

whose beliefs no record had been left, as far as I know. Perhaps, Suresh Chandra knows about these records and, if so, he will enlighten us by his empirical investigation on the subject soon. But I hope that even he will accept the distinction which is obtained at all levels and in all fields between what may be called, to use Indian term, the “*Śāstrika*” a tradition of knowledge and the common beliefs of the people who generally do not entertain one set of beliefs only, but have an amalgam of them, little caring for the consistencies in them. The question, then, was how to find the presence of “*Śāstrika*” tradition of Vedānta in the first millennium AD, and I will suggest that not only Suresh Chandra, but also all the others who have commented on my paper *indentently* undertake this work and come to conclusion on their own on the basis of evidence that is available for them. I look forward to their investigations and conclusions and I will be happy to revise my own judgement in the light of the conclusions they reach. I may make it clear that I am neither a “Vedāntin” nor “anti-Vedāntin” and that I myself had shared the view prevalent in this regard as I had read the same books which my colleagues had read. They can not imagine the surprise and the shock received when I accidentally stumbled on the evidence which, at least to my mind, lead to a different conclusion and “demanded” to be brought to the attention of the scholarly world so that they may deal with it as honestly as possible. I would like to add that in all intellectual matters one has to have what I have called “Niḥsanga buddhi” which is analogous to what the Lord had called “Niṣkāma Karma” in the *Gītā*. And, I may add one thing more that for a ‘real’ *advaitin*, it should not be difficult, for his consciousness ultimately is not “attached” to any specific *nāma, rūpa* or doctrine what so ever.

Notes

1. See Nākāmura, *A History of Early Vedānta Philosophy*, pp. 466-7.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
3. G.C. Pande, *Life and Thought of Śaṅkaracārya*, p. 12.

❧ 21 ❧

Nyāya; Realist or Idealist:

Is the Debate Ended,
the Argument Completed?

Nyāya, by common consent is regarded as a realist system *par excellence* by everybody. In fact, it is contended that if any philosophical system can be described as “realist” at all, then Nyāya is one. The queries raised by me under the above heading in two parts in JICPR volumes [(i) Nyāya: Realist or Idealist? (XII-I, pp. 161-163) (ii) Can Navya-Nyāya make distinction between sense and reference?(XII-3, p. 157)] do not seem to have disturbed the self-evident, axiomatic belief in the characterization of Nyāya as mentioned above. Normally, when five such knowledgeable persons reject the very possibility of doubting such a characterization, one should accept that the grounds of one’s “doubting” had no foundation at all.

Yet, there seems to have been some slight shakings of the foundation of the belief in the responses of all these Naiyāyikas, though expressed in different ways. Prof. Chakroborty, for example, concedes, “The canonical western characterization of realism as the thesis that objects exist mind-independently is difficult to apply to Nyāya” (p. 154 JICPR-

XII-2). And, Prof. N.S. Dravid explicitly admits that the question raised about the compatibility of the requirement of “*abhidheyatva*” with the definition of perception as *avyapadesyam* given in N.S. 1.1.4. is “an important one and deserves some serious thought.” Both these admissions are, surprisingly, questioned, the former by Dr. Ramesh Kr. Sharma and the latter by Arindam Chakraborty. But, though there seems to be a difference of opinion amongst the Naiyāyikas on the issue of the relevance, significance and importance of the questions raised, the “difference” itself is indicative of the fact that it is not easy to determine what exactly is the Nyāya position in respect of the issue concerned.

The different and divergent points raised in the responses to the simple question raised by me suggests that the House of Nyāya is divided in itself, and that the ideas of a unique, unambiguous position of Nyāya is a myth, sustained only by the fact that scholars and students have unquestioningly accepted what is purveyed in the name of Nyāya in the text books on the subject. Nyāya is not, and can not be, a monolith system as is suggested by all those who write on it, including the “five-experts” who have chosen to respond to the questions raised by me. To give a few examples from the comments of these well-known “authorities” on Nyāya, Prof. Mohanty is firmly of the view that Nyāya subscribes to the “extensionality of the relation” that obtains between ‘existence’ and ‘knowability’ (p. 167, JICPR XIII-1). Prof. Dravid, on the other hand, believes that at least as far as “*Sat, Prameya and abhidheya*” are concerned, they are supposed to have identical denotations, though the connotations of these words differ from each other” (JICPR XIII-1, p. 169).

These two positions seem, at least *prima facie*, to be radically opposed to each other. It is not clear whether Mohanty subscribed to the generalized position that Nyāya does not and can not in principal, accept ‘intensional relations’ in its system and that all relations have to be necessarily extensional. There is the related problem whether a system which admits only extensional relations can ever have any ‘intensional relation’ in it.

The problem, however, is not confined to relations alone. The

deeper question relates to the issue whether Nyāya admits extensional definitions alone or it also admits definitions that are ‘intensional’ in nature. Prof. Dravid in his discussion of the issue has explicitly brought in the concepts of ‘connotation’ and ‘denotation’ and suggested that while ‘*Sat*’, ‘*Prameya*’ and ‘*Abhidheya*’ have different connotations, they have the same denotation. But once the idea of ‘connotation’ is accepted in any system, it can not have pure “extensional” relations or definitions in it. And, if the extensional relations and definitions are rejected in a system, it is difficult to see how it can be realist in character.

Nyāya, as is well-known, is pre-eminently concerned with considerations of determining the exact *lakṣaṇa* of anything and if it is so then one can not understand how it can be regarded as realist in the sense in which the postulation of extensional relations or definitions would entail it. All attempts at the correct establishment of the *lakṣaṇa* of anything suffer from either an *ativyāpti doṣa* or *avyāpti doṣa* and it is extremely difficult to avoid either of these and reach a ‘definition’ which will capture the true nature of the object concerned. Prof. Mohanty has argued that there is a *vyāpti* “between existence and knowability” and that this ‘*vyāpti*’ is “extensional” in character. Not only this, he has explicitly stated that “In the celebrated case of smoke and fire, the *vyāpti* is not to be understood intentionally as a necessary relation, but rather extensionally as a relation of mere co-presence” (p. 167). This, if correct, will raise serious problems regarding the long discussion about the exact definition of *vyāpti* in the Nyāya tradition. Mohanty knows, as well as everybody else, that successive definitions of *vyāpti* given before Gaṅgeśa were found to be inadequate and the issue regarding the formulation of the exact nature of the *vyāpti* was not closed even after him. If *vyāpti* were merely co-presence, then it will be difficult to understand how these definitions of *vyāpti* were found to be inadequate, and that the dispute about the correct definition of *vyāpti* continued in the Nyāya tradition.

It may be said that the inadequacy of the definitions were primarily because of their inapplicability in those cases where the object concerned was either *Kevalānvayī* or *Kevalāvyatirekī*, that is, where it was always present or always absent. But, these are exceptional situations and normally the relation of *vyāpti* is established on the

basis of what Mill calls 'the joint method of agreement and difference'.

Mohanty has suggested that there is an extensional *vyāpti* relation between knowability and existence. But how is this *vyāpti* established? By assertion only or, by an examination of the cases where *anvaya vyatireka sambandha* is found among them. For the latter, one will have to have an independent *lakṣaṇa* or criterion of what existence is and a *separate* one for what knowability is. But, as far as I know, such a *Lakṣaṇa* has not been provided by the Nyāya thinkers and, even if it were to be provided, it will be difficult to see how one can find "existence" and "knowability" both present and absent in order to establish a *vyāpti* relation between them. Not only this, 'knowability' is a strange characteristic as it can only be defined in terms of a possibility, and not an actuality. If this is accepted then it will be difficult to see how could one determine its absence any where. If something is "known" then it certainly must have been 'knowable' but if it is not known then one can only say that it is 'knowable' on grounds of faith alone.

It is, of course, known that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish *vyāpti* between objects or entities which are *Kevalānvayī* or *Kevalāvyatirekī*. As both 'existence' and 'knowability' are *kevalānvayī*, at least on the usual understanding of the Nyāya position in this context, only Mohanty will know how to establish *vyāpti* relation between them. The solution, of course, is easy. The relation between 'existence' and 'knowability' can be established by treating them as being analytically involved or implied by each other. This, however, will destroy the "extensionality" of the relationship between them and make it "intensional" or even "definitional" which will not probably be acceptable to Naiyāyika, including Mohanty.

The term existence itself is extremely ambiguous, especially in the context of the discussion about Nyāya. Does it mean *Sattā* and, if so, then it will be confined only to the first three *padārthas* in the Vaiśeṣika list, or does it mean *padārtha*? And, if so, it will apply to all the six *padārthas* originally mentioned in the Vaiśeṣika Sūtras. However, even in this case, there will always be a problem whether it covers only the specific *dravyas*, *guṇas*, *karmas*, etc. which were

mentioned by Kaṇāda in his Vaiśeṣika Sūtras or it can be taken to include even those which were added to the list later by subsequent thinkers. Praśastapāda's addition to the list of *guṇas* is well-known, but there are others who have done the same in respect of other *padārthas*. *Sāmānya*, for example, is supposed to give rise to *jāti* but, as everyone knows, Udayana feels the necessity of formulating criteria for deciding between genuine universals and pseudo-universals. There are, thus, *sāmānyas* which do not, and can not give rise to *jāti* as they suffer from what he called *jatibādhaka* characteristics. The addition of *abhāva* as a *padārtha* presumably by Śivāditya around the 10th century adds problems of its own, as formerly, *padārthas* were supposed to be either *sattā-rūpa* or *bhāva-rūpa* only. But when *abhāva* was accepted as a *padārtha*, it could not be treated either as *sattā* or as a *bhāva*.

Besides these, the case of Raghunātha Śiromaṇi is well known. We need not elaborate the point. In case the term 'existence' refers to those *padārthas* which have *sattā* and *sattā* alone in the Nyāya-vaiśeṣika framework then they alone shall be knowable. In case the term covers or refers to all the *padārthas* then the dispute about the *padārthas* will also be a dispute about that which is knowable. Once this is accepted, the so-called *vyāpti* relation postulated between existence and knowability will also become flexible and shifting in character. Not only this, as the number and types of *padārthas* will increase or decrease, that which was supposed to be knowable will cease to be 'knowable' or that which was not knowable, become 'knowable' by virtue of the very fact that it has now become a *padārtha* and hence accepted as existent in the system. The term 'existence' is also generally contrasted with the term 'real' and it is not clear whether Mohanty accepts this distinction or not. For, in case he does, he will not probably accept the *vyāpti* between the real and knowable as all that is real does not exist in the usual sense in which the term 'existence' is generally understood.

The term 'knowable' is even stranger than 'existence' as it connotes, or rather denotes (to remain within the extension list framework of Mohanty's thought). Something that is a possibility, a 'dispositional' property, which may or may not be actualized. 'Possibilities' or even 'dispositional-properties', as Mohanty very well knows, are strange 'properties'. They are not like the usual properties

such as 'red' or 'blue' and give rise to the paradoxes of counter-factual conditionals. In the present context, however, the problem is a different one and relates to the question as to how one may establish a *vyāpti* relation between something that is 'actual' and something else which is 'possible' only, assuming that existence is something actual.

The establishment of a *vyāpti* relation between the 'actual' and the 'possible' may be left to the Naiyāyikas, who, I am sure, will be able to solve the problem with all the ingenuity which they have developed over the century. But, in the context of the question relating to the issue whether Nyāya is 'realist' or 'idealist', the distinction between 'known' and 'knowable' has assumed a central importance which is of a different kind. Dr. Ramesh Kumar Sharma, in one of the most clear presentations of the subject, has questioned the transition from the perceived to the perceivable in the classical Berkeleyan formulation and from the perceivable to knowable to bring it closer to Nyāya formulation. From 'to be is to be perceivable' to 'to be is to be perceived', and from that to 'to be is to be knowable is the subtle, transpositional trick or deception that I am supposed to be guilty of. But, surprisingly, his own conclusion is that this amalgamation of bringing together the position of Berkeley and Nyāya makes Berkeley a realist rather than Nyāya "idealist". He writes "...if Berkeley and Nyāya are thought to have been brought together on a common platform, this platform, I am afraid, is a realistic one rather than an idealistic one" (p. 141, JICPR, XIV-2). But, the main point is that both Berkeley and Nyāya can be brought together on a common platform by the inner logic of their positions and, I hope, Dr. Ramesh Kr. Sharma will admit that there is little point in giving any particular name to that position. If he wishes to call Berkeley a "realist", I have no objection. But similarly I hope, he will have no objection to my calling Nyāya "idealist" in the sense in which Berkeley's position is designated as "Idealism" in the western philosophical tradition.

Unfortunately, the distinctions between the 'perceived' and 'perceivable' and the 'known' and 'knowable' which seems so crucial to Dr. Sharma disappear both in Berkeley and Nyāya when God appears on the scene. To God everything is 'known' and if we use Berkeley's phrase 'everything is perceived'. This has been roundly asserted by

almost all those who have responded to my innocent query in the pages of the JICPR. But strangely, none of them appears to have seen that such an admission destroys the very foundation of the contention that Nyāya is, in essentials, out-and-out realist, unless the so-called 'knowness' by God is itself treated as completely contingent in character. The crucial problem for the Nyāya theorist as well as for Berkeley is whether for God also things may be knowable and perceivable respectively but not known or perceived. In Berkeley this move is impossible as he argues for the reality of God on the ground that if something 'is', it has to be the object of some consciousness or other. And, as it is not so in the case of many objects as per as finite minds are concerned, one has to postulate an infinite consciousness to which they are eternally objects of its awareness. In Nyāya, on the other hand, God or *Īśvara* is brought in on cosmological grounds, that is, in the context of understanding the creation of the world. As far as the question of 'knowness' of the world is concerned it is, at least *prima facie*, contingent whether it is known by someone or not. The 'someone' may be the finite mind of the Naiyāyika or anybody else, or the infinite mind of the creator who is termed as *Īśvara* in the Nyāya system. In Nyāya *Īśvara*, of course, can not have a 'mind' in the strict Nyāya sense of the term and, if it were to have it, then it will know only one thing at a time and hence will not be able to know simultaneously all the things that are there as they can not be co-present to his consciousness at the same time. There is the added problem of things or objects or events that have not yet taken place and hence cannot be known in the same way as those that have occurred or are in the present.

The straight way to realism would be to accept that there are, or may be, things which are not known or which need not necessarily be known by any finite or infinite mind. But this simple way does not seem acceptable to Nyāya and it tries to wriggle out of the difficulty by maintaining that things may not be known but that they are certainly 'knowable' in principle. It not only fights shy of but actively rejects the possibility that something may be 'unknowable' in fact or in principle as it does not want to subscribe to this hard core contention of realism in the strictly epistemological sense of the term. For it, 'to be existent' or 'real' is to be *necessarily* knowable in principle. But

what exactly is meant by saying that something is 'knowable' is never explained clearly.

To be 'knowable' in the Nyāya framework is to be a *Prameya*, that is 'to be known by a *pramāṇa*' or, in other words, it is to be an object either of *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (analogy) or *śabda* (testimony). But amongst all these, *pratyakṣa* or perception or being object of the five human senses is primary and foundational in the sense that neither *anumāna*, nor *upamāna* nor *śabda* can even be conceived of without reference to it. There may be some dispute or doubt about the relationship of *śabda* to *pratyakṣa*, but there can be little doubt that *śabda* has, at least, to be heard or 'read' in order to be the means for the knowledge of that which it is supposed to convey authoritatively. There is, of course, the added problem if Gautama's definition of *Śabda* is to be accepted that one has to *independently* know the character of the person whose *śabda* is to be authoritatively accepted. (आप्तोपदेशः शब्दः) And, if the *gloss* of Gautama on this *sūtra* is to be taken seriously then the very "authoritativeness" of this *pramāṇa* will be compromised at least in the sense in which it has generally been understood in the context of the acceptance of the authority of the *veda* in the Indian tradition. Gautama, as is well known, gives the example of *Āyurveda* to illustrate the authoritativeness of the *śabda pramāṇa* subsumed under this special category. The authoritativeness of *Āyurveda*,¹ however, is radically different from the way in which the *Vedas* or even the *Upaniṣads* have been regarded in the tradition. The *Āyurveda* is essentially fallible and the knowledge it contains continues to grow in time, the two characteristics which are completely absent from the authority of the *śruti* which is regarded as both infallible and complete by everyone who accepts it.

The 'knowability', then, in terms of *pratyakṣa* or perception basically depends on the assumption that all 'existent' or 'real' has such a structure that it is graspable by the five human senses. In other words, the limits of human sensibility is the limit of the 'existent' or the 'real' word. To put it differently, such a construal of Nyāya position implies that the existent or the real world is intrinsically and essentially of such a nature that it not only is, but has to be, graspable or apprehensible by the human senses. Its structure, therefore, has to be

of such a nature as to correspond with the structure of the human senses in order that it may be graspable by it. One 'knows' that human senses apprehend colour or sound *only* within a limited range and that beyond it they cannot perceive or apprehend whatever is, or may be there.

These entities, which are intrinsically inapprehensible by the human senses, may be said to be the subject of inferential knowledge, but what then is the nature of this 'inferential knowledge' which gives us knowledge of entities or 'things' which are intrinsically ungraspable by the senses and, therefore, are incapable of being known by *pratyakṣa*. Such a knowledge may be said to be a 'knowledge' that can be known only by *anumāna* and never by *pratyakṣa* and though this may create some problems for Nyāya which believes in *Pramāṇa Samplava* on the one hand and the grounding of *vyāpti* on the basis of *anvaya* and *vyatireka* in terms of sensuously apprehensible experience, it will have to grant some sort of isomorphism between the structure of reason, that is *anumāna*, and the structure of that which can be known only through inferential knowledge and hence is regarded as 'existent' or 'real' in nature.

Dr. Ramesh Kr. Sharma has questioned the postulation of this isomorphism by suggesting that Hegel's famous formulation "The real is rational and the rational is real" should be understood not only in terms of cognitive rationality but also in terms of what may be called 'the moral intelligibility of the universe.' In other words, according to him the term 'rational' in Hegel's formulation includes both the exiological and the epistemological aspects and the term 'Reason' has both these aspects simultaneously included or involved in it. This may or may not be correct and Nyāya may or may not subscribe to it. But, there can hardly be any doubt that in the purely cognitive aspect, there has to be an isomorphism of structure between reason and that which is 'known', if the essential 'knowability' of the real in terms of reason is to be asserted. Dr. Sharma himself accepts this when he writes, "There is no doubt that the eminent Hegelian equation of rationality and reality (or actuality) does presuppose some definite isomorphism between the two" (p. 144, JICPR, XIV-2). But, according to him, Nyāya subscribes only to the half-contention of Hegel; it is silent about the other half, that is about the isomorphism of the valuation aspect of

reason and the valuation aspect of reality. According to him, reason in the Hegelian sense involves both 'truth' and 'value' and Nyāya can not, therefore, be said to subscribe to the Hegelian dictum 'Rational is real and Real is ratiōn'. But this, according to him, will only be to deny the full blown characteristic of Hegelian idealism to Nyāya. It will still have to accept Nyāya as half-idealist in the Hegelian sense of the term and if we take the term 'Idealism' only in the epistemological sense of the term, Nyāya may have to be regarded as out-and-out Idealist on his own analysis.

But what is the 'structure' of *Buddhi* or reason in Nyāya which 'determines' the structure of that which is supposed to be 'knowable', as "to be known" is, in Nyāya, to be known in the specific Nyāya way alone. Knowledge or *jñāna*, at least at the *savikalpaka* level, has to be linguistic in character. This, according to some, is what is meant by the term *abhidheyatva* in Nyāya. Now the structure of linguistic knowledge in Nyāya is said to be constituted by *anuyogi*, *pratīyogi* and the relation between them which is termed as *samsargatā*. The complex unit formed by these three together is said to have a characteristic called *viśayatā* which probably is an emergent property arising, from the unique combination of these three elements. Strangely, the Nyāya has to postulate a *viśayita* to which the *viśayatā* appears as an 'object' of cognition. But while *viśayatā* is an emergent characteristic of the three elements mentioned above, it is not clear to which substantive entity *viśayita* belongs as a property, or whether it itself is a reflexively emergent property necessitated by the occurrence of *viśayatā* which makes the knowledge complex at the first level into an 'object' giving it epistemic objectivity.

The problems here are far more complex than those which have been usually considered by Nyāya theorists who have written on this issue. Some of these will become apparent the moment we consider the case of *anuvyavasāya* or introspective reflexion where the first order knowledge-complex consisting of *viśayitā* and *viśayatā* becomes an object of cognition and thus, where the complex formed by *viśayitā* and *viśayatā* itself becomes an 'object' of cognition giving it a new *viśayatā* necessitating the postulation of another *viśayitā* to which it becomes the object of knowledge. Some of these problems we have

dealt with in our comment entitled "*Have the neo-naiyāyikas been leading us up the garden path?*" (XV-2, pp. 121-141). But in the present context, the more important question is as to how the postulation of these entities affects the contention that Nyāya is a realist system *par excellence*.

Prof. Mohanty has roundly settled the issue by saying, "There is no reason why a realistic ontology shall not admit entities that are either purely mental or 'hybrid'" (p. 167, JICPR, XIII-1). This is an important declaration from the Nyāya camp and as Mohanty speaks with authority we may, for a moment, accept what Nyāya says in this regard. But what is a 'mental entity' and what exactly is a 'hybrid entity', which presumably is a *mixture* of something 'mental' and 'non-mental' in it? Normally the term 'mental' is taken to mean something that is not independent of consciousness or the *act* of knowing which apprehends it. It is in this sense that Locke regarded the secondary qualities as 'dependent' on mind and hence as not been there, independently of it, in the physical world. The very notion of a 'mental entity', thus, involves that it will not have been there if there had been no 'mind' in the universe. Realism, at least in the sense in which it has been used in the western philosophical tradition, refers to those entities which will be there even if there were no 'mind' in the universe. The contention was that certain kinds of entities come into being just because of the fact that there was 'mind' in the universe and these were regarded as 'subjective' in character. The realist epistemology was in search of those objects of knowledge which were completely independent and objective in the sense that they would be there even if there were no mind and hence will have no admixture of anything 'subjective' in them. The term 'mind' in this context means the same as 'consciousness' and the latter term can be substituted for the former without making any difference to the contention.

The term 'mental', thus, is systematically ambiguous in this context. It may mean (and perhaps Mohanty wishes to mean in this sense) that there are 'entities' which can not be characterised as 'physical' in character and yet, which are objects of consciousness and which have their own nature demanding to be known in the same sense as the so-called physical objects do. It may be, parenthetically, pointed out that

the term 'mental', as used in the English language, can not literally convey what is meant by '*manas*' in Nyāya. In fact, it will be interesting to find the exact corresponding term in the Nyāya system which conveys the same meaning as is conveyed by the term 'mind' in the English language.

But, assuming that the term 'mental' refers to what is usually conveyed in the English language, three distinct points arise in respect of the entities that are considered to be purely 'mental'. First, what is their 'ontological' status in the scheme of Nyāya metaphysics and is that status same as the one that is accorded to objects which are considered to be 'non-mental' or physical in character. Second, what is the status of these objects when they are not object of cognition? In other words, do they continue to have 'existence' in the same way as ordinary objects of sense perception are supposed to have? Third, do they possess an inter subjectively 'objective' character or they are 'objects' to an individual personal mind alone whose so-called 'existent' and objective character is not available to any other mind?

In case the mental entities are accorded a different ontological status than the ones given to non-mental objects, Nyāya would have to accept a radical dualism of the Cartesian type and face the well-known problem caused thereby. As for the second question, the mental entities can not be regarded to have 'existence' in the same way as is accorded to physical objects and hence, in case they are considered to 'exist' even after they have ceased to be the objects of apprehension by some mind, they will have to be given a 'subsistent' status on the lines which Russell at one time argued for in the case of such entities. This, of course, would save Nyāya realism, but obviously do so in a pickwikean manner. And, in case one grants them 'objectivity' only in relation to the individual personal mind which apprehends them, the situation will become even more hilariously pickwikean in character as now it will be the individual mind which will be populated by these 'subsistent' entities which will not be accessible to anyone else unless one accepts telepathic cognition to save the situation. One will have to accept 'unfelt' pains and pleasures, hopes and fears as they are mental entities *par excellence*.

Prof. Mohanty, however, has not only talked of mental entities but also epistemic ones which, according to him, enjoy the same 'realistic' status in Nyāya as any other entities. The mental is not and can not be regarded as epistemic if 'Psychologism' is to be avoided. And, if so the 'existence' of a unique class of entities which are neither mental nor physical will have to be admitted having ontological status of their own and an epistemological status different from the ones that is usually accorded to other existent entities such as those that are physical or mental in character. *Viśayatā* for example is one such characteristic and so also will be *viśeṣyatā*, *prakāratā*, *śaṅsargatā* and *viśayitā*. Nyāya abounds in such epistemic entities and in fact, they have proliferated as Navya Nyāya analysis developed over a period of time. These are entities created by Navya Nyāya analysis itself and their postulation was necessitated by the mode of analysis adopted by Nyāya. The history of this proliferation is interesting in itself as it shows that however innocent the first step may be taken in philosophical thinking it leads with logical inevitability to consequences which are difficult to accept even by those who are involved in that exercise. To give a few examples of such epistemic objects which the Nyāya analysis has brought into being we may turn to Prof. Prahaladacār's article on the *Kroḍpatras* published in JICPR, Vol. XIV, No. 3. Here are a few samples randomly selected which, I am sure, will test the understanding of even devoted Naiyāyikas unless they happen to be specialist student of the subject: *sva-samānādhikaraṇa*, *sva-āśrayatva*, *sva-tādātmya*, *sva-abhinnatva*, *sva-nirūpitatva*, *sva-vrittivitva*, *avacchedakattva*, *nirūpakatā avacchedakatva*, *saṁbandhitva saṁbandha*, *avacchedakatā vṛttitva*, etc.

The problem in respect of these epistemic objects which have gained 'existence' because of the Navya-Nyāya mode of analysis, has troubled the Naiyāyikas themselves. Shall they or shall they not be accorded the status of a *padārtha* in the usual sense of the term? The Nyāya 'realist' does not know how to deal with the situation. Prof. V.N. Jha, for example, makes a radical distinction between the usual *padārthas* which are subsumed under the given categories of the Vaiśeṣika and others such as *pratiyogitā*, etc. which according to him cannot be granted the same status of *padārtha*-hood as is accorded

to *ghaṭa*, etc. He writes, “A *Ghaṭa* after it comes into existence remains *ghaṭa* throughout its existence and continues to be designated as *ghaṭa* throughout its existence, but a *ghaṭa* does not always possess *pratiyogitā*.” (p. XXIII, *Viśayatāvāda of Harirāma Tarkālāṅkāra* translated by V.N. Jha, University of Poona, 1987). He calls these “acquired properties” to distinguishing them from those which he designates as “inherent properties”. The phrase recalls the term used by Locke in connection with his discussion of secondary qualities such as colour, sound etc. which according to Prof. Jha, would be regarded as inherent properties in the Navya-Nyāya mode of analysis. The important point is not how the property ‘red’ is designated in the Lockeian and the Nyāya framework but that each, in its own way, feels the necessity of positing a distinction between properties which set them radically apart from each other. And, this distinction is based on ‘dependence’ on something because of which they do not belong to the object in the same inherent fashion as the other ones do. In a sense many relational properties have this character, though it is not clear if Nyāya has paid attention to them.

The so-called ‘acquired’ properties in Nyāya, go on proliferating and the Naiyāyika does not find it easy to decide what to do with them. To give but one example, one may look into the discussion on *āpādyatā* in Harirāma Tarkālāṅkāra’s *Viśayatāvāda*. *Āpādyatā* is a very strange relation and the discussion about it is so subtle and sophisticated as not to be clear even to good Naiyāyikas. It arises in the context of the postulation of the absence of a *pratibandhaka* in respect of any knowledge whatsoever, and when, strangely, this is extended to the cognition of an imagined object where again one will have to posit the absence of *pratibandhaka* in order that the ‘imagined object’ may be imagined. (For detailed discussion see page XXXIX, *ibid*).

The problem of the *acceptance* of such entities is well-known in the Nyāya tradition and many a time, the dispute is sought to be settled by invoking the criteria of *gaurava* and *lāghava* in the situation and arguing that only that alternative should be chosen which necessitate the postulation of the lesser number of such entities. This is *occam’s razor* without the awareness of the epistemological and ontological implications of its acceptance by the philosopher concerned. One

interesting example of such a discussion in Nyāya relates to the dispute between Gadādhara and Jagdīsha regarding the construal of the meaning of an expression in terms of *prakāratā* and *sāmsargatā*. Baccā Jhā in his well-known discussion of the subject is said to have concluded that Jagdīsha’s position on the issue is preferable to that of Gadādhara as it requires the postulation of only 720 partibaṅ dhakatas as against Gadādhara’s position which require a far greater number of *Pratibandhakatās*² if *Prakāratā* view is accepted.

This is a strange way of solving the problem in case such entities are supposed to be existent in character, for who would decide about the population of animals in forest on such a basis. The existence of ‘Existent’ entities is not, and cannot, be decided in such a manner. They enjoy an independence of all such consideration and if Nyāya is deemed to be a ‘realist’ then it can not be allowed to indulge in arbitrary abolition of such ‘existent’ realities which are independent of both of the Nyāya and Naiyāyikas.

The issue, however, is not confined to those epistemic properties only which have been termed as acquired properties by V.N. Jha. It affects one of the basic *padārthas* in vaiśeṣika system which according to everybody has an independent existent character, entailed by a realist epistemology. This is the *padārtha* called *sāmānya* and as everybody knows, the Naiyāyikas are fond of establishing the reality of their “realism” by pointing out to it. But, as every Naiyāyika knows, or should know, there was a problem with such an acceptance and that consisted in the question whether every *sāmānya* should be given an independent existent reality or some criterion or criteria formulated to distinguish between genuine *sāmānyas* and pseudo-*sāmānyas*. As pointed out earlier, Udayana formulated such criteria and called them *jāti-bādhaka* to focus attention upon the fact that in case any or all of these criteria did not apply to a *sāmānya*, it could not be treated as giving rise to a genuine class of existent objects. It may be said that we are ignoring the distinction between ‘*jāti*’ and ‘*sāmānya*’, but what could have been the necessity for making this distinction.

The *padārthas*, it may be said, have sub-classes of their own, and hence it should not cause any surprise if ‘*sāmānya*’ has also sub-classes within it. But while this seems to be true of the first three *padārthas*

which alone are granted *sattā*, that is, 'existence' within the Nyāya system, it is difficult to say whether the same is true of the other *padārthas*, particularly the next three which are given the status, not of *sattā* but of *bhāva* in the Nyāya framework. *Sāmānya*, obviously, does not have sub-classes within it and it's not clear whether *viśeṣa* can be said to have any such sub-classes, even though there is the notion of *antya-viśeṣa* or the ultimate particulars which is supposed to be a property only of the atoms in the system (it will be interesting to find in this connection whether the individual souls that is the *ātman* also have this characteristics). As for *abhāva* whose status as a *padārtha* was accepted much later in the Vaiśeṣika system, it is divided into *prāgbhāva*, *dhvansābhāva* and *atyantābhāva*, (*anyonyabhāva* is also supposed to be accepted by some as a separate *abhāva*, distinct from the three.) but it is not clear if these should be accepted as sub-classes of *abhāva* in the same sense as one accepts those that are mentioned in the case of *dravya*, *guṇa* and *karma*. In any case, the case of *sāmānya* seems to be radically different as it is based on the ground of exemplification in existents and those which not only are not exemplified but can not be ever exemplified because they are not *sāmānyas* at all and have been regarded as such by misunderstanding on the part of the thinkers concerned.

The epistemic entities, or the *jñāniyapadārthas* will, thus, have to be divided into at least two major classes; the one consisting of the three *padārthas-sāmānya*, *viśeṣa* and *samavāya* and the other consisting of all those which have arisen because of *navya-nyāya* mode of analysis and whose number is, in principle, unending as their 'manufacture' depends on the ingenuity of the Nyāya theoreticians. The status of *abhāva* in this context is ambiguous as one is not sure whether it can be classed as a *jñāniya padārtha* or not. Nor is the relation of these *padārthas* to those which are supposed to arise from *apekṣā buddhi* clear, even though the latter are specifically restricted to arithmetical numbers only. Prof. Dravid has suggested that "...numbers other than unity are the products of the *enumerative cognition*" (p. 172), forgetting that it is enumerative activity that may be said to give rise to numbers and not enumerative cognition. The distinction between number 'one' and all other numbers will cease to have any meaning if Prof. Dravid's

explanation of the reality of numbers is accepted. For, while the "enumerative cognition" of numbers 2, 3, 4,...is there then it will only be the 'cognition' of those numbers that will be there and when that cognition will cease, only the 'cognition' of the numbers will cease but the numbers themselves will still be there just as is the case with other objects such as trees etc.

The issue of Nyāya realism, thus, has to address itself to all different kinds of objects that Nyāya postulates because of very different reasons. These 'objects' are not of one type and the contention that this difference between the ontological typology of the objects concerned makes no difference to the epistemological issue of 'realism' in respect of their knowledge, will be strange indeed. The very fact that there is an 'undecidable' dispute about the number and nature of these *padārthas* should be a sufficient reason for doubting the 'objective', 'realistic' character of them. The case of Raghunātha Śiromaṇi is well-known and so also the fact that in spite of his great reputation among Naiyāyikas, hardly anyone accepted his radical suggestions in this regard. It should be remembered in this connection that he not only argued that *new-padārthas* be accepted in the Naiyāyika pantheon but also demolished and rejected the old ones and threw them out with scant regard for the tradition which had 'worshipped' them for so long without feeling any guilt whatsoever.

The two most telling objections against any possible doubt regarding Nyāya being a 'realist' system *par excellence* come from the fact that Nyāya accepts a large number of 'eternal', objects in its ontology and that, in Nyāya view the Self or the *Ātman* in its pure nature is devoid of consciousness. Prof. Sibjivan Bhattacharya opens his comment on the issue by enumerating these 'eternal' objects and suggests that, "As they are all eternal, uncreated, they are not dependent on anything, least of all on their knowledge" (p. 164). But he seems to forget that "All reals are *objects* of God's knowledge" (p. 164) and, if it is so than to be "real" is either to be an object of human cognition or of God's cognition, a position that is squarely that of Bishop Berkeley in the western tradition. That "No human being is omniscient" (p. 164) is accepted by all idealists and no-one, as far as I know, has maintained that to be "real" is necessarily to be "an object of some

human cognition or other.”

As for the second objection that the *Ātman* or the self does not possess consciousness as its essential property, this does not make Nyāya any more realist than the acceptance of enumerable other such entities, if it is accepted that they are necessarily the ‘objects’ of some cognition, whether it be that of God or of some other consciousness different for the *Ātman* concerned.

The question whether Nyāya is realist or not can only be answered if one is first able to decide what realism as a philosophical position necessarily involves. The crucial question in this context relates to the notion of ‘independence’ from consciousness. Thus any discussion of the issue involves a prior acceptance of the notion of consciousness and that something can be dependent or independent of it in the context of cognition. There is the related question of what is meant by ‘being an object of’ or ‘being an object to’ consciousness.

There is also the question whether something can be regarded as ‘known’ if it is merely an object of awareness of some consciousness or other. The term ‘known’ may be used in the strict sense when to be ‘known’ is to be known in a judgemental form and even in a more strict form as entailing a cognitive claim which can be ‘justified’ if one is challenged to do so. Beyond this, ‘knowledge’ may be said strictly to refer only to those complex conceptual and theoretic structures which form a systematic unity of their own and are usually designated as “Science” or “*Śāstra*”. A cognitive assertion or denial is said to be a piece of ‘knowledge’ in this sense if it follows from the theories or laws or principles that form a basic part of that science or *śāstra*.

It is obvious that while in the first sense ‘to be an object of awareness’ involves a concrete, specific, experiential state of consciousness, while in all the others the ‘experiential’ and the existential’ character gets more and more diluted till, in the last stage the idea that an ‘object’ of knowledge is an object of consciousness can be asserted only in the vaguest form. The related question of the independence of object of knowledge from the act of being known or as being the object of some awareness or other is, thus, bound to be different in different cases. The notion of ‘independence’ is itself not

clear and hence any formulation of the philosophical issue concerning the ‘realism’ or ‘idealism’ of a philosophical position will have to be analyzed and answered in a differentiated manner in order that it may be meaningful and significant.

“Independence” may mean independence in origination or independence in ‘existence’ or independence in assertibility in respect of the nature and content of that which is asserted. Realism or Idealism thus, may also be of three types in respect of the contention that what I known is independent of the consciousness that ‘knows’ it. But, as consciousness itself is the vaguest of all entities and it is difficult to specify the exact sense in which it may be said to be ‘known’, the question of something being ‘dependent’ or ‘independent’ of it is still more difficult to answer. Most objects of awareness are independent, in the third sense as, their nature and content is distinct from the consciousness of which they are object. The only exception to this occurs in the case of consciousness when it itself becomes an object of *anusyavasāya* or self consciousness. In this situation where consciousness itself becomes an object of cognition, the former is not just consciousness but rather consciousness as ‘knowing’ or as being aware of something else. The complex awareness form by ‘self consciousness’ thus presents a difficult case for the realistic contention as here what is an object of awareness does not differ radically in nature and content from that which is aware of it except in the sense that there is a content involved in the first level awareness which is not present in the same sense at the second level awareness. And, in case some new property, such as, say *viśayatā* is produced then its ‘origination’ will have to be ascribed to the act of self consciousness which has given rise to it. It will be difficult to say that such a property will continue to obtain even when the act of self-consciousness which had given rise to it, ceases to exist. *Viśayatā*, for example, can hardly be said to characterize the judgemental cognition which occurs at the first level of conscious cognition at the human level, just as the whole complex of the judgemental cognition that is *savikalpaka jñāna*, can hardly be said to exist at the *nirvikalpaka* level or characterize it in any meaningful way, as any such characterization will destroy its *nirvikalpaka* character. Thus, the successive levels of *nirvikalpaka*,

savikalpaka and *anusyavasaya* cognition are characterized by properties which arise because of acts of consciousness and which can not be said to characterize them when that act of consciousness ceases to exist. Hence, at least in two senses of 'independence', that is in terms of 'origination' and 'existence' these properties can not be regarded as 'independent' from the act of consciousness which has given rise to them. They may still be recognised as independent in the third sense, that is, in respect of their nature and content, though even in their case there is an element of commonality between the act of consciousness which had given rise to them and the way they themselves are constituted.

There is still a way out for the Nyāya realist to save his position in case he wants to do so at all cost in face of the above evidence to the contrary. He may maintain that what once occurred as an actuality, can always be regarded as existing as a possibility which can always be actualized whenever the appropriate conditions obtain. There is, of course, the problem whether what is possible but has not yet occurred can be regarded as 'real' or 'existent' in any relevant sense of the term. The issue has been debated in Arab philosophy but Nyāya, being an ultra realist, may not be deterred from giving them a respectable place in its 'realist' pantheon. There will still remain the problem of what are usually regarded as being impossible such as *vandhyā-putra* and Nyāya alone may, to preserve its realism, grant them some sort of independent reality as they are 'knowable' in some sense of the term. Some have argued that at least they are known as 'unknowable' and hence have to be treated as 'known' in a minimal sense, as otherwise they could not have been characterized even as unknowable or impossible.

This will, of course, introduce modal concepts into Nyāya but, as Arindam Chakraborty asserts, "Nyāya metaphysics can not make sense of this empty 'can' or 'could', because nowhere in Nyāya do we find any trace of the idea of possible worlds" (p. 154, JICPR, XII-2). Prof. Arindam Chakraborty, however, is not deterred by this and is not shaken in his belief that Nyāya continues to be "resolutely realist" in spite of this. There could perhaps not be greater example of "faith" than this as he himself have just asserted "The notion of mind independence involves

the notion of possibility' (p. 154, *Ibid.*). For faith there are no contradictions and all persons who have encountered men of deep religious faith know this. Philosophy, however, is not a matter of faith but of reason and it normally does not countenance contradictions unless they are shown to be 'illusory' in nature. Nyāya, we hope, believes in reason and will not like to be saved on grounds which are non-rational or irrational or supra-rational in character.

Notes

1. Nyāya Sūtra 2.1.68 "मन्त्रायुर्वेदप्रामाण्यवच्च तत्प्रामाण्यमाप्तप्रामाण्यात्"
2. See page 139. "शास्त्र मूर्ति धर्मदत्त (बच्चा) ज्ञा इमः वैदुष्य एवं व्यक्तित्व" by Kishore Nath Jha in 'UNMILAN', July, 1999.



Appendix

Thinking vs Thought

Strategies for Conceptual Creativity*

The activity of thinking seems not only distinctive of man, but also appears to lie at the very roots of all his other activities. Yet, the activity itself is seldom directly paid attention to, as what we normally know are only its results, that is, thought. And it is with thought that we are usually concerned, the thought of others as embodied in language, the language that we ourselves know. The understanding of what someone else has said and finding fault with it constitutes the largest part of what goes on under the title of intellectual activity in the world. Even a casual glance at the list of publications in, say, *Choice* or any other

* The paper was the basis for an oral presentation at the last plenary session of the Third International Conference on Thinking held at Honolulu, Hawaii, from 4th to 8th January 1987.

review journal will confirm this. So will the teaching and-learning process in any educational institution, where the whole activity usually consists in somebody explaining to students what someone else has said and examining them for their capacity to reproduce what he had said.

In a sense, this is almost unavoidable, for what can be more palpable, concrete, visible, objective than the libraries and the museums in which thought and imagination has embodied itself. And that is also perhaps the reason why the secondary sources always take over and proliferate till they almost bury the primary sources or drive them into oblivion. The shock of a real encounter with the original is well known, but what is not so well known is the still greater shock which one feels when one meets the thinker himself. There is, on the one hand, the encounter with the person which, in a sense, puts all that he had said or written far behind and seems somehow strangely irrelevant to the situation. The *presence* of the person, in a sense, transcends all that he has written and, to a certain extent, even negates it. But that is not what we are interested in here. Rather, it is the person actually thinking before us and the relation of this to his finished thought that we had read earlier in his writings that I am interested in for the present. And the con-*trast* here is almost as great as between the person and the thought that he thinks or the action that he does. Seeing the thought arising, so to say, before our very eyes is to see it in a different way than when one finds it finished, frozen, congealed between the covers of a book. The latter appearance is deceptive, but its deceptiveness is grasped more easily if one has the thinker thinking before oneself, even if it be only for a little while. After one has experienced it, everything becomes fluid once again—tentative, hesitant, provisional—subject to revision and counter-revision.

The truth of what we have pointed out seems so obvious and trivial that one wonders if it even needs to be said. Yet, the perennial disputes regarding what texts really mean is a reminder that the point that we have made, though obvious, is forgotten or ignored most of the time. How much misguided intellectual effort humanity would have been saved if nobody had worried about what the *Bible* or the *Koran* or the *Vedas* really meant. And, as everybody knows, the problem is not

confined to the so-called revelatory texts alone or to those misguided ancients who believed in their authority. The so-called moderns are not immune from the disease. The amount of effort that has been wasted on finding what Marx or Freud or Wittgenstein or Hegel really meant is truly astonishing. These names are only illustrative and one may add others, according to one's liking, to the list.

This strange phenomenon of hundreds of able minds engaging themselves in disputing about what someone else has said may be seen as a hangover from those times when the authority of the revealed text was so great and the dangers of unorthodoxy so real that the only way that one could safely say what one wanted to say was to present it as the real meaning of the text whose authority everyone accepted. But the hangover hypothesis can hardly explain the continuance of the phenomenon and its proliferation even in times when the dangers of unorthodoxy have become only marginal in character. Perhaps the *guru-śiṣya* symbiosis or the master-disciple syndrome, along with the *sampradāya* mentality arising out of the inevitable schisms regarding who understood the master best, may explain the phenomenon better. Deeper than these, however, is perhaps the lack of confidence in one's own capacity to think originally, and thus to find crutches in the thought of others who are already acknowledged and established in the field. The cult of masters, past and present, helps to perpetuate this feeling, and the burden of the past and present greats stifles the young and the not-so-young into repeating what others have said and making their own thought respectable by buttressing it from quotes from others, forgetting that one could have easily found quotations for the counter-position also.

A more charitable view of this enormous wastage of intellectual effort is that it seeks to establish a relationship with the past and is not so much a sign of a lack of self-confidence in the power of one's own thinking as the acknowledgement that one thinks on the basis of what others have thought, that thinking is not a monadic activity but rather the achievement of a community of thinkers. But a community can only be of equals where none is afraid of saying what he thinks to be correct or significant or fruitful and, what is perhaps even more important, where none feels that no one else can say anything

worthwhile or significant in the matter. The arrogance of knowledge is as much an arrogance as the arrogance of power, and both lead to essential asymmetries which, however real, militate against innovation and creativity. A questioning attitude may prick the pretensions of both, as neither is as certain or secure as it usually proclaims itself to be.

Knowledge, it should be remembered, is usually a knowledge of what someone else has said or a repetition of what is habitually accepted as true by practitioners in a certain domain. The first is just information which may be useful in certain contexts. As for the second, a closer look at the field will always reveal dissidents who are anathema to the establishment. Thus, the distinction between those who know and those who do not is not only relative but also misleading if it is construed as a relationship of authority in which the latter have necessarily to accept what the former say, as they are a disadvantaged group in the situation. This illusion of authority is generated by the relation of dependence on adults which the child has in respect of many things, and is later strengthened by the schooling system where the teacher is supposed to know and the student to learn. However, when a question is raised either by the child or the student, the situation is generally reversed, revealing the ignorance of both the adults and the teachers. One is often surprised at the questions that children ask, but few reflect on the fact that this capacity is soon lost as children grow older. As for students, most teachers do not like questions to be asked in the class or they prefer that only certain types of questions be asked.

To ask a new question is to disrupt the closed circle of accepted knowledge and to open a new vista for thought. Asking a new question is, in a sense, an invitation to look at things anew. But, normally, only certain questions are allowed or accepted within the existing frameworks, and those that depart from them are usually treated as eccentric or irrelevant. But once one sees that a new question is an opening to a new possibility for thought, one will not dismiss it so easily or brush it aside as of no consequence whatsoever. True, one cannot accept all questions as equally relevant or promising, but, from the perspective we are trying to open, one will hesitate to pass such a judgment in an off-hand fashion, and, at a deeper level, see it as one's own limitation rather than that of the questioner. At another level,

perhaps, what one has to learn to cultivate is a sensitivity to questions and the ability to think and feel into what lies behind the question.

But if it is the asking of questions that is crucial for thinking, then what we have to ask with regard to any text is not what it says but the questions it asks or rather the hidden questions which lie behind what is said. The whole exercise of understanding will take on a new turn; for now it will be the questions and the problems that shall occupy the centre of attention, and what is said will be seen as a more or less satisfactory attempt at an answer or solution to them. The questions and the problems, however, are seldom there in the open, and many a time it is not clear which questions are being answered or which problems are being solved. Yet, once the attention shifts to the underlying questions and problems, one begins to take part in the thinking process itself, and the answers and the solutions begin to assume a far more tentative character than they generally do when only what is ostensibly said is taken into account. Also, alternative answers and solutions may begin to take shape, or at least their possibility begin to affect one's cognitive awareness.

What is, however, an even more important consequence of this shift of attention is the overcoming of that theological hangover which has infected so much of cognitive enterprise in all parts of the globe. The exegetical disease, which results not only in trying to discover the real meaning of the text but also in claiming that the master said what one oneself considers to be true, can only be cured if one's basic attitude to the text itself changes. The text, in the changed perspective, is seen as providing an occasion for a dialogue with a person with whom one cannot enter into a personal dialogue for some reason. And the purpose of this dialogue is to help one in the process of one's own thinking, a process that—as we shall see later on—is not a solitary, individual monadic exercise but rather the joint undertaking of a community of visible and invisible persons which ultimately includes, perhaps, the whole of mankind. But to see it in this way is to see it as an unfinished process, unfinishable in principle. For, as long as there are human beings, thinking shall go on; and its stoppage at their cessation will only be like the one that occurs when one gets tired or goes to sleep or dies, that is, accidental in character. Yet, to see it that way is to see

that, though the text has seemingly a beginning and an end, this is illusory. And to see it as illusory is to realize that the so-called ending is only a provisional ending, and that the end is really a challenge to us, the readers, to continue or carry the thought further. The 'continuance' or 'carrying' need not be in the same direction, and may even oppose it or move in a direction which is essentially tangential to it.

It may, perhaps, be thought that texts which are explicitly in the form of a dialogue such as the *Dialogues* of Plato or certain parts of the *Upaniṣads* will not require any such strategy as they ostensibly are doing what we want them to do. Unfortunately, the camouflage in such texts is even deeper, for, though they present an air of open-ended discussion, the questions asked and the replies given are always subtly structured in such a way as to lead to the predetermined conclusion which the author wants to reach. Some of the dialogues of Plato seem to be an exception as, at the end, Socrates confesses his inability to provide an answer to the questions he had asked. Yet, how many times in the course of a Platonic dialogue, one feels like disagreeing with the interlocutor's readiness to agree with what Socrates has said. As for the *Upaniṣads*, they do not even attempt to provide the atmosphere of a real dialogue, for it is a dialogue between those who have known and realized the truth and others who have not. Not only this, there is at times even the threat of punishment with death if one dares to disagree. The *Dialogues* of the Buddha do not have this covert or overt threat of punishment in them, but as far as authority is concerned they breathe the same spirit.

Yet, in spite of these obvious limitations, the dialogues may provide an interesting take-off point for exploring those possibilities of thought which have been so brusquely or casually rejected in the text. In a sense, the Indian philosophical texts provide a far greater opportunity for such an exercise than most philosophical texts written in the western tradition as they provide in the very format of their presentation the possible argument or arguments against their position and their reply to them. The counter-positions are, therefore, there in open and the reader is continuously aware of them. He does not have to hunt for them, or try to find them by delving under the surface of the text as is

the case with most of the philosophical texts written in the West or in the Western tradition. The suppressed text, so to say, is more exposed in the Indian tradition of writing, specially of the philosophical sort than in most other traditions.

The idea of a 'suppressed text' makes us look at the texts in a different way than is usually done by most readers who are still under the sway of what we have called the theological hangover without being aware of it. No text is, or can be, all of a piece as is usually presupposed. Rather, it is a compromise formation between different pulls, all of which are basically intellectual in nature. The Freudian parallel, though tempting, is fundamentally incorrect as it assumes that the only reason for suppression or rejection can be emotional or moral in character. It is forgotten that there can be purely intellectual or aesthetic reasons for such a situation. It is, of course, true that the Freudian perspective is one of neurosis, but that need not be the only context in which we may think of suppression or rejection. The suppression or rejection in the intellectual context results from the judgment of the relative weightage of the evidence and the argument that an individual entertains, and this, obviously, can differ from person to person. The other factor responsible for this emanates from the overall judgment of a person regarding the total cognitive world-view which he considers preferable to others. As these other views are many and diverse in character, the so-called 'suppressed texts' of a text are also multiple in nature. Also, as there is always some argument and evidence for them, they are not a nullity, and hence cannot be completely rejected with the assured certainty of truth. Rather, it is a wager that one puts on one's judgment against that of all the others; but one is aware or at least half-aware that they have a possible plausibility which, yet in one's judgment, is less than that which one has chosen. However, the claim is usually an over claim, for, in that way, one assures both oneself and others of the truth of what one is saying.

The text, in other words, is to be seen as the thought product of someone's thinking and thus having all those characteristics which any product of one's own thinking usually has—tentativeness, incompleteness, provisionality, lack of finality, etc. But this would destroy the illusion created by the appearance of the beginning and the

end within a finite number of pages securely bound within the confines of a book. That there is no real end to the thinking process is known to everybody, for one returns again and again to the themes one had written about till death intervenes and puts an arbitrary end to the process. Even earlier, one may lose interest, get tired or incapacitated or find one has nothing new to say. But these are as accidental or arbitrary as death, with the only difference that one may possibly recover from them. The interest may revive, the vision return, the incapacity be overcome and the creativity flow again. As for the beginning, one knows that there must have been one, but exactly when, one hardly can tell.

But, once the illusion of the beginning and the end are realized, the revelatory attitude to texts will cease also. One can easily see the absurdity of this attitude in the context of the so-called revealed texts of other religions but seldom in that of one's own. And those, who have seen through the revelatory pretensions of all religions, are seldom able to see through their almost universal prevalence in secular contexts also. The tribes of Marxians, Freudians, Fregeans, Wittgensteinians, Husserlians, Chomskians is legion, and one may easily extend the list if one is inclined to do so. The disciples proudly proclaim the final findings of the master, little realizing that each of them has been rejected as untenable by followers of the other group. Hard-core empirical sciences, such as physics, are not immune to the infection as any reader of Popper's *Quantum Theory and the Schism in Physics** would quickly realize. Basically, it is not the subject matter which determines whether the revelatory attitude shall prevail or not, even though certain subject matters may be more prone to it. Rather, the attitude derives from the belief that certain persons are nearer the truth than others, and that, as truth is presumably a unique and coherent whole, such persons are nearer to it in its totality. Both the beliefs, however natural, are mistaken. The first is a generalization or rather a wrong translation of the fact that certain people in certain fields seem to know more than others. The second derives from the seemingly harmless tendency to use the term 'truth' in the singular and to conceive of knowledge as a journey towards a fixed destination. To give up these ways of looking at

* Karl R. Popper, *Quantum Theory and the Schism in Physics*, ed. W.W. Bartley, III, London; Hutchinson, 1982.

knowledge and truth would not only help in overcoming the revelatory attitude and the theological hangover about which we have talked earlier but also, in its own turn, release the spiritual quest from its imprisonment in these attitudes in all the religions of the past.

The roots of creativity in all fields, including that of thinking, are unknown and perhaps unknowable in principle, at least in the usual sense in which 'knowing' is generally used. Yet, one of the preconditions for creativity to manifest itself is the giving up of the mistaken belief that it is confined only to certain persons or periods or countries or civilizations, and that the rest are only doomed to repeat or approximate what has been achieved by them. The belief that every human being is capable of entertaining a new thought, of asking anew question, of seeing a new problem is almost an a priori condition for fostering creativity and letting it emerge in the life of the mind. This means that people have to be encouraged to ask questions, to see problems and to attempt solutions, and that what they attempt in this regard is treated with genuine respect. Many a time, the person who asks the question, sees the problem and attempts a solution does not know the significance of what he has asked or seen or attempted. It is, or should be, the function of those who can see a little farther ahead, to see the potential directions for thought which are implicit in them. But such a situation can only emerge when people who pose questions, formulate problems and attempt solutions are not afraid of making themselves appear foolish or ridiculous or ignorant. This, however, depends on an atmosphere which is just the opposite of what normally obtains in most institutions devoted to the fostering and development of intellectual life today. There is usually a greater emphasis on the development of the critical ability rather than the creative one, even in the best of them. The first habitual response, therefore, in most people to what has been said is to find faults in it. The centre of intellectual life, thus, lies in the development of the critical faculty in the hope that the exposure of the weaknesses and faults in the contention would lead the person concerned either to give it up or modify it in the light of criticisms made. But the critical response does not merely make the atmosphere full of antagonism and hostility, thus discouraging the relatively weaker members of the group from expressing their views freely; but also

makes the proponents stick to their views more rigidly as they tend to identify themselves with them more strongly because of the criticisms made. Also, in such a situation, the questions themselves tend to get determined and restricted by the framework, ultimately leading to what may be called the establishment of different *sampradāyas* or schools, each with a position of its own consolidated over a long period of time in debate with other schools which also have, in turn, consolidated their own positions. The ultimate end becomes the development of defensive strategies which may save the position from any challenge whatsoever.

The fate of these impregnable fortresses of thought, built in theological and non-theological contexts, is well known to all those who are acquainted with the history of ideas in the major civilizations of the world. The security they might have provided to their adherents has been bought at the cost of closing the horizons to thought. Even the adventure of the battle against the opponents has long ceased, as all the questions have been answered and objections met.

The atmosphere for creative thinking to emerge is, thus, radically different from the one that has been traditionally associated with the intellectual seeking of man until now. It is a half-serious, half-playful attempt to explore collectively the various possibilities that spontaneously arise when people gather together to think about something that appears problematic to anyone belonging to that group at that moment. The attempt is to welcome each idea that spontaneously suggests itself to anyone present, and to see in it the possible opportunity for a new direction of thought. But the idea need not be pursued to the bitter end, even when some other interesting idea has suggested itself to someone else. The purpose, ultimately, is not so much to find a definitive answer or solution to the question raised or the problem posed, but rather to see how many directions thinking can take when confronted with a question or a problem. In fact, one's attention need not be confined to the question asked or the problem raised as, in the course of thinking, new questions or problems may emerge which might seem, at least for the moment, even more interesting or more promising.

The enterprise of thinking is usually supposed to be a solitary

exercise. Similar is the feeling about creativity. But this is a mistake. When people gather together, something new emerges. This has been known to all religious traditions as well as to those who have known how to manipulate people. But this age-old insight has seldom been used in the context of cognitive thought. The usual seminars, symposia and conferences, whose quantitative explosion in recent times is tending to destroy thinking at its very roots, are perhaps the farthest away from situations in which people gather together to invoke the spirit of creativity which lies in what has been called the *realm of the between*. The invocation of the spirit of creative logos requires, on the part of its seekers, strategies which, though similar in certain respects to those practised in religious and artistic domains, have a radical difference and individuality of their own. The collective adventure in exploring new directions which thinking may take presupposes attitudes amongst its participants which imply an essential openness to thought and ideas and the courage to follow them wherever they may lead. What the *others* says, therefore, is always an opportunity for one's own thought—not in the sense of controverting what he has said or in seeing in it what one always says, but rather in finding in it the possibility of a new direction for thinking which is not only different from what one has usually thought regarding that issue until that time but also beyond what the other person actually meant when he said what he said. What is required, in other words, is conceptual imagination, the ability to think beyond what has been thought.

Imagination, normally, is supposed to be the preserve of the arts. But the capacity to go beyond what is given lies at the root of all innovation and creativity. 'What is not' is, therefore, more important than 'what is' or 'has been'. The latter only conditions or plays a restricting role, but it is neither clear nor certain in what way. The transformation of a limitation into an opportunity is the eternal wonder of the creative genius. But, in the context of concepts, limitations arise from the settled habits of the past which constrain thinking to move in certain grooves only. To break the habit one has to make a conscious effort to think against the grain, and one may develop as many strategies to achieve this as one can think of. The central point in all strategies, however, is a subdued sceptical attitude to the sufficiency of what is

given and an openness to everything that suggests the possibility of the development of a new conceptual alternative or even of a new way of looking at old concepts which have ceased to excite curiosity or wonder or even interest by long familiarity and mechanical use. The writers, specially the poets, have known this for long, but that has been in the context of images, symbols and metaphors. The thinkers do not seem, at least consciously, aware of this in respect of concepts, even though they are the concept wielders *par excellence*. Concepts, unlike images, are not supposed to grow stale and lose their vibrancy and vitality to make thinking alive. But this just is not the case, and one of the tasks of thinking is to infuse new life into old concepts and see in them potentialities not realized before.

One of the simplest strategies, perhaps, is to realize that, though one is aware of concepts in certain contexts alone, there are other contexts and settings in which they occur or may occur also. As most people are usually confined to their own disciplines, they are not aware of the way same or similar or even analogous concepts are used in other disciplines. Reading a work in a different discipline is like entering a new terrain of knowledge, which arouses not only curiosity about the unfamiliar and excitement about something new along with the challenge to understand it, but also an incipient comparative judgment about the way the knowledge-enterprise is conceptually structured in the two different disciplines. In case the disciplines concern fields too far apart, there is, of course, little likelihood of anything meaningful emerging from this incipient act of comparison; but where the fields happen to be closely related there is every possibility of returning with a new feel and fresh look regarding the concepts one is habitually used to.

But, normally within a cognitive culture even different disciplines share a certain way of looking at things or certain ways of asking questions or seeing certain issues as problematic. It is, therefore, only when one undertakes a conceptual journey to another cognitive culture that one really encounters a different world—a world which, because of its different conceptual framework, appears to be no cognitive world at all. It can only be seen as something bizarre, something superstitious, something that one need not waste one's time upon. In the arts, one has

already learnt or is slowly learning the perverse parochiality of such an attitude. In religion, one is groping towards an awareness where one may accept, even provisionally, the meaningfulness of others' religion, at least for them if not for oneself. But, as far as cognitive enterprise is concerned, the very idea that there may be different cognitive traditions seems perverse to most of its practitioners today. And this, in spite of current fashions in model-building, on the one hand, and what goes under the name of sociology of knowledge, on the other.

In a certain sense, the claim to knowledge is a claim to truth, and one naturally wonders how truth can be multiple in character. But this is to conceive of truth not only in a crudely 'correspondence' way but also to think of reality as something to which temporality is essentially adventitious in character. Not only this; it also denies in a very fundamental sense the possibility of creativity in the field of knowledge. The ideal of knowledge is supposed to be a perfect mirror, but how can a mirror ever innovate except at the cost of distorting reality? But reality must include the knowing mind as much as what is attempted to be known, and temporality is as much a character of the one as of the other. The cognitive structures through which the knowledge enterprise is conducted are not, as Kant thought, completely given and static in character. Rather, they are themselves the creations of thinking and one seldom feels very much bound by them. Kant himself was forced to make a distinction between 'thinking' and 'knowing' at one stage of his thought as the 'thing-in-itself' could only be an object of 'thinking' and not of 'knowing' in his system. As for the 'categories of the understanding', it is never quite clear in what sense they may be regarded as objects of 'thinking' or of 'knowing'. In fact, the whole enterprise of transcendental investigation in which Kant was engaged confirms the freedom of the 'thinking self' as much as the 'moral action' does that of the 'moral agent'. But even if it be granted that categories, whether those enumerated by Kant or some others, constitute the very structure of the thinking process when it embodies itself in thought, they still function at a level of such generality that they do not affect the real diversity of cognitive structures across cultures and civilizations.

However it may be, the fact of what we have called 'cognitive journeys across conceptual frontiers' cannot be denied, nor that they can be intellectually as invigorating and rewarding as such journeys usually are. There are, of course, the hazards which all travel generally involves, but then there always are risks which the leaving of safe, habitual, beaten tracks involves. A realization of the limited parochiality of what one had taken to be universal and self-evident is the first consequence of such an encounter. The second is an openness to the possibility of alternatives which one had not even thought of before. The two are, in fact, two sides of the same coin, though the second is more positive than the first.

'Cognitive journeys' apart, one of the simplest strategies for conceptual innovation is to recognize that concepts are not monadic or atomistic in character. They are always related to other concepts, and to change the relationships is to change the conceptual structure itself. If one analyses the conceptual structure underlying some text, one would discover not only the roster of concepts which the author has used but also the way he has organized them. A different organization will result in a different conceptual structure, a different way of looking at things. Hence, one of the simplest strategies for achieving conceptual innovation is to ask oneself in what ways one can possibly change the relationships between the concepts in a significant way, so as to achieve a new way of looking at the phenomenon concerned. In any mapping of concepts, it will be obvious that they fall into clusters in which some seem obviously more closely related than others. Amongst the clusters, some concepts will have a dominating position such that other concepts in the cluster will get their meaning and significance determined by their relationship to the dominant central concept in the cluster. Some concepts may be common to more than one cluster, and, thus, may play a connecting role between clusters. The relationship between clusters may not be obvious at first sight. It may require conceptual insight to apprehend it. On the other hand, the clusters themselves may not be very clear-cut. If such a situation obtains, the possibility of there being alternative conceptual clusters embedded in the conceptual situation need not be ruled out. In fact, the whole purpose of conceptual mapping in the perspective that we are talking about is to explore the multiple

conceptual structures which lie as hidden possibilities amongst the concepts employed in any text. The same considerations apply to what may be called 'differential weightage' which an author gives to the concepts he uses. The number, distribution and frequency of the occurrence of a concept give some idea of its relative weightage in relation to others. However, one has to be careful in using these indicators, and, in any case, they should never be used mechanically.

Ultimately, the devising of strategies for conceptual creativity is itself an exercise in creativity. And, hence, they can neither be fixed in number nor be used in such a way as to ensure the result deterministically. The exercise of the strategy is as much a creative act as its discovery, for, ultimately, it is an invocation of the same mystery and power that lies at the root of the universe and ourselves.