

grave difficulties. The 'coherence' or 'incoherence', according to it, will be determined not so much by the nature of values as by the type of empirical world we might find ourselves living in. The issue of 'realizability' is not an issue about values, but about the world of causality in which the 'realization' is to take place. The limitations of this world, it is obvious, ought not to be projected on the realm of values. Further, if the criterion is accepted, the 'coherence' notion would cut across the tripartite division of value and make them coherent in the sense of 'being realizable together'. This, though not a great difficulty in itself, obscures the radical and inescapable division among the realm of values and helps the illusion that ultimately there is some necessary integral unity between them.

A deeper difficulty would lie in interpreting adequately the notion of 'being realizable together'. Many values cannot be realized *together*, not because they are incompatible but because of the limitations of time and attention which are such scarce economic goods that their use in one respect prohibits their use in other directions.

The autonomous multiplicity revealed so sharply in the realm of values is sustained and strengthened if we inquire about its relations to the realms of logic and of fact. Neither logic nor fact seem to have any essential relation to values. To be logical or factual is, obviously, not the same as to be valuational. Except for the values immanent to the domain concerned, viz., the values of Validity and Truth, they have nothing to do with the values of the other two realms, viz., Beauty and Goodness. It may be 'better' that Beauty and Goodness 'exist' but it certainly is not necessary for their being that they would not be values if they did not exist.

There is thus no unitary 'coherence' as many have supposed. Rather there are 'coherences', each of a distinct type belonging to realms autonomous and independent in their nature.

8

LYING AND THE COMPLEAT ROBOT

Michael Scriven has tried, with great subtlety, to indicate what the complete robot will be.¹ He has even suggested how far one can go in eliciting the answer from the robot himself (or herself)² if it is built in a certain way. But I think the question whether a robot can lie requires some further discussion than the extremely casual one given by him in his study.

'Lying' involves telling something different from what one knows to be the case. This, of course, is only a first approximation. Lying is by no means confined to verbal reporting only. One may lie in a hundred ways. The gesture, the expression, the turn of the eye, the inflexion of the voice all may be used for lying even more effectively than the utterance of a sentence. Rather, a sentence which is ostensibly false may be uttered in such a way as to convey just the opposite. Or, equally, a true sentence may be embedded in a context of expressive gesture which turns it into an effective lie. 'Lying', then, is a rather complex affair and needs exploration both on the intontional and the performatory sides before the Compleat Robot may do what it is expected to do.

One need not exactly *know* the case, in order that the lie may be a lie. One's belief for that purpose is sufficient. If I believe that such is the case and try to produce, by whatever means, a belief contrary to that which I believe, this will be regarded as 'lying' even if my own belief is *actually* mistaken. In such an event, it will be difficult to suspect that what I told was a lie, for it will be found to be true and normally taken as having been uttered in that way. It is not, thus, the actual contrariety of what

1. *Dimensions of Mind*: A symposium, ed. by Sidney Hook, New York, 1960.
2. The question of sex in robots has, as far as I know, not been discussed until now.

is uttered or expressed to whatever happens to be the case that makes a lie a 'lie'. Rather, it is the contrariety to what is *believed* to be the case that turns it into a 'lie'. And 'believing' is a very, very 'intentional' affair. There is, of course, a performatory aspect to 'belief' and we do try to square a man's professed beliefs with his behaviour. We even go so far as to infer unconscious beliefs that seem to be involved in the behavioural choices of persons. But, first, one does not generally speak of the beliefs of animals, not to speak of the beliefs of robots. There seems something incongruous in saying that the behaviour of the animal implies that he believes in such and such beliefs. For example, the statement 'my dog does not seem to believe in an after-life' makes no sense as its opposite doesn't do either. This may suggest that the ascription of belief to some object can make sense only if it can be said, in some sense, to disbelieve also. Secondly, there seem to be beliefs whose performatory aspect is too much confined to their verbalized expression. For example, if someone says that he believes in ghosts or that there was a life before birth or that there will be life after death, it is not quite easy to see what further performatory behaviour on his part is necessarily required for our believing in his belief. The person believing in ghosts may try table-tipping or show fear in the dark but he may, equally well, not do so. Yet, the mere verbalized expression on his part is, in most cases, sufficient to induce us to believe in the truth of his statement. On the other hand, no one will believe in this belief if a machine was made to utter such a verbalized expression.

The difficulties with regard to 'lying' may increase still further if we take into account the degrees of belief which so usually characterize our psychical life in this respect. I wonder if it will be called a lie if I try to produce a greater sense of conviction in the other person than I myself possess in the matter. This introduces another aspect which may be regarded as intrinsic to lying, that is, it has a purpose or an end to achieve without which it will not be communicated at all. I may be mistaken about the way I adopted to make my lie succeed in its function, but that I do want it to succeed is the very *raison d'être* of lying. A pure lying for its own sake will not be lying. It will be just joking or having fun or imagining or telling a tale or anything else. The point of lying is that the other person should not be able to guess that it is

a lie and the success of lying can only be determined if we know what the lie was for.

These considerations, I think, are extremely important for even the performatory aspect of lying to which Michael Scriven has confined himself in his paper. The point is how can one determine the performatory aspect unless, to some extent, one has determined what 'lying' is? Scriven, I am afraid, has not even raised the issue in his paper. He writes: 'We also introduce the robot to the concept of truth and falsity and explain that to lie is to utter a falsehood when the truth is known....' This obviously is an extremely loose kind of statement. One does not introduce robots to 'concepts' nor does one 'explain' anything to them. One just builds into them structures which perform the behavioural responses which we consider to be relevant to the doing of a certain action or being a certain sort of activity. The proper question would then have been to ask what is the performatory activity which we would have to build in a machine so that it may be said to 'lie' when it performs that sort of behaviour? Michael Scriven has not even raised this question, though it is so central to his whole argument. Perhaps he thought the matter quite simple, not worth a detailed discussion at all.

However, if we do think it out, there seem to be difficulties which are not quite so easy to overcome. These may, of course, be overcome or circumvented but it has to be shown how. For example, following Scriven's explanation to the robot, we may build in a structure which would make the robot always say the opposite of what it 'knows'. Supposing we do it, would this be 'lying' as we know it in a human being? Surely not, for here the lying would become so mechanical that the person noting the robot's responses would quickly find that the robot is functioning differently and will correct his interpretations and behave accordingly. The more important point, however, is that this will not change the robot's behaviour at all. It will continue to act or tell the lie which has been built into it even when the lie has ceased to perform its function. We, may, of course, try to build a robot which will change its behaviour on noticing that its lie does not work. But what will this exactly mean? How will the robot notice, say, my disbelief in its reporting? I need not do anything at all to disbelieve what someone is saying. Also, the range of actions that I

may do as a result of my disbelief are too large and varied to be built into the robot's system as stimuli arousing it to change its performatory lying. Not only this, if it is to be built in such a way that on getting the stimuli which are the performatory equivalent of disbelieving, it should be able to devise new ways of deceiving the disbelievers once again.

On the other hand, instead of making the lie mechanical we may just 'randomize' it in a robot's system. Now the robot will not lie every time it knows what is the truth, but only on chance occasions. This will hardly be 'lying' at all, for the robot may come to lie at a moment when it interferes with its own interests. In other words, if the robot were conscious in such a situation it will not lie at all. One may, of course, try to exclude such situations by building into the robot mechanisms which will exclude such self-defeating lying on its part. But, then, the rest of the lying would be some sort of a joke or a piece of fictional imagination if it is not also geared to some ends which the robot has been built to achieve.

This, perhaps, is the central point. Can 'lying' be adequately understood even in its performatory aspect without reference to the purpose it seeks to achieve? Michael Scriven has gone on to write: 'We then add a circuit to the robot, at a special ceremony at which we also christen it, which renders lying impossible regardless of conflict with other goals it has been told are important'.³ Scriven has forgotten that if the poor robot cannot but tell the truth, it is a robot indeed. 'Truth-telling', like 'lying', cannot be mechanized, that is, made compulsory without losing all that we connote by these terms in their human context. Further, it is not so easy to tell the truth as Scriven seems to suppose. Even the question what is truth has been the subject of unending debate among those who have tried to think about the matter.

Between the mechanical and the random may lie the area where we may try to build in 'lying' in the service of some purpose which the robot can vary if it finds that it does not succeed in the achievement of that purpose, I wonder what the engineering problems set by such a task will be. But, at least this much seems fairly clear to me that if the robot aspires to be human, it cannot be

3. Michael Scriven, p. 141.

made impossible for him to tell a lie, though what it will mean for a robot to tell a lie is not clear either. In any case, there seems little doubt that a lot of analysis is needed even on the performatory level to say that a robot is 'lying' or 'telling the truth.' And if Scriven's experiment depends on the impossibility of the robot's telling anything but the truth, his experiment is bound to fail if he is simultaneously trying to make it as human as possible, that is, if it is being made in principle 'unpredictable in a way essentially similar to the way human beings are.'⁴ If, on the other hand, the robot's unpredictability is given up in the matter of 'truth telling' then whatever the robot's answer to Scriven's question, we may rest assured that it is not human in the sense in which we consider ourselves to be human, that is, free to tell the lie or truth as it pleases us.⁵

4. Michael Scriven, *op. cit.* p. 122.

5. It is interesting to note the similarity of the robot-maker's dilemma to that of God with respect to man. If man is given freedom, then he may develop all sorts of undesirable qualities and if he is not given freedom, there is no virtue in his love or prayer or truth-telling or anything else that he does.

IT CAN'T BE SAID—SO WHAT?

I wish to examine, in this paper, a contention which may be said to lie at the roots of a certain type of philosophizing predominant in the English-speaking countries of the West for more than half a century at least. The contention essentially consists in what may be expressed by some such sentence as 'It can't be said' or any of its equivalents. When Wittgenstein wrote his famous sentence 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must remain silent', he was merely giving expression to this contention in a pithy, aphoristic way. There are things which cannot be spoken about or rather statements which cannot be made. And if one does utter them, then one is only making a noise, for what one utters is cognitively meaningless and thus, literally, nothing but nonsense.

The reproof—and the contention is a reproof—may be blunt or subtle. It may be made with a haughty, high air of superior disdain or with gentle persuasion, but the heart of it seems to have always remained the same. In a hundred forms, in a thousand ways, the warning uttered appears to be identical, whether made in the name of ordinary usage or of the forbidding purity of technical logic. Yet, what exactly is this warning and why should someone be told that what he is saying can't be said?

Obviously, the issue does not concern the literal saying of whatever is being said. For, what better proof of its sayability could there be than the fact that it is being said? Surely, a person who is saying something or has said it, has already refuted the statement that it cannot be said. This, it may be said, is a refutation only for those who are innocent of what a philosophical assertion really means. No one ever thought of refuting Zeno's assertions about the impossibility of motion by showing a case of actual motion and it was only the unphilosophical Dr. Johnson who thought he could refute Berkeley's assertion regarding the unreality of matter by kicking a stone with his foot. However, since Professor Moore raised his two hands to establish the reality of material objects, no one can complain about the philosophical irrelevancy

of such a refutation. At least, the philosophers who assert the unsayability of certain statements or certain types of statements should be the last persons to object to such a refutation, since they themselves use it to controvert others' assertions.

If it is not the possibility of literal 'saying' that is being denied by these philosophers, then what is it whose possibility they want to deny? Obviously, what they wish to deny is not confined to 'saying' alone. It applies equally to writing, gesturing, sub-vocal speech and even thinking, in case the latter is accepted by them as a valid independent category at all. Should it then be taken to mean that though it is physically or psychically possible, it violates the basic syntactical rules of the language in which it is uttered, written or thought? In other words, is it being suggested that what is being said is not what, in logic, is called a well-formed formula of the system? But the formation rules that determine what is to count as a well-formed formula in the system do so *only* in relation to that particular system. With reference to some other system, the rules may be different and thus what counts as a well-formed formula in one may not do so in another. The syntactical rules, so to say, may vary in different languages and thus what is unsayable in one language in this sense may not be so in another.

Obviously, therefore, the thesis of unsayability could not relate to the specific syntactical rules of some particular language alone. Rather, in order to become philosophically significant it must relate itself to those syntactical rules which are supposed to be observed not by this or that language alone, but by any language whatsoever. The contention, therefore, must lean on the presupposition that there *are* some universal syntactical rules which all languages have in common. This commonality, however, should not be of the sort described by Wittgenstein's famous phrase 'family resemblances'. Rather, it should be common in the strict sense of the term, that is, each and every language must display those characteristics which are claimed to be universal and whose violation is supposed to result in the philosophic admonition, which serves also as a reminder, that what ostensibly is being said really can't be said.

But the moment we talk of 'universals', a host of problems arise. The first and foremost concerns the validity of the factual

claim itself. Are there any such universal syntactical rules which are observed by all the languages that we know of? Secondly, even if there were to be such rules, what guarantee would there be that a language not studied up until now might reveal features of a different order? Or, could not there be such a language in the future? The point obviously arises from the well-known problem of induction, but it has an added significance in the present context which would become evident later.

The claimed universality, it should be noted further, is with respect to a rule which *actually* is being violated in the statement of the person concerned. The statement has actually been uttered, written or conveyed through some other means and still is not regarded as invalidating the claim to universality being made implicitly in the admonition urged by the philosopher concerned. This situation can be rendered intelligible only if either the universality claimed is supposed to be statistical in nature or the so-called rule or law is treated not as positive but only as normative in character. The first alternative is closed as both the point and the force of the admonition would completely be lost on that interpretation. The latter would land the philosopher in even greater difficulty, as the justification of an imperative is even more difficult to establish than that of a universal empirical generalization. Also, the admonition would then have to be phrased differently. Instead of 'It can't be said', it would have to be 'It ought not to be said' or just 'Don't say it'.

The latter formulations, however, would reveal the cognitive irrelevance of the admonition too clearly to be palatable to those who have made it their business to decide what a claim to cognitive truth consists in. The situation could perhaps be saved by suggesting that the observance of the rule is a necessary condition for the achievement of cognitive truth. The rule would thus be linked to cognitive claim for truth without losing its imperative or normative character. It would be a hypothetical imperative cast in the form that 'if you want your statements to be taken as making a truth-claim, then you have to observe certain rules regarding the way you form those statements'. If you are, so to say, playing the truth-game then you have to observe the rules of the game and the philosopher who shouts at you and says 'It can't be said' is merely blowing the whistle and warning you that you

are playing foul and liable to be turned out of the game if you persist in your behaviour.

Unfortunately for the interpretation, there seems to be no explicitly formulated set of rules concerning the truth-game even if we were to accept that there is any such game which men play. Even with respect to ordinary games which men play, the rules vary over regions and amongst groups and normally when players with different rules happen to meet and play together and discover the diversity, they exclaim, 'But we don't play it that way'. Sometimes, of course, one may hear, 'But it is not played that way'. However, that would only reveal the parochialism of the person who has made such a *faux pas* and arouse the laughter of the much-travelled and the more sophisticated of his listeners. It is well known that rules for games that have to be played internationally get standardized, while those that remain confined to regions or groups continue to show a variation among themselves. Perhaps, then, the philosophers who are saying 'It can't be said' are trying to standardize the rules for the truth-game, in case it is to be played internationally.

But, however interesting and tempting such an interpretation may appear at first sight, it seems to display grave deficiencies when subjected to closer scrutiny. First, if the statements made were really a part of the attempt to standardize the rules of the truth-game, they should have been offered as a tentative proposal rather than as a peremptory admonition assuming as already accomplished what is sought to be achieved. But this perhaps may be excused as a pardonable weakness or even as a brilliant strategy, for, are not we all convinced by the bold and confident tone of a person at least to the extent of being taken in momentarily by what he says? It would, of course, be violating the spirit of the truth-game at its very foundations, but the problem of violating a value in the pursuit of its active realization is too well-known to those who have ever tried to realize any ideal to be discussed here at length. Still, it may be pointed out that the strategy adopted, if it really has been done to this effect, is far more obviously self-defeating in the cognitive pursuit than in the pursuit of values other than that of truth. Further, any such attempt at standardization should at least have been preceded by a survey of the various rules actually adopted in the truth-game as played by different

cultures and communities. No such survey, as far as I am aware, has ever been attempted. Nor, for that matter, has even any need been felt for making an attempt in this direction. The explanation for such a glaring neglect may be found in the conviction that the only truth-game that need be taken into account is the game as played in scientific circles, for science alone can be regarded as the paradigmatic activity concerned with truth. If, then, such is really the case, there would be no necessity for finding the rules of the truth-game as played amongst different groups and cultures, since they have already been superseded by the rise of modern science which is truth-game *par excellence* that we know of. The only task, then, is to articulate the rules of this game and the philosopher who says 'It can't be said', is merely warning another to the fact that the rule or rules are being violated in what he is attempting to say.

This, however, scuttles the whole notion of the game completely. There can be no such thing as a game *par excellence* unless we wish merely to convey that we like to play it best. But this certainly is not what is meant by the philosophers concerned. They do not want to say that they like to play best the game with these rules, but rather that it is with these rules *alone* that one may hope to achieve truth in the strict cognitive sense of the term. The admonition, then, has to be interpreted in a different way. The game ceases to be a game and begins to have a purpose outside itself, while the rules gain an instrumental validity in the sense that their observance alone may ensure the realization of that end which we call 'truth'. The admonition, thus, becomes a hypothetical admonition. It warns that one is violating the rules whose observance alone can ensure the realization of truth and *if* one is trying to achieve cognitive truth, then one would be frustrating one's effort if one does not observe them. They are, so to say, the necessary conditions for the realization of what one wants to realize.

Such an interpretation, however, opens the question as to how it has been found that these rules are necessary for the achievement of truth. The best that can perhaps possibly be said is that these are the rules that *are* actually being observed by workers in the various fields of science and have been accepted by them, explicitly or implicitly. The contention about actual observance

would be an empirical claim subject to the usual processes of verification. But, as far as I know, no such empirical study has been made which could, even by a long shot, be considered as trying, let alone proving, the claim advanced by these philosophers. Further, the claim to actual observance could only be based on the observation of a random sample of the behaviour of scientists and thus would suffer from all the limitations which any such generalizations are usually prone to. But even if there were such a study and even if it had been established by complete enumeration that all the scientists (whatever may be meant by that term) do observe these rules, it would not preclude the possibility that the same persons or someone else may give up the rule and try some other if it is expected to yield more fruitful results.

The situation would be a little different if the community of scientists formed a club and had an explicit rule that no one who did not observe it could become a member of their club. But there is no such club and no such explicitly formulated rule or rules which is or are accepted by every scientist, and even if there were any such club and any such rule or rules, who could prohibit the formation of another club with another set of rules? And even the same person could belong to both the clubs, unless it was a constituent rule of the club that one who belonged to the other club could not become its member.

In case, however, the rule is alleged to be accepted only implicitly, the situation would be different. But in that case we would have the problem of determining the grounds for the validity of such an assertion. It obviously could only be based on the actual behaviour of scientists in their cognitive pursuit and an abstractive generalization from such observation. But, even if it were a fact that the philosopher's admonition emanated from some such study made by himself or some other person, there would always remain the possibility that what was abstracted as an implicit rule was only an accidental feature of the behaviour concerned. The person who in the philosopher's opinion is violating such an implicit rule may, therefore, only be showing up the accidental character of the rule concerned. If such be the case, the philosopher ought to be thankful to the person who has violated the rule for, by his violation, he has shown that the conclusion he had drawn was actually mistaken.

The interpretation of the rule, whether as explicit or implicit, involves even further assumptions which seem to be fairly dubious if closely examined. For example, it seems to be assumed that there is something like the scientific method which all scientists use in order to get the answers to the questions they ask. But this just does not happen to be the case. As Medawar has written, 'there is no one rounded art or system of rules which stands to its subject-matter as logical syntax stands towards any particular instance of reasoning by deduction.'¹ He is aware that such an opinion must seem unreasonable to many philosophers of science but, unfortunately for them, it just happens to be a fact. There should, however, be nothing surprising in this, especially for those who have been close to Wittgenstein or have been influenced by him. Further, the philosopher who admonishes and the one who is admonished are not playing the scientific game at all and thus the question of invoking any rule of that game, even if it had one, does not arise. Philosophy, whatever it may be, is at least not science and therefore the question whether there is any rule or rules which anybody engaging in scientific activity has to observe and whether some philosopher or other happens to have violated that rule are completely irrelevant to the philosophic enterprise. The confusion could only have arisen by mistaking the philosopher for a scientist and, if so, might easily be cleared by reminding the person admonishing that one was not what he had taken one for, that is, a scientist.

But, in most cases, it would seem frivolous to assume that the philosopher who is admonishing does not know that the person admonished is not a scientist at all or that even if he happens to be one, he is not making the particular statement concerned in the context of his scientific activity. The reason for this may be found not only in the general fact that philosophers usually know each other professionally, but also in the more important consideration that the admonishing philosopher would behave differently to the same statement, were it to be made by a scientist in the context of his scientific activity. The philosopher, in such a situation would feel like revising his criteria—whatever they may be—on the basis of which he feels justified in admonishing his

1. P.B. Medawar, *The Art of the Soluble*, London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1967, p. 132.

fellow-philosopher for saying what he has said. The history of the revision of the verification-principle and the criteria of meaningfulness would stand testimony to the truth of our assertion. The differential treatment meted out by philosophers to the same types of statements when they are made by scientists in the context of their scientific activity, on the one hand, and when they are made by philosophers, on the other, clearly suggests the unlikelihood of the hypothesis that the philosopher had mistaken the other for a scientist. Had he really done so, he would have behaved differently. Instead of admonishing the other for the violation of the rule concerned, he would have reflected upon the inadequacy of the rule and the necessities which led to its violation.

The problem, then, perhaps is not of science at all. Maybe, we have been on the wrong track all the time. The admonishing philosopher, perhaps, is not concerned with all these things. The violation he is pointing out may relate to conditions of communication rather than to those of meaning, truth (even scientific truth), verifiability, knowledge, or some other such notion which is allied to these. Success in communication is a necessary precondition of all these, at least to the extent that it is required for their achievement in an inter-subjective realm. But even if we leave aside the question as to how far inter-subjective dialogue is essential to knowledge or truth, the fact remains that the admonition relates to something that is being attempted to be communicated and thus may possibly be concerned with pointing out violation of the very conditions of successful communication itself. This would, however, be true *only* if we assume that there *are* conditions whose violation would result in a total failure of communication between any communicants whatsoever.

The realm of communicants, however, is too wide and disparate to be completely taken into account in this connection. Leaving aside the question whether it is meaningful to talk of communication between systems that do not show any signs of behaviour associated usually with consciousness, the admission even of animals into this realm who are certainly its members makes it too wide for any significant generalization in this domain. The number of living species is very large and it would be difficult to discover common features in the communication methods they all employ. Among the approximately million living species

recognized by the zoologists, very few have been studied until now with respect to their ways of communication with members of their own or those of other species. But even if we confine ourselves to the communication system as it operates amongst human beings alone, the difficulties would not be resolved thereby.

The communication systems used by human beings are themselves too large in number and too diverse in character to be of sufficient help to the philosopher who wants to tell another that he is violating the necessary conditions of successful communication. Many of the languages have not been studied and those who have talked about universals of language are aware that the study is essentially and intrinsically an empirical one.² The philosopher can circumvent the difficulties caused by empiricity only by investing the conditions with an a priori character which does not, *prima facie*, seem very compatible with the positivistic temper of those who usually make such admonitions.

It should be noted in this connection that usually the charge with respect to the violation of the condition of successful communicability is made by a person to whom the communication was, in no sense, specifically made and in the face of its understanding by others who have been the recipient of the communication in the same sense as himself. If the so-called conditions of successful communicability have been absolutely violated, then no one could ever have understood what was so communicated. The only alternative in such a situation where we find that others are claiming to understand something that has been said is to say that one has not understood it oneself and not that it is un-understandable. In the context of communicability, it may also be well to remember that the person who has communicated is perhaps the best judge of the fact whether what has been communicated has been understood or not. Further, if we accept that one may come to understand what one did not understand in the beginning and that one may understand more or less, then it would be very difficult to characterize any communication as intrinsically incapable of being understood. Every communication may be taken as being understood at least by the person who has made the communication concerned. This is not so trivial as it

2. See in this connection, *Universals of Language*, ed. Joseph H. Greenberg, Cambridge, The M.I.T. Press, 1966.

may appear, especially in cases where what one communicates is recorded for future reference. After all, one may read what one has written or hear what one has spoken and try to understand what was so written or spoken at another time. People do keep records and diaries for their own reference and what has been so kept has to be understood in order to serve its purpose.

Similarly, there may be communication systems shared only by two persons or by a closed in-group which are not understood by others outside the circle. The circle may widen and yet it never actually embraces even all the persons who are alive at a particular time. If we include the people in the future also, then it would be evident that any communication can only be treated as possessing potential intelligibility alone. The charge of failure in communication would, then, only reveal the failure of the person to make the requisite effort to transcend the limitations of his own in-group or decode a symbolic system different from his own. It is an illusion to think that the written or spoken statements of those who complain about others' unintelligibility are themselves intelligible. They may be so to themselves or to members of their own group, but their so-called intelligibility is at best only potential to those who happen to be outsiders. There is no such thing as transparent intelligibility or infallible success in achieving communication even amongst those who have claimed self-evidence for what they have said. The history of philosophy is a perennial refutation of anyone who claims to the contrary.

The admonition 'It can't be said', then, cannot reasonably be interpreted as drawing attention to the violation of a rule whose observance alone could ensure success in communication or at least avert the chances of a certain failure. How, then, shall we interpret this basic admonition which lies at the foundation of so much of philosophising of a certain type in this century? It should be obvious, by now, that the admonition could make sense only if one were to believe in some a priori conditions of intelligibility, communicability, knowability, meaning, or truth. All of these are different, though interrelated. Still, I have mentioned them all as the admonition, in its different interpretations, could relate to each of them or even to all of them together. The belief that there are certain necessary conditions such that if they are absent nothing can be realized with respect to these, lies at the

root of any such statement as 'It can't be said' when made seriously in the context of any philosophical discussion.

However, a mere belief in the existence of such a priori conditions would not suffice by itself to justify a philosopher's making the admonition seriously unless he also believes that he possesses indubitably the knowledge of such conditions. The latter is as important as the former, even though most philosophers who have concerned themselves with the problem of the a priori have failed to notice it. That the two are different may easily be seen from the fact that one may believe in the existence of a priori conditions and yet hold that they can never be completely known with final certainty and that their knowledge is subject to continuous assessment and revision. That something is a priori does not entail that it need necessarily be known, nor that in case it is known or rather that a claim to knowledge regarding it is made, it cannot be mistaken.

The possibility of the a priori and the claim to its indubitable knowledge are, thus, the necessary preconditions for any such admonition as is symbolized by the phrase 'it can't be said' in the philosophical domain. But they are not the only preconditions. A mere glance at the type of things with respect to which the a priori conditions are required would reveal that they all have an element of empiricity in them. The a priori, thus, that is required has to be of a special type, that is, the one concerned with empirical states of affairs. In other words, it has to be the synthetic a priori, the *bete noire* of these types of philosophers.

Indubitability and *synthetic a priori* are notions that are not in very good repute with most thinkers in modern times, especially those amongst whom such admonition usually prevails. Much of the argument in recent philosophy, which has displayed a predominantly positivistic temper, may be seen as concerned with disputing the validity of any such notions and exposing their dubious character. The fact that they underlie much of the argument concerning communicability, intelligibility, meaning, and truth shows only that even in philosophy one's right hand may not know what one's left hand does. The charge of inconsistency when brought against a philosopher is, if I may say so, perhaps not a very serious charge. After all, one is trying to think on so many fronts and in such diverse ways that one may give expres-

sion to one's thought in a manner which is liable to conflicting interpretations. But when philosophers begin to take the easy way out of declaring as intrinsically unintelligible or meaningless what they do not understand and set the fashion for doing so, it is time to remind them that the setting up of the personal and the parochial as absolutes would meet the same fate as the claim to other absolutes of the past, unless the concept of the absolute itself were to be rehabilitated once more in philosophy.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

Reality seems as much an object of seeking as anything else. 'Is it really so?' can be asked about everything even if in certain contexts it may appear idle, gratuitous, or perverse to ask such a question. The situation which makes it perpetually possible to ask this question is the distinction between the object as it is in itself and as it may be in relation to the person who is supposed to know it. The object must be presupposed to have a nature of its own, if the notion of truth is to have meaning. Equally, if the notion of error is to have any significance, the possibility must be granted that the object may be known as different from what it is. How, then, to distinguish between truth and error, between knowledge of the object as it really is and knowledge of the object as different from what it is in itself? The former must be possible, if truth is to be ever known; the latter, if error is to be ever committed.

The situation, in a sense, is no different in the other seekings of man. The possibility of being mistaken is always there. One can always ask oneself the question if one is really feeling the emotion one thinks one is feeling or if the action one is doing in a difficult situation is really the right action under the circumstances. Feelings are supposed to be subjective, but even among feelings the question of their genuineness is not irrelevant. One's feelings may be as imaginary as one's perception is, at times, illusory. The feeling is there in some sense just as the perception is there, but in both cases the judgement is that it is not as it ought to have been.

Without the notion of objectivity, human seeking will not make much sense in any realm whatsoever. If every perception is veridical, every thought true, every feeling adequate, every action right then there is just no question of seeking anything, for everything is realized all the time. The possibility of the illusory, the false, the inadequate, the wrong gives meaning to human seeking

but these terms themselves have meaning only if there is some objectivity with which they can possibly be confronted and judged in its light.

The notion of objectivity, I am aware, is not in good repute these days. Mathematicians and physicists, psychologists and sociologists, artists and thinkers, all, in their different ways and different fields have tried to show its futility and irrelevance. Behind them lies the philosophers' conviction that the notion of 'things-in-themselves' can lead only to a futile scepticism which leads nowhere. But none of these bold spirits takes the position that every opinion is *equally* true, every object *equally* beautiful, and every action *equally* right. All is not permitted; certain things have to be rejected and there are criteria of rejection. Even those who tried for the *überwindung* of all values stumbled against that of authenticity. As for the scientists, they are all the time busy verifying their theories and disputing if they are true or false.

The distinction between the subjective and the objective is, then, the motivating force behind every seeking of man. The tension between the two provides that dynamic strain which leads man ever forward. One seeks truth, happiness, beauty, love, good, meaning, significance and is aware all the time that that which one thinks or feels to be so may not really be so at all. One has been deluded in the past. So there seems no reason why one may not be deluded in the present. The source of this ever-present possibility of being deluded lies in that very distinction of the subjective and the objective which, in another context, provides the basis for every seeking of man. The 'subjective' is just another name for all that is erroneous, fanciful, false, evil, wrong. Subject or rather all that is in the subject which contributes to the obstruction of the occurrence of correct knowledge, ecstatic feeling and right willing is, then, the source of all delusion in man. But, on the other hand, the subject is equally the source of that striving towards every value which makes human life so distinctively different from that of any other being in this world.

Simultaneously, the source of delusion and creativity, the source of all striving and that which stands in the way of the fulfilment of the striving, the subject feels ambivalent towards itself and that which he vaguely senses to be the object of his striving. Such an object may be designated as 'God', if we under-

stand by the term a being which is completely real, which arouses us to a permanent ecstasy, and which is worthy of being the object of such an ecstasy. Neither omniscience nor omnipotence need be required of God. Only that he should be independent of us and unaffected in his being and qualities by anything else. Also, that his being should be such as to arouse in us a permanent ecstasy and that his qualities should be deemed worthy of such an arousal. The analogy, obviously, is with human love, though not much of an answering ecstasy is required in God as it is in the case of the person one loves. Rather, it is more akin to the deep experience felt with respect to natural phenomena where no answering ecstasy is required. Perhaps, it would be even truer to put the analogy somewhere between, for we do want God to respond a little to the ecstasy he arouses in us, though we do not want to make the arousal of our ecstasy conditional on the answering response in him.

But though 'God' is a unitary name for that which man seeks in different fields, the dichotomy between subject and object and the problems raised thereby do not cease to exist. The possibility of being in error or in delusion is here as great as anywhere else. In fact, the history of religions is full of such charges and counter-charges and mystics of the highest eminence have spoken thus about one another. Further, even if one is not deluded, the question remains, 'how can one know God as he is in himself' and this question is no different, nor does it raise problems of a different order than the knowing of any other thing as it is in itself.

The dichotomy of the subject and the object, which raises the problem, itself seems to be of a complex sort when closely examined. What, after all, is the object and what the subject between which the dichotomy is supposed to hold? The paradigmatic case is that of external perception in which the object seems to be there out in space as contrasted with the body which is the locus of all references and thus treated as subject in the situation. But, as everyone knows, the body itself can be treated as an object since it is not different from other things which are perceived and treated as object by us. Not merely this, one's own mental processes can be considered as object in the same sense in which we consider another's mind an object to us. The subject, then, whittles down to a locus of reference, a vanishing point which can hardly

be characterized as anything else except that to which everything appears. Such a subject can hardly be the source of delusion and error, for it just does not seem to have any content to itself. In a certain sense, no specific content can ever be ascribed to the subject since whatever content it would own, it would own by *identification* only. The possessive 'my' can apply to anything and just as there can be, intrinsically, no limits to what the subject can identify itself with, so equally, there can be none to that from which it can distinguish and detach itself.

The subject and the 'subjective' are, then, distinct to a great extent. The one can hardly account for the other. Equally, the object and the 'objective' have to be distinguished to some extent. The contrast between the subject and the object is metaphysically required to understand the multiple relationships of man to the universe. The contrast between the 'subjective' and the 'objective', on the other hand, is required to understand the failure of these relationships. The failure is as much a fact as the relationships. Yet, what is supposed to account for the relationships does not seem to account for the failures, though at first thought it seems that it should be.

There is, then, a double problem. The metaphysical dichotomy between the subject and the object and the epistemological dichotomy between the subjective and the objective both required to understand intelligibly the human situation seem in a certain sense to make it impossible also. One may not hope to achieve abiding truth, unswerving ecstasy, impeccable rightness, not because there is some limit or defect which one cannot overcome but because the very structure of the situation which makes the pursuit of these ends possible makes their complete realization impossible also. The situation is tantalizing in the extreme, for it is not that one does not seem to achieve truth, ecstasy or rightness in one's life. Rather, one seems to be achieving them all the time and losing them also.

The situation becomes more complicated as there is not just one subject but many subjects and even the subjects who are supposed not to be contemporarily present are effective by what they articulated as truth or ecstasy or rightness they discovered in their own experience. The exploration and the discovery seem to be a collective enterprise of all humanity including those in the

past, the present, and the future. So also is the elaboration of the discriminatory criteria in these different realms. The shadow of the past does loom large, but the shadow of the future is even greater, for if the present can negate the findings of the past the future may do so with the present. The individual subject has to collate the truth he has found with that which others have discovered in their lives. Not merely this, the communities or societies where even relative consensus prevails have to confront the challenge of other societies and cultures which have found a different answer to the same or similar questions. Even a cross-cultural consensus would have to confront the possibility of its being questioned by societies and cultures that are yet to emerge in the future.

The problem thus presented by this situation is two-fold. The truth in any realm is apprehended by an individual, yet its confirmation by others is so much a necessary part of it that one is required to doubt it oneself, if no such confirmation is forthcoming. One is supposed to declare against the whole world what one considers to be the truth, but equally one is regarded as insane if one persists in holding what one apprehends as truth against its continued rejection by others. Truth is not merely to be confirmed by oneself but by others also. Yet, the individual has nothing else but his own insight and experience to go on in the matter. What others say has certainly to be considered, but whether it has to be accepted or rejected or modified is and cannot but be the individual's own judgment. No one can possibly hold that an assertion is true just because most people choose to assert it, yet hardly anyone will dare assert that other's confirmation has got nothing to do with one's own holding of one's judgment or insight as true.

The deeper problem is, however, unfolded by the fact that the judgment of the oncoming generations is considered as relevant to the establishment of truth as the confirmation by the contemporaries. But the dilemma of the oncoming generation is faced by each generation anew and unless we suppose humanity to die one day, the dilemma is insoluble in principle. Further, even if humanity were to die one day it would not be sure if it knew the truth just as the individual human being who dies could not be sure if he knew the truth. It may, of course, have the

satisfaction that none else in the future would know any better, but that is poor satisfaction indeed. The privileged position of the present with respect to the past is reversed in its relations to the future. Ultimately, however, no position in time seems to be privileged with respect to that which man seeks, for the past was present once and the future too would share in the virtues and uncertainties of the present.

The progressive linear conception of human seeking is matched by other conceptions which try to escape the unending infinity involved in the linear conception. There is something dizzying about a series that never ends. Some thinkers have tried to overcome the feeling by finding the model of human seeking in terms of a convergent series which, though infinite, yet converges to a finite sum. The defect of the model is that we already know the sum to which the series converges, a situation which just does not obtain in any of the seekings of man. Further, as the series is made by us, we know what the next steps in the series are going to be. This is impossible in the case of what man seeks, for he just does not know what is going to come next.

The cyclical conception makes the situation no better. We are doomed eternally to repeat and the haunting shadow of a constantly threatened achievement is laid to rest. But, so is laid the very idea of achievement itself. The introduction of valuational judgment into the different phases of the cycle is, ultimately, a gratuitous one. Either one has to introduce supra-cyclical criteria to judge the different phases of the cycle or to absolutize the criteria of one phase to judge the others. The idea of a golden age at the beginning or at the end of the cycle seems equally gratuitous, for if in the beginning it was really so golden there could hardly have been any reason for its deterioration and if the other ages were really so dark they could scarcely result in an age where truth is known, ecstasy achieved, and rightness practised almost without exception. The fluctuating conception, such as that of Sorokin, gives up the notion of a unitary truth, unitary ecstasy, and unitary rightness at its central core.

The community of persons and the community of generations raises, vis-a-vis the individual subject, problems of another sort. A person is as much an 'other' to the subject as any other object in the world. This presents a dilemma of the acutest type, a

dilemma that is intensely felt in interpersonal interrelationships of the most different kinds. One is only vaguely aware of the subjectivity of the other; most of the time one cannot but think and feel the other as an object. Conversely, one cannot but be aware of oneself as a subject. The awareness of oneself as an object is only on the fringes and flickers only fitfully, never to last very long. Many of the agonizing tragedies of love and friendship emanate from this fact, as also the moral dilemmas that haunt the interpersonal relations of men.

The existence of other subjects presents problems of a metaphysical kind also. The differences among subjects at the level at which they are treated as pure subjects is difficult to determine. All the differences that are specifiable belong to the subject as identified with some object or the other. Points of reference can only be distinguished spatio-temporally, but subjects are not treated as spatio-temporal at all. The denial of temporality affects radically the notion of past and future subjects; the denial of space affects those of the contemporaries. Leibnitz is the classic name with whom is associated the attempt to solve the problem at the non-spatio-temporal level. But, basically, it is God alone who is the real subject in Leibnitz; others are real only by virtue of the unreality of the confusedness of their apprehensions.

The problem exists for the spiritual seekers also. For, all the differences between different seekers can be specified only in so far as they fall short of realization. Among realized souls, it is difficult to see how they could be distinguished. Of course, one may take the help of the notion of 'degrees of realization' and try to distinguish in terms of it. But the problem remains the same as in Leibnitz, for the less realized are distinguishable only by virtue of their imperfection. Even the specification of the distinction between the realized soul and God is not possible except in terms of some intrinsic imperfection of the one in respect of the other.

The dilemma is significant in the sense that every seeking of man involves in some sense an intrinsic reference to other subjects. If, however, the distinction between different subjects itself is ultimately untenable, the inter-subjective character of human seeking seems to be wrong somewhere at its very core. The dilemma is mirrored in the everyday situation where each holds his vision to be true and yet continuously appeals to others for

confirmation in argument and discussion. The intrinsic necessity for others in every seeking of man coupled with the continuous demand for essential independence from them epitomizes this situation very well.

The situation does not seem to be the same in the case of the distinction between the subject and the object, though many have thought it to be ultimately as untenable as the distinction between one subject and another. There seems to be no reason why some such position as that of the *Sāṃkhya* should be ultimately held to be untenable even if it is conceded that the category of 'being' or 'thing' is wider than both. The dilemma in this case lies, in my opinion, in another direction. The distinction itself makes impossible the realization of the ideals man seeks to achieve in different dimensions.

The human situation, then, may be characterized as consisting of seekings which are sustained by dichotomies which themselves make in principle impossible the fulfilment of those seekings. To put the same thing in a little different way, it may be said that the human situation can only be articulated intelligibly in terms of pairs of concepts which appear contradictory to each other. Each seems equally required, but their conjoint requirement makes the situation desperately impossible. The 'desperateness' and the 'impossibility', however are revealed only to thought. Life is lived without desperation and man continues to seek truth, ecstasy and rightness without any awareness of the impossibility of what he seeks.

Such a situation may be characterized as *Māyā*, if one so desires. Or, one may characterize it as 'appearance', if one likes the term better. Only one should remember that one cannot get out of *Māyā* or the world of Appearance except by not *thinking* about the way one lives through one's life.

Religion, all the world over, is an attempt to answer this dilemma. God is the supreme paradox that is supposed to solve all paradoxes. But, as everyone knows, it solves and has solved nothing. The term is the terminus of all man's seeking—necessary, yet introducing the final contradiction between Man, God and the World. The supposed resolution is only *asserted* by the individual; the biography of the realized souls and their history over known periods of time tells a different tale. Christ and Bud-

dha failed in their own times as much as Christianity and Buddhism have failed over historic times. Even the story of persons deemed to be incarnated Gods on this earth is as much a story of success as of failure. One may choose one's own roster of realized souls or of God-incarnate in man and ask oneself how the story of man shows any resolution except in one's assertion of it.

This, obviously, is not to deny either the outstanding impact of their personalities on history or the almost transcendent aspect of their being which seems to justify all life itself. What is denied is the claimed resolution of the paradox intrinsic to the seeking of man on the simple ground that the evidence does not support it. The evidence is the history of man and the life of the individual who is supposed to have found the resolution to the paradox of human seeking in different fields. The first we know very well. Whether interpreted as a Fall or as a continuous progress, there could hardly be two opinions about the resolution of the paradox having been achieved in it. As for the latter, both in the life of contemporaries claimed to be realized souls and in those of the past as reconstructed even by the most credulous anecdotes, the evidence against the achievement of resolution is overwhelming, unless we adopt a policy of double standards in judging that evidence.

The necessity of resolution, however, is felt only because it is assumed that a pair of contradictories cannot characterize a real situation. The notions of 'appearance', '*māyā*', 'phenomena', 'unreal'—derive all their strength from this basic assumption. The history of philosophy may be understood as a continuous struggle between those who are bent on showing contradictions in different areas of experience and those who are trying to show the inadequate nature of the analysis that leads to such a conclusion. Dialectical philosophers are no exception; they seek resolution of the contradiction as assiduously as those they contend against. The Absolute is needed just for this reason; otherwise, one would not think of it at all. Even the religious philosophers who usually tend to articulate their insights in the simultaneous assertion of pairs of contradictory propositions seek their ultimate resolution in God who is supposed to be completely real and completely ecstatic just because he has no blemish of the shadow of the opposite in himself.

The concept of Alternative Absolutes elaborated in the writings of the two most original thinkers of contemporary India, K.C. Bhattacharyya and Kalidas Bhattacharyya, does not escape, in my opinion, the charge of having made this assumption. The only possible reason why the alternative absolutes cannot be asserted simultaneously is because it would involve the affirmation of a contradiction, a thought too radical even for the radical Bhattacharyyas.

The law has been considered as absolute necessity for thought, even if it is disputed whether it is meaningful to consider it as characterizing that which the thought is supposed to be about. I have never been convinced by such an assertion. It may be concluded that the notion of resolution is necessary to make sense of human seeking in any realm. But this is a poor ground for the *assertion* of the resolution, for the counter-notion to resolution is equally necessary to make sense of the human seeking. If what makes sense of the human seeking is to be asserted, then both have to be asserted simultaneously and, then, we will have the paradox and the dilemma with us once more.

MYSTICISM AND THE PROBLEM OF INTELLIGIBILITY

The belief that mysticism or spirituality¹ is largely unintelligible and nonsensical is widely held in scientific and philosophical circles and has even percolated among the educated mass of most countries in the East and the West. In this paper we shall try to discuss how far such a belief can be said to be justified.

The problem of intelligibility has been discussed in recent philosophical literature with respect to propositions and their meanings. It seems to have been forgotten, however, that intelligibility presupposes interpersonal communication and that the problems with respect to it, in fact, arise within that field. The success or failure in intelligibility is always with reference to someone to whom we wish to communicate something. The success of the communication depends upon the fact as to what extent there is a similarity between the experiences of the persons who are trying to communicate with each other.

On primary perceptual, emotional, and instinctive levels such an intelligibility is assured by the common psycho-physical constitution of mankind. There can, of course, be little doubt that there is a vast cultural patterning, particularly of the emotional and instinctive life of a people, which makes for intelligibility within the group and unintelligibility outside. The peculiar elaboration of a symbolic structure, both verbal and non-verbal, seems to be another great factor in limiting the intelligibility to a particular group alone. But, in spite of these difficulties of cultural patterning and symbolic structure, the achievement of intelligibility on the primary levels is fairly easy to achieve. The need for food or drink or sex, the expressions of fear, anger, or love, the experiences of the common perceptual world—all these are easily

1. For the purposes of this paper, no relevant difference will be drawn between mysticism and spirituality.

intelligible to any two persons, even if they belong to different cultural and symbolic systems.

The problem, however, is not so simple with respect to the secondary levels achieved by man through a continuous development of imagination and ideation. The intelligibility here is not so immediate and direct as on the primary levels. It is rather a matter of achievement than possession—a continuous possibility which can be realized, but only through an openness and effort that may not be forthcoming. The capacity of consciousness to enlarge itself and grow beyond its immediate limitations provides the ground for this possibility that one can, if one so wishes, change into an actuality.

The 'unintelligible' is merely another name for the experiences one has not shared or whose analogue one has not experienced in one's own experience. Aesthetic experience is a commonly accepted category which most human beings would recognize as meaningful. After all, everybody knows that pictures are painted, songs sung, dances danced, buildings built, poems recited and tales told. One also knows stories about the artists and their lives. Yet, does not one frequently come across persons who find it extremely difficult to understand the serious interest of anyone in art? The common vital pursuits of sex or money or power they can fairly well understand. But when it is a question of the pursuit of any art, they find it extremely unintelligible. The unintelligibility, further, is not confined merely to the creative pursuit of ends which they do not understand but extends equally to the appreciation of others of such realms. In the background of the minds of most such people there is the feeling that the appreciation is not genuine but rather assumed or faked and that the creative pursuit is merely an *instrument* for the achievement of the vital ends that they understand.

Such is equally the case with intellectual or moral activity. The serious pursuit of these values does not seem very intelligible to the common man. The apparent² sacrifice of material gain and vital satisfactions involved in a greater or lesser degree appears to him absurd and foolish, for the gains and satisfactions sacri-

2. 'Apparent', because it is seldom felt as such by the individual concerned unless, of course, the very limits of his biosocial existence are threatened. The limit, however, is fairly flexible and varies within a wide field.

ficed seem to him the quintessence of what he is striving for. The Christ on the Cross or the Buddha leaving his wife and child for the pursuit of Truth may evoke his reverence or awe, but, when he meets such a person in common life, he faces him with incomprehension and bewilderment that later turns either into ridicule or anger.

The unintelligibility in all these cases arises from the fact that people do not share similar values—and this, perhaps, ultimately derives from the fact that they do not share similar experiences. The unintelligibility, however, is not absolute. If there is the ‘openness’ of the mind to understand, then the aesthetic, intellectual, and moral experiences can become intelligible, for, in however rudimentary a form, the elements of these experiences are more or less present in everybody’s experience. One has only to point out these experiences, and then most people would discover, like M. Jourdain in Moliere’s *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, that they were talking ‘prose’ all the time.

The ‘mystic’ experience, unlike the aesthetic or intellectual or moral experience, is not even an accepted category of modern life. In a sense it is still farther removed from the ordinary biosocial experience than these other activities of the human mind. It therefore cannot be a matter of surprise if most people find it unintelligible—particularly when we find that it relegates to a secondary level not merely the ordinary biosocial pursuits of man but also his second-level pursuits in the realm of aesthetic, intellectual, and moral life. Further, it questions the whole framework of ordinary human life in a more radical fashion than the other pursuits do.

Yet, no experience, however radical, is so far-fetched from ordinary human experience that elements of it cannot be found within it. It is because of this that there is no realm of human experience which is completely unintelligible to any mind, provided it is ‘open’ towards it. The mystic experience is no exception to this rule; and there are moments in everybody’s life when one has a vague feeling of the Transcendence Beyond towards which one feels an intimate relation with overtones of peace and joy and calm suffusing one’s whole experience. It is, therefore, only a question of opening one’s self to a certain aspect of experience to

find the mystic experience not so ‘unintelligible’ as it is held to be in most circles in modern times.

The analogy of aesthetic experience should, however, warn us that the problem of intelligibility is not a matter of conceptual comprehension. The aesthetic experience becomes intelligible not by any effort at rational understanding but only by a continuous ‘acquaintance’ with what may be called the ‘formal’ aspect of experience. Unless one begins to have a feeling for the visual forms and their patterning into significant organization, one cannot find architecture, sculpture, or painting aesthetically intelligible. The same is true of music. Here one should have a feeling for the tones and the harmony that they create in different patterns, if one is to find it aesthetically intelligible. No amount of conceptual classification or analysis would help in the matter, for what is to be understood is not conceptual at all. The conceptual analysis can, however, disabuse our minds of the prejudices that it has developed consciously or unconsciously in the past and make it ‘open’ itself to those aspects of the situation which are aesthetically significant or relevant. This seems to be the only important, though negative, task that conceptual analysis can perform in fields that are not purely intellectual.

For the intelligibility of mystic experience, therefore, what is necessary is not the attempt at conceptual ratiocination but at a continuous ‘opening’ of one’s self to the transcendental aspect of all experience. It can hardly be denied that there is such an aspect to man’s experience. In fact, it follows necessarily from the self-consciousness of man, as it essentially involves an awareness of the other, the Beyond in its generality and not specificity. The awareness of the margin is a necessary accompaniment of the fact of self-consciousness in man. However, the awareness is only marginal, and, unless it grows more and more focal, we would appreciate but little the mystic experience of mankind.

The term ‘intelligible’, however, is used in another sense also. When we call something ‘unintelligible’, we sometimes do not mean that we are not ‘acquainted’ with it or that it has not been a part of our familiar experience but only that it does not fit in with the accepted framework of our experiential interpretation. Here the term ‘unintelligible’ means the felt incoherence between the isolated sector of our experience and the interpretative frame-

work that is considered justified by a wider and more recurrent field of our experience.

Mysticism is regarded as 'unintelligible' by many scientists just for this reason. The widest interpretative framework accepted at the present time is that of the science of physics, and it is regarded by many as incompatible with the deliverances of mystic experience. The incompatibility would, of course, depend upon how we interpret the deliverances of mystic experience and its relation to the interpretative view elaborated by the science of physics. If, as we have contended, the essence of mystic experience is the orientation towards the undifferentiated transcendent pole of experience, then there seems little possibility of conflict; for such a pole exists, and science is not concerned with it. F. S. C. Northrop in his book *The Meeting of East and West* has called attention to the 'pure, inescapable empiricity' of this undifferentiated aesthetic continuum and has convincingly shown it as the perennial source of mysticism everywhere.

Further, the assumption behind every feeling of incompatibility is that there is, or, at least, ought to be, a unitary interpretation of all the phenomena that we experience. However, the interpretative framework has to be continuously modified in the face of new phenomena that reveal the inadequacy of the framework. In case we find the incompatible phenomena to be incapable of a unitary interpretation, we need not reject the one or the other as invalid or unreal. It should not be forgotten that the incompatibility is a feature not of the phenomena but of the interpretative frameworks within which we find them to be respectively intelligible. The relation of incompatibility, further, is a symmetrical relation, and thus, each is incompatible from the point of view of the other. The mystic has as vehemently rejected the verdict of scientific experience as the scientist has done with respect to the mystic experience. But, as we have just pointed out, it is not necessary. Even if a unitary conceptual framework is not found for both the types of experiences, it is unnecessary to deny the reality or validity of either.

The conceptual framework of physics is unable to comprehend the aesthetic or moral validities of man's experience. Yet we do not reject them on that ground or wait for a unitary conceptual framework in order to understand or explore these aspects of

our experience. The intelligibility or exploration of mystic experience, like the intelligibility and exploration in the fields of aesthetic and moral experience, cannot and should not wait on a unitary interpretative framework of all aspects of experience that may or may not emerge. Further, even when such a unitary interpretative scheme would emerge, it would not and could not invalidate the experiential validities discovered in aesthetic, moral, or mystic realms.

The problem of validity in these fields, it should be noted, is mostly immanent in character. It is not by considerations outside the field that we can judge of the value or validity of an experience within the field. There has recently been a tendency to think that the validities in the moral field can be adjudged with a reference to the findings in the field of the natural sciences. Waddington, Northrop, and Rapoport are some recent examples of this tendency. None of them, however, has gone so far as to suggest that the problems of validity arising in the aesthetic field can also be settled by a reference to the physical sciences. As for the mystic experience, it has long been decided that science has finally established the invalidity of that experience.

Yet it is wrong to think that aesthetic experience is the only exception to the general rule of science being the ultimate arbiter of experience within any field. Science certainly gives rise to certain moral values in the pursuit of its own end, and it is right for Rapoport to insist in his recent book *Science and the Goals of Man* that it, therefore, cannot be morally neutral between different cultural and social structures. But moral values, it is forgotten, are second-level values that arise in the pursuit of other values. It is not merely the pursuit of science that gives rise to moral values but equally the pursuit of art or, for that matter, any other value. Ultimately, however, the moral judgment seems as autonomous as the scientific and aesthetic judgments are within their own fields. The valuational independence of the various fields can be seen from the fact that for each the others are merely an instrument for the realization of its own values. Certain moral values are important for Rapoport only because they are a means for the pursuit of scientific values. For others, like the modern totalitarians and the medieval scholastics, the intellectual pursuit is to be permitted only if it does not

conflict with certain other values, or rather, primarily, as a means for the establishment of those values. The artist, for his part, has been interested in the discoveries of science only in so far as he could use them for the creation of new patterns of beauty; as for the moralist, he has always felt indifferent, if not positively hostile towards it.

The question of validity, therefore, is always immanent and can never be determined by reference to any considerations outside the field to which they are not relevant at all. The mystic experience too has its immanent criteria of validity, and it would be wrong to appeal to any other considerations for the establishment or disestablishment of validity within that field. The mystic literature is full of warnings against 'pseudo' experiences and is, in fact, continuously on the alert against what it characterizes as 'false' or 'deceptive' consciousness. The problem of qualitative hierarchy also is immanent to the experience and cannot be determined by considerations emanating from outside its relevant domain.

However, if the mystic encroaches on the aesthetic, moral, or intellectual fields and tries to prescribe criteria of validity for them, he would be as much wrong as the others if they tried to do the same for him. Physical science would be justified in pronouncing against mysticism if it should propound a physics or a biology that was incompatible with its own findings. Not merely science but arts as well can condemn the mystic if he tries to provide some criteria for the 'beautiful' and the 'ugly' in their field. The moralist too would be justified in resenting the mystic's subversion of the categories of 'good' and 'bad'. But, if these people are justified in resenting the mystic when he encroaches on their fields, so also would be the mystic when these people behave the same way in their own turn.

The principle of multiple validities that we have been trying to establish in the last few pages may be objected to just for that very reason. It may be contended that the admission of multiple validities is, in fact, the admission of 'unintelligibility', for the belief in a unitary explanation of all experience is, thereby, given up. It can, however, be hardly denied that such a unitary conceptual interpretative scheme does not exist. It would be highly foolish to wait for a unitary scheme to admit the multiple vali-

ditities that we meet with in different realms of experience. Second, whatever may be the unitary scheme, it would have to take into account the multiple validities; and, if it failed to do that, it would simply not be a unitary scheme at all. Third, any conceptual scheme, however comprehensive and unitary it may be, can simply not take into account the problems of quality immanent to different realms, for the very simple reason that they are not conceptual in their nature.

It would, thus, be wrong to think that mysticism is 'unintelligible' because it cannot be understood in terms of the categories of the physical sciences. Its 'unintelligibility' in the other sense of 'lack of communication' is only due to the reason that people are not 'open' to certain aspects of their experience. We suggest, therefore, that the mystic aspect of experience be as much an accepted category of modern thought as the aesthetic, the moral, and the intellectual already are.

TWO TYPES OF APPEARANCE AND TWO TYPES OF REALITY

The distinction between appearance and reality has been the central focus of philosophical discussion and, perhaps, the most dominant motive behind man's quest for knowledge. Any typical differences between different sorts of appearances, therefore, would most probably be reflected in the different conceptions of reality that the philosophers would entertain. It will be our task in this paper to draw attention to one such difference and show its influence on the corresponding conceptions of reality held in different philosophical systems. Our purpose, however, will require an analysis only of the immanent-phenomenological type and, thus, will not be concerned with questions of the causal or the historical type. We shall also not be concerned with the general questions concerning the validity or the criteria of the distinction which has been held to obtain at the commonsense, scientific, and philosophical levels of thought.

The appearance which characterizes the stick that looks bent under water seems, in one respect, to be totally different from the type of appearance that seems to characterize a rope when it appears as a snake. Both are certainly 'appearances' in the usual sense of the term, but they reveal important differences which, as far as we are aware, have not been paid sufficient attention by the philosophers concerned. The appearance of the stick as bent under water is not in any way affected by my knowledge whether it is really such. There is no difference in what is seen by the person who knows that the stick is not 'really' bent and the person who thinks that it is really so. No difference is made to the perceptual experience of the two persons. The correction that is made by the person who is supposed to know the real state of affairs is merely a theoretic correction and has no direct effect on the way he perceives the object. The rope-snake appearance,

however, is totally different in this respect. The moment it is known that the perceived snake is merely an apparent snake, it ceases to be perceived and what remains is only the rope and nothing else. The difference between the person who knows and the person who does not know is, thus, very great and, in fact, completely radical in character. Knowledge, in the case of such appearances, makes relevant difference to intuited experience which it does not do in the case of the former type.

Both types of appearances are commonly met with in experience and in specific instances we are not very puzzled as to which belongs to which type. But when the quest for reality takes the shape of finding the 'really real' behind 'the whole world of appearance', the difference between the two types of appearances begins to make a relevant difference to the direction that our quest may take. The 'apparent' character of much of our experience may lead us to search for a coherent picture in terms of theoretic concepts which, then, make a theoretic correction to our intuited experiences and are, thus, supposed to be the 'really real' behind the so-called 'world of appearance'. It may, on the other hand, be thought that the 'really real' behind the 'world of appearance' is not just a matter of theoretic concepts but something to be as directly and as intuitively realized as the world of sense experience and on the dawning of which it would vanish as completely as the snake when one sees the rope.

It may seem that while there can perhaps be some justification in regarding the whole experienced world as needing some theoretic correction on the illusory model of the bent-stick type, it is quite meaningless, if not sheer lunacy, to think of it as belonging to the delusional model of the rope-snake variety. This, however, would be wrong—for, in both cases it is certain theoretic considerations plus certain criteria from pragmatic verification plus the evidential claim of certain persons to have achieved that verification that provide the reasons for the movement in these different directions. It is, of course, not precluded that both may be wrong. What is extremely unlikely, on the other hand, is that only one of them is right and the other wrong.

The search for a theoretically coherent picture on the one hand or for a transforming revelatory experience on the other provides, then, the two alternative forms that man's quest for reality

may take. The former divides itself into two main parts, which may respectively be called the scientific and the philosophical. Empirical verification is the essence of the former as rational coherence is that of the latter. The difference is perhaps most clearly illustrated in the famous argument of Zeno concerning the unreality of motion. To the philosopher, the argument was all important and no philosopher since Zeno's time to Ryle's 'Dilemmas' has had the foolishness to point to the fact of motion and, thus, refute Zeno. The empirical coherence sought in the scientific pursuit does not, however, make the theoretic concepts in terms of which is sought to be formulated any more directly experienced than the purely rational concepts with which the philosopher is concerned. There is, of course, a radical difference between the two. The theoretic concepts of a science must have, at some point, a correlation with what is directly perceived—a requirement that the theoretic concepts of philosophy may, but need not, fulfil. But they both share a common quality in that the view of reality which they seek to discover is something theoretic or conceptual and not immediate, direct, intuitive, or perceptual in character.

In contrast to this, the other way to reality is never satisfied by a merely theoretic knowledge that it is so or by some sort of an indirect empirical verification in the sense that if such a sort of reality is there than such sort of apparent consequences can be directly experienced. These are of hardly any importance except perhaps as subordinate movements in the main task of achieving the direct revelatory experience. The reality for such a seeker does not consist in abstract, theoretic, conceptually formulated systems but rather in that which is immediately felt, perceived, and experienced. The prototype of our feeling of reality is the perceptually experienced world of external objects and the immediately felt world of our feelings and emotions. When, because of some reason or other, the 'apparent' character of this world begins to be felt, the search starts for another which will be as, or even more directly, experienced as the ordinarily perceived world usually is.

The parallel to the rope-snake type of illusion is, however, adequate in only so far as the directly experienced character of the so-called 'really real' is concerned. In other respects, it shows

marked discrepancy from the characteristics shown by man's quest for the revelatory 'reality' behind this world of appearance. Our perception of the rope as snake undergoes a sudden transformation if anyone tells us that it is not really such or if we ourselves become suspicious because of some reason or other. Such a situation obviously does not obtain with respect to the 'apparent reality' of the normally experienced world. The situation in this case is more akin to the systematic hallucinatory delusions which certain persons experience and which do not so easily vanish even when most people tell that they are wrong. The psychological complexes that lead to hallucinatory delusions have to be patiently analysed and gradually unravelled till it becomes as difficult to perceive them as to perceive the snake when one has seen the rope.

All search for the revelatory experience of reality behind the whole world of sensed appearance takes, therefore, the form of an intense psychological discipline, leading to the dissolution of psychic knots because of which the whole world was projected and experienced as real. The dissolution may occur either suddenly or in stages—though mostly it takes the latter form. Just as in hallucinatory delusions, one may get temporary relief and transient insight into the 'unreal' nature of one's condition only to relapse once more into regarding the 'apparently real' as the 'really real'. The memory of the fleeting revelatory experience, however, makes one seek the completer and total experience from which there would be no possible relapse. Such a state has been designated as the state of *samādhi* or *mokṣa* in Indian thought. In other cultural traditions when such a view of reality has been held and the path to it pursued, there has always been some such concept of 'realization' designating a state where the 'really real' is directly and fully experienced.

The search for the 'theoretically real', on the other hand, seeks rational or empirical coherence and does not rest till it feels that it has achieved it. Mostly, however, it seeks such coherence only within limited areas of experience, though it is certainly its ideal to find it in all such fields, actual or possible. It is the provisional achievement of such a unity that gives satisfaction to the intellectual seeker. But the unity, in most cases, is only provisional in character, for it generally is bound to be shat-

tered by the discovery of new facts or some new discrepancy in the old arguments. The philosophical short-cut to avoid this possibility has been the perennial one of declaring unreal all that refuses to fit the accepted criteria of logical coherence. The scientist, however, cannot take this road, for his goal is not rational but empirical coherence and, thus, he cannot refuse to take into account the disturbing facts. The dismissal of them as unreal is no solution for him as he has to understand them in terms of a general theoretic scheme and not deny them. Even the philosopher continuously discovers, or at least the others discover for him, the flaws in his argument. Therefore, the search, for him, as for the scientist, never ends and the solutions found remain, by the very nature of the goal that is sought, provisional in character.

In contrast to this, the finding of a revelatory reality other than this world of sense experience is marked by a finality about it. Just as there is little "provisional" about the fact that I am perceiving a table, so there seems little to doubt about my direct experience of reality if and when I come to have it. There is nothing problematic about what I directly experience, though it may raise problems to the consciousness that seeks theoretic coherence. The person who sees the snake sees it as unproblematically as he sees the rope when the delusion has vanished. Not merely this, he is hardly worried about the relations between the snake that he saw and the rope that he sees. Similarly, to the mystic or the spiritual seer there is hardly any problem about the baffling relation between the reality as he perceives it and the appearance that he used to perceive and that others continue to perceive still. In fact, the problem of incoherence that troubles the philosopher and the scientist so much, hardly troubles the mystic at all. It is because of this essential irrelevance of the problem of coherence that the mystic is hardly impressed by any logical arguments against his position. In fact, Logic, the study of coherence par excellence, plays hardly any role in his thought—a situation that completely baffles the philosopher and the scientist, as it is a denial of the very driving force behind their quest for reality.

The conception of reality as that which is directly and immediately apprehended on the rope-snake pattern of appearance-reality leads further to the well-known fact of the incommuni-

cability of mystic experience. The direct experience of perceived qualities is, as everybody knows, incommunicable to a person who himself cannot perceive. One can only ostensibly point out the object and if such a situation, for any reason, cannot be present one can only try to help the person with the aid of some graphic representation in the form of either a 'schematogram' or a 'retinogram', to use the terminology of Almroth Wright in his posthumous work *Alethropic Logic*. The abstract, theoretic, conceptual knowledge, on the other hand, is essentially communicable by its very nature, for there is supposed to be nothing more in the theoretic concepts than what they have been postulated to stand for. There is no essential ineffability about it.

Such a difference in the communicability of these two different conceptions of reality leads to the further difference which may be characterized as the 'private' or 'public' character of the knowledge achieved in these two different fields. The knowledge of reality which the mystic achieves is, by its very nature, confined to him and cannot become public property, except in the sense that it may theoretically be understood as claimed to have been achieved by him. The theoretic comprehension, however, is no substitute for mystic experience and has, in fact, little to do with it. The postulational knowledge of coherent theoretic concepts, on the other hand, is essentially public in the sense that once discovered it becomes a part of accepted knowledge and that later research can assume it as true and build upon it. Each person need not repeat the experiment for himself and can explore the field further by assuming the previously postulated knowledge as true.

Another difference that derives from these various characteristics of the two conceptions of reality concerns the relation between the Master and the disciple or the teacher and the taught. In one case, the Master or Guru is supposed to be one who has received the direct revelatory realization that reveals the unreal nature of our sense-perceived or thought-grasped world. The disciple, therefore, cannot hope to go beyond the Master, for that would be to admit that the Master had either not realized at all or realized only partially. One can also not adopt a critical attitude to anything that the Master does or says, for the finality of the master's realization is supposed to operate with respect to all

possible fields of knowledge and not merely with respect to some of them. In contrast to this, the teacher of a theoretically coherent system of concepts is neither supposed to be infallible nor to be competent in all fields. A critical attitude to all that is taught is encouraged, or at least supposed to be encouraged, by the teacher himself. The student is supposed to go beyond his teachers and unravel problems that he has not been able to solve. There is no disrespect or blasphemy if a merest novice tries to criticize even a Newton or an Einstein in his field. On the other hand, the disciple of even the least-known Guru feels that if his Guru is not actually God, he is at least very near it.

The two different types of appearances, thus, do not merely give rise to two different conceptions of reality, but also make a relevant difference to the total attitude which one adopts in the alternative quests that one may undertake. A historical confirmation of the fact that these alternative conceptions and different attitudes have been held is, we hope, not required. Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics* and Northrop's *The Meeting of East and West* have sufficient data to confirm the historical actuality of this distinction. Northrop, however, seems to have over-emphasized the geographical nature of the distinction. Particularly in his *The Taming of Nations*, he seems to have gone too far in this direction. To say that the assertion of the intuitively apprehended 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum' as the sole reality is the chief characteristic of Hindu culture, is surely an over-statement. The theory of rebirth and the Law of Karma are as deeply embedded in the Hindu mind and yet they can hardly be characterized as intuitively apprehended. The same applies to the determinate gods of the Hindu pantheon and the various theories about God, Self and the World held by thinkers and sects of non-Vedāntic persuasion. On the other side, he has equally failed to take notice of the witnesses of what Aldous Huxley has called the 'Perennial Philosophy' in the West.

There seems to be, then, important differences between the two conceptions of reality patterned on the two different types of appearances met with in ordinary experience. The question which of them is valid hardly concerns us here. They can both be

valid or each be alternatively valid¹ or both be invalid. What, in our opinion, will be difficult to maintain would be the view that *only* one of them is valid and the other invalid. But, as we said at the very beginning, the discussion of this problem is outside the scope of this paper.

1. For a thorough understanding of the challenging theory of the Logic of Alternation, see: Kalidas Bhattacharyya, *Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy*, Das Gupta and Co., College Street, Calcutta.

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, LANGUAGE, AND TRUTH

The hours devoted to discussion in this symposium seemed characterized by a singular unconcern with religious experience, which is the *raison d'être* of any inquiry undertaken in this field at all. It may seem futile to discuss problems in the philosophy of science without taking into account what the scientists in their scientific behaviour do and the way they go about doing it. But it certainly did not seem so to most persons discussing problems in the philosophy of religion. There was, for example, much discussion of language in religious discourse but little, if any, attention was paid to the way in which religious concepts arise from, and find their meaning in, religious experience itself. The 'operationalism' so obvious in the field of science did not seem quite so necessary in the field of religion to most philosophers assembled there.

The lack of interest in religious experience manifested itself in another direction. It was completely forgotten that the truths of religion are not contained in a set of propositions which can be made a subject of analysis and reasoned argument in themselves. Every religion prescribes a pattern of practices, sometimes varying in great detail for different types of persons with different temperaments, which, if pursued, result for most people in the gradual realization of what was meant by those statements. The philosophers assembled seemed to think that 'knowing God' is an easy matter, while to the religious men of all ages it has been the pursuit of a lifetime or in some cultures even of cycles of lives. The point again is that unless it is seen that, according to most religions, something has to be *done* to realize God (or whatever is the equivalent of God in that religion)—a realization in terms of which the religious statements get their meaning and their verification—philosophical discussions will hang in the air.

Religious discourse, for example, is replete with contradictions. There seems something in the religious experience which necessitates its articulation in statements which appear contradictory to the rational intellect. Should this lead to the view that what religion talks about cannot be valid? It makes claims to truth which in their very nature cannot be true. How would the scientist feel if the philosopher, using the criterion of strict verification, termed most of his discovered principles literally meaningless? Would he not think there is something wrong with the criterion which necessarily makes the philosopher reach such a conclusion? And why have the philosophers themselves increasingly diluted the verification principle till it has reached such an innocuous form as, 'our statements about the external world face the tribunal of sense experience not individually but only as a corporate body?'¹

The prestige of science is too great today, and if the philosophers had persisted too long in the stringency of their criterion, they would merely have exposed themselves to ridicule. Behind the diplomatic retreat, however, there was also the insight that the philosopher could bring no a priori criteria that would pre-judge the matter completely. Rather, one had to go to the practitioners themselves to articulate the criteria which they used within the field of their inquiry. And though a philosophical critique of the concepts employed, the methods used, and the criteria adopted is sound philosophical activity, it is such only if it does not make the activity itself impossible. That this has not been seen in the case of religious experience shows only that philosophers share the prejudices of their age and find it difficult to get away from them.

The other great limitation of the discussion, to my mind, was its confinement, perhaps naturally, to Christianity alone. It was as if one were to reflect on aesthetic experience and confine one's discussion to Greek art or the Renaissance masters only. (Today, no one would think of doing so in a discussion on art, but if one were to do it, one would be challenged immediately.) That no one challenged this implicit limitation shows once again the

1. W. V. O. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1953, p. 41.

difficulty of getting beyond the perspective of the culture one happens to be born in.

If these limitations are overcome, then issues will be formulated in a different way. Whether God exists or does not exist will not be in the centre of discussion. For, even if one were to come to the conclusion that a theoretic concept of God is required to understand intelligibly certain phenomena and that the totality of phenomena indirectly confirm—to a certain degree—such a hypothesis, the religious man will remain completely unsatisfied with it and will, in fact, consider it absolutely irrelevant to the ‘knowing’ of God in his sense of the term. Theology, it should be understood, is the exact opposite of what the religious man seeks, and however much the theologian may talk of God, he is not supposed to ‘know’ him at all.

Religion is essentially a *seeking* for something beyond this world with its limitations of space, time, mass, and causality—something that is to be experienced as, or even more, *directly* as the world we experience through our senses. The seeking invariably takes the form, at least in its first phase, of a turning away from this world. The world is not sought to be known or understood. It is simply disregarded or treated as a hindrance that distracts one from the singular pursuit of that which is felt to be beyond or behind the world that appears to sense perception. What is ‘beyond’ or ‘behind’ the world obviously is not something in space which one could seek and find. Nor is it some sort of a conceptual scheme in terms of which the world of sense experience can be interrelated and understood. The concern is not with the world at all, but rather with something that is to be realized by taking our minds away from it. The way, therefore, has always been the withdrawal from the world, the concentration on the Divine, the aspiration for it, and the prayer to it to reveal itself. The core of all religions is religious experience got through withdrawal, aspiration, and invocation of grace. Ultimately, whatever is being sought is supposed to reveal itself in freedom, and thus the element of grace is paramount and inalienable in all religions except in certain of its magical forms which have long been left behind in man’s religious exploration.

This experience, while not completely the same everywhere, has recognizable similarities in its different ranges, and thus forms

a distinctly determinable realm having certain characteristics of its own. It tends to formulate itself, for example, into contradictory statements simultaneously asserted as true. The language in which religious experience tends to express itself is not the language of mathematics or even of the empirical sciences but of parable and paradox which still claims to convey truth. The philosophers and most educated people believe that a set of contradictory statements cannot describe truth. Religion, the realm of contradiction *par excellence*, therefore, becomes to them so obviously false or even meaningless as not to require any further consideration at all.

The preliminary question is, then, if a contradictory statement can ever correctly designate a state of affairs. Could not there be an experience which could correctly be formulated *only* in a conjunctive unity of contradictory statements? I think it is too easily assumed in philosophical discussions that the answer to such a question can only be a definite ‘no’. Supposing I were to ask someone ‘Are you happy?’ and he were to reply ‘I am and I am not’, would he necessarily be uttering a false or nonsensical statement? (I am not trying to distinguish between the two at the present state of the argument.) Is it quite so obvious that he could only feel either happy or unhappy but not something which could only be described as feeling both?

The objection obviously will take the familiar form. First, it will be suggested that we are ignoring the difference in contexts and what may be called the difference in time-instants, which *alone* could make the sentence meaningful for any further consideration. The statement is supposed to be a cryptic way of saying that I am alternately feeling happy and unhappy in quick succession with respect to different things in my life which force themselves on my attention. Second, it may be suggested that the person just does not know what he is talking about, that he is talking lightly and doesn’t expect to be taken literally and seriously, or that we are making an elementary confusion between language and that to which it refers. Contradiction is characteristic of linguistic discourse, and if we are asked to avoid it, it is only because linguistic discourse must be intelligible to perform its function effectively. It may even be suggested that the problem arises merely because there is no single word for the feeling in the langu-

age. (There may actually be such a word, but that does not affect the argument.) If there were such a word we would not feel it to denote a contradictory state of affairs, just as no one thinks that the word 'courage' refers to something which is both cowardice and foolhardiness at the same time.

I do not wish to consider all these objections here in detail, since some I have considered elsewhere.² But I should very much like to urge that, if someone feels that the alternative formulation does not adequately describe what he wants to convey, then his own formulation should be accepted. After all, isn't the person concerned the one who should be supposed to know best in the whole affair? And as for intelligibility, how do we know that the Law of Contradiction is a necessary condition for it or that without it language cannot perform its function adequately? Surely, on any 'operational definition' of 'intelligibility,' if a large number of people behaved as if they understood, then it cannot but be considered intelligible to them. I may not understand a thing myself, but I can certainly *observe* that others are understanding and successfully communicating with each other. Whether the language is performing its function or not can only be decided by those who are using it. If it were not performing the function to the satisfaction of those who are using it, then obviously they would try to change it in a way that would make it more effective for their purpose. Of course, the satisfaction may only be minimal and the persons may just not know that a more effective instrument exists or is possible. Equally, they may be too lazy to make the extra effort or too easily satisfied to want something better.

These considerations, however, do not seem relevant, for it is not that religious people are, or were not, aware of the Law of Contradiction. Like everyone else, they themselves accept it in many fields of human discourse. It is only with respect to religious experience that all of them feel constrained to question the relevance of the law. It is almost as if beyond a certain range the

2. 'Law of Contradiction and Empirical Reality', *Mind*, April, 1957. The 'point-instant-context' way of saving the Law of Contradiction has been discussed and, as far as I am aware, no one has ever attempted to meet the considerations urged there.

properties do not hold—a situation which certainly is not unfamiliar to persons in other fields of knowledge.

Basically, the application of the Law of Contradiction presupposes a sharp, specific, and identifiable application of 'sameness', and if this is not possible in a situation, it ceases to be relevant. Religious experience is concerned with that which is supposed to be beyond space, time, mass, and causality. There should be little wonder, then, if it expresses itself in a conjunction of contradictory statements asserted as true.

Contradiction may be a characteristic of linguistic statements, but that it is a necessary condition for any language to be a 'language' or for language to be 'intelligible' is empirically falsified by the existence of languages in which contradictions abound and which are treated as intelligible by a large number of persons who use them. It may be objected that the use in all such cases is non-cognitive and thus beyond questions of truth and falsehood. The contradictory assertions of religion are supposed to shock the mind out of its habitual grooves of thought, or to be something like poetry, which conveys truth but not of the cognitive kind. However, what if the persons insist that this is not always what they are doing? Some parts of religious discourse as, say, in Zen Buddhism, are obviously of this type and such is consciously intended by the Master. But, equally obviously, others are not of this type, and if one were to treat them in such a way, one would be corrected immediately. As for 'poetic truth', it has mostly been considered as the truth of the form of our feelings, while religion has always claimed that the truth it discovers is simultaneously a truth about the self and the world.

The claim to truth is the hardest thing to understand for most persons who are scientifically or philosophically trained. Yet it can hardly be denied that there is some sort of verification in terms of experience. A person has to undergo a certain process in order to encounter a certain experience which he takes as verificatory of that which he had been theoretically told by the tradition and the Master. The verification is never complete, and both theoretic reflection and actual experience can reveal new possibilities and actualities which neither the tradition nor the Master knew. The experience and its usual interpretation, of course, do not cohere with the general trend of interpretation in the sciences. And many

persons genuinely feel that if they have to bet on one rather than the other, it will be far, far safer to bet on science than religion, for it is almost certain they would gain the whole world and very, very doubtful if they would lose the whole soul. But is it necessary to choose between them? Can't we have the whole world and our soul too?

First, even on the purely scientific plane, there is no such thing as Science, but only sciences. There is not only the great cleavage between physical and social sciences, but within these broad classes there is no unity either. Even within a single science, the generalized theory from which all the facts within that realm can be derived is an ideal unrealized anywhere—including that paradigm of all sciences, the science of physics.

Second, it does not seem quite clear what exactly is meant by the demand that all the fields of human experience, or even all the theories constructed to account for the phenomena in these different fields, should be 'coherent' with each other. What, for example, is the 'coherence' between Freud's theory of neuroses, Darwin's theory of evolution, and the electro-magnetic theory of matter? Or, for that matter, what is the 'coherence' between 'matter' and 'evolution' and 'neuroses' if they are treated as facts and not as constructs in a theoretic system?³ The theories, it will be observed, are about too disparate realms for the question of coherence to be significantly raised about them. And once this is accepted, it becomes completely irrelevant to object to religious experience and its usual interpretation on the ground of 'incoherence' with experience and interpretation in other fields. True, if religion makes claim to knowledge about phenomena in other fields which conflict with the evidenced findings in those areas, then it obviously has to give up its claims or substantiate them by the usual processes of establishing a proposition in those realms. Similarly, if a generalized philosophical structure is built on the basis of religious experience, it will have to stand the usual tests brought to bear on the adequacy of any philosophical system whatsoever. But both these admissions do not impugn in any way the claim to knowledge and truth made by religion in its own sphere.

3. For a more extended discussion of the problem see 'Types of Coherence', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, July, 1960.

Third, it should be seriously considered how the cognitive claims of experiences which are of great immanent significance should be regarded. Sensory experiences in terms of which verification is sought in the sciences are usually not significant in themselves. Their significance is merely in the context of the theory which is sought to be verified. And it is never a part of the theory that the experience which verifies it should be felt as outstandingly suffused with significance in itself. In religious experience, on the other hand, the supremely significant character of the experience is an integral part of its being an evidence for the truth of the cognition claim based on it. Crystals may be beautiful to watch or the stars a wonderful sight, but it is not a part of the theory in crystallography or astronomy that they should be so.

The alleged incongruence between religious experience and its articulation on the one hand and the so-called 'scientific experience' and its articulation on the other need not then be such a serious thing as it usually is considered to be. After all, everything that seems to matter to us and makes life meaningful and worthwhile is, at least apparently, incongruent with scientific explanation. Whether it is love or friendship or enjoyment of art or contemplation of nature or courage to be what one thinks one ought to be—all these seem irrelevant to or even positively incongruent with the world as revealed by science. However, neither the scientist nor anyone else gives up these things, ceases to find meaning in them, or waits till someone will discover the cognitive congruence in all the different realms of human experiencing. Why, then, should it be different with religious experience in particular? Why should the exploration in this realm and the relevant theorizing therein wait on the issue of its accord with the experience and the theories in the different sciences?

There is, of course, a theorizing which is permitted and even welcomed in the prevailing academic atmosphere today, viz., the theorizing that drains the experience of all its significance and reduces it to some sort of an illusion which, when its causes are understood, would cease to be mistaken for knowledge or felt as supremely significant. Unfortunately, everything is supposed to have a cause, including an experience that is veridical, and there are no *specific* causes which establish an experience to be illusory. Also, an experience does not lose its significance if its causes are found

to be of dubious character, unless the belief in the nondubiousness of its causes is a necessary condition of its being felt as significant. The case is similar with that which is supposed to be illusory. No one ceases to feel the beauty of a Greek column just because he finds that its physical measurements are different from what they seem to the eye.

These considerations, it may be urged, apply to all experiences felt as significant, including those of the drug-addict and the murderer. Why should the religious experience be treated on a different level, or as cognitively in a different category than these experiences? The question of abnormality in relation to values and cognitive validity has seldom been discussed in philosophical literature. But it may be asserted with some confidence that, except in the statistical sense, religious experience cannot be considered as abnormal. The capacity for inner freedom, abiding joy, and relevant response to external situations is so pre-eminent and abundant in spiritual persons that compared to them, ordinary, normal persons appear as deficient human beings. The problem of cognitive validity centres around that about which the cognitive claim is made. If the claim is about empirical things, the tests of validity are the same as in the relevant sciences. However, it should be remembered that statements concerning entities, which may be treated as logical constructs out of experiences which are spiritual in nature, seldom concern the world known through sense experience or reasoning except at the highest level of generality, and they are almost impossible to verify. This does not mean they are unverifiable, but only that their verification is not quite an easy thing to achieve. This should hardly be surprising when even such a simple thing as the geometrical nature of the space we are living in is not quite easily determinable by all the methods of present-day physical science. The situation is even more complicated in the case of religious statements, as they are cognitive and evaluative at the same time. The logic of verification of evaluative statements is hardly developed, and if purely cognitive statements about the whole of the space-time universe (this phrase itself is difficult to give any meaning) are so difficult to verify, how much more difficult it must be in the case of these that are evaluative also.

Therefore, unless the autonomous validity of religious experi-

ence is accepted in its own field and the theoretic reflection thereon is carried in the context of this basic acceptance, all that goes on in any discussion about religion will appear completely irrelevant to those who are actually practising religion.⁴

4. For some of the issues discussed in this paper see 'Mysticism and the Problem of Intelligibility', *The Journal of Religion*, April, 1954.

ARTS AND THE COGNITIVE ENTERPRISE OF MAN

Abu Sayeed Ayyub, one of the most cultured and urbane thinkers in India, has been interested equally in philosophy and literature almost the whole of his life. There are perhaps few thinkers in India who combine such a sensitivity to both philosophy and poetry as Professor Ayyub does in his life and thought. In fact, his Jadavpur lectures, entitled *Poetry and Truth* try to bring together into one focus these two central concerns of his thought.

Yet, what is the truth that art gives us and how is it related to that which is supposed to be given us by science, on the one hand, and philosophy, on the other? Can there be different types of truth or, if truth is one, how could we claim that both science and arts give us truth?

There is, of course, no such thing as science. There are only sciences. Similarly there is no such thing as art, but only arts. Do we, then, wish to maintain that not only is there no such thing as scientific truth, but also that if the arts are supposed to convey some truth, then there is no such thing as unique artistic truth either? Truth would become multiple or rather multiform on such a view. Not only would there be a distinction between the truth which we find in science and that which we find in the arts, but also we would have to divide it further within these broad realms themselves. Thus, the pure, absolute, untarnished unity of the body of truth would lie broken in multiple fragments, each claiming to be the absolute itself and perhaps crying to be built into a unity which each of the torn parts promises and demands in its own way.

Even amongst the sciences there is no such thing as a unified body of knowledge which could claim to be the truth. And as for the arts, Ayyub himself has attempted to make a radical distinction between poetry, literature, and the other art forms. But

if we accept his distinction, would we also accept the contention that non-literary arts do not convey any truth at all and that it is only literature which may possibly vie with the sciences for the apprehension of truth—an apprehension which has been claimed by many to be more profound and deep than that given by science?

The question of the non-literary arts immediately raises the problem as to how we shall interpret their meaning, in case they have any, for they do not appear to possess any referential language whatsoever. This statement may not seem to be exactly true as, first, the term language is seldom confined to written or spoken language alone and, secondly, there are such things as representative paintings and mimetic dance which derive their meaning from that to which they refer. Further, even if there is no such thing as a formal structure of meaning in the sense in which it usually obtains in oral or written language, there certainly are such things which may be designated as elements or units in terms of which the whole structure of a work of art may be said to be built. After all, there are such things as notes in music or lines in painting or movements in dance, etc. In fact, it is well known that all art consists of symbols and if this is true, then it is legitimate to talk of that which the symbols symbolize.

The mimetic theory of art, tracing its origin from Aristotle, finds itself on this very fact. But, as everybody knows, the theory of imitation has hardly been of any help, as the truth of any work of art is hardly ever considered to lie in how correctly it represents that which it purports to represent. Also, as there is such a thing as non-representational art which does not even attempt to represent anything and which in many cases, is far, far superior to that which is intrinsically representative, the so-called truth of a work of art in the representational sense will be in conflict with what may be called its artistic quality.

In any case the question remains as to why we should seek and prefer the truth conveyed by a work of art to that which is conveyed through declarative sentences. In other words, is there any truth which can only be conveyed through a work of art and through no other means? The point is that unless we accept the position that there are truths which can be conveyed only through works of art, we would be saying at best that what is being con-

veyed by the so-called sciences could also be conveyed by the arts in some sense or other. Must we then say that the truth conveyed by a work of art can be conveyed by no set or sets of declarative sentences, however complex or complicated they may be? Would this then mean that as truth is always supposed to be the truth about something, this something itself is of such a divergent nature that it is impossible of articulation in terms of the usual medium of language alone? But would we then say that all the arts are different ways of conveying a truth about matters which are of such a nature that they cannot be conveyed by means of language, at least in its indicative use? Are the arts then translatable into each other, for that would be a necessary condition for the maintenance of the thesis that they all convey truth about a reality which itself is completely different from the one that is conveyed by the sciences assuming, of course, that sciences consist of nothing but declarative sentences?

However, if it is contended that the different arts are not reducible or translatable in terms of each other, then it would have to be conceded that the type of reality which art conveys is itself disparate in nature. This is not so disastrous as it may seem at first sight. For even in the realm of science, the paradigmatic example of knowledge *par excellence*, it is difficult to say that there are not different sciences or that the significantly true statements of one science can always be translated or reduced to the true statements of another science. But if this is not possible even in the case of science, there is little reason to expect it in the case of the arts. Yet, even if it is accepted that the arts convey a truth about reality, it would have to be essentially different from that which is being conveyed by science. However, there would still remain the related question regarding the criteria of truth and falsity that would be applicable in the case of the arts, if they are supposed to make any truth claims of their own.

The arts, in any case, are supposed to be concerned with that which is essentially imaginative, and imagination seems to make no claim to truth, at least in the first instance. But it may be asked what exactly is truth. Truth, in the first instance, may be defined as that which mirrors reality or, in other words, represents it as it is. On the other hand, truth is also conceived as that which not merely reveals reality but also transforms it, and, in a

deeper sense, transcends it. Art, however, may be considered as performing all the three functions. It has been held to mirror reality, but it has also been held to transform reality as well as to transcend it. The deeper question in all the three functions may be said to relate to that which it is supposed to mirror or transform or transcend.

The answer to this question may perhaps be found by asking another question. The question could take the form, for example, of asking whether there would be any art if man were only a mirroring consciousness or what, in the context of Indian philosophy, is called the witness consciousness, *Drasṭā*. On the other hand, we could have asked the same question with respect to the fact whether there would be any art if man were only a knower or a doer, that is a *Drasṭā* or a *Kartā*. It is obvious that on both these presuppositions there would be no such thing as art. Art presupposes a being who is essentially a *Bhoktā*, that is, one who suffers and enjoys and lives through the pleasure and pain of human living. It is therefore this world of reality, the reality of lived through experience with its joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains that art may be supposed to mirror, transform, and transcend. It is not concerned with reality as it is, apart from and independent of man which perhaps is what science seeks to understand and also which it seeks to transform, at least to some extent, through technology.

It may be suggested that science also tries to alleviate pain and conduce to pleasure through the discovery of drugs and other such things which affect consciousness directly. Yet there is perhaps a significant difference in the sense that art mirrors and transforms not merely the felt pleasure and pain but also what may be called the psychically lived life and its meaningful patterns that only human beings may be said to enjoy. The animals—perhaps all living beings—may be said to suffer pleasure and pain but only human beings do it as a part of complex meaningful patterns of structures which have a significance of their own.

The truth of imagination, then, is the truth of art and in order to understand what is the truth of literature in general we would have to ask ourselves first the question as to what is the truth of the imagination itself. The function of the imagination in science is well known both at the level of theoretic postulation and at

the level of technological ingenuity in the building of instruments for effecting change in nature or even in the human surroundings. In art, the function of the imagination has been primarily conceived as not giving us truth or helping in the exploration of truth, but basically as creating a world which is essentially different from the world as it is actually there. It is, so to say, the creation of a second order world which has a reality of its own but which has no relation except that of indirect derivation with the actual world.

Still, the truth of imagination is revealed in works of art. They are an indubitable witness, and may perhaps be conceived as analogous to models in the sciences. They may be supposed to deal with the emotional world of man, both as articulating it in terms through which man may understand himself, and also transform it in directions which he may consider as significant or desirable. The encounter with a work of art transforms one's consciousness and not only takes it away from the so-called actual surroundings, but changes it in subtle ways.

At a deeper level, the relation of art to reality may be formulated in terms of its relation to time. Time is ordinarily conceived as consisting of past, present, and future which is the basic triad in terms of which man lives. On the one hand, it is in the memories of the past that he is immersed while, on the other, he lives in anticipation of the future. The present which is a continuous moving intersection between the past and the future is the point where he acts to bring something into being which he desires or which he may be compelled to bring about by others who desire their own ends and want him as their instrument for their realization. However, if the circumstances permit him even a little opportunity, he either dreams of the future or is lost in the memories of the past or becomes immersed in the feeling with respect to the present.

The whole life of feeling with its hopes and fears, hates and loves, desire and greed surround a human being like the air which he breathes and provides the context in which he lives his life and wherein he finds its meaning and significance. This is the world that art mirrors, if it seeks to mirror any reality at all. The drama may be unfolded in terms of an individual life or be played on the historical stage where collectivities interact; but basically, it

mirrors and can mirror only this life. The truth of art thus concerns the truth of the lived life of man which science can never capture and which it perhaps never strives either to capture or to understand.

On the other hand, the imaginative power of creation presents a model of the lived life of man in terms of structures of felt meanings which, on the one hand, depict the life as it is actually lived through by most persons, and on the other, influences it in the direction of transformation towards forms of meaning which are embodied in a work of art. Thus, the works of art themselves may be divided into those that, for the most part, attempt to capture life as it is lived through or those that try to present an Ideal Type which might be, or perhaps even ought to be. This, in a certain sense, is different from the models in the sciences which never try to transform the natural reality in the direction of any ideal except indirectly through technology which itself can hardly be designed without a reference to human purposes which it seeks to realize.

The deeper question however relates to the issue whether the different arts relate themselves to different domains, both in their mirroring and transforming functions, or whether they are merely different ways of dealing with the same reality. The natural division, of course, would be in terms of the particular sense and the sense experience derived from it which is emphasized in a particular art. However, as all experience is to be interpreted in terms of human meaning by the mind itself, the structures of meaning and significance may be said to be embodied or interpreted in different sensuous media. It might be that each of the arts is pre-eminently suited to the expression of a particular kind of meaning or value as has been suggested by Susanne Langer in her *Feeling and Form*. However, it is difficult to think of analogues or translations of a meaning as embodied in one such medium into the media belonging to other senses, even though Sorokin has exhaustively elaborated this in his *Social and Cultural Dynamics* and Spengler has intuited daring correspondences between different creations of a culture in fields as apart as music and mathematics.

Ayyub, however, has not only been concerned with truth in relation to the arts but also with morality. The problem of truth in the arts is compelling for everyone who is seriously concerned

with them, but so also is its relation to morality. Ayyub has dealt with this issue in his well-known Bengali book entitled *Ādhunikatā o Rabīndranāth*. However, right from Plato all those who have tried to think of this problem tend either to make art subserve purposes that are not its own or judge it in the light of standards which are alien to its inner being. Instead of asking for a social transformation which itself would try to give importance to the apprehension of the beautiful, particularly in that aspect of it which makes man transcend and overcome temporality for some time at least, they try to use it as an instrument for some purposes of their own. Collingwood exposed the confusion of art with craft a long time back; yet, the confusion dies hard. Ayyub, on the other hand, is aware that art, at best, may give only a vision where the tragedies of the moral domain are transformed in a vision of the beautiful which reconciles all. But does the vision blunt the edge of action and the impulse towards it? Or, does it make men return to action with a subtler sensitivity and a deeper flexibility, responsive to the shades and nuances of the specific situation in a more relevant way?

However, the attempt to absolutize any of the ultimate values and treat others as merely instruments thereof, is perhaps as mistaken as to think that there is an intrinsic harmony between the ultimate values and that no serious conflicts between them could ever arise or be present. Yet, as almost all values refer simultaneously to the subject and the object, they may be taken as manifesting or illuminating the nature of both in some significant way. It would therefore be relevant to ask as to what exactly is revealed by the arts about the nature of the universe, on the one hand, and the nature of man, on the other. It is this trail which has to be pursued if the cognitive function of the arts is to be understood. Also, unless the transformative and the transcending aspects of truth are kept in mind equally with those that are usually regarded as informative or descriptive, it would always be suspected that the arts have no cognitive function at all.

The closest approach to the understanding of arts in this respect may perhaps be found only if we see it in relation to religion. The latter also starts with purely imaginative entities and would, if successful, result in their concrete actualization in a transformed human personality which itself is, perhaps, seen and appre-

hended as an actualized work of art. That is one reason why when confronted with a genuine spiritual personality all questions cease and the person himself seems to be his own justification and to a certain extent even the justification of the world. In almost a similar sense, a work of art appears to be its own justification and to a certain extent justifies the world in which we find ourselves also. The truth of imagination is the truth of *human life* and whoever ignores this does so at the peril of becoming more like the non-human world he sees around himself.

SELF AND ITS REPRESENTATIONS
IN LITERATURE:
SOME EPISTEMOLOGICAL ISSUES

The idea of self is generally explored in the philosophical and religious traditions of a culture. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that everyone who lives has some idea of the self which develops through the experiences of one's own life and through one's observation of others with whom one is closely related. Literature in a sense may be considered a bridge between these two. The concepts of self as elaborated in the philosophico-religious traditions of a culture and the lived experience of the self, both as observed in oneself and others, may be said to provide the twin background for the imaginative exploration and construction of the self in literature.

Such a construction, however, would have an added problem to face in those cultures where the idea of self developed in the philosophico-religious tradition is at radical variance with the self that is actually experienced and observed. Of course, the representation of the self in literature cannot but heavily depend on what may be called the empirico-psychological level of the self and not what may be called its transcendental nature. The Indian tradition may be considered to be a pre-eminent example of the situation where the philosophico-religious notion of the self is of such a nature as to make it unfit for effective use by literary imagination. The self in the Indian tradition has been conceived as essentially distinct from the whole of empirical reality or rather from all that which can be experienced as 'object'. That is one reason why both mind and intellect have been normally considered as a part of the 'not-self rather than the self. The Buddhists, of course, do not accept anything like self even at the transcendental level, and thus problems arising from not accepting any permanent entity had to be faced by them, whether

in the world of objects or in the world of the subject. However, there seems little evidence of any stream-of-consciousness literature produced in India under the influence of Buddhist metaphysics.

But, whether the self was accepted or not, the way in which human reality was conceived in India, was primarily in terms which happened to deny the fundamental reality of both passions and emotions as well as the reality of the 'other' without which no literature can be created. In fact, the first systematic creative reflection on the dramatic arts shows an awareness of this problem. The *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata raises the issue as to whether the lives of the gods may be shown in a play and gives a negative answer to the question on the ground that unless there is sorrow and joy, virtues and vices, effort and frustration, success and failure, one cannot have a dramatic representation. Hence, if gods were to be represented, they 'were to be shown as taking place in Bhāratavarṣa, the land where joys are mixed with sorrows and where the achievement of desires depends on endeavour'.¹

Drama, of course, is not the whole of literature and though drama cannot be conceived without action and conflict between characters, the same cannot be said of other forms of literature such as prose or poetry, particularly of the lyric type. But though the latter may not show any specific action or conflict and its resolution as is necessary in a play, it must contain feelings and emotions, without which it is difficult to see how it can make any sense at all. The essential distinction between drama and poetry or between *Nāṭya* and *Kāvya* made in the Indian tradition points to this. Theory of *Rasa* was the heart of the former, while that of *Alaṅkāra* was the centre of the latter. Thus, the representation of self in dramatic literature is bound to be different from that which is found in other modes of literature.

But if we accept that the cultural ideal regarding the self as contained in the philosophico-religious tradition functions as a model for all the arts in a culture, then the search for a correlation between the representation of the self in diverse art forms

1. Mukunda Lath, 'The Nāṭya as conceived by Bharata', *New Quest*, March-April 1984, p. 85. (*Nāṭyaśāstra* 18, 98-100).

will have to be undertaken. The self, for example, is represented as much in sculpture as in literature and it is perhaps easier to see more clearly the self as represented in sculptured images, whether they are Buddhist or Jaina, Vaiśnava or Śaiva than in literary modes such as drama or poetry. The images of Buddha and Mahavira represent almost transparently the idea of self as conceived in Buddhism and Jainism. On the other hand, the Nataraja image of Śiva gives a visible representation, not of a person but of a cosmic idea, a way of looking at the world. It may be difficult to find literary counterparts of the Buddha and Mahavira images but there can be little doubt that much of the classical Indian literature may be understood better by seeing it as an attempt to represent something similar to it.

The self as conceived of in the Indian tradition is primarily a self that witnesses things, that is, a self that only observes and does not either act or feel anything. This, of course, is the *Sāṃkhya* position. But even when feeling in the form of bliss is considered an essential part of the nature of self, it is treated not as something which has an intrinsic variability in it, an upward or a downward movement, a rise or a fall, but rather as a steady state which is continuously and uniformly blissful. Action, dynamism, emotion, conflict, and development are usually treated either as unreal or merely as means for the achievement of the former. In most Indian literature, therefore even where action is necessary as in drama, it is valued not for its own sake but only as a means through which a state of being where all action and movement ceases is realized.

The position may perhaps be understood better if we contrast it with the tradition in the West where self is thought of in terms of will rather than in terms of pure detached awareness. The concept of sin in the West arises from the assertion of the human will and is not seen as merely some sort of inexplicable error, as is held by most schools of Indian philosophy. Redemption comes by saying 'Thy Will be done' instead of 'My will be done'. Right from the Greek tragedies to modern drama, the focus of attention in the West has always been the man of action who pursues an impossible ideal which is mostly outside himself and which has little to do with any state of his own being. Faust is the perfect symbol of this character. His is the search for infinite know-

ledge for the sake of infinite power symbolizing the quest of western man. It may all be 'sound and fury, signifying nothing' and 'ripeness is all', but still it is the sound and fury that holds the centre of the stage and which provides meaning and significance to the life of man.

As against this, the situation is completely different in the philosophico-religious conception of the self in India as well as the way it has been represented in the literature and arts of this country. In the Indian context, the question of the meaningfulness or the meaninglessness of actions or emotions does not arise, since they are regarded as the result of a misapprehension of the true nature of the self. The self has a natural tendency to be identified with that which is distinct from it and this is the root cause of the ignorance from which evil follows, rather than from the assertion of one's own will.

Art and literature in India, thus, suffered from a continuous tension and implicit conflict between what could not but be felt as real because of its very nature and that which the culture at its deepest level thought of as real, particularly with regard to the self. All art, if we forget literature for the moment, deals perforce with media that are thoroughly sensuous in character and it was through this sensuous medium that one was expected to convey that the reality which it represented was essentially non-sensuous in character. Indian art tried to achieve this impossible task set to it by the culture. What is surprising, however, is that it almost succeeded in fulfilling this impossible assignment. Some of its greatest works remind one of those Zen gardens in Japan where there are no flowers or trees or anything else that one associates with a garden, but merely fine gravel and round stones which yet give one the sense of a garden. While no work of art in India reached such an extreme as this, it approximated it in some of its greatest achievements. But in literature where a story had to be told or something described, the attempt was not so successful as in the plastic arts or in music. The conflict between the necessities of the medium and the ideal which the culture had proposed, thus, was far more severe in the case of literary creations than in the case of other art forms.

The solution that was attempted took many forms. One extreme was perhaps the explicit declaration of the intention as in

the *Saundarānanda* of Asvaghosa where it is stated that whatever else besides *mokṣa* there is in the play, is there only because of the exigencies or requirement of poetry or art.² The other and perhaps the more general alternative chosen was to minimize action and conflict as far as possible; and where it was difficult to avoid it, to try to show it in such a way that it was more suggested than enacted and to see that the means used for suggesting action were as indirect as possible.

The inclusion of song, dance, and mime, etc., in Sanskrit plays has usually been explained either in the context of the theory of *rasa* as propounded by Bharata or in terms of the creation of a spectacle produced out of the different arts for the enjoyment of the audience, as is done in most Indian films today. The two approaches are not incompatible. In fact, Bharata explicitly raises the issue of the combination of different arts to produce a new art, that is, *Nāṭya* or Drama and the practical and theoretical problems created by the enterprise. Recently, Mukund Lath has treated this question extensively and raised some very interesting issues, both theoretical and practical, which though interesting in themselves need not be pursued here in detail.³ However, what is of interest from our viewpoint is the fact that the use of such diverse art forms in the creation of drama may also be seen as an attempt to minimize and mitigate the impact of action and conflict which are inherent in the dramatic mode of presentation. The other alternative in the situation was to treat the type of literature that was directly concerned with the depiction of conflict and action in the usual sense of the term as a separate form in itself and to treat it almost as the lowest of the low and thus, virtually banishing it from what the cultured called 'literature'.

But one of the strange results of this banishment in Sanskrit literature was that the banished reality of the sensuous and the empirical assumed an almost autonomous form, and like the psycho-analytic 'return of the repressed', pervaded and overflowed the whole of Indian art and literature in a way that has

2. *Saundarānanda*, 81-63.

3. Mukund Lath, 'Bharata and the fine art of mixing structures', paper presented at a seminar organized recently by the Department of Sociology, University of Delhi.

perhaps seldom been seen in other cultures and traditions. The dripping sensuality which is such a feature of most Sanskrit literature as well as of other art forms in India has been a perennial problem for those who have tried to understand it in terms of the deepest values of the culture, incessantly proclaimed through its religious and philosophical texts.

Yet even within this domain the predominant mood that is prevalent is once again a tribute to the central notion of the self as essentially inactive in nature. The whole thing is, so to say, the reflection on the physical and psychical plane of what is conceived in spiritual terms as a state of being which is essentially and undisturbedly a state of perennial blissful being. The line between what was genuine symbolism arising out of the Bhakti tradition and what was merely an excuse for indulging in pure sensuality is very thin indeed in this kind of literature.

Between the world of the spirit and the world of the senses, then, lies the world of literature. But the question what sort of self is represented in it, is complicated by two other factors, which, unless taken into account, would distort the picture or at least render it incomplete. Besides the self that is regarded as real by the philosophico-religious tradition of a culture and the ordinary empirico-psychological self that is experienced by most of us in our day-to-day living, there is the self of the writer or the artist who creates the work. It is this which gives individuality to a work of art and perhaps even more to a work of literature where it is difficult for the creator not to be present in his work in some sense or other. Yet the artist is never directly present in the work. He is only indirectly so. What we have before us is the work of art or literature and not the person who created it. For, though we know that every work has an author, yet the work may be anonymous and even when not anonymous we may know little about the biography of the artist or the writer who created it. There is thus an author within the work of art and an author outside it. The relationship between the two is very difficult to establish and even more difficult to understand and articulate. Some of the important points in this regard that should be taken into consideration relate to the fact that the personality of the writer or the artist is itself a creation of the culture in which he has been born and brought up and that imaginative

projection of the self or selves in his created work is a function both of the past history of the works in that field which have been judged as authoritative by the culture and his own imaginative stance towards them. The immanent intentionality which is so pervasive in a work of art and even more so in works of literature gives not only representation to the idea of self in the work concerned but also what may be called the attitude towards that idea which is implicit in the way it is approached, described and developed. The so-called point of view of the author which, explicitly or implicitly, can never be absent from a work that tries to represent anything, gives a twist to the representation which not only makes it complex but also makes it function simultaneously at least at two, if not more, levels.

So far we have only talked of the four factors which have to be taken into account in understanding the representation of self in literature: the ideal as elaborated by the philosophico-religious tradition of a culture, the actual experience of the self by most people in their day-to-day life, the self of the artist who creates the work and the self or selves that are immanent in a created work of art or literature. There is, however, another side to the story, and that is the reader or the observer of a work of art without whom the circuit does not get completed, as the reader or the spectator or the audience is as central to the understanding of any creation of art as the creator of the medium in which he creates. This, in fact, remains true even of those creation which seem to be self-enclosed autonomous worlds of forms which refer back to themselves, and not to anything beyond or outside them. They are eminently self-referential in a palpable, concrete, and visual way. But whatever the character of the created work, what is apprehended by a reader or an observer need not coincide with all that exists in the work of art. In fact, the greater the work of art the more difficult it would be for any reader or set of readers to exhaust what is contained in it. And in case what is apprehended is articulated then its articulation, particularly when it is given a more permanent form as in writing, affects the apprehension of the work by subsequent persons and thus there occurs what may be called a history of the apprehension of a work of art where successive acts of apprehension are affected by the way the work has been apprehended before. What one sees as

represented in a work of art or literature, thus, is a function not merely of the work itself but the way it has been apprehended before by others.

The representation of self in literature, thus, has a historical dimension in a double sense. It is rooted in ideas and norms which are a legacy of the past to the writer concerned both at the conceptual level and at the level of their imaginative embodiment in created works which function as controlling and authoritative norms for what is regarded as great literature in that culture. From the readers' point of view, on the other hand, the apprehension of the self as represented in works of literature is a function of the way successive great critics have apprehended them. At any given point of historical time, therefore, each work of literature may be regarded as consisting of successive layers of ideas of self which are embodied in it and which like the successive geological ages of the earth are an evidence of the way certain minds at a certain stage of history apprehended it. However, it should not be forgotten that there is also a history not merely of the representation of the self in literature and the way it is understood over a period of time, but also of the philosophico-religious exploration of the idea, both at the conceptual and the existential level.

The interrelation of these three histories in any particular culture is an interesting undertaking but, as far as I know, it has not yet been undertaken with respect to any culture nor does there seem any awareness of the need for undertaking it. What may, however, be hazarded on almost pure a priori grounds is that there is bound to be a time lag between the developments at one level and developments at other levels. It is fairly clear therefore that the ideas of self that a literature represents would be the ideas that were prevalent in the previous period. The same appears true to some extent about the relationship between the second and the third levels also.

Besides these, there seems to be still another dimension which creates complexity of a different sort in our exploration of the representation of self in literature. This arises from the fact that the so-called day-to-day empirico-psychological experience of the self is itself powerfully affected by the representations of self in literature and drama, as men conceive of themselves in terms of

the characters that they read about in stories or see in plays or films. The powerful impact of films in this regard shows in a conspicuous way what perhaps has always been true of the arts in general and of literature in particular. This is perhaps one reason why there has always been a problem of censorship with respect to the arts and why political and religious cultures have always used them as vehicles for the propagation of their views.

The influence of the arts on the way people imagine themselves to be does not, however, mean that they model themselves completely in terms of the imagined characters of the drama or the novel. The actuality, of course, is a function of many factors but that the arts and literature play a significant role in modelling human personalities can hardly be denied. This, however, leads to complications of a different sort. A literary writer, though aware of the norms of the idea of the self which has been explored by the highest thought of his culture as well as of the actuality of life that is lived by people in their daily activity, forgets that the behaviour which he sees as objectively given in his own times is itself a function of the literary creations of the past which men have tried to imitate, embody, and live up to in their lives to some extent or other.

The representation of the self, thus, can be seen from the viewpoint of the person who tries to represent it in his work or from the viewpoint of the person or persons who try to apprehend that representation. Both are involved in history and are heirs to a historical tradition, both of representation and of apprehension. The still deeper problems relate to what may be called attempts at objectification of the self and its apprehension as something which is not an object through the medium of something which *is* an object. The epistemological and ontological problems raised by these two paradoxical situations are too complex and complicated to be explored here. But there can be little doubt that perhaps one of the most fruitful ways of looking at literature would be to see it as an attempt at a solution of these paradoxes. It should be remembered, however, that the solution is attempted not at the conceptual level as a philosophy but at the level of concrete, lived-through experience without which art or literature cannot be conceived at all and which, perhaps, is its most essential difference from philosophy.

Why should the self objectify itself and why should others be interested in the objectification of somebody else's conception of what other people's selves are? The answer to these questions may lie in the essential difference between self and nature, illustrated by this fact itself. There seems to be a need, almost a necessity of looking at oneself in countless embodiments. Literature, thus, is not a mirror of nature, but of self or rather, selves in which we try to recognize ourselves not merely as what we are or what we ought to be, but as we might have been. The imagined possibility of one's self is as much a part of the reality of oneself as what one actually is. In the case of the self, the ideal is as much a part of its reality as that which it finds itself to be. All art in general and literature in particular, thus, fulfils this need of the self to see itself and become aware both of its perils and its potentialities.

PITIRIM SOROKIN AND THE PROBLEM
OF KNOWLEDGE

Pitirim A. Sorokin's *Social and Cultural Dynamics* seems to be such a definitive work, both in its data and methodology, that most thinkers seem to be afraid of coming to terms with it. Instead of discussion, there is a general evasion of the issues raised by this outstanding work which combines the encyclopaedic exhaustiveness of the data with a self-consciousness about methodology that is rarely found among sociological thinkers. In this paper, however, we shall be concerned with only one aspect of his work, viz., the problem of knowledge and try to show that there is a serious confusion in his central categories vitiating the whole idea of socio-cultural fluctuation of systems of knowledge or truth.

Sorokin's whole work is a sustained attack against any unilinear theory of development in any direction. Not merely this, his is a challenge to the whole concept of a unified system of knowledge. If his contention is true, then there is no such thing as *the* system of truth but only systems of truth which are each alternatively valid. He does not merely show, as a matter of historical fact, that different criteria of validity have been held at different times but also that there could not be any grounds for choosing between them. The scientific adventure of the last four hundred years is no more valid than that of the Middle Ages, for the simple reason that they do not have the same criteria of validity. The major presupposition of the scientific adventure is the same as the ultimate presupposition of all sensate culture in general, viz., the belief that only that is true which can be grasped by the senses. Such a presupposition is completely denied by the ideational culture which believes that only the supra-sensory and supra-rational is true. However strange such a presupposition may seem to us, Sorokin has conclusively shown that over large

tracts of time the belief was regarded as natural and normal and that there has been no continuous unilinear movement from the one to the other but only an alternative fluctuation between them.

However, instead of remaining merely satisfied with the fluctuation between alternative systems of validities and the impossibility of choosing between them, Sorokin works towards the notion of an 'integral system of truth' which combines in itself both the ideational and the sensate systems of truth. He finds the historical correlate of this integral system in the so-called idealistic cultures which are a synthesis between the ideational and the sensate and are found generally during the intervening period of a declining ideational and a rising sensate culture. The synthesis, however, is short-lived and the rising sensate culture dominates and submerges the ideational elements in its onward sweep. It should also be remembered that, according to Sorokin, no such synthesis is created during the interregnum between a declining sensate and a rising ideational culture. There is only an eclectic confusion that can hardly deserve the name of a synthesis. This means that the 'integration' can occur only in terms of the idealistic elements and not of the sensate ones.

Historically, therefore, there would be a triple alternation between ideational, idealistic and sensate cultural systems and the question of validity between them would be meaningless since each would be valid in terms of itself and invalid or only partially valid in terms of the other. In fact, the whole question of validity does not seem to have been seriously discussed by Sorokin. By showing that alternative criteria have been held in the past, the problem does not cease but only becomes more acute. It may be that ultimately we have to be satisfied with some sort of a Logic of Alternation but unless all attempts at generally acceptable unitary criteria of validity have failed, such an alternative need not be chosen.¹

1. Kalidas Bhattacharya in his book *Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy* has powerfully argued for an ultimate logic of alternation. Niels Bohr's principle of complementarity, the view of cultural anthropologists as to alternative cultural frameworks and recent studies in semantics and logic, all seem to be tending in the same direction. Bhattacharya's work deserves serious discussion, but this is not the place to undertake it.

In a recent work of his,² Sorokin has summarized his view of the ways of cognition and systems of truth under the following phrases: (1) Sensory cognition and the truth of the senses, (2) Rational cognition and the truth of reason, (3) Supra-rational and Supra-sensory cognition and the Ideational truth, (4) Integral cognition and the Integral system of truth, and (5) Eclectic cognition.

The first is explained with the statement: 'All propositions that deal with the sensory aspects of the world, derived from sense perception, and tested, by sense organs (in co-operation with rational syllogistic and mathematical logic) are sensory; such cognition is sensory; and the truth based upon the testimony of sense organs is Sensate truth'. The second is concerned with 'Syllogistic and/or mathematical logic'. The third is concerned with 'God, Nirvana, Tao, Brahman, Zen, Chit', or any other such thing known by direct 'intuition, grace, revelation, mystic experience, samadhi', etc. The fourth is considered to be a unification of these into 'one integral cognition and system of truth in which each of the three ways and truths checks, corrects, supplements and enriches others'. The fifth is 'only chaotic bits of information, not organized into any unified or consistent system, self-contradictory in large part'.

It should be noted that sensate truth, as Sorokin conceives it, necessarily involves the truths of reason known through deductive reasoning and not vice versa. Ideational truth, on the other hand, is not merely of God or Tao or Brahman but also of all that is apprehended by intuition, inspiration or direct apprehension. In this way, for Sorokin, such a factor is present 'at the initial phase of creativeness ... in science and technology, religion and philosophy, the fine arts and law, ethics and politics'. Such a statement is copiously illustrated by extensive quotations in the third section of Chapter Sixteen of *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. IV. The significance of such an admission will be seen later. As for the integral cognition, which combines intuitional, sensate, and rational elements in a synthesis, he has given no examples of it unless, of course, we are to understand idealistic cultures as such. The eclectic cognition is, perhaps, not very

2. *Social Philosophies of an Age of Crisis*, pp. 245-48.

important as a way of cognition but it gains significance if we remember that 'the total culture of any organized group, even of a single person, consists not of one cultural system but of a multitude of vast and small cultural systems that are partly in harmony, partly out of harmony, with one another, and in addition many congeries of various kinds'.

The distinction between these different ways of cognition thus seems to be based on the different sources of knowledge, viz., sense-perception, deductive reasoning, and intuition, revelation, or inspiration. But Sorokin also seems to define, at least ideational culture, by its *content* rather than by its *organon* of knowledge. The fact, for example, that intuition is 'at the initial phase of creativeness' of a scientific hypothesis would not make it *ideational* for Sorokin's purposes. It is only if the intuition, revelation, or inspiration gives a knowledge of supra-sensory and supra-rational kind such as of God, Brahman or Tao that it is to be called ideational. Sorokin has criticised Northrop for failing to distinguish between the immediacy of strict sense-perception and the direct intuition of a mystic or yogi. The designation of both by the same term, 'aesthetic' or 'intuitive' in Northrop's system is misleading, since it leads to the identification of the sensory with the ideational which, according to Sorokin, is impossible. But he himself seems to have put two different, if not incompatible, things under the term 'intuitive'. It may designate either the way of cognition that leads to the knowledge of entities of a *particular* sort, i.e., those which are supra-sensory and supra-rational or the way which, while itself being non-sensory and non-rational, may lead to the knowledge of *any* sort of entities whether sensory, rational, or supra-rational in their nature.

There is a radical difference between the sensory-rational objects of intuitive knowledge and those that are supra-sensory and supra-rational. The intuitive or revelatory knowledge that the world was created five thousand years ago is essentially different in its nature from the intuitive knowledge that there is a supra-sensory, supra-rational reality called God or Brahman or Tao. The object of knowledge in the first case is an empirical state of affairs and has, thus, a *possibility* of being verified through other sources of knowledge. In the second case, however, the *very*

possibility of an independent verification is excluded by the designation of the object of knowledge as supra-rational and supra-sensory. The refusal to make any distinction between the two would only lead to great confusion, since the former can be accepted by any scientist without impunity while the latter would *always* be *irrelevant* for his purposes. Sorokin's extensive quotations in Chapter Sixteen of his *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, Vol. IV, only establish the widespread acceptance of intuition as a source of knowledge in the various arts and sciences. But this can be no *ground* for the acceptance of intuition as a source of knowledge of entities which are supra-sensory and supra-rational in their nature.

The unitary category of ideational culture should, therefore, be broken into two parts; one part of it is concerned with truths that are supra-sensory and supra-rational, the other that which is concerned with things empirical and rational. The two may be functionally interrelated in the institutions of a society and in the minds of men but they are *logically* disparate and, in terms of logico-meaningful unities of Sorokin, are congeries rather than systems. In fact, things which, when viewed logico-meaningfully, appear as congeries may be causal-functional unities though, of course, logic-meaningful unities when embodied in 'behavioural' and 'material' forms give rise necessarily to causal-functional unities. The distinction between causal-functional unities which are *due to* logico-meaningful unities and those that obtain between logico-meaningful congeries needs to be made. It is perhaps the lack of this distinction which has led Sorokin hastily to reject the possibility that Toynbee's or any other historian's so-called 'civilization' are unities at all. He himself has characterized them as 'rather a cultural field where *a multitude of vast and small cultural systems and congeries—partly mutually harmonious, partly neutral, partly contradictory—coexist*'. If we remember, this was just the description of 'the total culture of any *organized* group or even a single person' quoted previously as an example of eclectic cognition. But if the group could be *organized* and have some sort of a functioning unity in spite of such a description, then surely it is *possible* that a 'civilization' may also have it to some degree.

However, what is more important for our purpose is to note

that there are two radically different kinds of objects of intuitive cognition which are so incommensurate that they cannot form a logico-meaningfully unified system in any sense of the term. In his category of integral cognition, Sorokin has sought to suggest a synthesis of sensate, rational, and intuitional modes of cognition where each 'checks, corrects, supplements and enriches the others'. But if there are to be different types of objects of the intuitional modes of cognition, then it becomes important to know which is to form the element in the integral synthesis. If the intuitional objects that are to be integrated belong to the empirical or rational variety, then modern science with its hypothetico-deductive-verificational method seems, par excellence, to be the integral system of knowledge which Sorokin is talking about. In case, however, he means the *supra-sensory* and the *supra-rational* objects of intuitive cognition, he has to show how they can *possibly* form a synthesis with the sensory and the rational elements when, by definition, they have no relation to it. The so-called 'triple epistemic correlation' is a correlation only in name since there can, in fact, be no *correlation* between the supra-sensory and the supra-rational elements on the one hand and the sensory and the rational elements on the other. The elements of the former type belong to the 'non-logical' category of Pareto's system and are, thus, incapable of proof or disproof by any epistemic correlation. In case such a correlation were possible, there would already have been an increasing confirmation or rejection of the hypotheses, but, as by the very nature of the case it cannot be so, they can in principle, be never pronounced either true or false.

The so-called integral cognition, then, is either already achieved in the methods of present-day science or is impossible of achievement. To say that "the empirico-sensory aspect of it is given by the truth of the senses; the rational aspect, by the truth of reason; the supra-rational aspect by the truth of faith" is not to give us an integral cognition but alternative systems of cognition united only by the fact that they have been conjointly asserted in a sentence. The further statement that 'each of these systems of truth separated from the rest becomes less valid or more fallacious, even within the specific field of its own competence' cannot, we think, be true of the transcendental verities known

through faith, intuition, grace, or revelation. *Credo, quia absurdum*, summarizes the essence of faith and to judge it at the bar of reason or sensory experience is already to leave the field and commit blasphemy. As Sorokin's own data show, even the attempt to *justify* the truths of faith already reveals that the *mere* faith of pure ideational cultures is felt insufficient and that it foreshadows the coming time when instead of justifying, reason would begin to question faith.

If, then, we admit that the objects of intuitional cognition fall into two radically different classes and that only one of these can enter into possible integration with the sensory and the rational modes of cognition, then we must also admit that a radical distinction must be made between the sensory-rational objects of intuitional knowledge in an ideational culture and others which are of an entirely different kind. The major premise of the ideational culture, thus, should be split into two parts or rather an *additional* premiss added to that already formulated by Sorokin. Not only is it believed that the 'ultimate reality-value is supra-sensory and supra-rational' but also that the *sensory* and *rational* truths revealed by intuition, faith, grace, or revelation are and in fact cannot but be *empirically and rationally true*. In the so-called ideational culture-systems that have historically existed, the latter has been as necessary and sometimes even more so than the former. Shorn of the latter, the former only describes the essential kernel of mystic experience which, while in itself undeniable, is intrinsically *irrelevant* to the sensory-rational cognition of the scientist.

It would, however, be confusing if we fail to distinguish—as Sorokin seems to have done—between the *undifferentiated Tao, Brahman* or *Zen* of the mystics and the *determinate* nature of the supra-sensory and supra-rational reality as conceived in most religions. Northrop might have been mistaken in including both the apprehension of the mystic and the sensing of the blue under the same category of 'intuition', but Sorokin too has made a similar mistake by failing to distinguish between the object of mystic experience and the determinate supra-sensory, supra-rational object of intuitional cognition and including them both under the same category of 'ideational system of knowledge'. Northrop has steered clear of this mistake and sharply pointed

out the distinction between the immediate intuition of the 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum' and the theoretic postulation of a determinate supra-sensory, supra-rational reality. But he, on his part, has failed to see that there can be no 'epistemic correlation' in the case of such a theoretic postulation and, thus, while immensely important for the understanding of cultural systems and their interrelations, it is *intrinsically* impossible of verification as either true or false.

There should, thus, be drawn a threefold distinction in the ideational system of knowledge. First, it consists of those truths which are concerned with empirical-rational states of affairs in the world. Second, it consists of truths about the determinate nature of supra-sensory and supra-rational reality. Third, it consists of truths concerned with the 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum' from whose viewpoint every other truth is, at best, of partial validity and, at worst, a complete mirage, a *māyā*, an illusion. Only the first of these can have possible 'epistemic correlation' and, thus, the possibility of verification.

The *validity* of the rational-empirical content of an ideational culture, then, can be determined by the usual verificational methods of science. Of course, in doing so one of the ultimate premises of ideational culture that intuition, grace, or revelation gives, indubitably and inevitably, valid empirical and rational knowledge, is given up. But this *can* only be done because the content of such knowledge is essentially empirical, rational in nature and the 'intuitional' grounding cannot long withstand the repeated failure of such propositions to come true empirically. In an *intelligible* sense, therefore, we can say that much of the scientific knowledge of the sensate culture of the present day is *more valid* than the same or similar kind of knowledge of the ideational culture of the Middle Ages. And if we can say so, Sorokin's idea of 'systems of truth' is wrong in an important respect. At least, with respect to empirical-rational truths there are not *systems* but only the system of truth. *There is, thus, a cross-cultural system of validity and not alternative systems of validity, at least in the empirical-rational sphere of truth.*

If we look closely, however, we would find that a unified system of knowledge prevails not only with respect to the sensory-rational sphere of knowledge but with respect to the mystical

sphere also. The 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum' cannot, by its very nature, be apprehended differently and thus must possess a cross-cultural unity which does not vary with varying cultures. The *determinate* intuitions of supra-sensory, supra-rational reality, on the other hand, can hardly form a unified system. Each stands by itself in its self-sustained validity since there is no overarching revelation in terms of which they can be united. Northrop, therefore, is right when he contends both in his *The Meeting of East and West* and *The Taming of the Nations* that a unified system can be built on the basis of the integral system of science and the apprehension of the 'undifferentiated aesthetic continuum' and not on the various determinate theoretic postulations of supra-sensory, supra-rational reality found in various religions. But the unified system would be a system of *knowledge* rather than of *values*, as Northrop seems to think. In fact, the relation between truth-values and other values is one of the weakest points in Northrop's system'.³ The multiple value-patterns of different cultures can hardly be *unified* either on the basis of science or mysticism or both.

But while it is true that a unified system of knowledge can be built both on the integral system of science and the intuitional system of mystic cognition, it is doubtful whether it can be built on both *together*. The two simply cannot form a logico-meaningful unity together and even the empirical attempt to realize one either in the individual or in the collective social life tends to make the realization of the other difficult, if not impossible.

This would give some ground for the socio-cultural fluctuation or alternation that Sorokin so powerfully contends for. The limits of the fluctuation may be set by the fact that both may be necessary for the functioning of a society. There may, thus, be a *critical* range within which the fluctuations may occur. But the fact of fluctuation should not lead us to conclude that a judgement of validity cannot be rationally made in respect of matters of knowledge between predominantly different cultural systems, whether situated in different regions or different times. The

3. For a further discussion of this point see my paper 'Some Considerations on F. S. C. Northrop's Theory of Concepts', *The Philosophical Review*, July 1952.

validity of knowledge that is concerned with empirical-rational subject matter can, in most cases, be finally determined by the integral method of scientific verification. As for mystic cognition it cannot but be always valid. The intuitional cognition of determinate supra-sensory, supra-rational reality is a matter of faith and impossible, at least, of cross-cultural verification.

The development of sensory-rational knowledge that is traced, for example, in George Sarton's monumental *History of Science* is, thus, not wrong as Sorokin's theory of socio-cultural systems would lead us to suppose. For, the unity of sensory-rational knowledge is the unity of its subject matter and it is *irrelevant* to its empirical-rational validity from what source it has been derived. This, of course, does not mean that there is a uniform, unlimited, unilinear trend in the development of sensory-rational knowledge. What it means is merely, that in most fields of empirical-rational state of affairs, the scientific knowledge of the present day is vastly superior and far more valid than either the ideational knowledge of the Middle Ages or the sensate knowledge of the late Graeco-Roman times, or the ideational knowledge of the early Greek times. The claim would hold also with respect to the Minoan, Egyptian, Indic and Sinic civilizations of the past as well as the others which Toynbee has enumerated in his *A Study of History*. Even if, in future, a predominantly ideational culture were to swamp much of the scientific knowledge of the present, including the work of Sorokin himself, that will not destroy the validity of either that work in general or his work in particular.

Thus as far as the problem of knowledge is concerned, Sorokin's chief failure seems to consist in having failed to distinguish between the source, content, and validity of knowledge. This has led him to confuse the empirical-rational elements of knowledge in an ideational culture and the supra-sensory, supra-rational elements in it. This also makes it difficult for him to see that the empirical-rational field of knowledge crosses the classificatory categories of ideational and sensate cultures and that it is *only* with respect to it that a *cross-cultural, developmental, integral system of cognition is even possible*.