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DESHPANDE
BAL DASGUPTA**

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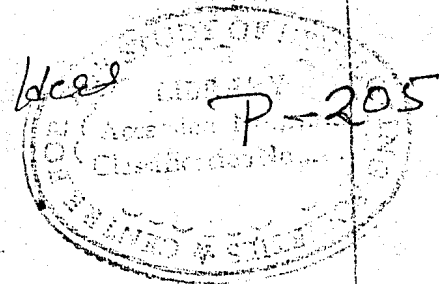


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"Mourn" and "lament" are inadequate words, but we deeply mourn the death of Shrimati Indira Gandhi, struck down by separatism not svaraj, and we deeply lament the black aftermath of that black deed. We shall overcome, Hinduism and Sikhism shall overcome, India shall overcome costly ungrateful forgetfulness of svaraj. Satyameva Jayate.

SPECIAL NUMBER EDITORIAL

In our editorial announcement and letters inviting contributions to this special number of Indian Philosophical Quarterly, we had boldly asserted that K. C. Bhattacharya's discourse *Svaraj in Ideas* (1929) was "no less fundamental in its analysis of Indian bondage and its possible cure" than *Hind Svaraj*, Mahatma Gandhi's revolutionary text of 1909 whose seventy-fifth anniversary of publication is marked by this just-ending Orwellian year of Indian and global turbulence. We stand by our juxtaposition of the Mahatma and the philosopher on the theme of *svaraj*, not in absent-minded forgetfulness of the differences between revolutionary writing and philosophical inquiry, but on the basis of our conviction that the neglect of *Hind Svaraj* by Indian intellectuals down the decades (avant-garde fringe celebration of it notwithstanding) is the consequence precisely of that loss of *Svaraj in Ideas* — independence and autonomy of thought — which KCB laments and warns against in his quiet discourse, bondage more enslaving than political subjugation because of its invisibility and silent creeping paralysing power, unforgivably persistent even after political independence. The lessons of the philosopher's discourse must be learnt if we would respond to the summons to civilisation and realisation represented by Mahatma Gandhi's writings or by Sri Aurobindo's and Śrī Rāmaṇa Maharṣi's or Svāmi Vivekānanda's testaments of timeless, timely, Indian, universal truth. Behind them all, and still in quite recent modern times, is that unique explosion of light and love and truth — the fact of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahansa. Such is our unfreedom of mind, however, that there is not yet amongst us even a fringe academic celebration of the *Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Kathāmṛta*, that wellspring of metaphysical and spiritual wisdom, apart from ritual recitations of bhakti in circles that do not set cognitive goals and directions of inquiry. Our bhakti need not be anti-intellectual and archaic, and our rebelliousness ought not to be ignorant and borrowed — this is

the minimum important lesson we learn from *Svaraj in Ideas*. We are not here editorially propogating metaphysics and spirituality, not even their matchless Indian manifestations, at least one of us mightily resisting the temptation to do so. We only lament and seek limitedly to correct our indifference to self-knowledge.

The response to our invitation has been substantial and pours in even as we go to press, and ranges widely from un-hedging enthusiasm for the idea of *Svaraj in Ideas* (it is this idea, and not only KCB's exploration of it, that this number seeks to examine) to unhesitating rejection of it, in-between positions also receiving serious attention. Our aim was to provoke serious thought, not to pronounce or evince the whole truth on the question of autonomy and thought. We welcome the diversity of vigorous thought¹ represented in this volume and thank all contributors solemnly editorially, having unfortunately failed to do so informally individually (Sorry!) In the interest of uniformity, we have editorially imposed a single spelling for the word *Svaraj* following the standard international transliteration of Sanskrit words into Roman script and a single system of referring to K. C. Bhattacharya's text using paragraph numbers.

We would like to thank Dr. Kalyan Bagchi and Shri Pradyot Mukherjee, both of Visvabharati University, for making available to us for reproduction in this issue the KCB texts (*Svaraj in Ideas* and the review of Ethel May Kitch's *The Origin of Subjectivity in Hindu Thought*) as well as the 'Introduction' from Kitch's book. KCB's review of Kitch's work is a paradigmatically lucid and powerful defence of traditional Indian thought and life against prejudice and ignorance in high places.

Readers poorly acquainted with the name of K. C. Bhattacharya would like to know that the learned philosopher was born in a renowned Brahmin family of Bengal on May 12, 1875; graduated with triple honours (English, Philosophy and Sanskrit) from Presidency College, Calcutta, in 1896; was awarded

¹ But see also 'Editorial Postscript'.

EDITORIAL

Calcutta University's Premchand Raichand Scholarship in 1901; served the Education Department of West Bengal as a Lecturer in Philosophy, retiring as the Officiating Principal of Hooghly College in 1930; was the Director of the Indian Institute of Philosophy at Amalner from 1933 to 1935; was George V Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at Calcutta University from 1935 to 1937; died on December 11, 1949. We have not been able to secure a bibliography of Professor K. C. Bhattacharya's writings more complete than what is contained in his *Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. 1 and 2, recently reproduced as one Volume, Delhi 1983, by M/s Motilal Banarasidass.

We apologise to regular readers of IPQ for the eleventh-hour appearance in December of this October-December issue, the unpunctuality attributable to special number demands; and for the absence of a Students Supplement to this issue due to exigencies of scheduling.

We hope a national seminar on the theme of 'Svaraj in Ideas' (if not on Svaraj as such), and a sequel to this special number, will materialise in the not too distant future.

This volume we dedicate to the memory of two distinguished Indian philosophers who have recently died — Professor T. M. P. Mahadevan and Professor Kalidas Bhattacharya (a son of K. C. Bhattacharya).

A happy new year to all our readers, filled with gifts of autonomy and universality, gifts of svaraj.

K. J. Shah (Guest Editor) Ramchandra Gandhi (Guest Editor) S. S. Deshpande (Organising Editor)
Probal Dasgupta (Guest Editor)

Special Number Editorial Committee.

SVARAJ IN IDEAS *

KRISHINA CHANDRA BHATTACHARYA

I. We speak today of Svaraj or self-determination in politics. Man's domination over man is felt in the most tangible form in the political sphere. There is however a subtler domination exercised in the sphere of ideas by one culture on another, a domination all the more serious in the consequence, because it is not ordinarily felt. Political subjection primarily means restraint on the outer life of a people and although it tends gradually to sink into the inner life of the soul, the fact that one is conscious of it operates against the tendency. So long as one is conscious of a restraint, it is possible to resist it or to bear it as a necessary evil and to keep free in spirit. Slavery begins when one ceases to feel the evil and it deepens when the evil is accepted as a good. Cultural subjection is ordinarily of an unconscious character and it implies slavery from the very start. When I speak of cultural subjection, I do not mean the assimilation of an alien culture. That assimilation need not be an evil; it may be positively necessary for healthy progress and in any case it does not mean a lapse of freedom. There is cultural subjection only when one's traditional cast of ideas and sentiments is superseded without comparison or competition by a new cast representing an alien culture which possesses one like a ghost. This subjection is slavery of the spirit; when a person can shake himself free from it, he feels as though the scales fell from his eyes. He experiences a rebirth, and that is what I call Svaraj in Ideas.

* This discourse was given at a meeting of the students of the Hooghly College of which the writer was Principal, during 1928-30. The present paper was recovered from Dr. Bhattacharya's unpublished writings.

Subsequently it was published in the *Visva Bharati Journal*, Vol. XX, 1954; pp. 103-114.

2. In these days when our political destinies are in the melting pot, one is tempted to express a doubt — till now vaguely felt but suppressed as uncultured — how far generally we have assimilated our western education and how far it has operated as an obsession. Certainly there has been some sort of assimilation — at least by some of us — but even of them it may be asked whether the alien culture has been accepted by them after a full and open-eyed struggle had been allowed to develop between it and their indigenous culture. It is admitted today — what was not sufficiently recognised in the earlier days of our western education — that we had an indigenous culture of a high degree of development, the comparative value of which cannot be said to have been yet sufficiently appraised. Under the present system we generally receive western culture in the first instance and then we sometimes try to peer into our ancient culture as a curiosity and with the attitude of foreign oriental scholars and yet we say that this ancient culture of ours is no curiosity. Many of our educated men do not know and do not care to know this indigenous nature of ours. When they seek to know, they do not feel, as they ought to feel, that they are discovering their own self.

3. There is no gainsaying the fact that this western culture — which means an entire system of ideas and sentiments — has been simply imposed upon us. I do not mean that it has been imposed on unwilling minds: we ourselves asked for this education, and we feel, and perhaps rightly, that it has been a blessing in certain ways. I mean only that it has not generally been assimilated by us in an open-eyed way with our old-world Indian mind. That Indian mind has simply lapsed in most cases for our educated men, and has subsided below the conscious level of culture. It operates still in the persisting routine of their family life and in some of their social and religious practices which have no longer, however, any vital meaning for them. It neither welcomes nor resists the ideas received through the new education. It dares not exert itself in the cultural sphere.

4. There can be no vital assimilation, in such case, of the imposed culture. And yet the new ideas are assimilated in a fashion. They are understood and imaginatively realised; they

are fixed in language and in certain imposed institutions. A drill in this language and in those institutions induce certain habits of soulless thinking which appear like real thinking. Springing as these ideas do from a rich and strong life — the life of the west — they induce in us a shadow mind that functions like a real mind except in the matter of genuine creativeness. One would have a real mind except in the matter of genuine creativeness. One would have expected after a century of contact with the vivifying ideas of the west that there should be a vigorous output of Indian contribution in a distinctive Indian style to the culture and thought of the modern world, — contribution specially to humane subjects like history, philosophy or literature, a contribution such as may be enjoyed by our countrymen who still happen to retain their vernacular mind and which might be recognized by others as reflecting the distinctive soul of India. Barring the contribution of a few men of genius, — and genius is largely independent of the times, — there is not much evidence of such creative work done by our educated men.

5. I may refer also to more modest forms of creativeness, creativeness such as is evidenced in the daily business of our lives, e.g., in the formation of judgements about our real position in the world. We speak of world movements and have a fair acquaintance with the principles and details of western life and thought, but we do not always sufficiently realize where we actually stand today and how to apply our bookish principles to our situation in life. We either accept or repeat the judgment passed on us by western culture, or we impotently resent them but have hardly any estimates of our own, wrung from an inward perception of the realities of our position.

6. In the field of politics, for example, we are only today beginning to realize that we have for long wrongly counted on principles that have application only to countries that are already free and already established and have not had sufficient perception of the dark thing they call 'power' which is more real than any logic or political scholarship. In the field of social reform, we have never cared to understand the inwardness of our traditional social structure and to examine how far the social principles of the west are universal in their application.

We have contented ourselves either with an unthinking conservatism or with an imaginary progressiveness merely imitative of the west.

7. Then again in the field of learning, how many of us have had distinctively Indian estimates of western literature and thought? It is possible for a foreigner to appreciate the literature of a country, but it is only to be expected that his mind would react to it differently from the mind of a native of the country. A Frenchman, for example, would not, I imagine, appreciate Shakespeare just as an Englishman would do. Our education has largely been imported to us through English literature. The Indian mind is much further removed by tradition and history than the French or the German mind from the spirit of English literature, and yet no Indian, so far as I am aware, has passed judgements on English literature that reflect his Indian mentality.

8. His judgments do not differ materially from the judgment of an English critic and that raises the suspicion whether it is his judgment at all, whether it is not merely the mechanical thinking of the galvanic mind induced in us through our western education.

9. In philosophy hardly anything that has been written by a modern educated Indian shows that he has achieved a synthesis of Indian thought with western thought. There is nothing like a judgment on western systems from the standpoint of Indian philosophy, and although some appraisal of Indian philosophy has been attempted from the western standpoint, there appears to be no recognition yet that a criticism of the fundamental notions of either philosophy is necessary before there can be any useful comparative estimate. And yet it is in philosophy that one could look for an effective contact between Eastern and Western ideas. The most prominent contribution of ancient India to the culture of the world is in the field of Philosophy and if the Modern Indian Mind is to philosophise at all to any purpose, it has to confront Eastern thought and Western thought with one another and attempt a synthesis or a reasoned rejection of either, if that were possible. It is in philosophy, if

anywhere, that the task of discovering the soul of India is imperative for the modern India; the task of achieving, if possible, the continuity of his old self with his present day self, of realising what is nowadays called the Mission of India, if it has any. Genius can unveil the soul of India in art but it is through philosophy that we can methodically attempt to discover it.

10. Our education has not so far helped us to understand ourselves, to understand the significance of our past, the realities of our present and our mission of the future. It has tended to drive our real mind into the unconscious and to replace it by a shadow mind that has no roots in our past and in our real present. Our old mind cannot be wholly driven underground and its imposed substitute cannot function effectively and productively. The result is that there is a confusion between the two minds and a hopeless Babel in the world of ideas. Our thought is hybrid through and through and inevitably sterile. Slavery has entered into our very soul.

11. The hybridisation of our ideas is evidenced by the strange medley of Vernacular and English in which our educated people speak to one another. For the expression of cultural ideas specially we find it very difficult to use the pure Vernacular medium. If I were asked; for example, to conduct today's discourse here in Bengali, I would have to make a particularly strenuous effort. One notices a laudable tendency at the present day to make such an effort. It is not that it is always successful. Perhaps, that is only to be expected in a period of transition. If the language difficulty could be surmounted, it would mean a big step towards the achievement of what I have called Svaraj in Ideas.

12. The hybridisation of ideas brought about by our education and the impact of Western political social and economic institutions on our daily life is one of the most distressing features of present situation. It is unnatural and may be regarded with the same sentiment with which an old world Hindu looks upon varṇa-saṁkara. It does not simply mean a confusion in the intellectual region. All vital ideas involve ideals. They embody an entire theory and an insight into life.

Thought or reason may be universal, but ideas are carved out of it differently by different cultures according to their respective genius. No idea of one cultural language can exactly be translated in another cultural language. Every culture has its distinctive 'physiognomy' which is reflected in each vital idea and ideal presented by the culture.

13. A patchwork of ideas of different cultures offends against scholarly sense just as much as patchwork of ideals offends against the spiritual sense. There is room indeed for an adjustment and synthesis, within limits of different cultures and cultural ideals. Life means adaptation to varying times and to varying ideals. But we are not always clear about the method of this adaptation. As we have to live, we have to accept facts and adapt our secular life and secular ideas to the times. We have to alter ourselves here to suit the situation. In spiritual life, however, there is no demand for compromising our ideals in order to have a smooth sailing with the times. Here, if possible and so far as lies in our power, the times have to be adapted to our life and not our life to the times.

14. But the world confronts us not only with aggressive interests but also with aggressive ideals. What response should our traditional ideals make to these imposed ideals? We may respect the new ideals without accepting them, we may attempt a synthesis without compromise, or we may accept them as the fulfilment of our ideals. Different responses may be demanded with respect to different ideals, but in any case a patchwork without adjustment or with a mechanical adjustment, if complacently accepted as a solution, is an evil, as no ideal here gets the entire devotion of the soul. Where different ideals are accepted in the prayerful hope that a synthesis will come, the patchwork is not accepted as a solution and need not be an evil.

15. We talk — a little too glibly perhaps — of a conflict of the ideas and ideals of the West with our traditional ideas and ideals. In many cases it is a confusion rather than a conflict and the real problem is to clear up the confusion and to make it develop in the first instance into a definite conflict. The danger is in the complacent acquiescence in the confusion. The reali-

zation of a conflict of ideals implies a deepening of the soul. There is conflict proper only when one is really serious about ideals, feels each ideal to be a matter of life and death. We sometimes sentimentally indulge in the thought of a conflict before we are really serious with either ideal.

16. We speak also a little too readily of the demand for a synthesis of the ideals of the East and the West. It is not necessary in every case that a synthesis should be attempted. The ideals of a community spring from its past history and from the soil: they have not necessarily a universal application, and they are not always self-luminous to other communities. There are ideals of the West which we may respect from a distance without recognizing any specific appeal to ourselves. Then again there are ideals that have a partial appeal to us, because they have an affinity with our own ideals, though still with a foreign complexion. What they prescribe to us is to be worshipped in our own fashion with the ceremonials of our own religion. The form of practical life in which an ideal has to be translated, has to be decided by ourselves according to the genius of our own community. A synthesis of our ideals with western ideals is not demanded in every case. Where it is demanded, the foreign ideal is to be assimilated to our ideal and not the other way. There is no demand for the surrender of our individuality in any case: Svadharme nidhanam śreyah paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ.

17. There are those who take this emphasis on the individuality of a historical community to be overstrained. It appears to them to be the expression of national, communal, or racial conceit and the excuse for a perverse obscurantism. They believe in abstract self-luminous ideals for all humanity, in a single universal religion and a single universal reason.

18. There is, however, case for universalism. The progress of a community and of humanity implies a gradual simplification and unification of ideals. This is just the rationalizing movement, the emergence of a common reason. We have to distinguish, however, between two forms of rationalism, two directions of this simplifying movement. In the one, reason is

born after the travail of the spirit: rationalism is here the efflux of reverence, reverence for the traditional institutions through which customary sentiments are deepened into transparent ideals. In the other form of rationalism — what is commonly meant by the name, the simplification and generalization of ideals is effected by unregenerate understanding with its mechanical separation of the essential from the inessential. The essential is judged as such here not through reverence, not through deepened spiritual insight, but through the accidental likes and dislikes of the person judging. Customs and institutions bound up with age-long sentiments are brushed aside (in the name of reason) as meaningless and dead without any imaginative effort to realize them in an attitude of humility. Decisions as to what is essential or inessential have indeed to be taken, for time carries not and mere historical sentimentalism will not avail. In practical life, one may have to move before ideals have clarified; but it is well to recognize the need of humility and patience in the adjustment of the world of ideas. Order is evolved in the world of our ideas through infinite patience and humility. That is the right kind of rationalism: it is only in the wrong and graceless form of rationalism that brusque decisions in the practical manner are taken in the name of reason, in the world of our ideals.

19. There is then a legitimate and obligatory form of rationalism. It is wrong not to accent an ideal that is felt to be a simpler and deeper expression of our own ideas simply because it hails from a foreign country. To reject it would be to insist on individuality for the sake of individuality and would be a form of national conceit and obscurantism. The acceptance of such an ideal is really no surrender of individuality: to serve this foreign god is to serve our own god: the foreign ideal is here in our own ideal. The guru or teacher has to be accepted when he is found to be a real guru, whatever the community from which he comes. But it is not every foreign ideal that is felt to be the soul of our own ideal. Some foreign ideals have affinity with our own, and are really alternative expressions of them in a foreign idiom that has no sacredness for us and there are others which have no real application to our conditions.

20. It is sometimes forgotten by the advocates of universalism that the so-called universalism of reason or of religion is only in the making and cannot be appealed to as an actually established code of universal principles. What is universal is only the spirit, the loyalty to our own ideals and the openness to other ideals, the determination not to reject them if they are found within our ideals and not to accept them till they are so found. The only way to appraise a new ideal is to view it through our actual ideal; the only way to find a new reverence is to deepen our old reverence. Progress in the spiritual world is not achieved by a detached reason judging between an old god and a new god. The way to know facts is not the way to know values.

21. So much for the objection, which is often raised in the name of universalism, to the stress I have laid on the individuality of Indian thought and spirit, on the conservatism of the distinctive values evolved through ages of continuous historical life of Indian society. I have thought it necessary to examine universalism in some detail at the risk of tiring the reader with abstract arguments because this appears to me to be our greatest danger. It is the inevitable result of our 'rootless' education and it stands more than anything else in the way of what I call Svaraj in Ideas.

22. The other danger of national conceit and the unthinking glorification of everything in our culture and depreciation of everything in other cultures appears to me, in our circumstances, to require less stressing. Not that it is less serious abstractly considered, but as a matter of fact our educated men suffer more from over-diffidence than from over-confidence, more from a 'rootless' universalism than from clinging particularism. We are more ready to accept others' judgments about us than to resent them. There is the old immemorial habit of regarding what we are taught as sacred learning, and the habit is not easily altered even though the learning imparted is the mere opinion of others — opinion about us, for example, of men who might be presumed to be ignorant of us and unsympathetic to us. There is so much, kind or unkind, written about us and preached to us by others that raises the legitimate ques-

tion if they have a sufficient perception of the inwardness of our life. Prima facie it is very difficult for a foreigner to understand the mind of a people from whom he is widely removed by tradition and history unless he has intimately participated in their life for a long time. It is only natural that the people in question should receive his judgment about them with a certain amount of mental reserve. It might lead them to self-examination if the foreigner is not obviously ignorant and abusive; but docile acceptance is not certainly demanded in the first instance.

23. Now there is a good deal in the name of learning — history, philosophy or moral sermon — imparted to us through our education which is unconsciously or consciously of a tendentious or propagandist character. They imply a valuation of ourselves, an appraisal of our past history and present position from a foreign standard. Our attitude towards them should be one of critical reserve, and not of docile acceptance. And yet the critical attitude would in many cases be condemned by our foreign teachers and by our own educated men as uncultured and almost as absurdly ignorant as a hesitation to accept the truth of geometry. That is inevitable where the education of a people is undertaken by foreign rulers. There is bound in such a case to be some imposition of foreign valuation on the learner and a discouragement of the critical attitude.

24. The question of imposition does not arise in the case of certain branches of learning — mathematics and the natural sciences, for example, which have no nationality and imply no valuation. Whenever there is valuation, there is the suspicion of a particular point of view — national, communal, or racial, of the person who judges the value. A valuation of our culture by a foreigner from the standpoint of his own culture should be regarded by us as meant not for our immediate acceptance but for our critical examination. It should be a filip to which we should react. I remember a remark of Sir John Woodroffe to this purpose. That our first impulse here should be one of self-defensive resentment is only natural and need not imply an uncultured self-conceit. Docile acceptance without criticism would mean slavery.

25. The critical attitude is demanded pre-eminently in the field of valuations of ideals. Mere acceptance here makes not only for confusion but for moral evil. But barring the concepts of the sciences — even here there may be some doubt — all concepts and ideas have the distinctive character of the particular culture to which they belong. What should be our reaction to such cultural ideas? They have to be accepted, but metaphors and symbols to be translated into our own indigenous concepts. The ideas embodied in a foreign language are properly understood only when we can express them in our own way. I plead for a genuine translation of foreign ideas into our native ideas before we accept or reject them. Let us everywhere resolutely think in our own concepts. It is only thus that we can think productively on our own account.

26. In politics our educated men have been compelled to realize by the logic of facts that they have absolutely no power for good, though they have much power for evil, unless they can carry the masses with them. In other fields there is not sufficient realization of this circumstance. In the social sphere, for example, they still believe that they can impose certain reforms on the masses — by mere preaching from without, by passing resolutions in social conferences and by legislation. In the sphere of ideas, there is hardly yet any realization that we can think effectively only when we think in terms of the indigenous ideas that pulsate in the life and mind of the masses. We condemn the caste system of our country, but we ignore the fact that we who have received Western education constitute a caste more exclusive and intolerant than any of the traditional castes. Let us resolutely break down the barriers of this new caste, let us come back to the cultural stratum of the real Indian people and evolve a culture along with them suited to the times and to our native genius. That would be to achieve Svaraj in Ideas.

INTRODUCTION

TO

*The Origin of Subjectivity in Hindu Thought**

ETHEL MAY KITCH

One of the most fascinating and yet most neglected fields of human experience is that known as Indian or Hindu thought. Hemmed in by the Himalaya Mountains and the Indian Sea, it existed in comparative isolation from both oriental and occidental thought until the invasion of the English in the eighteenth century. Even the hardiest and most persistent investigator has been baffled by this prolific product of more than thirty centuries, extending from the migrations of an Aryan branch into the Indus Valley some ten or fifteen centuries before the Christian era to the conquest of Lord Clive. However, a century of arduous research by Max Müller, Oldenberg, Geldner, Rhys Davids, and other adventurous spirits has blazed pathways into this fascinating jungle. The disagreement of these pioneers makes it, nevertheless, sometimes rather unsafe ground for the novice, who must always proceed with caution and trembling.

But the pursuit proves too interesting. Hindu thought is essentially social and also universally religious. The social is religious and the religious social. Indian thought passes through a variety of forms, but this characteristic is always outstanding. It has almost nothing that could be classed as strictly secular. No Burbank of human experience could produce a species more delightful to the modern religious theorist. It differs from Hebrew life in a comparative absence of the moral element; from the Greek in its lesser

* *The Origin of Subjectivity in Hindu Thought* : Ethel May Kitch, The University of Chicago Press.

definition of its god-forms, in its polytheism, and in its want of interest in science; from the Roman in its lack of initiative and of ability for organization; and from all Western thought in its emphasis upon the subjective phase and its neglect of the individual as such.

The means of investigation in this field is itself restricted. Because of India's isolation foreign commentary prior to the tenth century A.D. is of small amount; Megasthenes, the Macedonian ambassador to the court of Chandragupta in the fourth century B.C., has left us some records of Hindu life of that period. Also Chinese travelers of India have given a description of Buddhist India. The internal presentation of its thought is limited by its lack of treatises on history and science. The materials to be used are the religious hymns, the sacrificial formulae, the law-books, the epics, the dramas, the fables, the lyrics, and the philosophical treatises. For the sake of simplicity and clearness it may be advisable to indicate the arrangement of the earliest portion of the Sanskrit literature — the Vedas. The core of these is the Rig-Veda, a collection of ten books of sacrificial hymns; it is followed by the Sāma Veda, the metrical version of these hymns; by the Yajur-Veda, sacrificial formulae; and by the Atharva-Veda, magic charms and spells. Each Veda has special divisions, and these cover a considerable period of time, showing definite change and development. These divisions may be indicated as follows :

Veda —

- (a) Mantra : Mere hymn-poetry
- (b) Brāhmaṇa : The text in prose — an interpretation or explanation of the Mantra.
 - (1) Āraṇyaka : Forest Books.
 - (2) Upanishads : Philosophical Books.
- (c) Sūtra ("thread") : A syllabus of the long Brāhmaṇa.
 - (1) Āraṇyaka : Public type of sacrifice — king's sacrifice.
 - (2) Grihya : Minor sacrifice — marriage, death, etc.
 - (3) Dharma : Concerning relations towards fellow-men and gods-duties.

The highest interest in all the literature is that which centers around the essential characteristics of later Vedic thought—its subjectivity. The subjectivity, with its attendant pessimism and doctrine of illusion, form a development different from that of any other country. Hence our problem becomes an investigation of the sources and conditions which could produce such a peculiar type of experience.

Subjectivity is a type of self-consciousness due to a persistent thwarting of individual experience. Consciousness does not appear in the experience process until an obstacle arises, that is, until there is a lapse in the process; instincts and habit are illustrations of such a continuous experience process. But when the experience process is blocked, this suspension permits its separation into parts, and it becomes what we call the knowledge process. Such an opposition of parts is necessary to the rise of self-consciousness; every individual consciousness must become aware of something set over against itself before it can be aware of its. These parts of the opposition we call the subject and the object. However, this self-consciousness can be expressed in two ways: If this opposition is mediated, the synthesis that results is a relationship of unity in difference, the unity of the act. In the unity of the act the object of knowledge or the object of desire is created as such from the reactions of the subject; this furnishes a mechanism for the control of the object, and a voluntary, natural accommodation on the part of the subject. It is not merely the definiteness of an object that permits us to act, but the ability to act defines the object, makes it more concrete. The individual in this mediation does not lose his identity or his form of expression; he expresses himself through his construction of the physical object, which in turn is built up by the reactions of the self. The knowledge process, then, is a continuous interaction of subject and object when we have an objective type of thought. When the impulse to movement, of which this object of knowledge or desire is the initial phase, attains fulfilment, it becomes universalized, that is, a part of the world outside of the individual. In a concrete situation the process would be expressed as the object of knowledge or desire becoming socialized; thus the individual be-

comes a real, active, concrete element within his social group, and his experience is taken over by the group-consciousness. The individual consciousness now possesses a social value through the individual's ability to initiate and organize group experience.

On the other hand, if this opposition in the experience process cannot be mediated, cannot become an action, the subject turns back within itself. The result is a subjective self-consciousness. In its social aspect this means the thwarting of the universalizing or socializing process, and experience must turn within the individual and there reform the object of knowledge or desire. The result is either the rise of a system of control within the individual in terms of other ideas and desires or the suppression altogether of this idea or emotion which cannot be universalized. The meaning of this suspended impulse is that eventually it kills itself or is annihilated; on the social side of the individual fails to find an evaluation of himself in the group-consciousness.

This is what happened in India. A fixed caste system furnished the unyielding opposition against which the self was forced. In the northern and eastern parts of India, where migration and conquests were still active, the warrior controlled conditions. In the older and more permanent civilization of Western India the warrior had lost his function, and the Brahman became the chief figure. Here the priests dominated everything. Thus all orthodox doctrines arose in the western center of Brahmanism, and the reconstructive tendencies are attributed to the warriors in the eastern section. The Brahman, not being opposed in the expressing of his function, did not feel problems that must confront the Kshatriyas. His loyalty to caste, his indifference to, and even unconsciousness of, the others' problems, served as an effective check on the ideal and desire that the king chose to realize. The king was a figurehead, not a real ruler. It was the history of this opposition which set the theme for all later literature and which was the history of a suspended ideal that was never universalized in Indian Society. The result was the doctrine of illusion in the Vedanta system and the pessimism and negation of Buddhism. The trend of subjectivity was in a continuous line, fatal and pre-

determined as long as the Brahmans were at the head of the caste and not aroused to self-consciousness.

In chapter 1 is traced the early tendency toward an objective development of nature and the person; the following chapter shows its transition to a philosophical interest and the rise of a subjective interest through emphasis upon the class-consciousness of the Brahman and the function of this group. The class-consciousness was developed through the sacrifice, which was the chief expression of the priest's function, and also through the form of education and initiation for this duty, Brahmacharya. Thus the priests were set aside as peculiarly fitted for this service and as particularly sanctified by it. All of this emphasized and helped crystallize the class system which was rapidly arising from distinctions in occupation and colour (conquered Dravidian).

In chapter 4 the social system and the religious formulation have arrived at a condition of arrested development. The first attempt to express the individual desire for new function and meaning comes in the Kshatriyan doctrine of the self as the knowing subject. The texts hint at a self which is to find all its impulses and activities real. The sense-world is true and valuable. But the Brahmans have taken all the flavour out of these passages by identifying this self with an All-God which cannot be known.

The Vedanta is the conclusion of this theory. It asserts that the true self is the unknown and unknowable inner being. This self through ignorance becomes united with the senses, but the world which this union depicts is unreal, therefore an illusion.

Buddhism and the heretical movements are discussed in chapter 5. The Buddhists accept no god and eventually destroy the conscious self. Their system of control of self assists in bringing harmony into this life, but is of no value for the future existence in Nirvana. The materialists conclude the negative movement by destroying everything except existence in this life.

Chapter 6 records briefly the positive developments as found in the epic and the renaissance of the Christian era, which held vital possibilities that were never realized.

Krishnachandra Bhattacharya's Review† of

*The Origin of Subjectivity in Human Thought**

The present brochure is an American study of Indian thought, from Vedic times downwards, viewed not only as a philosophical but also as a sociological movement. The central topic is 'subjectivity with its attendant pessimism and doctrine of illusion', which is taken to be the essential characteristic of later Vedic thought. The sociological problem is to trace 'the sources and conditions which could produce such a peculiar type of experience'.

The material used by the author appears to be the writings of Western orientalist which present a certain amount of information and express certain 'opinions' about Indian thought and social history. There is not much evidence of a firsthand acquaintance with the Sanskrit literature of the subject. The labelling and valuation of Indian thought by Western names like subjectivity, pessimism, and pantheism appear to be rather too facile and the social conditions of ancient India are depicted with a definiteness which is hardly warranted by the extant evidence. Western scholarship has not seriously tackled the systematic philosophical literature of India as distinct from her early religious literature. This systematic philosophy may be presumed to have been in touch with the atmosphere and tradition to a greater extent than any Western investigation today can claim to be and so an interpretation of Hindu religious thought which does not attempt to meet this philosophy is bound to be risky, if not altogether imaginary. Early inchoate

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* *The Origin of Subjectivity in Hindu Thought* by Ethel May Kitch, Philosophical studies under the direction of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Chicago, Number 7, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois.

tainly there: some specific kind of spiritual activity is the postulate of the feeling of religious progress and it cannot be brushed aside as mere imagination. The faith in a will continuously efficient in this inwardising direction demands indeed verification in a systematic discipline that works in practice. But in any case it cannot be rejected before one has begun to practise and meantime all that can be demanded is the intelligibility of the psychological theory underlying the discipline. Such a theory is presented in all Indian systems, one form — the most systematic among them — appearing in Yoga philosophy. The psychological possibility of the voluntary control of the inwardising process has to be seriously investigated before the faith in the reality of a subjectively spiritual will can be definitely accepted or rejected.

The psychology of subjectivity as presented by the author is unacceptable on many grounds. The subject turns back on itself not merely when the experience-process is arrested but also when it prevails, through the success itself relaxing the stress of the will. Outward defeat and success alike may induce either an inwardising reversal or a reinforced objective effort according to temperament; and either movement may prepare for the other or accentuate itself. There is no ground for the ordinary assumption that the practical or objective tendency of the mind is the normal condition, that the recoil of subjectivity, when it comes, is normally a drawing backward to spring forward again, and that continued subjective deepening is only a pathological process. What we may call the aesthetic-contemplative process is just as primitive as the practical life-preserving process; in the child, each may be as dominant or as defective as the other, though temperaments vary. There is no special reason to assay reality in terms of the practical function rather than of the other function: there are contemplative attitudes that like practical attitudes either work or do not work, induce or do not induce continuous experience of satisfaction.

Not that the two attitudes are unrelated. The deepening of contemplative activity and the extension of the objective value-creating activity may — though they need not — be mutually

the heed of the caste and not aroused to self-consciousness'. This is practically the theme of the entire book.

The two forms of self-consciousness correspond to what are called concrete and abstract unities, to the two rival conceptions of identity-in-difference, viz., of identity as comprehending and as transcending difference. The transcendent identity is generally misunderstood, though influential types of the conception are not lacking in Western philosophy. The negation of the immanence is too often taken as an empty abstraction or as only a mystical feeling. The reality of a dissociating or inwardising will is ordinarily denied. The abstracting process is admitted but it is understood more as not attending to certain details than as a new direction of attention. The attention of the subject to itself — when it is not a preparation to spring upon the object again — is regarded as 'only helpless or perverse suicide of concrete experience. In the moral sphere, the rejection of a desire is indeed taken as willed but is conceived as a positive suppression: rejection as dissociation, as a cutting of the root of desire, is hardly admitted to be voluntary. Obedience to the law as an attitude of the spirit and not a mere acting according to it is not allowed to be a real doing and terms like will-negation or transcendental activity used in this connection are taken as only mystic metaphors. So all that is conceived as spiritual doing — like prayer, self-surrender in worship and wanting to forgive or to love — would be taken as no doing but unique feelings merely. Self-realisation as a moral formula is no prescription yet of a specific description: the activity it prescribes is but the creation of social or objective values — a sort of artistic activity at its best from ever new depths of spiritual insight, the energising of which however is left to accident, the luck of inspiration, and is not believed to be controllable. There is in fact a general disbelief in a continuous inwardising activity towards one's subjective being, in a specific method of realising subjective depths, in the reality of what may be called a subjectively spiritual will.

The symbolism of a deepening or inwardising of the will has not been sufficiently investigated either in its psychological aspect or in its metaphysical significance. The problem is cer-

priestcraft. How the diabolical resolve to block all progress could be efficient is hardly intelligible unless one resorts to some theory of an age-long collective hypnosis induced by the man of magic. A singular hypothesis appears to be that as a class the Brahman stood for spirituality, and that his power lay not merely in the superstition but also in the reverence of the community.

The whole outlook of the author on religion, priestly class, and caste-system requires to be revised. Religion need not be primarily the creation of social values: contemplative inwardness may equally be a primary religion. The warrior need not be the social expression of religion, the warrior-priest need not be the normal institution of early societies, and in any case the priest need not take part in politics to regenerate religious and social ideas (p. 47). The predominance of the contemplative religion in India implied the non-political character of the priest whose power lay in his very detachment. The Dravidian intermingling, the increasing complexity of the sacrifice and the consequent institution of sacerdotal apprenticeship, the settling down of the nomadic Aryans in certain tracts and the consequent reduction of the king to a figure-head — conditions suggested by the author to explain the 'tremendous dominion of the priest' — would at best explain the increasing segregation of the priest-caste but not its *comparative* influence. The real quarrel apparently should be why the religious function was taken to be at all so important by the community.

Like subjectivity, objectivity also appears to have been misconceived. In the chapter of Vedism occurs the remark 'the Rig-Veda hymns had in them very little of direct, warm, and vital experience: they were ritualistic, practical, and wholly utilitarian' (p. 20). The warm experience here apparently means subjective feeling. That the religion was objective is readily admitted: spirituality was of the form of actual sacrifice. The epithets practical and utilitarian appear, however, to be utterly inappropriate. The division between natural and spiritual life had not yet emerged though life was none the less spiritual, its significance lying in the sacrifice. The sacrificer was not ashamed to ask for the good things of life but they

were to be received as gifts from the gods. The efficacy of sacrifice was indeed unquestionably accepted but it was in no sense a *means* or 'conscious tool' to be appropriated by the merely secular will. The practical or utilitarian attitude would imply the employment of means — natural or magical — with a worldly motive. But the idea of flattering of gods, of cheating them into making gifts is entirely foreign here. Sacrifice meant adoration and not flattery or clever mendicancy — a distinction wantonly ignored in modern 'scientific' studies of ancient religions — adoration of gods conceived in terms of sublime power or wisdom or goodness — all as objectively real and not as luxuries of subjective reflection. The gifts prayed for — strength or life or sinlessness — were themselves conceived as sacred, not good things of the world in our sense but things which gods only could give.

Spirituality was of the form of objective sacrifice but this objectivity is perversely misjudged. 'The gods were to be appeased rather than revered. To give them food, drink, and flattery was better than to be good. In fact this was the only good that the Hindus knew: no recognition was granted to the spirit and intention of the act. The consequence alone was the conscious problem' (p. 21). One might have expected at least a better appreciation of the ethical unity of the consequence and motive. Objective morality is not necessarily utilitarian: to pursue consequences is quite compatible with a spiritual motive, though it may be subjectively undistinguished. Experience in fact in which object and subject have not yet been distinguished is not merely objective in the practical sense: without being subjective, it may yet be spiritual in the contemplative sense. The division of the spirit is after all only a natural necessity, a human tragedy which is not in itself a merit. The degree of division is no measure of the depth of spirituality.

The contemplative experience of natural purity or defilement may be of all degrees of reality or depth without being subjective. The laying bare of subjectivity, of what is called 'spirit and intention' is only an accident of spirituality which may make alike for realisation or inanity. There is no parti-

cular merit in the feeling of sin in the subjective sense. The propitiation of the gods, it must be remembered, was a sacrifice and not merely an offering. It was a propitiation for sin in the objective spiritual sense. The element of self-surrender in sacrifice is apparently ignored by the author both in the chapter on the theory of sacrifice and elsewhere. Attention is drawn in that chapter more to the increase of communal or spiritual life achieved by sacrifice than to the other necessary element, viz., renunciation, the symbolic self-purification and self-killing. That sacrifice was a killing of the god to renovate the god is indeed recognised but the significance of the god killed is not brought out. The sacrificer purifies his detailed objective self and offers it as purified to the gods to have it renewed or sacrificed. The depth or reality of the renunciation need not suffer because it is objective.

That the author's view of objectivity does not work appears in her own admission: 'While the Rig-Veda is thoroughly objective in its earlier portion, there is much that is mystical and unintelligible, portentous of undefined problems and half-conscious of the ineffectiveness of the Vedic religious system' (p. 21). The unintelligibility would be largely relieved if objective adoration and sacrifice be admitted to be throughout spiritual and not 'practical and utilitarian'. There is no question of 'ineffectiveness' of the system here: 'the same spirituality was only passing from the objective to the subjective. The need was being felt to adapt the religion to a division of the spirit that was inevitably coming. There is no discontinuity in this inwardising movement, it was but an adaptation of the Vedic spirit to the natural emergence of subjectivity. One can trace this continuous adaptation of the spiritual to the natural or secular order down to what is called ritualistic and philosophical Brahmanism. The growth of the conception of *Brahman* and of the monistic tendency and the deification of the sacrifice itself are arbitrarily understood by the author as a degenerative process, as a shrivelling up of spiritual content: the emergence of the conception of *ātman* is taken to mark a recoil of self-expression and the identification of *ātman* and *Brahman* is supposed to have choked this nascent movement.

The truth seems to be that with inevitable changes in the secular or historical life, there came a subjectivising abstraction, an 'undefining' transformation of nature on the one hand and the corresponding discipline for realisation of the subjectivity on the other. The emergence of the conceptions of the subjective *Brahman* and *ātman* marks the operation of one and the same undefining activity directed to the cosmos and the body respectively; and the formula 'That art thou' indicates just the spiritual discipline adapted to this subjectivity. Subjectivity is here to be understood as at once a contemplative undefining of objective distinctions and the spiritual fixation for the individual meant on the social side a reconstruction, understood in the Brahmanical sense, adaptation of the old spirit to new and, it may be, fallen times — not creation of new institutions by iconoclasm but the reinvestment of a naturally changed society with the eternal ancient spirit of religion.

The nature of the undefining abstraction requires to be cleared up. There is difference between contemplation or aesthetic abstraction and practical or scientific abstraction. The withdrawal from the concrete is in both an undefining movement and is conditioned by striking relations within the concrete. In scientific abstraction, the withdrawal is for the practical handlings of a more extended objectivity; the analysis is for the construction of a comprehensive concept. In contemplative abstraction, the content is undefined to be envisaged as a deeper reality, not to be applied to a wider objective range. The undefining means *eo ipso* a spread which is redefined either externally or internally, either by a comprehensive grasp of the distinct concretes as related or by an inwardising stabilisation of the abstraction-nucleus, whether as truth or value or reality. It is this latter movement that has led to the emergence of the pantheistic gods — Vedic and post-Vedic. The lack of individualisation in the Hindu gods means lack of external, not internal definition. With each perception of secular differentiation, there emerge a further internalisation of the nucleus and a wider pantheistic spread. Cosmic life, the sacrificial ceremonial, and the sacrificer thus get respectively internalised and spread out through continuous stages into *Brahman* as the one

presence, the word as its pervading symbol, and the *ātman* behind all grades of the body, which realises the identity.

The significance of the doctrine of *ātman* is misunderstood by the author. There is no special reason for regarding it as a revolt against pantheism, as a hopeful reconstruction that was arrested by the Brahmanical doctrine of *Brahman* and sacrifice. In one sense, every deepening or inwardising is a revolt, an unsettling of the abstraction-nucleus for contemplation. At every stage of it there comes a conflict with those who would not push forward to the inner vision, adapt the old spirit to the new secular division. The conception of *ātman* represents an undefining, not a reconstruction but an analysis or division; and the realisation of it as one with *Brahman* is the adaptive reconstruction. The new discipline is a continuation of the old spirit of sacrifice but is none the less opposed by those who cling to objective spirituality and would not recognize the demand of the time. It is thus that one understands the conflict between ceremonial religion and subjective realisation. The concept for *yajña* sometimes expressed in the Upaniṣad, the emphasis on knowledge and subjective life and the philosophical recognition of continuity and discontinuity alike between outer and inner life, between works ceremonial and moral on the one hand and *mukti* or absolute freedom of the subject on the other are all intelligible in the light. The continuity is in the efficacy of works to destroy the illusion that comes through the desiring identification with the object and the discontinuity is in the final lapsing of time for the individual which all *mukti* implies, freedom being in no Indian system taken as mere result continuously appropriated by the will before it.

**CULTURAL FRAMES FOR SOCIAL INTERVENTION:
A PERSONAL CREDO**

ASHIS NANDY

I

Amilcar Cabral, the African freedom fighter, spoke of the 'permanent, organized repression of the cultural life of the people' as the very core of colonialism. 'To take up arms to dominate a people is', he said, 'to take arms to destroy, or at least to neutralize... its cultural life'. Cabral also seemingly recognised the corollary of such an understanding, namely that the reaffirmation of cultural traditions could not but be the heart of all authentic anti-colonialism.

In some ways, however, Cabral borrowed heavily from nineteenth century Europe's world image. He could not be fully sensitive to the other reason why a theory of culture has to be the core of any theory of oppression at our times, namely that a stress on culture reinstates the categories used by the victims; that a stress on cultural tradition is a defiance of the modern idea of expertise, an idea which demands that even resistance be uncontaminated by the 'inferior' cognition or 'unripe' revolutionary consciousness of the oppressed. A stress on culture is the antonym of the post-Renaissance European faith that only that dissent is true which is rational, sane, scientific, adult,

This paper has grown out of a presentation made at the Seminar on Gandhi and Social Theory, held at the Gandhi Bhavan, University of Delhi in March, 1983. Later on, some of the ideas were also discussed at the Seminar on The Perception and Understanding of Social Reality at the Department of Psychology, Allahabad University, April 1983, and at the Symposium on the Cultural Context of Scientific and Economic Development in the Third World, organised by the Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science and the Deutsches Kulturinstitut at Colombo in May 1983.

and expert—according to Europe's concepts of rationality, sanity, science, adulthood, and expertise.

Viewed thus, the link between culture, critical consciousness, and social change in India become, not a unique experience, but a general response of societies which have been the victims of history and are now trying to rediscover their own visions of a desirable society, less burdened by the post-Enlightenment hope of 'one world' and by the post-colonial idea of cultural relativism.

II

Cultural survival is increasingly a potent political slogan in India. When the religious reformers of nineteenth century India spoke of protecting cultures, it seemed an obscurantist ploy. Today, when the juggernaut of modernity threatens every nonwestern culture, the slogan no longer seems a revivalist conspiracy. It has become a plea for minimum cultural plurality in an increasingly uniform world.

The plea has been accompanied by a growing concern with native resources and ideas, even though only to the extent they serve causes such as development, growth, national integration, security, and, even, revolution. As if culture was only an instrument. Perhaps the time has come to pose the issue in a different way. I shall do so here in terms of the binary choice which underlies most responses to modernity in complex nonwestern societies.

Unmixed modernism is no longer fashionable, not even in the modern world. Even the ultra-positivists and the Marxists, once so proudly anti-traditional, have begun to produce schools which criticise, if not the modernist vision on its entirety, at least crucial parts of it. Lionel Trilling and Peter Gay have gone so far as to call such criticisms — and the modernist dislike for modernity — a unique feature and a mark of modernity. One can offhand think of examples like the 'solar plexus' of D. H. Lawrence, the 'primitivism' of Pablo Picasso, and the defiance of science and rationality in the surrealist manifestos of André Breton *et al* as indicators of how modernity at its most creative cannot do without its opposite: anti-modernity.

However, to the extent most of these criticisms try to abide by or use as their reference the values of European Enlightenment, and to the extent modernisation is an attempt to realise these values, such criticisms are internal to modernity. Let us call them forms of critical modernism. Examples of such critical modernism are those models of scientific growth or technological transfer in the third world which do not challenge the content of modern science; critiques of the existing world order which take for granted the modern nation-state system; and the kind of critical modernism which believes that if you displace the elites or classes who control the global political economy, you could live happily with the modern urban-industrial vision ever after.

On the other hand are the criticisms of modernity from outside. These criticisms reject the Enlightenment values and, thus, seem insane or bizarre to the modern man. Blake, Carlyle, Emerson, Thoreau, Ruskin, and Tolstoy have been some of the better-known external critics of modernity in the West. In our times, Gandhi has been by far the most consistent and savage critic of modernity and its best-known cultural product: the modern West. Gandhi called the modern culture satanic and, though he changed his mind about many things, on this point he remained firm. Many Gandhians cannot gulp this part of him. Either they read him as a nation-builder who, beneath his spiritual façade, was a hard-headed modernist wedded to the nation-state system. Or they say that he was a great man pursuing crazy civilisational goals, the way Issac Newton, when not working on proper mathematical physics, worked on alchemy and on the science of trinity. They divide Gandhi into the normal and the abnormal, and reject the latter either as an aberration or as an embarrassment. 'Bapu, you are far greater than your little books', Nehru once charmingly said.

Gandhi however was willing to take his 'insanity' to its logical conclusion. He rejected the modern innovations like the nation-state system, modern science and technology, urban-industrialism, and evolutionism (without rejecting the traditional ideas of the state, science and technology, civic living, and social transformation). Not being a Gandhian, I am forced

to applaud from a distance the contortionist acts many modernists put up to fit Gandhi and his strange views into the modern paradigm. They can neither disown the Mahatma nor digest him.

Yet, Gandhi was no Ananda Coomaraswamy. Both hated modernity but they parted company when it came to traditions. Coomaraswamy theoretically kept open the possibility of assessing or altering traditions from the point of view of traditions. But perhaps because he was single-handedly trying to do for past times what the anthropologists as a community were trying to do for distant cultures, there was no criticism, or at least no significant criticism, of traditions in his works. The attitude was, if you examine for instance his comments on the concept and practice of sati, unashamedly defensive.

Gandhi never eulogised the Indian village nor called for a return to the past. He supported the ideas of the village and traditions but not the extant Indian villages or traditions. Coomaraswamy, too, at one plane made this distinction but the tone was different. This would be obvious to anyone who reads Coomaraswamy and Gandhi on caste. The former defended the premodern caste system because he found it more humane than the modern class system; the latter also did so but went further. He sought to reorder the hierarchy of skills — to relegitimise the manual and the unclean and delegitimise the Brahmanic and the clean. Such examples can be multiplied. Compare Coomaraswamy's appraisal of the Indian village — or Nehru's — with Gandhi's account of Indian villages as 'dung-heaps'; compare Dhanagopal Mukherji's passionate defence of India against the attack of Catherine Mayo in her *Mother India* with Gandhi's advice to every Indian to read what he called Mayo's 'drain-inspector's report'.

Unlike Coomaraswamy, Gandhi did not really want to defend traditions; he lived with them. Nor did he, like Nehru, want to 'museumise' cultures within a modern frame. His frame was traditional and he was willing to criticise it violently. He was even willing to include in it elements of modernity as critical vectors. He found no dispute between his rejection of modern

technology and his advocacy of the bicycle, the lathe, and the sewing machine. Gandhi defied the modern world by opting for an alternative frame; the specifics in his frame were frequently modern. (The modernists find this hypocritical but they do not object to similar eclecticism when the framework is modern. Witness their attitude to the inclusion of Sarpagandha in modern pharmacology as reserpine, even though the drug has been traditionally a part of Ayurveda.)

Today, the battle of minds rarely involves a choice between modernity and traditions in their pure forms. The ravages of the former are known and, if the past cannot be resurrected but only owned up, pure traditions too are a choice not given to us. Ultimately, the choice is between critical modernism and critical traditionalism — it is a choice between two frames of reference and two worldviews.

III

Some scholars object to such a formulation. They find the concept of critical traditionalism soft on obscurantism and internally inconsistent. And T. G. Vaidyanathan has recently suggested that I use the expression 'critical insider' instead of 'critical traditionalist'.

Frankly, I have little attachment to the words I use. If by changing them some processes can be described better, I have no objection. I recognise that my descriptive categories are partly the ashes of my long romance with some versions of the critical theory, especially the early influence on me of scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm. They are not always adequate for nonwestern realities. However, my categories are also partly a response to the argument of some scholars — Pratima Bowes being the last in the series — that traditional Indian thought never really developed a true critical component. I am arguing that (1) Indian thought, including many of its folk elements, can be and has been used as a critical base, because critical rationality is neither the monopoly of modern times nor that of the Graeco-Roman tradition, and (2) some aspects of some exogenous traditions of criticism

Mount and claiming it to be the core concept of orthodox Hinduism. Howsoever odd such 'distortions' may seem to the westernised Indian or to the scholastic, Brahmanic traditionalist, they are the means the Indian civilisation has repeatedly used to update its theories of evil and to ensure cultural survival while allowing largescale social interventions.

To appreciate such reinterpretations, we must learn to acknowledge or decode three languages which often hide the implicit native theories of oppression in many nonwestern traditions. These are the language of continuity, the language of spiritualism, and the language of self. They may look like aspects of a primitive false consciousness to the moderns but they continue to be the means of indirectly articulating the problems of survival for the nonmodern victims of history.

The language of continuity (which accounts for the image of the savage as change-resisting and stagnant) assumes that all changes can be seen, discussed or analysed as aspects of deeper continuities. In other words, the language assumes that every change, howsoever enormous, is only a special case of continuity. The perennial problems of human living and perennial questions about human self-definition are common to all ages and cultures and all disjunctions are a part of a continuous effort to grapple with these problems and questions. This position is radically different from the modern western concept of continuity as only a special case of change or as only a transient period of time which is only overtly continuous or which, if it is truly continuous, is for that reason less valuable. In the dominant Indic tradition, each change is just another form of the unchanging and another reprioritisation or revaluation of the existent.

At one plane the difference between the languages is exactly that: a difference in language. Yet the fact remains that the language of continuity is mostly spoken by the victims of the present global system; the language of disjunction by the powerful and the rich and by those dominating the discourse on cultures. The fact also remains that the language of disjunction today has been successfully, though not wholly, coopted by those who are for the status quo. The Shah of Iran spoke of moderni-

sation and social change; his opponents spoke of cultural survival and conservation; the military juntas in South America speak of changing their societies into powerful nation-state systems; their opponents speak of protection of Indian rights and of the traditions of nonwhite cultures; Ronald Reagan and Indira Gandhi speak of scientific and technological growth; their critics speak of ecological issues, traditional sciences and rural technologies. For a long time the weights were differently distributed: the language of continuity was mainly used by those who ran the older oppressive systems. Now, development, maturity, scientific temper, revolutionary consciousness — these are keywords in the vocabulary of those who see themselves as either deservedly ruling the world or as its future rulers.

The language of spirit, including both its 'respectable' versions and the versions which the spiritually-minded themselves reject as confidence tricks, can serve a number of this-worldly purposes of the oppressed. It often expresses, when decoded, an analysis of oppression which rejects the analytic categories popular with the oppressors and with the modern sectors from which the oppressors come. Such analysis in the language of spirit is seen by us as a camouflaged statement of hard self-interest and *simultaneously* — and here lies a fundamental contradiction in the modern concept of the politics of cultures — as woolly sentimentalism and a subjectivist hoax. Obviously, if it is only woolly sentimentalism it cannot at the same time be a camouflaged statement of self-interest, and if it is an indirect statement of self-interest it is not that subjectivist after all. Marx recognised this when he spoke of religion as expressing the pain of the oppressed. But he was mired too deeply in Eurocentric nineteenth century scientism and evolutionism. He did not go so far as to take seriously the cognitive frame which went with the 'pain'. Nor did he notice that (1) the frame often used the language of spirit to articulate a set of values which criticised or defied the society as it existed; and (2) it rejected the conventional concepts of science and rationality as irrational, inhuman, sectarian, and collaborationist.

A subcategory of the language of spirit in societies like ours is the language of anti-history which rejects the idea of history,

specially the idea of historical laws, as a new tool of oppression. The language seeks to reinstate the mythopoetic language which is closer to the victims of history. The understanding of oppression expressed in myths and other forms of shared fantasies — or expressed through alterations in existing myths and shared fantasies — transcends the barriers of regions and sub-cultures in a complex civilisation. For most savages, myths communicate life experiences and cultural roots; history hides them. That is why the theory of oppression expressed in the mythopoetic language does not come as a special module prepared by outsiders (to which the oppressed must learn to adapt); it comes as an analytic statement of the emic kind which may or may not be translatable into the language used by the dominant theories of manmade suffering.

Finally, the language of self in which the oppressed often package their story. This language includes, as does the language of spiritualism, the so-called fatalism of the savage and the primitive against which conscientisation and other similar processes seem such good medicines. The language of self emphasises variables such as self-realisation, self-actualisation or self-enrichment and apparently underplays changes in the not-self or the outer world. This has been for instance the emphasis of the humanistic psychologists and others who have tried to base their theories of consciousness, psychological health, and human creativity on insights into self processes, rather than on insights into psychopathologies of social life. I am however drawing attention to the language from another vantage ground. The language of self, I want to stress, also has an implicit theory of the not-self — of oppression and social transformation. To borrow words from modern psychology, autoplasticity does in this case include alloplasticity. In many of the nonwestern traditions the self is not only included in 'external' laws of nature and society but nature and society in turn are subsumed in the self. Self-correction and self-realisation include the principle of intervention in the outside world as we have come to understand the world in post-Galilean and post-Cartesian cosmologies.

V

Modern theories of oppression, whether they help the oppressed or not, help the theorists a lot. To the extent they speak the languages of discontinuity, ultra-materialism, or impersonality, they become a part, often a fashionable part, of the modern world and valued streams of dissent within that world. To the extent they presume to represent the sanity of the oppressed, these theories also sometimes become the mark of a new elite — the revolutionary vanguard, the expert demystifier, the trained psychotherapist, the scientist trying to break down the pre-scientific temper of the masses. Perhaps we have reached the point where one must learn to take more seriously other kinds of categories used by those victimised by the modern oppressive systems. These systems oppress not only the way older oppressive systems did — by openly legitimising violence, greed, and dominance. These systems successfully tap the human ingenuity (1) to produce systems that are unjust, expropriatory, and violent in the name of liberation or freedom; and (2) to develop a public consciousness which includes an explicit model of proper dissent. In such a world, dissent, unless it seeks to subvert the rules of the game and the language in which the rules are framed, becomes another form of conformity. George Orwell realised this. He felt that the oppressed, when faced with the problem of survival, had no obligation to follow any model or any rule of the game. It goes without saying that only way to contain the oppressive possibilities of such 'methodological anarchism' is to continue to work with a perspective which (1) retains the sense of immediacy and directness of the experience or perception of manmade suffering and (2) which keeps open the scope for criticism of every criticism.

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K. G. BHATTACHARYA'S SVARAJ IN IDEAS:
SOME REFLECTIONS

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Only rarely do we in India ever take other's work any more seriously than passing amusement; given this, I am glad that the guest editors have given me an opportunity to present publicly my response to Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya's *Svaraj in Ideas* (which I shall call KCB's SII). My presentation is organised as follows:

(1) I shall endorse the main thrust of SII concerning colonialism of mind and intellectual slavery that has eroded the autonomy of the colonized soul and which was so eloquently described and castigated in Frantz Fanon's autobiography *Black skins and white masks* in the sixties. Bhattacharya's ideas, though buried in his unpublished papers, and originally delivered to an obscure mofussil college audience, are lucid, clear, and no less perspicacious.

(2) I will examine SII in connection with KCB's theory of ideology, both ideas and ideals. He emphasizes the role of cultural symbols and metaphors in the articulation of concepts, in philosophical analysis, and in ideational criticism. I feel that KCB has not fully worked out, at least in SII, all the implications which may follow from the views he advocates, and that his views end up committing him to some uncomfortable consequences. Of course, SII itself as a text entails no formal contradictions. But KCB often demands that we critically compare, estimate, and appraise (accept or reject) western and Indian ideals (or ideas?); these activities, to my mind, presuppose a background Logic of understanding: rules, norms, and principles which one is sure are not merely culturally determined artifacts of particular traditions. Is Philosophy a product of a cultural milieu alone? Or can it, at least sometimes, hope to liberate us from the bondage of the here

and now, giving us insight into truths that are sub specie aeternitatis? I have to record that wobbly hesitation and tentative inconclusiveness characterize SII on the matter of universality and cultural specificity in the exercise of reason. I think that SII is not representative of KCB's best work about the nature of Philosophy as a critique or as critical inquiry.

(3) I must, reluctantly, point to a few blind spots of KCB leading to his uncritical non-discriminating sleep-walk through the long and hoary spiritual legacy and cultural identity of Indian society and his bland affirmation of its unique spiritual values. KCB obviously had little interest in cultural history or in any kind of social praxis or its understanding. He hardly ever took the trouble of grasping the non-ideational factors of Indian civilization. He is just a little too cocksure of so-called Indian ideals. A clear case of reification. Whose ideals, may I ask? Those of the Vedic Brahmanic orthodoxy of Sanskrit Pandits. Yes, but are these everybody's? If so, how about, pray, those millions of Moslems, tribals, Shudras, and unlettered peasants? I shall conclude by pointing out briefly the role of explanatory concepts like Tradition and how one ought to avoid hypostatizing the very explanatory abstract categories as historical Agents.

I

Much of SII (paras 1, 18, 22) is rife with KCB's remarkable spirit of critical inquiry and commendable freedom from the cant of his class of anglicized Babus that had come to live 'with an imaginary progressiveness merely imitative of the west' (para 6). He also disapproves of the new caste system of the westernized Bhadrakok, who, like the Brahmos of Bengali society in the second half of the nineteenth century, hoped to cure Indian society of its moribund ideals in such domains as caste, family ties, child marriage, dowry, etc. by legislation and administrative measures by the authorities and (para 22) refused to show sufficient humility and understanding of the entire cultural Gestalt that India was. He rightly diagnosed the glibness of these diffident Indians, faced with the denigration of Indian ideals from the west, 'talking of a conflict of

the ideas and ideals of the West with our traditional ideas and ideals' even where there is in fact a confusion that has not yet sharpened into a conflict (para 15).

KCB notes, in this connection, that India's native soul gets twisted and warped by a shadow mind due to our western education: 'Our thought is hybrid through and through and inevitably sterile. Slavery has entered into our very soul (SII, para 10).

Bhattacharya rightly and with insight regrets the fact that western education has not, even after more than a century, produced any original interpretation of western material in history, literature, or philosophy from an Indian standpoint (SII, para 4). He candidly remarks about his own tribe of Bhadrak, "His judgments do not differ materially from the judgment of an English critic and that raises the suspicion whether it is his judgment at all, whether it is not merely the mechanical thinking of the galvanic mind induced in us through our western education" (para 8).

Lest it be thought that KCB is guilty of a form of cultural chauvinism, we must note his awareness of his own inability to deliver such a discourse as SII in his native language (para 11). He realizes (para 3) that many Indians positively accepted westernization as a talisman for the accumulated debris of a wounded Indian civilization. KCB only protests against brusque dismissal of the old ideals of India without humility or even critical examination under the authoritarian denigration mounted by ill-disposed missionaries and champions of imperialism. I salute him for his courage of conviction and transparent dedication to the truth in his matter: KCB reminds himself and other Indians of their 'old immemorial habit of regarding what we are taught as sacred learning, and the habit is not easily altered even though the learning imparted is the mere opinion of others' (para 22). He contends that a negative opinion about our culture on the part of a foreigner 'should be a fillip to which we should react. I remember a remark of Sir John Woodroffe to this purpose. That our first impulse here should be one of self-defensive

resentment is only natural and need not imply an uncultured self-conceit. Docile acceptance without criticism would mean slavery' (para 24). I fully uphold this principle of the dignity of the colonized and am glad to see that an academic philosopher of British India had the vision and courage to voice it. His thought was articulated not out of any morbid dogmatism but as a self-conscious stance of a cultural critique which was capable of remaining unswayed by the prevailing disparagement of our enslaved people and their civilization.

To make sure I do not miss the critical and universalistic element in KCB's search for cultural Ideals I wish to note three points in his response to western ideals in his quest for svaraj in ideas: (a) 'it is wrong not to accept an ideal that is felt to be a simpler and deeper expression of our own ideals simply because it hails from a foreign country'; (b) 'Some foreign ideals have affinity with our own, and are really alternative expressions of them in a foreign idiom'; (c) 'and there are others which have no real application to our conditions' (para 19).

Of course, KCB desires a critical appraisal of all ideals on some supracultural touchstone, but above all he wishes, even here, to protect the rootless educated mind from losing 'the distinctive values evolved through ages of continuous historical life of Indian society' (para 21); on this point, I demur. Or, further, when he speaks of universal reason as involved in delineation of spiritual ideals, he seems to draw on some involuted form of justification of a tradition from the reverence one ought to have for its inner core. I, for one, happen to feel some hesitation in accepting such fetters, even when born of my own reverence towards my own cultural ideals, on any critical reflections. I shall elaborate on such issues in the next section. First let me quote from SII on this crucial point: 'It is sometimes forgotten by the advocates of universalism that the so-called universalism of reason or of religion is only in the making and cannot be appealed to as an actually established code of universal principles. What is universal is *only the spirit, the loyalty to our own ideals and the openness to other ideals, the determination not to reject them if they are found within*

our ideals and not to accept them till they are so found' (para 20, emphasis mine). I am puzzled by this unequivocal assertion of an orthodox position which takes the spiritual ideals of our culture as beyond all scrutiny. I wonder if KCB remembers that he has said in para 9 that 'if the Modern Indian Mind is to philosophize at all to any purpose, it has to confront Eastern thought and Western thought with one another and attempt a synthesis or a reasoned rejection of either, if that were possible. It is in philosophy, if anywhere, that the task of discovering the soul of India is imperative for the modern India'. Careful scrutiny is needed before one can know how KCB visualizes this relation of reason to values and ideals on one hand and philosophical criticism, required to appreciate this ideational effort, on the other hand. I may do that in the following section.

II

KCB insists on the cultural predetermination of all concepts and seems to 'disapprove' of universality of conceptual frameworks even in science. In para 24 he allows mathematics and science to be taken to be value-free and as such free of cultural appraisals as well, and yet in para 25 he enters a caveat about them as well. In contrast, all other ideas, if they happen to be 'vital', must be related to ideals, he claims: 'All vital ideas involve ideals. They embody an entire theory and an insight into life. Thought or reason may be universal, but ideas are carved out of it differently by different cultures according to their respective genius. No idea of one cultural language can exactly be translated in another cultural language. Every culture has its distinctive 'physiognomy' which is reflected in each vital idea and ideal presented by the culture' (para 12). Paragraphs 12 and 24 appear almost mutually contradictory. They are not; yet nothing shows the deep crisis of KCB's theory of cultural concepts better than this awkward hesitation on his part to acknowledge the universal nature of philosophical concepts. He certainly hopes authentically to render ideas from foreign cultures by reincarnation as our own indigenous concepts; and it is only in this way that we can enrich the world's thought,

he strongly maintains in paragraph 25; note especially the exhortation 'Let us everywhere resolutely think in our own concepts.'

A study of para 25 shows how, in the context of his analysis of the cultural predetermination of ideas, KCB shuttles between his several perplexities with regard to what makes up different levels of critical human thought about 'values', their applications, and their expression in particular languages; further, he was confused about the ideational episodes of conception and the core sense or the objective correlative of these acts, the sense-content or concept proper. KCB's discussion does not distinguish clearly enough the inscriptions of a language we employ to think and the concepts. He also confuses verbal tokens with concepts and propositions. In a certain sense no concepts could ever be exclusively mine. Concepts do not share the identity of their carriers (acts, inscriptions, or sounds). I can entertain the proposition that $7^9 > 6^8$. This does not depend on my words. Yet SII continuously dissolves all questions of conceptual validity into episodes from the intellectual biography of persons who think. This is a poor performance by KCB who had a well-earned reputation as a student of Indian epistemology,¹ particularly Abhāya.

This whole disinclination to attend to the universal conceptual order of ideas per se, and this insistence on conditions anterior to their maturation, social nexus, and on their plausible and imaginable remote and proximate consequences on the person who reflects, suffers, to my mind, from a serious

¹ I have discussed some questions concerning philosophy as an expression of culture in one of my papers, 'Is philosophy culture free?' (Anviksisi 4:1-2.50-56, January-April 1971, BHU). I argue there that philosophical thinking could be systematic as well as critical; whereas systematic philosophy could be an ideational expression of cultural attitudes, beliefs, etc., at least the critical reflections on the very groundwork of all conceptualizations could not be so determined by anterior cultural metaphors. By these critical reflections we offer a set of plausible *Analysans* to our ideational matrix which we wish to comprehend as a mere *Analysandum*. How, then, can anybody hope to grasp an *Analysans* by the help of an *Analysandum*?

lack of distinction which is sometimes seen as a failure to distinguish the context of discovery and the context of explanation. We know only men think; when they think at all, a vast accretion of accidents related to the socio-cultural mechanism essential to the activity of manipulating inscriptions — say, the presence of light in the library while reading or the supply of electricity for communicating on television sets — has nothing whatever to do with the respective thematic contents represented. The medium cannot and should not be falsely believed to swallow the message (with apologies to Marshall Macluhan for twisting his now famous contrary epigram).

Let us get down to some hard facts of philosophical writing. I am asking KCB and his contemporary admirers to tell me: Did he or did he not recognize the occurrence of a body of basic questions and issues regarding categories, sense, negation, time, identity, prediction, causality, and others in several works of writers as widely differing in their cultural backgrounds as Shankara and B. Bosanquet, or Spinoza; a Vasubandhu and a Protagoras; Heraclitos or a Bishop Berkeley? If not, how can a modern professor of linguistics at MIT today hope to learn and share theoretical implications for the deep grammar of all languages by grasping the rules of basic stems as propounded in Pāṇini's *Ashṭādhyāyī*? Is its logic truth-functional? A quest for the critical structures of all reflections, particularly concerning the nature of negation, has been carried out in the history of philosophy with various ontological, semantic, and dialectical (?) linguistic beliefs and assumptions. Yet, however much a Platonist, a Hegelian, a Sartre, a Marxist, a modern logician like Russell, or a Nagarjuna or a Gangesha from Mediaeval India may have differed, is it not possible, nevertheless, to decode their varied special idioms into a common theme and delineate the various dimensions of the problems tackled by them, which they can reformulate in disputing each other's work? That only proves that they do share a framework, however inarticulate it may be. I am prone to argue that this coincidence is neither fortuitous nor contingent. Human cognitivism cannot be denied its autonomy, and it is this universal conceptual framework which is very often ignored in the

onrush of more engaging labour such as collecting factual generalizations about abstract and concrete entities. But the articulation of all possible discrete presuppositions of any argument or hypothesis related to a different variety of assorted entities is also an object of critical reflection. It may be the rock-bottom of all other theoretical enterprise. The fact that most scientists and common-sense people do not acknowledge the need for such explorations or do not appreciate the universal validity of the results of such inquiries need not be counted as justification for not recognizing the very field of exploration that is rational discourse itself.

I wish SII had been based on a full appreciation of the multitiered levels of concepts, functions, rules, criteria, and axioms, and had concentrated on lucidly delineating the structures of some selected concept clusters, as well as noting the differing ranges of the applicability of such varied concepts. If this subtle schematic framework is philosophically captured, the gross theory of cultural determinism falls into irrelevance by itself.

III

In this last section, I am going to be somewhat critical of KCB's SII in general and his belief which he states in the following two passages² in particular and I will show how KCB is totally naive about the concept of the 'real Indian people' and our evolving a culture along with them suited to the times and to our native genius, which he would regard as truly achieving 'Svaraj in ideas' (para 26).

But let me quote a line even commented upon earlier in these reflections. The line is from para 16: 'the foreign ideal is to be assimilated to *our ideal* and not the other way (emphasis mine — DG). There is no demand for the surrender of our individuality in any case: Svadharme nidhanaṃ śreyāḥ paradharma bhayāvahaḥ."

² (The author seems to mean paragraphs 21 and 26. Apparently paragraph 16 is not directly at issue in this section; the author quotes a passage from paragraph 16 by way quot(ing) a line'. . . commented upon earlier in these reflections'. — *Editors.*)

KCB confesses his conservatism and traditionalism while he rejects the universalism of ideals. In the following assertion of his faith in the distinctive values of Indian culture he categorically argues, 'the stress I have laid on the individuality of Indian thought and spirit, on the conservatism of the distinctive values evolved through ages of continuous historical life of Indian society' (SII para 21; emphasis mine). I appreciate KCB for his candour, but I think him uninformed of historical truth. As far as his taken-for-granted attitude towards an integrated spiritualistic core of Indian culture is concerned, I find his uncritical assumption regarding the continuity, individuality, and distinctiveness of Indian Mind, its thought, spirit, and values, totally untenable. I have to explain here, in the first instance, an interesting conceptual distinction that many working social scientists have also been often misled to ignore (and of course we know how philosophers are too prone to reify abstractions; consequently they mix theoretical explanatory concepts with those that are actual, real social historical agents). Let us scrutinize and reflect on 'Modes of Production', 'Relations of Production', 'Rule of Law' etc. which are being eagerly thought of nowadays as the 'real' objects of the study of civilization.

I know that one must idealize in order to handle the chaotic mass of vast cultural matrices. One must postulate basic principles underlying a multitude of amorphous instances. But one should not take models so proposed to be given entities themselves. That would be subversive of the very intellectual analysis of social reality. While we should not violate methodological good sense as embodied in strictures against 'the fallacy of misplaced concreteness', one should not go to the other extreme of methodological nominalism, either, denying the utility of ideational paradigms in the study of concrete social facts. Without unifying individuating idealizations, we can hardly take any step; we might as well abandon cultural analysis altogether. So, unless the nominalist wishes to leave rational understanding alone, he should allow us to idealize about a large body of dissimilar particular events, beliefs, attitudes related to social phenomena, logically subsuming

them under a few basic ideational paradigms. I will not digress too far into the unceasing debate between holists and individualists in methodology, but I will offer the following example.

Let us, for a moment, forget Indian culture and talk instead of a vast Mango Grove which is very old. Periodically, some of its old trees and plants die, and some new saplings grow; new ground is acquired, and old areas are cleared up and built upon for other purposes. Suppose that, at a particular point of observation, it had most numerous ungrafted simple indigenous mango trees, as well as many other prized fruit trees like, say, Alphonso and Dasheris, well-known for rich texture and flesh flavour in Alphonso's case and unbeatable sweetness in the case of Dasheris, respectively. If, now, a philosophical taxonomist wishes to find out the *real* and *essential* Mango type in this grove, what would be the best bet and the most rationally acceptable 'paradigm' for the entire ongoing life of this grove? The ungrafted variety, since it is the most frequently observed one? Dasheris, because this variety is sweet? Alphonso, on grounds of flavour? Are all three answers wrong? Or is any of them right for a particular purpose, so that we can in effect say that all of them are right, depending on what you mean and why?

In Indian life and society we are faced, as we know, with all the diversity of civilizational levels that we can expect on the globe since the birth of culture in places and periods. In view of the continuous civilizational tremors and vast cultural and social structural fusions and refusions making our successive formations and disintegrations, KCB's naive conservatism, however clear it might appear to the sacred custodians of our sanātana traditions, seems to me to be totally stylized and innocent of vast discontinuities of period, place, mode, and convictions, involving a very large number of successive oral and literate traditions. I have discussed these matters of empirical fact in detail elsewhere.³ It is not possible to

³ I have written on the 'Idea of tradition' in the Panjab University Journal of Medieval Studies (1980, pp. 85-89). There I have tried to suggest that one thinks of Tradition only in the following scenarios: (a) seeking one's Ego-Identity; (b) apprehending the

demonstrate the lack of credibility that seems to ring in my reflections when I am unproblematically informed by KCB about the Indian mind, the vernacular mind and its spiritual ideals, being an unequivocally abiding underlying framework of Indian civilization and our real people, with whom KCB (SII, para 26) wishes his educated generation to march in line to Svaraj in Ideas.

I feel that the panorama of India's past, extending for more than five millennia of a quest for culture, cannot be articulated easily within the limited perspective of Sanskrit traditions, even if we add to the Vedas the dharmashastras, epics, poetic classics, theatre, dramaturgy, nitishastras, and attendant social institutions. Even a cursory acquaintance with some of these elements in the sanātana traditions themselves reveals, to my mind, the well-known doctrine of adaptation and accommodation of varied principles and contingencies to each other, sometimes associated with the locality and tribe in the idiom of the universal symbols of Brahmanism, on the one hand, and sometimes even deifying tribal symbols and practices in the total structure of Sanskrit Brahmanic orthodoxy on the other. The Ahimsa of mediaeval Brahmanic Vaishnavism is from

sense and meaning of a work of art in its period; (c) when a society wishes to undergo a state of radical transformation either as a whole or in one of its major dimensions, it defines its Tradition. Further, I have emphasized that before the western intervention the real interaction between several insulated oral cultures in India was minimal and collective, maybe also fitful. As such, writing was very late to come and to characterize any pan-Indian stereotypes. Afterwards, crazy attempts to document Indian oral traditions bring a lot of distortions (other than those which sacred traditionalists in different ramified branches introduced about each other earlier). The entire corpus of Indian studies is full of these polemics and controversies. Compare a recent paper of mine, 'Contemporary interpretations of Indian culture — a note' (Visvabharati Journal of Philosophy, 1982, vol. 13, p. 65 ff.), where I criticize the Marxist, conservative, and idealist liberal interpretations of Indian life and culture. I very much wish to see the vast cultural matrix of India explored without ideological fixations. The task has not been done, partly because of the orthodox blinkers, some of which KCB applies.

Buddhist and other non-Aryan sources. The sexuality in Tantric Shaktism also very largely derives from primitive oral beliefs and rituals. Tribals had been carrying on Brahmanic texts in their oral myths. Examples are easy to multiply. I find it difficult to maintain, with KCB, that there is a homogeneous and consistent identity of ideas and ideals throughout India's historical experience. To my mind, Indian traditions are highly eclectic and inconsistent. Let us consider one or two symptomatic examples.

Consider the amoral manual on politics written by Kautilya, the Arthashastra. It is incompatible with the usual advocacy of purusharthas and varnashrama principles as in the epics and the enduring dharmashastra texts. What is Dharma, one wonders? The Yaksha in Mahabharata asks this question, and gets no answer from Yudhishtira. 'Follow great men' — that is all.

We turn to the great grammarian, philosopher, and yogi Bhartrihari of the classical period. Like the great Shankara himself, Bhartrihari frequently wrote evocative erotic lyrics also, while of course he advocates rightly the purity of desire and penance as so much idealized cant in the tradition coming down from the Vedas to the Puranas!

The tantras and eroticism of mediaeval Indian life are a direct slap in the face of that fiction of highly austere and 'incorporeal paradigm' of Indian civilization, suggested by Hindu deifiers of the last one hundred years, led by such great savants as Aurobindo, Coomaraswamy, KCB and others.

Consider also the simultaneous existence of high elite Sanskritic cultures with the folkways of the common Prakrit, Pali, and Apabhramsha mind, the pre-English vernaculars of India. How can one ignore the peripheral tribals who had been repelled and attracted by the high tides of refined civilization as found in urban centres like those of ancient Kanyakubja, Kashi, Ujjain, Pataliputra, Nalanda, Kanchi, Taxila, and later Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Pune, Chittor, Lucknow. The vast peasant and working populations lived their small worlds of stereotyped roles and marvellous skills and

motifs unbothered by tremors of political revolutions or artistic and moral upsurges, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Vaishnavism, Saktism, Sufism, the Bhakti cults of Nanak and Kabir, the rise of modern Indian language poetry (Vidyapati, Chandidas, Ilango, Namdev, Tulsidas, Kabir, Rahim, Mira).

Which is representative of the Indian spirit, Professor Bhattacharya? A Pandit Raj Jagannath beating about the old poetic conventions in Sanskrit at the Mughal court? Or new emerging poetry in Punjab by Guru Gobind and in Avadhi-speaking villages by Rahim? Ghalib's Urdu, or the revivalism of Sanskrit karmā-kānda in Sanātana Indian cults of temple prostitutes?

A man of my cultural mix cannot disown one and identify wholly with Valmiki and Bharata. For my personal identity, Agra and Ghalib, Guru Gobind and Amritsar are as much part of my world-idea as Ramayana and Bhagavan Amitabha. It makes no sense for me to disown Ilango and Chandidas or Kamban just because I do not know their beautiful languages Tamil or Bengali. That is my limitation. It is emphasized that I would like to explore and consolidate my own world-view not only from the Sanskrit classics but equally from the rock etchings in central India and Mirzapur; not only from the temples of Kanchi and Bodhgaya or the painting and sculpture of Ajanta, Khajuraho, and Konarak, but also through the modern wonders of Amrita Shergill, M. F. Hussain, Jamini Roy, a Tansen or Ravishankar, Nandalal Bose, and of course Mohandas Gandhi. Examples could be multiplied indefinitely. The religion, sex, and race of these people do not matter to me. For me they are mine; their images and memories have echoed long and me the man I am. I do not know, despite my desire to be representative of the working common people, the peasant as well as the stone carver of modern India, if I have been unconsciously biased in favour of Hindu, Hindi, and North Indian sensibilities. Possibly, likewise, without offence to me, a Maharashtrian or a Bengali, a Kerala Moslem or a Panjabi Sikh, has the right to define his own tradition. The only thing we should jointly try to explore afterwards is how much we converge, without reification. That way lies a *real*

swaraj in ideas for us all. We the poor dehumanized wretched of this earth, who, if fired by the new Science and its inquiry, and moved by the spirit of Neo-Rationalism, are bound to inaugurate a new chapter of vibrant Indianism in the twenty-first century into a yet more glorious future.

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AN ESSAY TOWARDS CULTURAL AUTONOMY

PROBAL DASGUPTA

I

During the two hundred years between the American national anthem which sings of 'the land of the free and the home of the brave' and the song by the Beatles that says 'all I can tell you is that you've got to be free', the theme of freedom conquered many minds. It is today a widespread assumption that freedom is the only worthwhile goal.

One thing that free people must do is explore the problem of being free, being an explorer. Explorers are not boy scouts. Freedom is hard. Let us face that aspect of its hardness that we must deal with. Our freedom as a culture is at stake. Can those abilities that are distinctively ours help us to explore, to be free, at a higher level, now that the only way out for us is the way up?

The art of schematic and abstract classification and the mathematical and logical arts related to it come naturally to us as a culture; consider Pāṇinian grammar, the Nyāya tradition of logic, the elaborate taxonomies in the paurāṇika culture, and the detailed segmentations in our social order. In this spirit, we should surely work on the task of digesting notions like deduction, induction, hypothesizing and so forth into a satisfying system, and on the substantive as well as formal problems of formulating a defensible correlation between scientific and ethical matters. This essay will undertake these tasks in an exploratory vein.

The system we arrive at will help answer the question of what we are supposed to do with the two extreme programmes, simple idealism and simple materialism, towards which serious thinking about freedom has gravitated. Let us start by outlining these programmes.

The simple idealist programme for setting ourselves free from material bondage says we can live a free inner life and overcome outer difficulties if we realize that our spirit is unbindable by material constraints because the spirit is the primary reality. The material world is a passing show of appearances or phenomena.

The simple materialist programme for releasing authentic life from the oppression of unjust social structures postulates the organization of matter-energy, whose highest form is social life and its reproduction, as the primary reality. Repressive superstructures and symbolic representations are secondary toys thrown up in the course of games people play as they vie with one another. Only the material world where we live is seriously present and must be fought for. Real people — those who are in the closest touch with material reality because they (re-)produce the means of everybody's daily life, the working masses — must fight together to attain just and stable social arrangements for the future.

A subtler formulation of these visions of collective liberty and individual liberty might restate the former so as to emphasize material well-being and play down the justice dimension and correspondingly restate the latter so as to make spirit and matter co-primary. These revised visions are reconcilable, as in the abstraction that the Third World calls development, steering various courses between capitalism and communism. However, it seems historically and logically right to take Marxist thought as the representative of the materialist programme; the capitalist stance resists formulation as a true vision because it has no theoretical conception of simple idealism as a friend or an enemy and thus must be regarded as essentially pretheoretical. Marxists, as consistent materialists, hold that people who believe that inner freedom is supreme will voluntarily accept social subjection and that therefore the idealist pipe dream is an enemy of the revolution.

In our country, much of what passes for fundamental thought pertains to the simple materialist and idealist programmes as stated above. Our materialists seek, or lament the absence of, ancient Indian ideas of social liberty, and wish to shake us up

so that we wake up in the real world. Our idealists want to wake everybody up from the modern world's dogmatic slumber so that we rediscover the inner self, which alone is truly free. While these efforts have value, they are not fundamental. The person, whose freedom is supposedly at stake, gets pushed into the background in both programmes, and even ceases to exist conceptually. The Marxist thinker Althusser was right when he responded to the Khrushchev thesis that there had been a cult of Stalin's personality by pointing out that Marxist theory recognizes no such thing as a cult of personality and that, if Marxist self-criticism was to begin, one would have to reconceptualize. He then built, over the years, a theory of superstructure that says that social ideological forces construct each person in their own image. If persons are ideological forms, the attempt to characterize Stalinism must obviously leave persons (and their cult) alone and must seek guidance in such structural theses as Trotsky's 'bureaucratic counterrevolution' analysis. While strict materialism, as just shown, regards persons as formed by the play of social structures, simple idealism views persons as due to another form of play. Play of what? That depends on which version of idealism it is. Play of meaningless natural forces. Or of the pure spirit disguised as natural factors. Either way, the spirit, in which meaning inheres, the primary reality, exists more seriously than persons, who strictly speaking do not exist. Thus simple idealism and materialism accord a secondary place to the person and a primary one to the principle of freedom — materiality or ideality.

Note that people who adhere to one of these programmes often believe in heroically or lovingly effacing their personhood to exalt the social or spiritual principle of freedom. Since people are not formal schemata, all this is complex and diverse; for example, much advaitin thought eludes my skeletal caricature of idealism; but it is true that many materialists identify with the community, while many idealists identify with, or into, the spirit who is all. In both cases, one must educate the self and push the natural person in some disciplined direction. The programme that defines this direction postulates an absolute freedom; it either hopes to go beyond the fragile finitude of personalities or aims to concentrate the untapped

collective powers of the social crucible in which persons arise and fall.

What is the natural state of the person who is to decide whether and how to abandon this state? If the person accepts freedom as the goal, what is the source from which to move towards freedom?

C. Wright Mills offers an answer in *The Sociological Imagination*. Persons are situated both in circles of intimacy and acquaintance, *milieux*, which are the stuff biography is made of, and in macrosocial formations or *structures*, whose adventures through time are called history.

This dual situatedness — it takes a Mills to pinpoint the duality! — is usually, oversimply, described by saying that people live in *society*. In an optimal society, *milieux* and *structures* are held together by what we may call *private* and *public bonding*, respectively. Societies are not optimal; the integrating that bonding leaves undone tends to get done by bondage instead. The order of bondage has roots in a subsoil of bonding that keeps alive the prospects of freedom, the victory of bonding over bondage. Given these characterizations, the person lives in *society*, so constituted — the person lives in concrete *milieux* and abstract *structures*. Both involve bonding and, failing that, bondage.

If you value clear and fair bonding and feel a need to struggle against bondage, you may come to construe bonding in terms of an idealist or materialist view of the conceptual content of bonding. These represent attempts to sharpen the feeling that freedom is the victory of bonding over bondage. Thus the present approach illuminates the goals as well as the source of the freedom programmes.

Now we may think about according philosophical primacy or coprimacy to the persons who are the subjects/objects of bonding/bondage. The remainder of this essay will attempt this. We will be proposing, among other things, that the reality of persons is proportionate to how much *initiative* they take in initiating bonding as opposed to bondage. This amounts to saying, 'You go out of your way for the sake of those you care for.'

When you must serve a master, you stick to what you have to do. You are really yourself — not an alienated means to someone's ends — when you do something with vigour, willing to put yourself out and go out of your way.' The notion of initiative is related to that of support. We want the world to support us actively, not just to permit us, passively, to exist; the maxim 'do to others what you want done to yourself' implies that therefore we must go out of our way and support others. To the extent that we do so, we are free, and therefore real, and therefore we *live* a philosophy that affirms the reality of persons prior to asking questions about materiality and ideality in a technical framework.

2

So far, the discourse has made no contact with the philosophy of modern science, whose centrality no inquirer can ignore today. This essay will operate with a certain conception of the rational history of the philosophy of inquiry (including the empirical sciences and mathematics) and propose that this conception carries over to the philosophy of action.

We will assume that there are four significant moments — deductive, inductive, conjectural, and programmatic — in the logical history of the philosophy of inquiry. You may associate these moments, if you wish, with such names as Pythagoras, Bacon, Popper, and Lakatos, respectively; but this essay will avoid the footnote-mongering style of historiography.

The deductive moment entertains the possibility that deducing logical consequences from obvious first principles will give us knowledge. Mathematics as a mode of knowledge stays at this moment. Empirical science leaves it and embarks on a voyage that has not yet ended.

The inductive moment renounces, temporarily or permanently, the possibility of any true and certain knowledge of factual (as distinct from mathematical or conceptual) first principles. But one continues to recognize the need to organize each field of inquiry in terms of initial postulates and systematic consequences. These postulates, the inductive mind assumes, are

to be obtained by inductive generalization from carefully gathered and checked particulars. Primarily descriptive domains of investigation such as certain branches of geography remain at the inductive moment. Other sciences need to go beyond it.

The conjectural moment is also called hypothetico-deductive. It denies the usefulness of induction in hypothesis formation and plays down the question of how hypotheses arise, stressing instead the need for deducing testable consequences from given hypotheses and seeking empirical refutation as a method of eliminating hypotheses. Perhaps detection as practised by Sherlock Holmes or Hercules Poirot is a domain for the conjectural moment in its pure form. In the case of the sciences, moment three leads inexorably to moment four.

The fourth and *programmatic* moment stresses the organic continuity of the core of a research programme. In the face of routine refutations of small-scale concrete conjectures, auxiliary assumptions need to be revised continually; this revision is a principled process reflecting the character of the research tradition. The core postulates are revised more slowly, again in a principled fashion.

This outline is not meant as an adequate description. Let it serve as an indication of the areas of thought in the philosophy of inquiry that this essay presupposes. Those who wish to read this essay critically will have to have or acquire some knowledge of standard work in the philosophy of science. My Bangla article *Biggan, shotti kotha, ar shoto pushpo* ('science, truth, and a hundred flowers', published in 1982 in the journal *Baromas* vol. 4 no. 5, pp. 45-9) presents some material about the inductive, conjectural, and programmatic moments and proposes a polysystemic handling of research programmes, invoking a distinction between tactical multiplicity of approaches and strategic unity of thought-style. The reader is referred to such purely epistemological writings for more detailed discussion of the philosophy of inquiry *per se*. The project in this essay is to bring out and make use of a deep affinity between the thematic progression of the four moments in the philosophy of inquiry and a similar progression in the philosophy of action.

At the outset we must meet the widely respected objection that there is no valid derivation of value from fact, of ought from is. The heart of this objection is the feeling that no amount of fact-gathering will lead us to principles that can guide action or teach us about freedom. This makes sense only if the objector also feels that fact-gathering does lead to empirical principles. Thus the source of the objection is clearly an inductive cast of mind. My 1982 article mentioned above pointed out the affinity between the inductive moment of the philosophy of inquiry and the utilitarian moment of moral philosophy, the moment associated with John Stuart Mill in particular. The strategy of utilitarianism, a theory still accepted uncritically in much economic thinking and planning (often without awareness of the presupposed moral theory), is to collect short-term interests of individuals and inductively to arrive at the long-term interests of society, with which the enlightened individual should identify for the sake of the least evil, the greatest good of the greatest number. This is obviously the moral equivalent of inductive epistemology.

It seems reasonably easy to answer the objection. The objector himself, an incarnation of Mill, finds that his cast of mind—which happens to be inductive—accustoms him to a certain style of rationality, which he adheres to both in the philosophy of inquiry and in moral philosophy. Thus, even if we grant, for argument's sake, the point that factual premises alone never entail a moral conclusion, we may insist on the match or harmony between particular empirical rationalities and particular moral reasoning-styles. We may contend that this harmony is significant and adopt the working hypothesis that there is a four-moment thematic progression in moral philosophy analogous to the progression outlined above for the philosophy of inquiry.

In making this move we distance ourselves not only from British inductivism but even from certain much less prosaic and more radical-sounding doctrines which appeal to the young to this day, such as Sartrean existentialism. The notion of individual freedom in the early Sartre, although less ponderously and more playfully presented, is not less inductive, in our sense,

than the utilitarian view; Sartre was fond of insisting that empirical sciences deal in probabilities. The later Sartre worked out some detailed consequences of the efforts modern people make to put their wishes together and order society in a way that releases the individual's dreams; again, though Sartre is concrete and excited about it, the notion of putting people's wishes together remains an inductive one. This point is not new, in the sense that Lévi-Strauss made some vituperative remarks in *The Savage Mind* to roughly this effect. What is new is our attempt to go beyond inductivism in the moral domain explicitly, theoretically.

It is important to see why this deserves attention. The inductive world-view, in one form or another, underlies the ideology of democracy, beyond which social and political thought has not moved. Thus, it is at least theoretically important to ask whether there are coherent moral philosophies which correspond to the conjectural and programmatic moments in epistemology. For some concrete social grounds for believing that we need to move beyond the perspective of Hobbes, Locke, and Mill, consider the following.

In today's world, there is a general assumption of rationality or enlightenment (even in the apparent exceptions, such as fundamentalist societies like Iran's which merely define rationality differently). We manage our economies on the advice of specialists. We sell our bodies to doctors and our minds to psychologists. Our very perception of people is an educated perception, informed by the insight of fiction, poetry, films, and other art. Thus, the individual's life no longer confronts reality directly, but through the conceptual and practical structures of specialist guilds (of economists, doctors, artists, etc.) which exercise a bureaucratic power that is often overlooked in discussions of the problem of bureaucracy. Every individual member of each of these bureaucracies feels powerless also, both because of the many other bureaucracies and because an individual bureaucrat is bound by the rules and slow rhythm of the guild (as vividly shown in Kafka's fiction). Nobody is free monad with directly definable wishes or epistemological stances; the world presupposed by inductivism does not exist (or at least is not our world).

A different but not unrelated point pertains to the question of sovereignty with respect to the transparencies of such institutions as the language of a community. Let us ask: does the state have the right to legislate about syntax, everyday words, spelling etc.? What right? Does language rest on a social consensus which, working through the state, may deliberately alter it? No clear answers exist; more importantly, no answer can even be imagined in the inductive democratic perspective, which, with its philosophy, must therefore be superseded.

3

Let us bear in mind the details of the four-moment progression in the philosophy of inquiry and expect to find something similar in moral philosophy, which is an independent domain and should lead us independently to postulate a similar progression.

The first deductive moment of *religion* is clear, in the sense that we intuitively take it for granted. Let us not try to distance ourselves deliberately from this feeling, although such an exercise needs to be undertaken elsewhere (and it has been).

The second and inductive moment in moral philosophy arises in the form of a stand-off between conflicting and equally powerful deductive systems. Given the absence of pansocial consensus on moral and religious matters, the notion of a community dissolves; mutual service of the spontaneous kind that flourishes in a homogeneous community becomes impossible, because opaque; urban or 'bourgeois' (a word that once meant 'urban') non-mutuality and insular non-acquaintance prevail. Judgment, deprived of natural first principles, accepts the legal principle of preponderant evidence in ascertaining facts and motives, and the utilitarian principle of preponderant interest (and related principles of obligation and right) in deciding what to do. Carried to an extreme, this stance yields skepticism about the existence of other selves (Karl Popper has pointed out that such skepticism has an inductivist basis), which undermines the golden rule 'Do to others what you want others to do to you'. One would normally assume that the golden rule, shared by all religions and, Kropotkin argues in encyclopaedic detail,

all cultures, could be a consensual rallying point accepted even in an inductive secularism; but the golden rule becomes unintelligible, and a fortiori inapplicable, if one is not even sure that there are others, and if one is any case unable without protracted sifting of evidence to ascertain what people are doing and why (this stance stops short of solipsism but leaves the existence of others contentless because it holds that we can have little or no knowledge of what others do or what they have in mind).

It seems that the ontological sterility of the second moment leads to the third, *conjectural* moment which makes it possible to operate with a less legalistic and more authentic notion of reality. One has to realize that the ambience of mutual non-acquaintance of early urbanity is due to the fact that persons are self-revealing and are not automatically knowable, which means that one would naturally start with a blank slate of urban anonymity. Persons are free to express themselves, and only if they do this will others see who they are, and thus come to know their reality. The golden rule functions here in a way that is often overlooked. It goes like this: 'If you want to support me actively and not just tolerate me passively (and possibly denying my existence in your ontology), you have to be real for me and come out and encounter me half-way. I want this. So, by the golden rule, I owe it to you to be real for you and to support you. Thus I must act in excess of what is inductively warranted, I must act in such a way that it becomes clear who I am; thus I set you an example, remind you that you have an audience, and, by going out of my way morally, put my "money" on the conjecture that you and I and others inhabit a common moral space that we can all recognize if we act.'

Instead of mechanically passing on immediately to the fourth moment, let us explore a few properties of moment three. The conjecturing inquirer stands to lose the conjecture in the sense that the facts may refute it; what does the conjecturing moral actor stand to lose? The moral counterpart of refutation is the world's condemnation of my initiative through the voice of my conscience. The world will not necessarily tell me when I am

right, but it will (through my conscience) tell me when I am wrong; this is one dimension of the Bhagavadgītā statement that we have no right to the fruit of our action. Since the world will condemn many actions, I will see that the world is real and independent of my reality. This indirect condemnation — my inner feeling that what I did was wrong or went wrong — is a subtle one which leaves me free to harden my heart, to stifle my conscience the way Pinocchio killed the cricket (in the unsentimental original Pinocchio on which Walt Disney based his children's movie); precisely the fact that I am free to choose whether I wish to see the world's verdict as real and as meant for me makes me realize that I don't want to wish away all negative judgments on my actions, but that I want to learn from them. The world is a graceful teacher; I can learn how to act gracefully and to express what my reality is without acting in ways violative of other realities.

How is this different, you may ask, from existentialist freedom of choice? A theoretical answer is that, under extreme existentialism, pursuit of conjectures would constitute unfreedom and becomes illicit. I can make this clearer by quoting from Camus's review of Sartre's *Le Mur and Other Stories* (see pp 203-6 of Camus's *Lynical and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip Thody, New York: Vintage Books, 1970; the review is also anthologized elsewhere):

'M. Sartre has a certain taste for impotence ... which leads him to choose characters who have arrived at the limits of their selves, stumbling over an absurdity they cannot overcome. The obstacle they come up against is their own lives, and, I will go so far as to say that they do so through an excess of liberty. // These beings with no attachments, no principles, no Ariadne's thread, are so free they disintegrate, deaf to the call of action or creation. A single problem preoccupies them, and they have not defined it. ... // The fascination such a story evokes is undeniable. One cannot put it down, and soon the reader too acquires that higher, absurd freedom which leads the characters to their own ends. // For his characters are, in fact, free. But their liberty is of no use to them. At least, this is what M. Sartre demonstrates. And doubtless this explains

the often overwhelming emotional impact of these pages as well as their cruel pathos. For in this universe man is free of the shackles of his prejudices, sometimes from his own nature, and, reduced to self-contemplation, becomes aware of his profound indifference to everything that is not himself. He is alone, enclosed in this liberty. ... His condition is absurd.'

In contrast, we are postulating a person who does have an Ariadne's thread and is committed to tuning the principles of the self to those of a discoverable moral universe through the method of conjecture. Thanks to Camus's literary powers, perhaps you can also *feel* the difference now.

Will it help if we look briefly at yet another domain? Consider poetry. Deductive poets are certain that strict metre and rhyme (or other alliteration) are obligatory; they produce classical verse. Inductive existentialist poets write anything down and call it a poem; they have the right to do so; and they have no warrant for seeing anything as less poetic than anything else. The conjectural poet tries out various possibilities and, on the basis of an evolving personal poetics, writes a poem and sees if it sounds right or wrong; the outcome modifies the poetics a little bit each time. Perhaps this analogy clarifies the difference between inductive freedom and conjectural freedom.

Sartre gives us valuable clues to various facets of the inductive universe, which people have by no means finished exploring (recall that, among the sciences, some are descriptive and will validly remain inductive for ever). His *Being and Nothingness* contains a fascinating study of love which tries to show that love is impossible because the would-be lover is forced to choose between (a) being a subject and reducing the beloved to objecthood, the sadist mode, and (b) being an object for the beloved subject, the masochist mode; one cannot be both at once. In the inductive universe, this argument is surely flawless. It is also instructive in an unexpected way. The sadist and masochist choices Sartre describes so well correspond to two philosophical responses to the sterility of the inductive problematic. Assuming that the thinker has insufficient warrant for claims to valid knowledge, and feeling frustrated with this assumption,

one may want (a) to grant apodictic validity to the knower's self-knowledge, or (b) to declare by fiat that the universe with all its causal intricacy is real and causes knowledge to arise inductively in our heads, valid knowledge because it is duly caused. These moves, called idealism and materialism respectively, correspond exactly to Sartre's sadism and masochism, the flight from objecthood and the flight into objecthood. The inductive basis of such moves is particularly clear in the case of materialism: consider the writings of Lenin and Mao on epistemology. In the case of idealism, there is recent work by Popper showing that idealism crucially rests on inductive premises. We begin to see that the transition from moment two (the inductive moment) to the third, conjectural moment cuts several Gordian knots.

But this moment does not go far enough. I am not saying this for the mechanical reason that I expect a counterpart to the fourth moment of the philosophy of inquiry, although I am proposing that the deep parity between inquiry and action is real and should guide our thought. For a reason purely internal to the moral domain, moral philosophy too must move into moment four. The reason is that moment three does not apply the golden rule thoroughly enough. This failure is not a historical accident in real life or an expository trick on my part (holding some cards back for later use), but springs from the conceptual exigencies of a moment which accords centrality to the person as a conjecturer. Let us see how moment four overcomes this limitation.

4

Moment three tells the moral agent to take action and face the consequences and learn from them. But our acts are not only concretely testable, subject to success or failure. They are also abstractly testable, not for success but for 'grammaticality' or naturalness. In some theoretical setting, an action we are contemplating must 'feel right' or 'sound right' or 'make sense', independently of our willingness to bet that the action will be concretely successful. This theoretical setting, the *moral tradition*, is the locus moment four, the programmatic moment, of moral philosophy.

We may begin quite simply, by extending the golden rule to dead and unborn people: do to the dead what you want the unborn to do to you. We find that we want to continue the unfinished projects of others because we want the future to take up our own projects where we leave off. This leads us immediately into a moral tradition, although we still seem to be within the conceptual world of moment three, dealing as we are with a person-to-person problematic. Actually, this is an illusion. The dead and the unborn, in the vast sense that is operative here, are not felt as individuals; when we apply the golden rule to them, we have really already made it to moment four.

A moral tradition involves bonding and, failing that, bondage, in the sense discussed in section one. The world of moral traditions is a social world with its milieux and structures. Acting on behalf of your tradition, do to other traditions what you would have them do to you: allow for them, give them space to be. This calls for action, as all structuring, including the structuring of space, calls for work. This work is necessary not only between macro-traditions, but even within a single tradition to clarify the relationship between micro-traditions. A blanket secular or ecumenical declaration of tolerance can be no substitute for structuring work. Let us sharpen this polemical statement.

The present essay is part of a tradition, which I see as one shared by such different-looking figures as Gandhi and Tagore, of affirming the active sociality of persons and explicitly opposing the Manichaeic traditions—like Christianity, Judaism, middle-eastern Islam (perhaps something qualitatively different is to be expected from such cultural crucibles as Indonesia, Bangladesh, and even India and Pakistan, whose Islams will some day come into their own), the socialist re-elaboration of Judaeo-Christian and classical ideas, the capitalist rearrangement of European paganism—which all assume that the private and the public are primordially distinct spheres. The outcome of various church-state struggles that arose from this assumption has been varied, but the spectrum from France, through America, to Iran shows us nothing but dogmatic

(fundamentalist) intolerance and dogmatic (materialist) tolerance of various churches by a purely public state. It is not necessary to accept this as the entire spectrum. Gandhi and Tagore spoke for an alternative. Although they were different, in ways that have been much discussed, they both held that the nation-state machine in its present form would have to go, and that the possessive (not to say rapacious) individual built in its image would have to remould itself into a new type of person willing and able to undertake and sustain radical social structuring. Such action would have to reflect a sane and reasoned philosophy continuous with the beginnings of a properly nurturing, human society that Gandhi and Tagore had both perceived in the Indian countryside.

Of course, they had perceived this by abstracting away from the distorting effects of colonial and other devastation. The point was not to continue the habits of our rurality in any superficial sense. Tagore and Gandhi attacked such pillars of our ancient order as untouchability, male chauvinism, cognitive obscurantism leaving initiative to the upper strata etc. so consistently and vehemently that one might take Gandhi and Tagore for enemies of rural India (Naipaul makes this mistake in his not entirely insightful book *An Area of Darkness* in Gandhi's case). What they wanted to cherish and nurture was the primacy of the milieu and of bonding and the explicit recognition that action must be in terms of traditions (and the moral communities that they imply) and, we may add, in terms of programmes and the intellectual communities that they entail—not in terms of monadic individuals entering into a social contract that they may tear up tomorrow for reasons just as arbitrary as their motives today. Tagore and Gandhi were concerned about the *ecology* of personalities. About balance.

This concern led them to outline in their writings an overall philosophy which corresponds to the new cognitive and practical perspective, to the genuinely collective and *re*-collective orientation from which feminism, the environmental movement, the struggle of non-white people in the West, the global struggle of the South against the North, and other contemporary movements draw strength. This new orientation does

not seek to rise on the ashes of a forgettable past, but works for an ecological understanding and practical recognition of our environment in physical and cultural space and time. Supersession, we have learnt in science and have to learn in social life, does not kill. Earlier moments live on, restricted to specific domains which become special cases of the new generalities. This is the answer to the anguish of Max Weber, who in *Science as a Vocation* gives us the impression that scientists must learn to accept, with stoicism, the fact that their work will die and be forgotten and that the very sciences in which they are working will diversify and dissolve for ever. If we do not learn how to handle the past with grace, it is of course natural to feel anguish about mortality; the answer to the anguish is that there are bonds through time and space. By recognizing their reality, we make them come true. A young Parisian in 1968 scrawled on some wall, 'I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires'; if we can transcend (and therefore, in reading the line, ignore) the excessive me-centredness, this is exactly right; that is the nature of human reality in general.

It is in this spirit that we must ask what role the fourth, programmatic moment as our tradition sees it will assign to the elements of the earlier moments discussed in this essay. It is clearly impossible to give a full answer in an abstract discussion; the question is in large part a practical one. But I would like to propose some elements of an answer. The pivotal notion is that of rhythm—invoking the hum of Gandhi's spinning wheel and the subtle, non-ornamental rhythm of Tagore's mature poetry. The ideas about rhythm proposed here, if correct, not only help us see the content of moment four in the moral domain, but even enable us to begin the work of incubating moment five at the heart of moment four. Each moment much bring up the future which will take over from it in due course.

5

The conceptual progression we have been looking at in the philosophy of inquiry and moral philosophy is a rhythmic

sequence of four moments. The deductive moment introduces the theme of necessity. The inductive moment counterposes the theme of contingent or arbitrary (non-necessary) reality. The conjectural moment restores the distinct role of necessity as the only valid mode of serial (antecedent-consequent) inference and stresses that there is no immediate contact between fact and hypothesis—facts do not (inductively) engender hypotheses, and they do not directly bear them out; facts can only refute entailments of hypotheses. The programmatic moment reaffirms induction as exposure, factual and conceptual, to a setting, and makes it apparent that the growth of a programme has non-deductive exigencies of its own which constrain the roles deduction can play. The rhythm should be obvious. The third moment echoes the first. The fourth moment echoes the second.

Whereas moment three is the moment of learning to take responsibility by formulating coherent personal responses and remaining accountable for these choices, moment four extends this responsibility to a collective and recollective (ecological) perspective, thus raising the question of macro responses, echoes, parities, rhythms. Moment four also makes available one sort of answer to this question: the deduction-induction macro-rhythm, which begins to appear at moment three, is confirmed at moment four. However, moment four cannot itself pursue the matter which it raises, for logically it cannot at the same time confirm a pattern implicitly (by displaying certain properties as it unfolds) and thematize this pattern explicitly. Moment five can and must take up the problem. Moment four has to prepare for that.

Rhythm involves repetition. But what sort of repetition? Consider the difference between deduction at moment one, 'because necessarily p, therefore necessarily q' (recall that Moment One geometry, for instance, is a Euclidean geometry held to be uniquely and evidently true), and the restored deduction of moment three, 'given hypothesis p, we get consequence q'. The direct induction of moment two likewise gives way at moment four to a sophisticated notion of exposure to which the subject actively responds by forming and trying out hypotheses at so

many levels of consciousness that the result looks like classical induction just as the motion of the earth gives us the impression of the sun rising and setting (this analogy is due to Chomsky's 1978 Columbia University lectures later published as *Rules and Representations*, a book which, I seem to remember, does not stress this analogy). In both cases, the second version of the theme is more indirect, more transpersonal, and thus more reflective of the broader scheme of things. The repetition involved in rhythm is inexact by design, in both of the major senses of *design*.

Moment five is apparently supposed to bring back the primacy of deduction in some manner. But this will be a new deduction—neither concomitant necessity (moment one) nor entailment (moment three). I suggest that it will be a parallel (rather than serial) relationship of the type we are outlining in this essay. In other words, under the logic of moment five, there will be a mode of reasoning which says, 'In system A, x and y are related—for example, x entails y; there is parity between A and B, and B contains p and q which match x and y; hence p and q are related'. There will be official permission to reason by analogy, because more will be known about the properties of analogies and about where and why analogies do not, as orthodox thought puts it, 'mislead'. The crude notions of matching entities in different subsystems which I am appealing to in this exposition will give way to something conceivable in its full richness only in the corresponding moral universe of moment five, where the moral agent is basking in the restored glory of the individual (recall that moment one, with the individual religionist, and moment three, with the initiative-taking person, are personalist, while moment two and four, morally, are collectivist). In the moral philosophy of moment five, no doubt, one person can act in far fuller tuning with the moral life of another person, for people of that more mature moment know themselves and each other better; they are diverse and plural, but they know how to communicate and tune in across such differences because they understand parity.

Articulating this dream permits us to talk about what we of moment four are supposed to do to help incubate this future. We are supposed to build and sustain a social order which civi-

lizes individuals towards such a moment five — which teaches us how to tame diversity and remain in touch with parity without overunifying.

There was an overunifying streak in all programmes that arose in the inductive setting. Interestingly enough, moment three inherits one aspect of this, and only the 'newly inductive' fourth moment makes it possible to overcome this problem. Moment three in its pure form presents the image of a disjointed series of idea-bursts and initiatives, which reflect possibly incompatible cognitive and moral styles. People are faced with the impossible task of inductively gathering the pieces to put Humpty Dumpty together again, but a Humpty Dumpty who was never together to begin with. Moment four insists that a conjecture or an initiative must make sense and involves inhabiting a partly conscious, partly unconscious conceptual milieu within which conceptual evaluation precedes the launching of conjectures and initiatives. This means that there are going to be lots of different and specific, concretely living milieux with styles of their own. We need not imagine an abstract inductive gatherer who goes around collecting successful conjectures and bundling them together into fields without caring about traditions and other affinities. There is no externally imposed artificial globality of thought. Or action. What unity there is stems from the tradition or the programme, and is not imposed by a background-blind computation. To the extent that traditions can reach out, genuinely touch each other, and discern equivalences which matter, a new type of unity can emerge, the way to moment five. But this can happen only if the isolated idea or initiative stops being regarded as the unit of value. Entities must act in some sort of concert.

Initially, and that is where we must begin, we need an educational umbrella which, both on grounds of political feasibility and sociological efficiency and on general moral principles, must be based on some sort of common denominator. Thus, the structures of society are supposed to be public in the materialist sense, and it is in building and thinking about these structures that the materialist programme and its morality and epistemology must play a role, of course in a re-thought form

that gets rid of the inductive hang-ups which plagued the origin of materialism. Some beginnings of the new materialism we need appear in the later work of Michel Foucault, for example. I am thinking especially of his *History of Sexuality*, which sets aside the negative view of the 'state machine' prevalent in radical thought and points out ways in which positive action (we may think about 'affirmative action', for instance) that only statelike structures can undertake and have undertaken constitute and sustain essential practical, cognitive, and emotional formations.

If one is serious about *sva-raj*, self-rule, one must conceptually recognize certain institutions as positive agencies of management. Such guilds as the scientific community in each domain, the community of serious film-makers in each society, etc. have begun to exercise an as yet poorly understood mode of power that one can imagine taming but not eliminating; the point is to manage it, to relativize it. As Plato pointed out when he decided to examine the republic and not the individual, the republic alone is a big enough unit to give us a complete view of persons. This is obvious; people as diverse as Ben Anderson, Laclau, and Jean-Marie Benoit are discovering how real the nation is. Institutions are the skeleton of a nation. In the perspective of moment four, we must adopt (and take over) this skeleton to help organize the work of educating ourselves towards moment five. And initially this overall network of national structures is going to have to be 'neutral' so as to make traffic possible; materialism is just about as neutral as we can get.

In the other direction, the programmes which are at the heart of moment four — the traditions — are microsocial, not macrosocial; they pertain to milieux, not structures. At that level, idealist modes of discourse and interaction are appropriate, no doubt with an effort to outgrow the idealism of moment two, but idealism nonetheless. Of course, in a society where sufficiently many people are striving, with some success, to defeat all sorts of pathology, the original idealist foil, the hostile and absurd external world, no longer remains as a bogey, and the point of idealism becomes maintaining the

self as a continuity and integrity which keeps us from losing ourselves in the increasingly lush arena; but it is clear that enough of the thought of classical idealism carries over to this situation that we can maintain it as the appropriate mode for the domain where people develop and nourish their traditions and personalities, the domain of milieu.

This much is fairly orthodox. All I have done is state Tagore's idea of adopting the scientific method in the external world and the teachings of the East for the inner life redefining slightly the notions of outer and inner. The result is a stance not unfamiliar to people who have considered combinations of, say, 'transcendental idealism' and 'empirical realism'. It can lead to disaster, as in cases which I plan to discuss in another article. I would now like to make some crucial points.

With advances in our systematic knowledge, especially of causal and ecological structures in the systems of culture and life, increasingly many of our actions become conscious, and therefore must be carried out with responsibility, instead of leaving all balancing work to the invisible hand. But advance also brings specialization. Let alone science, even the arts are specialized, which means that such art forms as the novel and the cinema which are to educate our perceptions often do not reach, and cannot educate, large numbers of people. If people are not educated and therefore not responsive, how will they act responsibly?

In line with the Tagore-Gandhi stress on popular participation in the task of dissolving structures and giving all power to milieu, I would like to propose the notion of the popular arena where programmes and traditions have to present themselves to each other understandably and critically. The importance of the arena increases in an epoch of specialization. Popular culture, popular science, etc., transmitted into a forum where the moral and intellectual traditions present themselves for positive criticism by their fellow traditions in the popular (non-technical) idiom and where the traditions educate the public to the point at which they become qualified to criticize responsibly, can set up such an arena, and are beginning to do so in modern societies.

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The human sciences, which study milieu and structures and thus are answerable to both materialism and idealism, have an important task. They must be not only sciences, but activities that have to do with structuring the arena itself. For the arena ultimately forms individual personalities; and it is clear that a mature human science will have to help us as persons to form and reform ourselves intelligently. A responsible Indian intelligentsia may be expected to examine the possibility of presenting the orientation developed by such modern Indians as Tagore and Gandhi as an epistemology and axiology for the human sciences, obviously with much rethinking, drawing on older traditions which we recognize as ours, borrowing from other places where appropriate, and innovating outright when necessary. Equally important is the hard job of making all this thinking arena-worthy. There have to be artists of the right kind.

To change the image, the arena is a social sea. Only the sea is objective. All rhythms meet there.

Generalized materialistic structures within which milieu, pursuing particular programmes in an idealistic mode, reach out and contact each other, perceiving rhythms and deep parities, and, by these very communications, constitute a fertile social sea: this is the image. The necessary initial disparity between personal, idealistic milieu of bonding ('love') and impersonal, materialistic structures of contract ('justice') sets up some new rhythm of potential parity which we cannot hope to begin to read today.

We must take seriously the work of our own epoch. We tend to see the intimacy of milieu and the need for justice in structures as polar opposites: consider the cases of nepotism and of using state resources for party purposes. We fail to conceive of separate personal dignity and unified social effort in ways that are compatible: hence we fail in dignity and in unity. We have to find practical solutions to these fundamental problems. It seems to me that fundamental thought must develop in close touch with our practical enterprises. The full weight of modern science and the full scale of classical Indian systematic thought must both be present in such attempts, with the con-

creteness of our daily life serving to mediate between these modes of abstraction. If organic systematization and concreteness fail, our culture will not regain svaraj if we fail to take science entirely seriously, science will remain a marginal ritual, a time bomb that will give us some time to come to our senses and then, after the deadline, blow us up. There are major intellectual lapses in the writings of such figures, even such figures, as Tagore and Gandhi, who stopped short of taking science seriously in their life and thought — lapses of 'intellectual taste', to quote the characterization in Lévi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques* of mediaeval Western travellers' tales of mermaids and other imaginary creatures who, like the unicorn, mechanically combine fragments of known beings. As we begin to understand that mechanical combination is a symptom of getting stuck in the inductive swamp, and that getting out of this is going to call for faith (of which self-confidence and a willingness to stick your neck out for the sake of a conjecture are important special cases), or courage, we can outgrow these and related disorders. Obviously, there is no growth without disorder; but real growth means getting over our adolescence.

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THE SVARAJ OF INDIA

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(I)

What could be the significance, the esoteric and civilisational significance, of the remarkable coincidence that precisely during the half-century when Mahātmā Gandhi was steering India's struggle for at least political svarāj, Śrī Ramaṇa Maharṣi mightily witnessed to the truth of svānubhūti, self-realisation, radical freedom from all delusion and ignorance of not-self, alienation? The answer should be obvious to anyone who has not lost a sense of the truth of India, the advaitin (not 'advaitic' which has the bad suggestion of "smacking of advaita") truth of India, and it is this. 'Svaraj' in politics or economics or in ideas or whatever is etymologically the kingdom or order or dispensation of 'sva', self, myself; consequently, in all seeking of svaraj I seek, 'sva' seeks, to be the ruler, centre, source of all things; and this seeking is wisdom and not paranoia, health, i.e. svāsthya or self-situatedness, and not sickness, sarvodaya and not selfishness, only in and through the truth of advaita, *the truth that you and I are not other than one another*. Thus the Gandhian struggle for svaraj, and indeed the Indian struggle for svaraj under the leadership of thinkers and revolutionaries rooted in Indian metaphysics and spirituality such as Lokamānya Tilak and Śrī Aurobindo, is always implicitly an advaitin struggle, a struggle for the kingdom of self or autonomy and identity as opposed to the delusion and chaos and dishonour of not-self or heteronomy and divisiveness. British rule or modern industrial civilisation and its imperialism and materialism, missionary Christianity and Islam and their soul-lust, the self-contradictoriness and shame of advaitin Hinduism's practice of untouchability, etc., are symbols and powers of illusion of not-self, otherness, Māyā; and the historical struggles of metaphysical Indian civilisation have always been, not excluding the modern period, attempted overcomings of all such

Māyā so as to see God face to face in the truth of self-realisation. Such alone is the svaraj of India, at least such.

Śrī Ramaṇa Maharṣi's towering presence in the background of modern India's struggle for svaraj in outer life is no coincidence, it was meant to draw attention to the deeper advaitin implications and responsibilities of the outer struggle, and it was meant to be a promise of the possibility of victory. Really the outer struggle gathered momentum only after 1896 when Śrī Ramaṇa, shortly after his Naciketan self-realising victory over death, arrived in Tiruvannamalai. Indeed it is only in 1897 that Svāmī Vivekānanda establishes the Rāmakṛṣṇa Math and Mission and metaphysical Indian thought, advaitin thought, is world news, good news, great news. Renaissance is not rebirth but second-birth, dvijatva, birth into Brahmanhood. Nationally, in the modern period of history, Indian dvijatva is promised by Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa's catholic spirituality and marked by Śrī Ramaṇa's unambiguous, effortless, sahaja self-realisation at the end of the 19th century. Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj, powerful self-images of defensive Indian self-confidence, lose catholicity in their flight from the truth of image worship, and lose Indian distinctiveness and truth's ultimacy in their flight from advaita. It is only in the post-Vivekānanda and post-Ramaṇa phase of Indian awakening that social awareness begins to acquire the catholic advaitin śakti of svaraj. Aurobindo and Tilak and Gandhi are inconceivable before Ramaṇa and Rāmakṛṣṇa and without them.

It is important, following K. C. Bhattacharyya's lead, to examine the whole corpus of our indigenous thought and ideas with a view to ascertaining whether this storehouse of truth cannot serve our civilisation's needs better than imported knowledge and experience and enthusiasm, and whether our intellectual inheritance needs renewal and reorientation in the light of our encounter with the modern world's alluring intellectual and civilisational foreignness. It would be a great pity, however, if we were to allow ourselves in this exercise to get stuck with lists of what is native and yet serviceable, and what is alien and yet available in the world market today as civilisation, important though it is to be mindful of these things even in a list-

making way. It would be a great pity if such list-making, whatever its importance, were to obscure from our view the root obligation and meaning of svaraj, the obligation to repudiate the so-called law of identity, that old testament of unadventurousness which is at the foundation of alienating modern civilisation, i.e., *that everyone is what he is and not someone else, that everything is what it is and not another thing*. In so far as we choose not to repudiate this manifesto of monadism, we are hardly entitled to speak and dream of svaraj in ideas or life, of a jealous self-sufficiency which is at the same time exploding uncoercing uncovetous caring. Advaitin India must boldly embrace the new testament of identity, which is really anādi and new only in rediscovery and abiding freshness, *that everyone and everything is both what he is and it is and also everyone and everything else*. For svaraj is simultaneously autonomy and love, radical and universal, and these are impossible of realisation without transcending in advaita the old order of isolationism and hegemonism, tribalism and imperialism.

(II)

"Nativism!" is how a friend only half-humorously derisively characterised the defence of svaraj in ideas generally, and not only K. C. Bhattacharyya's plea for it. What is "nativism" as a dirty word and thing? Perhaps the following things: (a) A mulish disregard of truth and worth which originate and flourish elsewhere than in one's own nation or civilisation or general cultural milieu, irrationally and unexaminedly reserving regard only for indigenoussness in all spheres of life and thought. (b) An almost pathological womb-returning life-style which chooses the timid security of familiarity and kinship and abandons the adventure of growth and rebelliousness and novelty, impervious to rational and ethical and general social and existential considerations in the matter. (c) A failure of cosmopolitanism and internationalism and cultural freedom, a blindness to the universalism of science and a deafness to contemporary imperatives and invitations of justice and freedom and enjoyment.

I suppose there is some dark truth in the above characterisations of what might be called degenerate nativism, although I think one should here be very wary of implicit assumptions such as the following which are worse than fallen nativism and often pass as adequate criticisms of it: that to prefer one's own truth and dharma to another's is unmitigated selfishness, or that faithfulness to the familiar is less adventurous spiritually than being magnetised by novelty; that conformity to truth as one sees it is less demanding morally and intellectually than the rebelliousness of egoistic heterodoxy, or that the metaphor of "returning to the womb" cannot be a term of praise and celebration, that the world is less cocooning in its worldliness than the womb in its nourishment of a soul; that internationalism which is mostly superpower nationalism in disguise is less parochial than the patriotism of dateless national traditions; that Eurocentrism is universalism; that class war and race war and arrogant species-centredness are more redeemable than, e.g., the merely fallen but not false sociology and ecology of Indian civilisation.

Unfortunately, those who pejoratively shout "Nativism!" are not only not wary of the dangers listed above, constantly succumbing to them in high places; they have no notion at all of unfallen or regenerate or true nativism, for such a thing and truth there really is, and it is the highest truth and thing too. There is no need to abandon even the word "nativism" falsely defensively in favour of words of euphemism and growing respectability such as "tradition", "aboriginality", "ethnicity", etc., because there is always greater hope for the fallen and abused than the secure and unharmed in language as in spiritual life! Take the word "untouchable", vehicle in use of tragic sinful disrespect of a whole category of human beings in our country even today, alas! Yet savingly ironically, the word "untouchable" itself truly designates Ātman, which alone cannot be touched, seen, heard, etc., and is what each one of us really is. Thus when we would-be-derisively call somebody an untouchable, we acknowledge him in perfection of phrase as Ātman and he deserves our obeisance and not ostracisation. Untouchability will be defeated by the word "untouchability". Likewise, narrowing unadventurous isolationism is overcome by

nothing more effectively than by etymologically self-conscious "nativism", which is loyalty to what is most *native* to myself, i.e. selfhood and self-consciousness one in and as all.

Consider further the svarājist magic of nativism. Even if what I am exhorted to return to, or to race towards, is as exotic as the idea of a golden age of Indian civilisation, Rāmarājya, both as symbol and reality, or the idea of a human future beyond history and without inhumanity and alienation, without fear and delusion, e.g. communism, but if what I am exhorted to return to, or to race towards, is not myself, my own essential truth of self, the retreat and the adventure cannot be enduringly satisfying to me, because they will prove to be forms of otherness capable of unexpected power of oppression over self, myself and yourself. Only if a golden age of the past or of the future can be seen by me as the unfurling in manifestation of myself, the truth of me, the being of me, can they be unalienatingly acceptable to me. Dualistic nativism or dualistic universalism and futurism are by this token equally alienating and unacceptable to the core of my being. But "nativism" has this edge over universalism and futurism, it suggests powerfully, as earlier pointed out, the idea of that which is native to myself, that which is in no manner alienatingly other than myself, i.e., that which is myself, i.e., I, self-consciousness, Ātman. Existentially and metaphysically, nativism is advaita, Ātmānubhūti in all its forms and figurings. Nativism become self-conscious ceases to be fallen, resurrects as the truth of Ātman-Brahman. Nativity becomes Resurrection! Self-conscious Indian nativism cannot, therefore, be any of the narrow things possible to it in ignorance of itself, in fallenness.

Advaita is a Śruti-sanctified tradition of India revived down the ages, not excluding our own age where Jñānī Rāmaṇa reigns supreme in svarājya. Unlike elsewhere in civilisational time and space where advaitins appear but advaita does not receive the status and sanctification of Śruti. Christ is at the head of a long line of advaitins martyred by the absence of appropriate advaitin Śruti. Indian nativism because of its inescapable advaitin dimension, unlike fallible dualistic localism of all varieties, including its Indian equivalent, is the very

opposite of irrationality and exclusivism and infantilism, it is on the contrary a Śruti-sustained far-flung sourcewardness, the heterodoxy of orthodoxy, the rebelliousness of conformity. Faith in Ātman one in all and as all is the most seditious and iconoclastic and cosmic, not merely universalist, revolutionay śakti conceivable, but it is not hubris-inviting world-remaking arrogance because it is indistinguishable from the timelessness of self-realisation which is no worshipper of times past or present or future while caring for all time, and because of its rootedness in one nation of the earth, Bhārata, spiritually omnipotent but geographically uncovetous. K. C. Bhattacharyya's or Ganhiji's invitation to svaraj, in ideas or civilisation, is unalluring without advaita, run-of-the-mill traditionalism and not a summons to Indian self-realisation. Mercifully advaita is at the heart of the philosopher's thought and the Māhatmā's life.

(III)

I can hear the following strident objection straightaway to what has been said above. "You are unjustifiably advaitising the Indian tradition of thought and aspiration. The viśiṣṭ-ādvaitin and dvaitin traditions of metaphysics and meditation, thought and aspiration, are as fundamental a part of Indian consciousness as advaita, no less Śruti-supported than the latter. Nativism of the Indian variety is a return to to entire corpus of our legacy and inspiration, not only to those portions of revelation that sustain a Śaṅkarācārya or a Rāmaṇa Mahārṣi, but also those sources which uphold a Rāmaṇujācārya, a Madh-vācārya, a Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and a Śrī Aurobindo. Indian groundedness is larger than advaitin self-realisation. Even K. C. Bhattacharyya in 'Svaraj in Ideas' is not flying exclusively the ~~advaitin flag~~, he is not unfurling a Śaṅkarite umbrella and pretending to be able to give shelter under it to the totality of tradition. We have roots to return to, not just one trunk of one tree but roots that nourish a whole orchard of trees and fruits and flowers. Tradition is an ocean, not one or two rivers, howsoever mighty. Neo-Vedānta is a caricature of the complexity of Indian civilisation. Off with your head!"

Without losing my head, and without denying the complexity — and oceanic unity — of Indian consciousness, I would like to suggest that the above diatribe is shot through with misunderstanding. Advaita is a distinctive identifying feature of Indian consciousness, not a mere fringe indulgence as it is elsewhere, and dualism of all types in India defines itself most intimately by reference to advaitin thought. If Indian nativism is a distinctive sourceward turn, and not merely an instance essentially indistinguishable from other instances in the modern world of a harking back to the truths of the past, if it is a rootedness not to be confused with mere chauvinism, it cannot hope to avoid acknowledging the centrality of advaita in Indian Śruti and civilisation and the advaita inherent in the very idea of nativism, i.e., of that which is truly native to oneself, i.e. self-realisation. Non-advaitin Indian thought and aspiration cannot claim to be nativist in this deep sense of the word. Dualism of all kinds requires reference beyond oneself to something other than oneself, God or heaven, which dualistically conceived are not the self-consciousness which is what is most fundamentally native to oneself. Only in a watered-down sense of nativism can a dualistically envisioned deity be regarded as my native being. Such a deity and his abode may be my native place, but even my native place will alienate me if it does not disclose itself as the unfurling of my native being, self-hood and self-consciousness. I am not here concerned to argue against the truth-claim of dualism. I am merely suggesting that dualism and nativism do not go well together at any level of depth, and that for better or for worse, metaphysical nativism is unavailable as a principle or a platform to dualism. As for qualified non-dualism, *viśiṣṭādvaita*, it can only lay claim to a qualified, not a full-blown, nativism and it is for my purpose sufficient to point this out and not attempt metaphysically to quarrel here with *viśiṣṭādvaita*.

I believe that it is possible to cast apparently dualistic Vaiṣṇava bhakti and thought in a strictly advaitin mould, taking metaphysically seriously Śrī Kṛṣṇa's declaration "Vāsudeva Sarvam Iti", but it is not necessary for me to attempt such an exercise here or even to indicate its possible outlines. My limited purpose here is to argue that Indian nativism which

is not the *mumukṣutva* of *advaita sādhanā* is not the kind of Indian sourcewardness in thought and life which is likely in India and elsewhere to be a winning power of correcting the costly self-obscuring absentmindedness of modern civilisation. K. C. Bhattacharyya's plea for svaraj in ideas has many dimensions, but its worth would diminish in my judgement if it is not understood as taking for granted that advaita is the true philosophy of nativism, and that Indian nativism because of the centrality of advaita in Indian civilisation is more likely than any other kind of nativism to be the genuine thing. The imagined diatribe against advaita quoted earlier invoked Rāmānujācārya, Madhvācārya, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Aurobindo. It is my belief that their implicit and esoteric advaita (advaita is not synonymous with Śaṅkarācārya) tends to be forgotten in *śāstrārtha* between doctrinaire dualism and non-dualism, and in any case my plea that svaraj in ideas or svaraj in general in India is unintelligible without advaita is not an undermining of their truth and vision.

The boy Mohandas who later became Mahātmā Gandhi confessed to his father the sin of stealing and selling some of the latter's gold ornaments and spending the ill-gotten money on meat-eating forbidden to Vaiṣṇavas such as his family, and his father forgave him the transgression with tears of joy at the nascent saint's contriteness and purity of heart. Gold symbolises the native wealth of the soul, i.e. self-realisation, and selling gold dramatises the obscuration of advaitin self-realisation in exchange for the glitter and litter of worldliness which includes meat-eating symbolising lack of faith in the soul's capacity for nourishing itself without avoidable violence. Gandhian nativism, esoteric Hind Svaraj, in ideas and in other things, is, therefore, advaitin faith together with a search for autonomy in all spheres of life, an unexploiting idiom of living with which to battle and cure, hopefully, the heteronomous megalomania of modern civilisation; it is the faith that within the soul of man and in the intimacy of community life are available all the resources of survival and growth in love and truth that mankind needs. Advaitin conviction is what prevents intimacy from becoming isolationism, and uncovertous intimacy is what

prevents advaita from becoming expansionist in morally risky ways. (IV)

On the subject of Svaraj and India, I can think of nothing more instructive than stories, true stories, from the lives of saints and jñānis. Even more powerfully instructive than the Gandhi story I recalled in the last section is the following outwardly innocuous incident from the life of Śrī Ramaṇa Mahārṣi. Ramaṇa was but a boy biologically, although a jñānī when, magnetised by Aruṇācala Śiva, he made the sacred hill his home, inhabiting its caves and groves, instructing its animals and devotees, communing with its spirits and siddhas, one with Śiva in essence, and in manifestation the most ardent bhakta cleaving inextricably to his Lover Hill. One day the boy Ramaṇa, bare-headed and barefoot, kaupīna his sole garment, is wandering in the hot sun up and down all over the hill as any boy would, jñānī or no jñānī, as any child should. From nowhere a cāṇḍāla old woman appears and fires a volley of abuse at Ramaṇa, the gist of her vigorous speech being: "And why don't you sit in one place, are you off your head?" At first puzzled by the undeserved abuse, the boy jñānī realises that the strong words are good advice to a jñānī who must exemplify sufficiently outwardly too his inward truth of still-centredness, so that everything about him, the style of his rest and movement no less than the power of his words and silence, are a complete upadeśa, a complete upaniṣad. But the incident is a volume of esoteric instruction on our civilisation and its future, on the truth and fate of India, and not merely good advice to a sadhu in the sun.

The cāṇḍāla woman is surely Pārvatī, mother of Kārtikeya Ramaṇa or Gaṇapati Ramaṇa, protectively scolding her son for avoidably risking life and health. But why has she assumed the form of a cāṇḍāla woman and why is her speech so strong? To the believing heart of India the answer should be plain, and it is this. Essentially every woman is Pārvatī herself, God-head, and not only half of Śiva; this is the first lesson which the

incident teaches us, that all women, and especially urgently, all ill-treated and exploited women, are in truth to be seen as the Divine Mother, Ātman-Brahman, if we would wish to put right our society's injustice to them not in the style of meta-physically uprooted feminism, but in absolute harmony with the nature of things. Again, quite rightly roughly, for politeness and the urgency of truth don't go together, She orders the jñānī to sit in one place and conserve the truth of Ātman-Brahman and not let it die in the hot sun of aimless dogooding, the exploited of the world being quite capable of fighting their battles without such misdirected help. (Ramaṇa is not guilty of any of this. He only occasions in līlā Pārvatī's warning to mankind). What the exploited, the wretched of the earth cannot hope to do without, what no one can do without, is the truth of advaita which must continue to be exemplified in the lives of jñānis, who must not be allowed prematurely physically to disappear, something which in their utter forgetfulness of bodily need they may let happen. A jñānī like Śrī Ramaṇa Mahārṣi arrives once in a millenium and the cāṇḍāla needs him no less than the brāhmaṇa. Svaraj in ideas, in everything, requires the uncompromised exemplification of the reality and possibility of advaita-siddhī, self-realisation ablaze with the gospel of identity, contemporary battles for freedom and justice in India and the world requiring the light and fire of such self-realisation no less than the battles of other ages. It would be a false activism which would make of all contemplatives political revolutionaries, and it would be a false jñāna mārga which would seek to make all activists yogis. Aruṇācala means "The Red Hill", "Aruṇa" symbolising the activist śakti of truth, as does the cāṇḍāla woman; and "acala" images truth's still-centred, yet omnipresent, immovability, Ramaṇa-Śiva. "Aruṇācala" is the motto of Indian civilisation's revolutionary conservatism and its saving, conserving, śakti. Śiva and Pārvatī. Svaraj.

A final story and reading of outwardly trivial things which are yet monumental in their significance for us, an incident from the life of Rāmakṛṣṇa Paramahaṃsa. When it was reported to Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa that one of his devotees had started quite avoidably to learn English, the Paramahaṃsa made the com-

ment "Now he will start whistling and wear boots!" That comment of Śrī Rāmakṣṛṇa's goes to the heart of the subject of Indian Svaraj. Whistling represents frivolousness, especially of thought and speaking, inquiry and learning, which is what our servile and supercilious English speaking symbolises with deadly accuracy. Boots represent grossness and insensitivity, the trampling upon native soil which borrowed authority so painfully truthfully represents, the authority of sundry isms of importation without examination and assimilation. They are a caricature of the substantiality, gāmbhīrya, which and not whistling, ought to characterise our speaking and life of mind and ideas. And whistling in the context caricatures the lightness, the uncoerciveness, which should be our gentle walking upon this sacred earth. The absence of svaraj results in comic costly inversion of the truth of things, trivialising levity where deep-going-seriousness is in place, i.e. in thought and speech, and trampling burdensomeness, weight of insensitivity, where the lightness of the Paramahansa's feet, which shuddered even at the thought of stepping on grass, is called for. The setting right side up of things is no Marxist discovery, it is the ancient Indian t̄antric discipline of svātantrya.

May K. C. Bhattacharyya's plea for svaraj in ideas occasion a deep-going Indian inquiry into the idea of svaraj as our birth-right to second-birth, dvijatva, true renaissance. May we rediscover and celebrate the distinctive advaitin politics and metaphysics of Indian civilisation.

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