness and consciousness itself is of a contingent nature. And therefore it is argued that pure changeless, self-luminous consciousness is the nature of the self. This argument has another addendum to it. It is argued that since in waking up I can declare that I slept well and since this is a memory statement, it must be the reproduction of an original knowledge of self-consciousness of the period of dreamless sleep. To remember something is to remember that which was once known. If I have now the memory knowledge that I slept well, it is supposed to imply that I was conscious of myself during the state of deep sleep.

To take the first part of the argument first, it has to be pointed out that the nature of necessary and contingent relation is conceived with the help of a picture. A thing necessarily related to another thing is pictured as the thing being inextricably bound up with the other. Similarly the nature of contingent relation is pictured as a kind of loose tie so that when the knot is untied each term of this relation will remain outside the other. On this analogy it is believed that subjective and objective experiences, being contingently related to consciousness, could be loosened away from it, and the self-luminous pure conscious ego can enjoy its life of eternal bliss. This is the life of complete freedom of self, a life of liberation in which the self is no longer driven hither or thither and is not tied to this or that, a bodiless soul or self-poised spirit. But these pictures are misfits to the occasion and create confusing illusions. There are no necessary connections, and for that matter no contingent relations either, among items of furnitures in the world. Necessary and contingent relations are significant only in the context of propositions and meanings. Propositions necessarily related are such



that one of the propositions *can-not* be asserted when the other is denied. To assert the one and deny the other will involve self-contradiction and paralyse speech; but there is no such self-contradiction in the case of contingent relation. From this linguistic fact nothing about the world can be inferred at all. To say that something is red is to say that it is and is coloured; but this does not mean that the existence of the coloured thing is necessary, that it could not be destroyed. To say that the activities in which I am engaged are not necessarily related to me is to say that I need not be conceived as doing the same thing all the time; but this does not imply that I would be eternally continuing without doing anything and without being related to any situations or even without having a body at all. Similarly to say that the particular cut of the nose, or for that matter, any particular limb that I have got, is not necessarily related to me is not to say that I will continue to exist even when I have no cut of nose and no limbs at all. Or let us take another example. To say that something is a triangle is to say that it must be a figure, but to say that something is a figure is not to say that it must necessarily be a triangle. It could be any figure. But this never implies that it could still be a figure without being any one kind of figure at all. Similarly, consciousness need not necessarily be subjective or objective; but it would never be consciousness if it is not manifested in any of these forms. Hence the supposed idea of pure consciousness completely breaks down. From the necessary and contingent relation among propositions nothing can be inferred about the things and their relations, not about the existence and non-existence of things at all.

Now we can come to the second part of the argument. It is true that to remember something is to have known the thing earlier. But is the statement that I slept well a memory-statement at all? To say that I slept well and that I do not remember any dream of that period is not to say that there was a consciousness concurrently going on during the period of sleep which I now remember. It only declared that I do not remember anything at all. But to say that I do not remember anything at all is not to say that there was a thing which I do not remember. To say that I know nothing is not to say that the nothing is the thing which I know.

We can now conclude that the model of pure thought and pure action pictures the human individual as a composite being of pure self and a mere body. This picture of pure soul and mere body is based upon linguistic confusions and bad logic. The Indian tradition, being lured by the possibility of a pure self, has created a culture of asceticism and indifference to worldly affairs. Similarly abhorrence to the idea of the mystical has taken the human individual as a pure body, a mere machine in the West. It has created a culture of labour laws, absolute authority of the state, labour camps and brainwashings. These

conflicting cultural patterns have their deep roots in bad philosophical traditions based upon misunderstanding of the logic of our language. Once these faulty philosophical bases of these conflicting cultural patterns are seen in their proper light the conflicting cultural patterns will dissipate. The philosophy which points out the logical errors in the metaphysical pictures of the past is the critical and analytical philosophy of the modern age. Its logic is without ontology, it does not indulge in creating different metaphysical traditions and consequently does not leave room for the emergence of clashing cultural patterns. In the darkness of logical errors and linguistic confusions there is no guarantee that all people should see the things in the same way. Errors may take different forms and may create different cultural outlooks. Mutual checking and correcting lead to clear and uniform understanding. Clarity is the aim of this modern philosophy; logical analysis is its method; clearing away misunderstandings is the result which it achieves.

A philosophy which brings back man from his aerial existence on the one side and slavery and forced labour on the other, sees man as an individual, a person. It sees man as one individual having ambitions and wants, working under limitations and difficulties. Such a philosophy therefore is bound to be humanistic in its cultural outlook. When there is war in the Western Asia or suffering in East Pakistan, or racial discrimination in South Africa resulting in human sufferings, the new cultural humanistic outlook does not allow for indifference and disconcert. This cultural outlook based upon a proper understanding about the nature of man does not allow a Lord Krishna to persuade an Arjuna to go to war to kill his own relations under the belief that in killing only the perishable body is destroyed while the eternal soul is neither created nor destroyed. Similarly it does not also create the corresponding outlook of man being a mere machine which can be made to work and exploited. It does not work upon the analogy that, as a car be sent to the garage when it is out of order, a man who does not conform to the standard behaviour prescribed can be sent to the labour camps for correcting and brain cleaning. Because of the new philosophical outlook cultural isolation is disappearing fast. Releasing of the international tensions and laying and securing the foundations of peace by negotiation and talks in conferences is the concern of the modern age, and helping to see the baselessness of clashing culture is the role of modern philosophy. Deepening the human understanding is the role of modern linguistic and analytical philosophy and removing the clashing nature of cultural patterns is the result of deep understanding. Modern philosophy has brought man to his own original home and the man at his own home is engaged in constructive programme of work in which the common interest of the human group is already prefigured.