

THE
NATURE OF PHILOSOPHY

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PRACHI PRAKASHAN
CALCUTTA

Publisher :

S. Goel,
Prachi Prakashan,
12, Chowringhee Square,
Calcutta-1.

MARCH, 1955



Printer :

B. K. Sen,
Modern India Press,
7, Wellington Square,
Calcutta-13.

**Dedicated
to
My Teachers**

LOOKING BACK

There is a history behind every work—relevant and irrelevant. The past flows into the present and the present looks back, lingering over moments that are of no interest to the reader. Biography crosses objectivity—the Subject intrudes and the ghosts walk alive in the corridors where they were, perhaps, never dead.

A nebulous nucleus taking a determinate form—that is the story of all creation whether it be a thought, a poem or the stars that circle around. To the environment, its attitude is always ambivalent. Like the parents from whom it grows, it cuts off the umbilical cord and asserts itself in opposition to them. It is sustained from and yet stands in opposition to that which surrounds it. And like all determinate beings, it will have its day and then pass into the silence of the night.

The nuclear idea—the central intuition as Bergson would have called it—had already taken full shape when the accident of a Research Fellowship from the University of Delhi tempted me to sit and write. 1948-50 was the period when it was written, though the Fellowship lasted until 1951. When completed, friends and teachers suggested that it might be submitted for the Ph.D. degree of the University of Delhi. After some delay, the authorities granted the permission and it was submitted as a Ph.D. thesis to the University of Delhi. The examiners included Prof. Gilbert Ryle and Prof. H. H. Price, both of the University of Oxford, and Dr. S. K. Maitra of the University of Calcutta. Their reports were highly appreciative and suggested that what was intuitively grasped and ratiocinatively developed had also some trans-subjective validity about it. A friend's turning a publisher completed the series of accidents or the chain of causation that resulted in the publication of this book.

There is little change between the original and the published versions. The changes that have been made are minor and mostly of a linguistic character. The credit for them mostly goes to Prof. H. H. Price whose extensive corrections in his copy have been incorporated in the published version. If there are fewer 'dashes', it is because of Prof. Gilbert Ryle who found them strewn "like autumn leaves" in the body of the book.

Not that the book did not need changes other than the

linguistic ones! But, then, it is far easier to write a new book than to correct the old one. Laziness, combined with the feeling that no fundamental changes were required, dictated the easiest course of letting everything to itself. Of course, it could have been brought more up-to-date, some recent thinkers discussed and several possible misunderstandings removed. But, then, when is a book really up-to-date and when have misunderstandings been avoided? And, after all, something should be left for the critics and the reviewers to exercise their function upon.

Still, one thing may be pointed out. The issues in Part II entitled 'Examinations and Clarifications' have been discussed only as far as they were relevant to the problem under discussion. There is, therefore, a certain inconclusiveness about the multifarious issues raised, though the same, perhaps, cannot be said about the main problems that have been discussed. In Part III entitled 'Discussions', the same thing should be kept in mind. The various thinkers have been discussed only in so far as a view of philosophy was supposed to be implicitly or explicitly contained in their writings. It is hoped that no serious injustice has been done to their positions—particularly, to those of the phenomenological and the existentialist schools, as a heavy reliance has been placed on secondary sources in their case, both because the books were not easily available and because the author's knowledge of the original language was not very proficient.

One's mind inevitably turns to the friends in whose association one has grown and to the teachers at whose feet one has learnt. The long walks with Sita along the banks of the Yamuna in the post-graduate days and the equally long discussions into the late hours of the night with another of the same name who is now no more; Om and Ratan, in discussions with whom almost every philosophical problem of mine has taken shape; Vivek, who has suggested so many points before the "amber liquid in marble cups" at the Coffee House on the Queen's Way. These are names that stand out, but there are others whose resonance mingles with almost every page of this book. The understanding patience of my parents, the loving care of my friends, the amused kindness of strangers—all live in these pages, though the reader shall never know them.

As for my teachers, to them is this work dedicated—To Dr. Indra Sen, who has been disappointed at its negative conclusions; to Dr. S. K. Saksena, who will like but perhaps never read it; to Dr. N. V. Bannerjee, under whose direct supervision the research work was undertaken and without whose guidance it

would have had unmanagable paragraphs and even some positive blunders.

Intuited, argued, written, proof-corrected, published—the book is there, independent of everyone who had any hand in it. With its faults and its virtues, it stands there ready to meet its destiny till, like every child of time, it goes under the waters of Eternal Creation.

March 2, 1955.

DAYA

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PART ONE
PRESUPPOSITIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since the Vedic Seers sang their hymns to Varuṇa and Indra and since Thales went about musing regarding the origin of the cosmos, Philosophy has continuously been an occupation of the human mind. For two thousand years or more, man has wrestled with the problems of origin, reality and worth of the world he has found himself in. Gradually there has occurred a differentiation through which the problems regarding the constitution, origin, reality and worth concerning any particular group or groups of objects, have been separated from the problems concerned with reality as a whole. The former is known as Science; the latter, Philosophy. And though two thousand years are nothing in that vast stretch of time through which humanity has lived and hopes to live, yet it would be a matter of serious concern if the same arguments still revolved round the same problems and if they were as far from any solution as they were before.

It may be that the problems arise inevitably from the nature of the situation in which Man finds himself in the universe. Or it may be that the constitution of the human mind is such that these problems are inevitably raised and equally inevitably remain unsolved. But, whatever the inevitability, this, at least, is certain that it is not of a mechanical or of a compulsive kind. There have been whole ages and in all ages there have been men in whose minds the so-called questions regarding reality as a whole have seldom arisen. And whatever be the feeling of a historian of philosophy, there certainly have been philosophers who have thought themselves to have solved these problems to their utmost satisfaction. Equally certainly there always have been others who have failed to be convinced of the validity of such solutions. This would not have been surprising, for there always are individual differences, if Philosophy had not claimed to be the supremest of Sciences. If knowledge be the claim—and absolute and ultimate has been the claim of Philosophy—then certainly the situation is disquieting, if not desperate. Divergent and opposite beliefs held to be equally true is a situation more akin to Taste, Faith and Religion, than knowledge.

Philosophy, however, since its very inception, has claimed to be knowledge rather than opinion. Philosophers have not

been unaware of each other's arguments—and Reason has claimed to be the universal as opposed to the indefinite particularity of sense-perception. Yet, though it has been the organon of Philosophy both Ancient and Modern, it has seldom resulted in the philosophers being convinced of one another's arguments. Modern philosophy started with a universal doubt, in quest of a mathematical certainty that shall remove the very possibility of doubt and yet we are as far removed from any agreement as before. No doubt, every great thinker has had his disciples and every 'ism' its followers yet, even to day, the disagreements between the schools are as vital and as sharp as ever. It is not implied that in other fields of knowledge there are no differences but there they are either due to the lack of relevant facts or, what is the same thing in another sense, a possibility of alternative explanations owing to the inadequacy of final data. Divergent theories in the field of Science are *provisional* in the sense that the decisive data is not yet forthcoming—and, in truth, we are aware of a certain *set of facts* which would decide conclusively between the rival theories. This is rendered possible by the fact that the theories of Science stand always in need of verification. Their validity is not assured by the mere fact that they are rational but also that they conform to the facts they seek to explain.

Such is, by no means, the condition which a philosophical theory is expected to fulfil. At least, there certainly is no set of facts which may, even possibly, be supposed to decide in favour of one theory rather than another. Philosophy, somehow, is supposed to concern itself with 'interpretation' only—and as the history of thought has amply confirmed, the facts can bear any interpretation, at least, to the complete satisfaction of the thinker concerned. Therefore, perhaps, the differences in philosophy are more permanent and radical than the differences prevailing in the other departments of knowledge. Verification not being the objective test for philosophical theories, the objectivity is supposed to be found in the objective (supra-subjective) universality of Reason. That is the most simple explanation why Descartes turned to mathematics for finding out a philosophical method that might result in certainty. Mathematics is, perhaps, the only science which does not depend for its validity upon verification and hence Philosophy, the knowledge without verification *par excellence*, was to model itself on the mathematical method. But while mathematicians are generally agreed about their solved and unsolved problems, the philosophers, even those

who agreed to use the mathematical method, have hardly come nearer any agreement on most problems. Rather the mathematical method has itself become one of the subjects of philosophic controversy. Thus Reason that has fought both Faith and Opinion for Ages, seems to result in nothing better than contrary opinions—each claiming to be the sole and ultimate truth.

Not only have the philosophers failed to be convinced by each other's arguments, even though they have claimed to be the most rational animals of all, but they have equally, at least in most recent times, failed to arrive at an agreement about the subject-matter of their study. Thinkers like Prof. Moore—with whose *Refutation of Idealism* the recent realistic movement in philosophy may be considered to have started—seem to be of the opinion that philosophy is merely a correct analysis of propositions which we know to be true. Thinkers like Collingwood and Croce are convinced that Philosophy is identical with History; while about Metaphysics, Collingwood's opinion is that it is merely the explication of the ultimate presuppositions of a scientific thought-epoch—presuppositions which can neither be true nor false, as they are ultimate. Whitehead, who has been conceded the courage of building philosophy in the 'grand old manner', conceives of it as a general Speculative Scheme of Reality which might apply to and explain every phenomenon or fact. On the Continent, persons like Husserl think of philosophy as an articulation of transcendental Eidetic structures involved in all knowledge. The existentialists, on their part, are concerned with the problems of Life and Death and of the Situation of Man as he finds himself faced with an absolute 'Nothing' on both sides. Philosophy with them is a living consideration of Life's Problems—problems that arise from the very situation of Man in the Universe.

Even those who belong to the more traditional schools of philosophy, have ceased to expect much from it. Mctaggart, the greatest Hegelian interpreter and one of the greatest idealists of modern times, writing of the use of philosophy in his *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, says: "The result seems to be that philosophy can give us very little, if any, guidance in action. . . . The use of philosophy lies not in being deeper than Science, but in being truer than theology—not in its bearing on action, but in its bearing on religion. It does not give us guidance. It gives us hope."* Another translator of Hegel, J. B. Baillie, in

* p. 196.

his introduction to Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, writes : "Philosophy as an attitude of mind towards the world. occupies a region midway between Poetry on the one hand and Science on the other. It always implies an individual point of view and a perspective of the world, which are central and final for the individual, but are different in each case. There is thus no final philosophical theory for all men, any more than there is one poetic vision for all. If philosophy were to claim the universality of Science the history of philosophical systems would refute the claim, since no two philosophers agree in the theories they advance."*

Joad has somewhere compared Philosophy to Art, but to find a Hegelian translator like Ballie expressing the same sentiments is really astounding. In the last sentence in the above quotation the claim of philosophy to be considered as knowledge is expressly given up and it is reduced to mere opinion. Further, the very sentence reveals what the writer considers to be knowledge and, surprisingly for the idealist, it is neither Art nor Philosophy nor Religion but Science. There seems to be a growing suspicion among philosophers that mere reason cannot provide that objectivity which alone can bring agreement between different thinkers. If philosophy, as McTaggart says, has no bearing on action then it can hardly be knowledge. It cannot provide even hope, unless hope were to mean a mere fancied wish-fulfilment. At best, it would be an intellectual pastime ; at worst, an intellectual escape ; and if really such be the case, Milton would be right in consigning both the philosophers and their problems to hell.

The result of all this is a growing lack of mutual understanding among philosophers regarding one another's position. More and more we find them describing others' positions as 'Nonsense'. 'Sects' and 'circles' are becoming commoner in philosophy—and with this all a general defeatism, a sense of uselessness seems to pervade the whole philosophical atmosphere. Philosophy is perhaps the only branch of knowledge which seeks to justify the subject-matter of its study and the more recent the book, the more apologetic is its tone. Somehow, the philosophers have been feeling that they have just been turning round and round and the acuter the feeling, the more vociferous the justification. This mutual unintelligibility is taken by some writers as a sign of 'philosophical sterility'. Mure, for example,

* p. 51.

in his *Introduction to Hegel* says : "There are signs, at any rate among our professional thinkers, of an inability to grasp even the bare meaning of an idealist Philosophy. It may be that in this and some other countries the main impulse of European Speculation is destined to sterility for a time."* But this is merely the use of an adjectival phrase which simply denotes Mr. Mure's dislike of all those who do not understand, or rather agree with, Hegel.

In fact, this unintelligibility is rather the symptom of that deep-rooted crisis which is finding it more and more difficult to hide from itself the lack of any objective criterion in the study of philosophy. L. S. Stebbing in the beginning of her *A Modern Introduction to Logic* writes : "Neither Bradley nor Bosanquet, nor any of this school of Idealist Logicians, has ever succeeded in making clear what exactly is meant by the principle of identity in difference upon which metaphysical logic of the idealists is based.† Prof. Collingwood, on the other hand, writes in his *Metaphysics* : "The theory of knowledge called 'realism' is based upon the grandest foundation a philosophy can have—namely, human stupidity." This is merely a sample of what can be quoted *ad nauseum* from the writings of contemporary philosophers. Russell, for example, took the trouble of going to a cinema to understand the 'cinematographic' view of reality as presented by Bergson and, even then, found it unintelligible.

Such a growing unintelligibility has made the philosophers think of Philosophy as a more or less personal matter. Not to remind the reader of Baillie's statement already quoted, here is another one from Ward made in *Contemporary British Philosophy* Vol. II : "The answers which these questions receive will depend upon the character of the person considering them i.e., on the system of values which determine his conduct."‡ And here is another by Sorley from the same book : "Even with these postulates it is not contended that the events of the world and the careers of particular minds can all be explained and 'justified'."§ Many are such statements scattered over the whole book and the phenomenon is important for it is an authoritative statement of the personal philosophies of some of the most eminent thinkers of the modern world. Of course, each of the philosophers thinks that his is the most apt solution of the problem but, however much he may be convinced, he feels that it is impossible to convince others. Collingwood has given

* p. 161. † p. x. Italics ours. ‡ p. 54. § p. 265.

a vivid description of this feeling in his *Autobiography* and it is a commonplace of any meeting of philosophical societies.

Philosophers seem to be beginning to believe that, somehow, their reasoning is irrelevant to the nature of Reality. The world of experience *which can bear any interpretation or interpretations which are so wide as to fit any world* have been the characteristic of philosophic thought. But if so, then it is certainly irrelevant for both knowledge and action. Philosophers themselves have defined 'Nothing' as that whose presence or absence makes no difference to anything whatsoever, and if this be the definition, then philosophy certainly is very near being 'Nothing'. Of course, it may give hope—but only to those whose hopes and fears depend upon an elaborate rationalized Reason. And if this be its sole justification and value, then, though we would hardly grudge the philosopher his satisfaction and his hope, we would scarcely be to blame if we refuse to take him seriously. Philosophy, then, would be merely a habit, a necessity without which certain persons cannot do and if they cannot be satisfied unless they find a Cosmic Necessity for their every triviality, let them, by all means, seek it. But William James was certainly more frank when he said let us accept God, Soul and Immortality—for, well, it is useful to believe in them. Certainly, if somebody cannot be happy without believing in God, he should do so. But a philosopher would hardly agree; he would say that no we should first find sufficient reasons and then alone, if the reasons be adequate, believe in God. The choice of 'sufficient reasons' is certainly large, for many have been the philosophers who have found adequate grounds for such a belief.

Of course, philosophers are troubled at this growing tendency to regard philosophy as something personal, a matter of reasoned faith, hope or belief—reasoned, but faith all the same. Thus writes one of them: "Some of us who believe philosophy to be Science, and attempt at truth, are troubled when we hear philosophy described as merely a work of art, the lyrical outpouring of the mind of a philosopher; beautiful, perhaps, but not knowledge; only comparable to a statue or picture or poem; making no doubt the impersonal appeal to human feelings, but not itself a reasoned account of the simplest things."* Here again the author betrays himself that he considers only Science as knowledge and though troubled by the comparison of philosophy to a work of art, he fails to see that philosophy lacks that element

* S. Alexander, quoted in *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Vol. II,

of objectivity which Science finds in verification. Reason, as we have already said, has failed to supply it.

Yet, in spite of all these difficulties, philosophical thinking goes on and has gone on for the last two thousand years. It may be because of sheer inertia, for thanks to language and social heredity, every manifestation of the human spirit tends to survive. Or it may be, as some have suggested, the vested interests of the University Professors which does not let the subject die its natural death. Others would see in this continued survival some vital necessity for the needs of the human spirit. But if survival were the real criterion, then ritual, magic, superstition and a hundred other manifestations of the human spirit would become equally vital. Of course, whatever survives must have some value, at least, to those amongst whom it survives. But, then, this is an obvious truism, so obvious that we have already accepted it. But it may be said that while everybody need not be a magician, each has to have some kind of philosophy. As Bradley once remarked, the choice is not between being a philosopher or no philosopher but between being a good philosopher or a bad one. It would have been equally true if he had said that the choice was between being a good physicist or a bad physicist, a good biologist or a bad biologist, a good singer or a bad singer, a good man or a bad man and so on. What the statement means is only this that all the specializations of skill, art and science occur out of the common continuum of experience reached by all men. But if so, the statement would become of such an abstract universality as to lose all significance whatsoever.

Yet, even if philosophy is not so general an occupation of the human mind as some philosophers have supposed, still it would certainly belong to some phase in the development of the human spirit. Hegel claimed that it was not a mere phase but the final fruition of the human mind in its concrete completeness. It would hardly be surprising if a philosopher came to that conclusion. What is really surprising, however, is that most of the philosophers do not agree with this contention of Hegel. 'Final Fruition' or a 'Phase'—philosophy is 'something'.....an 'activity' that happens in some minds at some period of their development—an activity that flows in certain channels and takes certain forms that have almost crystallised into typical moulds in the course of centuries of thought. What exactly is this 'phase' will be the subject-matter of our study.

Different, as we have already said, have been the beliefs about the function of philosophy. Still more different have they

been in modern times. Reiteration of arguments which fail to convince is a feature which hardly any student of the subject could have missed. 'Mutual unintelligibility' is another. And all these have been more on the increase in recent times. Of course, there is a certain broad current but it is the current of the epoch. And equally competent thinkers have made contrary estimates of its character. It would not, therefore, be wrong if we claim a certain 'radical relevance' for our enquiry and even if we fail to make any clarification regarding these and other allied problems, we would be justified in merely having drawn attention to a state of affairs that, to say the least, demands the closest attention of our most competent thinkers. We would feel ourselves sufficiently recompensed if the attention of any of them is drawn to any of these problems.

We would try to delineate and examine the character and presuppositions of Philosophy and its problems as conceived in times both Ancient and Modern and then indicate what, in our opinion, it has always been trying to do as distinct from what it has thought it was trying to do. In this connection, we shall try to show that it has both an importance and a necessity, but the importance and the necessity would hardly be of a kind which philosophers have taken it to be. Even Marx who said 'Philosophy tries to interpret the world while the task is to change it' gave it an importance in his system which is hardly second to anything else even in his revolutionary strategy. As a matter of fact, it has been a debatable question whether Marx's philosophy was a theoretical adjunct to his revolutionary strategy or his revolutionary effort merely a practical consequence of his philosophic thought. Thus, as Hegel would have said, the notion of philosophy itself is the subject-matter of our study, but we fear he would hardly have agreed with our conclusions. In fact, he would have declared us pseudo-philosophers of the worst type. But the chiding from the Master we would have borne with a smile, for we hardly consider philosophy to be the supremest of values—and, well, it is good to be chided, if it be only from a Master.

In the first part, then, we propose to articulate the fundamental presuppositions which, in our opinion, have governed the philosophical activity of most thinkers. In the second part, under the general title 'Examinations and Clarifications', we undertake a detailed criticism of these presuppositions. In the third part, under the general heading 'Discussions', we discuss some of the alternative conceptions of Philosophy advanced by eminent

thinkers in the recent past. After this negative work of clarification and discussion, in the fourth part, we attempt to articulate a view of Philosophy that we consider to be fairly adequate and correct.

CHAPTER II

PRESUPPOSITIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Philosophy, in its age-long search for what philosophers have agreed to call the Real, has generally made a claim that it alone among all the sciences has no presuppositions. Neither are its presuppositions, it is claimed, either inarticulate or unproved. They are either held to be so intuitively self-evident as to admit of no doubt or they are supposed to be such that their very denial would involve their affirmation. Further, it is held that their denial would involve the ruin of Reason, for they are nothing but the self-articulation of that very Reason itself. The very beginning of modern philosophy is supposed to start with such a Doubt, a doubt that breaks its own edge as it cannot doubt itself. Descartes' 'Cotigo, ergo sum' is supposed to possess both the 'intuitive self-evidence' and 'the impossibility of its denial'. Hegel would deny to it the third characteristic, since it certainly is not for him the complete self-articulation of Reason itself. In fact, he has characterized the 'Cogito, ergo sum' of Descartes as an abstract identity which lacks the concrete content of his 'Absolute Idea'.

Yet, whether abstract or not, such a distinction between 'contingent' and 'necessary' truths has always been made. Leibnitz's criterion of 'the inconceivability of the opposite' has generally been admitted as true of the 'necessary truths' and philosophy has always claimed to be a knowledge of such truths as opposed to the 'contingent' truths of Science. Even Hegel distinguished between the 'correctness' of a statement and its 'truth'; the former being conceived as mere correspondence between the statement and its object while in the latter it was identical with its own 'notion'. It would, on the other hand, be needless to remind ourselves of the famous Greek distinction between 'opinion' and 'knowledge'. Kant, who characterised the whole previous philosophy as 'dogmatic', undertook an inquiry into the presuppositions of knowledge and came to the conclusion that 'universality' and 'necessity' were categorically involved in the very conception of knowledge. For him, too, therefore, the necessity of knowledge was given in the very notion of knowledge

itself. Kant, of course, differs profoundly from Hegel or even from Descartes and Leibnitz and the status of 'contingent truth' is a difficult problem in his philosophy. Yet it is certain that for him too the truth and necessity of philosophical knowledge is involved in the very structure of knowing consciousness. If for Descartes the truth of his 'dubito, sum' lies in the fact that its denial would break its own point; if for Hegel the truth of his Notion lies in the fact that its opposite is always turning into itself as it itself is turning into its own opposite and finding itself therein; then for Kant too the necessity of the categorical knowledge lies in the fact that its very denial would involve the whole categorical structure over again.

These three characteristics, 'the intuitive self-evidence', 'the inconceivability of the opposite' and 'the self-articulation of Reason', thus, have been usually considered sufficient ground for the proud boast that philosophy has no presuppositions or assumptions. Leaving aside the question whether or not there could be any such self-proved presuppositions, it is a matter of real surprise that philosophers have failed to take serious notice of the contrary and divergent propositions that have been held to have such a characteristic. If any proof were needed of the conceivability of this so-called 'inconceivability of the opposite', there could be nothing better than to show that it has been so conceived. However impossible it may appear to the philosopher concerned, it can hardly be denied that the so-called 'impossibility' has been affirmed as a self-obvious truth by some philosopher or other. Far be it from us to exploit the scandals in the domestic house-holds of philosophy; yet it certainly would be a disservice to let the 'pretension' pass and hush and hide the whole affair.

This is not to deny that philosophy, in the largest and deepest sense of the word, has continuously tried to articulate the presuppositions involved in natural science, in moral and aesthetic experience and in its own intellectual pursuit and endeavour. In fact, the effort has been both prolonged and sustained and it would be difficult to say that the result has been scanty. But philosophers have thought that their presuppositions, in contrast to those of Science, Art or Morality, are self-deduced and thus have a self-obvious necessity. Rather, the presuppositions of Science, Art, Morality and Religion lose their arbitrariness and find justification only after they have been philosophically deduced. The arbitrariness of a fact is supposed to lose itself when it can be shown as a part or an element in some system

and the arbitrariness of a system is supposed to lose itself when it can be shown to be involved in the very structure of self-conscious Reason. To ask the 'why' of a fact is considered legitimate and so also the 'why' of a System or Law, but to ask the same of Reason is considered otherwise, for it is considered to be its own justification and explanation. How, it is asked, can the standard itself have a standard, the source of all explanation and justification itself have a source? Hence in the classic example of Hegel a thing is understood only when seen as a self-necessity of Reason, while in that of Spinoza, it is intrinsically deduced from the self-obvious axiomatic definition of substance.

The general problem of logical involvement, presupposition and implication will be discussed in a later chapter. Here we are only concerned to show that apart from these three safety-devices regarding any philosophical presupposition whatever, there are presuppositions which few philosophers have admitted, at least as presuppositions. As regards the safety-devices here we shall only say that the great variety and contrariety of propositions held to satisfy the criteria should be considered a presumption against the truth of the doctrine. Relativity or even contrariety, we shall be told, is no sign of untruth and though we agree, yet the criteria themselves make a claim for unity—a claim that can hardly be ignored. But even apart from this, the presuppositions that we are going to discuss seem to be of such fundamental and final character that they can hardly be dealt with through the usual method of the safety-devices.

The first great presupposition of philosophical thinking has been the belief that the nature of ultimate reality is such that it can be discovered by pure thought alone. No doubt, there have been thinkers who have tried to set limits to the 'knowing activity' of this 'reine Vernunft'; others who have denied the very possibility of knowing anything at all and still others who have dismissed the 'reine' as a pure abstraction dissolving into sheer nothing. Some would remind us of those for whom experience was the sole source of knowledge and others point at that great idealist in whose 'Phonomenology' Experience found its complete articulation from the bare 'this' of sense-certainty to the self-knowledge of the Concrete Absolute. But whether it be a question of the limits of knowledge or of the nature of Reality, the philosopher has always believed that by thought alone he can solve his problem. There is hardly any set of facts, present or future, which can be held as relevant in establishing the validity or truth of a philosophical theory. Facts, at best,

have merely an illustrative or a suggestive significance for him. The constitutive significance belongs always to the argument and it is because of this that a philosophical theory is criticized not on the ground of its inadequacy to meet certain particular kinds of facts but on the ground of some incoherence in its arguments. Otherwise, the standing refutation of the Eleatic contention regarding the impossibility of motion would have been to point out that motion actually occurs. But no philosopher, even in his dreams, could have the crudity of advancing such a commonplace objection against the contention, not because the fact does not occur in the common experience of philosophers but because it is the argument that is all-important for them. Of course, the philosophers think they have sufficient grounds for the adoption of such an attitude, but we are concerned here only to show that such a presuppositional attitude is held by most philosophers, whether with or without an additional belief that such an attitude is justified. The question of justification, both actual and possible, as we have already said, will be discussed in the next chapter.

However, we should guard ourselves against the misunderstanding that pure reason is a reason which has no content at all. Some content, of course, there must be, for mediating thought must have something to mediate; but what is of importance to note is the fact that this something has only to be a 'some' thing i.e., anything. It is not contended that philosophers have been completely indifferent to the specific 'what' of their thought. Rather their thinking has always tended to gravitate towards the moral, religious and aesthetic experiences. But even here, as in the case of 'cognitive consciousness', the philosopher is more interested in the form and type of the relation between the subject and the object than in the specific 'what' of the object itself. This, in fact, is the reason why the particular 'specificity' of the content, whether in cognitive, moral, religious or aesthetic experience, is uninteresting to a philosopher. His task is served by any and every content, for he is not concerned with the content as such but with the form of the relation subsisting between the subject and that type of content.

To take but one example—any content of the 'cognitive consciousness' would suffice, for in Epistemology we are concerned not with the object but with the problem of knowledge. So also for other kinds of experiences. One single instance suffices for the philosopher's purpose, for he is concerned with the essence underlying the experience and the essence is equally manifested everywhere. Of course, some contents are supposed to manifest

the essence more explicitly and thus enjoy the favour of the philosophers concerned, but, as even those philosophers themselves would admit, it is more because of a human and psychological limitation than because of the intrinsic nature of the content concerned. This, perhaps, is the reason why the claim is sometimes put forward that a philosophy is, unlike sciences, seldom superseded by later philosophies. Be the reason whatever it may, the presupposition that the real can be known by an exercise of pure thought has generally been made by most philosophers. And if philosophy be an enquiry into the nature of the Real, as it generally has been supposed to be, then the presupposition seems to be involved in the very nature of that enquiry. Otherwise, the enquiry would defeat its own purpose, for both the amount and the unfinished nature of fact would make it impossible for us to be ever sure that we have determined the nature of the Real with any degree of accuracy. And this brings us to the second presupposition of philosophical thinking that both the object and the organon of knowledge are finished, unchangeable and final.

This unchangeability and finality both of the object and the organon is, to some extent, presupposed in all knowledge—for, otherwise, the knowledge process itself would become impossible. If an object of knowledge is continuously changing, it would be difficult to know it. A certain stability is required even for perceptual discrimination and 'repeatability' is a necessary characteristic of phenomena without which scientific comprehension would become impossible. The phenomena of change are treated by Science as a stable, repeatable phenomena and this stability and repeatability is supposed to come from the unchangeability of the laws according to which the change itself occurs. The self-identity of the law results in the self-identity of change and hence, though a change, the change is always the same. As for the organon of knowledge, Science has believed it too to be complete, fixed and unchanging. Modes of knowing other than the scientific it has tended either to ignore or consider as 'merely subjective'. Technological advances aside, its methodology has remained the same. From classificatory observation in the early stages of science to the hypothetico-deductive verification in the advanced stages of it—this has been the usual procedure of scientific method. The possibilities of the evolution of new senses or of new faculties of the mind is hardly considered a serious limitation on the existing organon of knowledge—and this when it itself has been a witness to the proof that there was

a time when even such faculties as exist were non-existent. Of course, that which does not exist can hardly be taken into consideration, but the very fact that what exists to-day (senses and faculties) was non-existent once should make us, at least, pause and consider.

New senses and faculties, we shall be told, may give us a new qualitative mode of experience but would hardly affect the conceptual scheme of Reality that science has built up. To this we will only say that it would be really surprising if a new mode of conscious experience were to leave the conceptual scheme of science unaltered; for the conceptual scheme itself is supposed to be based on facts of experience. Further, the objection assumes that there is some unitary conceptual scheme of the universe which Science presents to us, yet, as far as we are aware, we know of no such scheme presented by science qua science. Rather, science has given us conceptual articulation within relative fields of phenomena and the reductive unity remains only an ideal cherished by persons working in the basic sciences. In fact, the distinguishing categories of one can hardly be reduced to those of the other sciences and the unitary ideal remains merely an interpretative scheme through the selective categories of a single science.

Yet, howevermuch the presupposition of unchangeability may have been made by science, philosophy has always done so in a way both greater and deeper. Methods of investigation and even the criteria of truth and validity have been adapted to the nature of the subject-matter, and Science, in its sober moments, has seldom claimed to be anything more than a generalised description of the ways in which things behave. That things do not change, science has never said; but only that if they change, they become another thing. Of course, there is a methodological presumption that the change itself should be completely explicable by the inherent state of the antecedent conditions, but on a wider view it seems pretty difficult if any of the great changes from Matter to Mind can ever be completely explicable in terms of the antecedent conditions alone. In fact, Science can seldom go beyond the assertion that things happen because they happen; its task being only to describe the ways in which things behave and to believe that there is a very high probability, amounting to almost a practical certainty, of their continuing to behave in the same way for a sufficiently long stretch of time. The new evolutionary emergents—meaning in the strictest sense a new organisation, whether with the quanti-

tative variation or not, yet in either case having a determinate qualitative novelty with a determinate new mode of behaviour—continuously make manifest the inherent possibilities of behaviour that lie embedded in the nuclear notion of the thing. A thing can only be defined as a matrix of determinate possibilities of behaviour—possibilities that are realised only when it comes into effective contact with other things. The coming into being of new emergent entities makes it possible for many of the possibilities of existing things to become actualized. In this way there is assured, for science, a continuous novelty, for unless a potentiality has become actual we never know what exact, determinate character it has.

Philosophy, on the other hand, cannot even admit the incomprehensibility of 'this happens because it happens'. It must appear to it as the self-inherent necessity of the notion, otherwise it would be a mere 'is', an 'accident', a 'fact'. The 'brute objectivity' must be resolvable into a mere moment in the life of the Spirit separated from which it is a mere 'is', an existence hovering on the brink of sheer nothing. The Real, just because it is real, can be known by pure thought, for it is what it always is, even if what 'is' is pure change. The Real, for Bergson, is sheer 'élan'—for it alone 'is'; the rest i.e. the static slices cut from the Living Reality by Intellect, is something that is both 'is' and 'is not' and hence no object for philosophic study.

Both the object and the organon of philosophic knowledge are eternal, whether eternity be interpreted in the sense of non-temporality or duration. The distinctions of past, present and future are equally repugnant both to Bergson who thinks of time alone as real and to idealists like McTaggart who think of it as completely unreal. The logical Reason of Hegel is non-temporal as also is his Absolute Spirit. The 'intuition' of Bergson is 'L'intuition duré', an intuition that does not have the distinctions of past, present and future in it. Kant's 'critical reason' is non-temporal and so also are his 'categories'. Time is for him merely transcendental, *a priori*, formal—in short, a non-temporal form of sensibility. Descartes' 'cogito' can hardly be said to have the distinctions of past, present and future, for it can never cease to be 'cogito'. Logical thought, the usual organon of philosophic knowledge, is non-temporal and therefore unchangeable in character. Its content is the universal—the real universal, which because it is universal, does not change... and because it does not change, is Real.

Those who have turned to 'feeling' or 'intuition' as the organon of philosophy have also conceived it as a super-temporal, non-relational, distinctionless mode of feeling which grasps at a super-temporal reality and, losing itself, becomes identical with it. The mystic in his blissful ecstasy of the divine union and the logical philosopher in his thinking awareness of the 'really real' are both making the claim of being aware of a reality which is either super-temporal or non-temporal in character. This awareness of the supreme, unchanging Real, whether in the form of the self-articulate logical Reason or in the concrete immediacy of mystical experience, is also considered as the supremely valuational. This identity of the Real with the valuational is the other counterpart of that previous identity which we found between the Real and the Rational. This triune identity of the Real, the Rational and the Valuational is the key to the nature of philosophic thought and its ultimate presuppositions as evidenced in this age-long search for the really real. The identity of the rational and the valuational is, thus, the third great presupposition of philosophical thinking.

The presupposition destroys the usual distinction between the ideal and the real, the possible and the actual and finds value within Reality or rather as identical with it. *Value is not something opposed to Reason*, for, being Real, it is rational as well. Of course, there have been thinkers who have disagreed with such a view of values but only in the sense that they found in values a more powerful clue to the nature of Reality than the ordinary logical reason seemed to permit. In fact, value may be considered as the experience, *par excellence*, on which philosophers have drawn or rather continuously over-drawn for the purposes of building their systems. On the contrary, the bifurcation of Value and Reality has been so seldom held by any eminent philosopher that we may consider it quite safe to recast the presupposition as the identity of the Real and the Valuational. But as the nature of the Real can be determined by pure thought, so also it has been thought that the nature of value too can be determined by just a 'thinking consideration of things'. Sometimes, as in Kant, reason is supposed to show its own limitations and point to values as a more efficient key to the nature of the Real. Sometimes, as in Hegel, and this happens more often, Value is considered to be identical with Reason.

But whatever the shape this presupposition may take, it is quite certain that in either of its forms it is present in the thinking of almost all philosophers. With regard to this presupposition

there is a difference that may be noted here. This, in contrast to the second presupposition regarding the object and the organon of knowledge, is seldom shared by science. In fact, the distinctness of the scientific attitude lies just in this that it treats things in their non-valuational aspects and treats value in its factual aspect i.e. the aspect of sheer occurrence.

These three presuppositions, corresponding to the three usual divisions of philosophy into Metaphysics, Epistemology and Axiology result in a fourth presupposition which is implied by all these three taken together. This implication articulates itself as the 'final and ultimate absoluteness of the knowledge with which philosophy is concerned'. Philosophy, in contrast to all the other sciences, claims to give a knowledge which is final in its pronouncement and complete in its validity. This results from the very nature of the presuppositions pointed out uptil now—for, the discovery of the 'really real', the unchanging finality of the object and organon of knowledge and the real and rational character of values combine to give philosophical knowledge a final and ultimate absoluteness because of the reason that nothing falls outside it and whatever is, is completely determined. Time cannot make or mar the truth of a philosophical theory and it is perhaps because of this that the writings of a Plato or an Aristotle are today as fresh as ever.

That philosophers are not unaware of this character of their thought can be easily seen from these lines of A. E. Taylor: "But, unlike all other knowledge, our metaphysical knowledge of the formal character of an all-inclusive experienced whole would be final in the sense that no addition of fresh knowledge could modify it in principle."* To J. B. Baillie it appears as a problem of great and vital importance; he writes: "How are we to reconcile the claims of knowledge to supply valid and universal truth about the world with the undoubted fact that the human mind—and, therefore, all that it produced, including human knowledge—is subject to temporal change and has a history."† Of course, Prof. Baillie has forgotten to characterize 'knowledge' that claims to supply valid and universal truth as 'philosophical', but, like Taylor, he has no doubt about the validity of any such claim, though he certainly feels puzzled by the problems arising therefrom.

The reason for such a claim is not far to find. It is because,

* *Elements of Metaphysics*, p. 32.

† *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 15.

if we may use the words of Bernard Bosanquet, 'no experience of life, nor any partial aspect of knowledge, can be more to it than a suggestion or a stimulus'.* We need not remind the reader of the classical thinkers of the past who built up systems of such forbidding completeness that few dared to enter them. Kant wrote with confidence *The Prolegomena To Any Future Metaphysic* and Hegel, without a wink, claimed to be the final consummation of all previous and perhaps future philosophy. There have been voices in recent times that have urged the giving up of this pretension of philosophy but they invariably have retained the definition of philosophy as the determination of the 'really real'. L. T. Hobhouse, for example, writes: "It follows that philosophy must abandon the dream of educing final truth from meditation on simple and elementary conceptions to follow another and a longer road. It must share the incompleteness of the sciences, and may well be contented if in return for the admission of partial and broken knowledge it secures something of their assured continuity of advance."† And here is Belfort Bax writing in his *The Real, the Rational, and the Alogical*: "If there be one thing that we must learn to give up, it is the notion of finality."‡ But Prof. Hobhouse continues to think of philosophy as "the attempt at a rational interpretation of Reality as a whole"§ and does not see that the two are incompatible. The absoluteness of philosophical knowledge comes from the very fact that it is the knowledge of Reality as a whole. The giving up of the one would imply the giving up of the other. If philosophical systems were at the mercy of scientific discoveries, then Plato and Aristotle would certainly have been outmoded long ago—for, without doubt, Greek science has already suffered the same fate.

These presuppositions are, as it would have already been noticed, intimately related to each other. They are concerned respectively with the problems of Reality, Knowledge and Value with which philosophy has been supposed to be specifically concerned. Just as these divisions of philosophy are intimately related to each other, so also are the respective presuppositions thereof. By calling them 'presuppositions' we neither wish to imply that philosophers have always been unaware of them nor that they have never thought they had sufficient grounds for believing in them. Nor do we wish to imply, in the strict

* *Contemporary British Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 51.

† *Ibid.*, p. 151.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

logical sense of the term, that they are mutually independent and jointly sufficient for the building up of philosophical activity. The first three are simply different facets of the same presupposition that there is something that is 'really real' and the nature of which can finally be determined. The fourth is so obviously the implicated result of the first three that it needs no comment. That we have called them 'presuppositions' is because they are of such final and ultimate a character that to give them up would mean to give up philosophy completely in the traditional sense of the term. The word also denotes our doubt regarding the very possibility of any proof regarding such propositions and though we have not discussed the so-called proofs that have satisfied most philosophers, we certainly have pointed the indubitable fact that many have been the philosophers who have been unconvinced by such proofs. A detailed discussion of the actual and possible arguments for these presuppositions will form the content of the subsequent section of our work. Here we were only interested in showing the 'what' of these presuppositions and, we hope, we have done so as far as our interests required.

PART TWO

EXAMINATIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

CHAPTER III

LOGIC AND REALITY

That there is something which is 'really real' and that its nature can finally be determined is the central presupposition of which, as we have already seen, the rest are mere facets. Thus the distinction between 'Appearance' and 'Reality' seems to be implied in the very nature of philosophical thought; while the question about the 'final determinability' of the ultimate nature of that which is 'really real' needs hardly any substantiation after what we have already said in our 'Introduction' and the chapter on 'Presuppositions and Implications'. The distinction between 'Real' and 'Unreal', thus being fundamental to philosophic thought, there arises the problem of its criterion. Philosophy, since its very inception, has held universality and unchangeability as the self-obvious, inalienable characteristics of the Real. Thales, who is mentioned as the first philosopher in any history of philosophy, is supposed to have considered water as the most common element in all things and hence also the most real. Parmenides and Zeno, the two greatest representatives of the Eleatic School, held only the unchanging Being to be real and relegated all Becoming and Change to the realm of the unreal. In the East, the Vedic seers said: "One alone is the Real; the wise call it by many Names." And so through the whole history of philosophy one finds the tacit acceptance of these two criteria—and even when, though in exceptional cases, unchangeability has been given up, universality has always been retained.

These two criteria have generally been considered to be so self-evident as to require hardly any proof. To the common mind, the reality of a thing is in correlation to the range of its extent and the degree of its permanence. Philosophers—who generally believe that they are merely carrying out the task of commonsense, albeit in a more systematic manner—have, in this case as well, carried the prejudice to its logical conclusion. As nothing abides in the world, nothing is real and as things are particular i.e. not universal in their extent, they are unreal. The unchanging universal alone, according to philosophers, is real. Such has been the message of philosophy since Parmenides thought and Plato built. But philosophers have thought them-

selves to be reasoning animals and reasons must they give for the beliefs that mankind holds in such unreasoning innocence. The only reason that has, perhaps, ever been given is that of the ancient Zeno who tried to show that the very notion of change involved self-contradiction and, hence, was unreal. The same argument has been used with vigour against the reality of 'finite particulars' by such thinkers as Bradley and Spinoza.

The arguments given by all these thinkers, however, presuppose that what is self-contradictory cannot be real; if what seems to be real proves to be self-contradictory, it should cease to be considered real. 'Freedom from self-contradiction' then, may either be considered to be the criterion, both *sufficient* and *necessary* for the determination of the notion of Real, or be itself considered as constitutively identical with it. Both the realist and the idealist concur in this belief; what they differ about is only the question whether 'change' or 'finite particulars' involve such a contradiction or not. Russell, for example, in his *Our Knowledge of the External World* makes much capital out of Cantor's solution of the supposed contradictions involved in the mathematical concept of the infinite, but the jubilation would be fitting only if he had agreed with his opponents in assuming that a thing would be unreal if it involves contradiction. It seems to be an unacknowledged assumption of his thought which he shares with his opponents, differing only as to the question whether 'change' or 'finite particulars' involve such a contradiction or not. His repeated complaint is that their logic is faulty, their analysis incomplete but never, nor even once, does he discuss what would have been the status of their result even if their logic were correct.

The question involved is not merely of 'this' argument or 'that', but the still more fundamental one whether *any* argument could ever decide what was 'real' or what was not? Russell, in his paper on 'Logical Atomism', observes: "I hold that logic is what is fundamental in philosophy, and that schools should be characterized rather by their logic than by their metaphysic."* But he has forgotten that the still more fundamental problem is to decide whether logic could ever determine Reality. No doubt, he has considered "as the distinguishing characteristic of the classical tradition, and as hitherto the main obstacle to a scientific attitude in philosophy" the belief "that a priori reasoning could reveal otherwise undiscoverable secrets about the

* *Op. Cit.*, p. 359.

universe, and could prove reality to be quite different from what, to direct observation, it appears to be".* He further observes that "while it (i.e. logic) liberates imagination as to what the world may be, it refuses to legislate as to what the world is".† In this he forgets that his 'is' is merely a form of the 'may be'—the *possibility of actuality* being provided by logic, and the mode of actuality by its being a fact. If what 'is' were to lack logical possibility, then Russell, we are sure, would hardly agree to call it 'real'. But in spite of this, he deserves to be congratulated on his masterly attempts to remove the so-called contradictions made capital of by idealist philosophers in general. However, a searching examination of this so-called criterion with its supposed relation to the other two criteria, universality of extent and unchangeability, seems to be urgently called for.

That some persons may *choose* to call 'real' what lacks self-contradiction or is universal in extent or unchangeable, can hardly be doubted. But if it is considered to establish anything more than that their supposed analysis of phenomena reveals them to be possessed of incompatible characteristics and that somehow they consider this characteristic, with those of universality of extent and unchangeability, as far more important than the hundred other facts which the phenomena show then, certainly, the problem arises, what, after all, is this 'something more' which has struck the philosopher as so important that his mind has revolved round the same problems for the last two thousand years or so. This, perhaps, is the feeling that things are not what they appear to be. What is 'really real' as opposed to what is only 'apparently so' seems, then, to be the fundamental quest governing all philosophic thought. This distinction which quite naturally arises in the course of experience itself, is one which the philosopher merely takes hold of and universalizes but from which he finds it difficult to get himself out. The commonsense view that a thing *is* what it *appears to be* unless there be some reason to think otherwise, is, in the sophisticated attitude of philosophy, replaced by its opposite viz. that everything should be doubted unless reasons be shown why it should not or cannot be doubted. Thus there arises the universalization of doubt, the questioning of every nook and corner of experience and the refusal to be convinced of the reality of anything unless its denial is shown, by its very nature, to be impossible. The very *possibility of a thing's denial* is, thus, taken

* *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 16.

† *Ibid.*, p. 19.

to be the sign of that thing's unreality and, as in Descartes, unless the denial involves its own affirmation, the thing is not considered real. The *prima facie* doubt, thus, gets still another turning and becomes the belief that the real could only be that *whose denial would involve its own affirmation*. Such is the real meaning of Descartes' famous 'Cogito, ergo sum' and of Leibnitz's doctrine of 'the unthinkability of the opposite'. Leibnitz's distinction between the 'contingent' and the 'necessary' truths also revolves around the same problem.

This doctrine of the unthinkability of the opposite is the positive result of the Law of Contradiction which, in its negative aspect, had declared the world to be unreal. This positive result ends either in the declaration of the whole world of sense-experience as unreal or as necessarily and inevitably involved in the very nature of some self-identical and self-necessitating Real. The 'contingent' must either be shown to be 'necessary' or declared unreal. Both alternatives have, however, been adopted by philosophers. Thinkers like Spinoza and Hegel have tried to show the geometrical or the dialectical necessity with which the seemingly 'contingent' facts are or rather cannot but be involved in some self-obvious self-necessitating Real; while thinkers like Saṃkara, on account of this very 'seeming', have felt themselves forced to reject such supposedly 'necessary involvement'. 'Necessity', then, by another turn of the same thought, comes to mean, that the ground or reason of a thing lies in its very being or that things which do not have their ground within themselves are involved in some Reality which, at least, has its own ground within itself. 'Unreality' then arises when a thing is viewed in its 'isolated particularity' and is regarded only as such. Yet, even on such a view of the real, the things which are 'involved' are considered as only 'derivatively real', for they are *dependent*, even if logically and necessarily so, on that which has the ground of its own being within itself and, thus, is 'really real'.

This idea that a thing has a 'lesser reality' if it depends for its existence or being upon another thing is not confined to philosophers only. Scientists too tend to regard the cause as more real than the effect. Otherwise the electro-protonic vibrations could not have been considered as the most real things in the world. It is the same principle which makes the scientist, at a lower level think the light vibrations more real than the colours we see and the vibrations of air more real than the sounds we hear. It was the great merit of Hegel to have made

the stupendous effort to show that the ground is *as much* dependent on the consequent, the cause on the effect, the subject on the object as *vice versa*. In his category of 'Reciprocity' at the end of the categories of 'Essence', Hegel comes to the concept of mutual dependence which certainly goes beyond the usual idea of one-sided dependence and its derived notion of 'derivate reality'. We are not here concerned with the correctness or otherwise of Hegel's conclusions but with the mere fact that the 'dependence' of a thing is no ground for the assertion of its 'unreality' or even 'lesser reality' unless we are *interested* more in *getting at* the 'dependent' than in the dependent itself. This 'interest' is purely psychological in character; and though it can provide a sufficient explanation of the view held, it can hardly be said to be a *justification* for it. Even Hegel, who fights and goes beyond this view, implicitly assumes it. What he differs about is not the view that 'dependence' is a sign of 'unreality' or perhaps a 'lesser reality' but whether the notion of 'one-sided dependence' could be legitimately maintained; for, according to him, it leads to contradictions and, therefore, must be unreal. If such a 'dependence' could have been possible, Hegel would have had no objection in calling the 'dependent' 'less real'; what he maintains is only that such a 'dependence' is not possible.

Thus if we try to disentangle the notion of 'reality' from its historical trappings, we find that different but related thought-currents have gone to form it. Some have been merely half-articulate beliefs while others have been the self-explicit assertions of self-conscious reason. 'Unchangeability', 'Universality of extent', 'Lack of self-contradiction', 'Unthinkability of the opposite', 'Self-necessitation and Self-dependence' have been the characteristics that have gone to constitute the philosophical notion of the real. That all these characteristics are interrelated—we have been trying to show in the last few pages. In fact, they all stream forth from the Law of Contradiction and revolve round it. But that they are relatively independent is shown in the philosophy of Bergson who rejects both Unchangeability and the Law of Contradiction and yet considers the *universal élan* alone as real, and not any *particular* manifestations of it. Intellect, according to Bergson, cuts the Living Flow of Reality into dead, static bits of particular things and thus falsifies the universal élan into the appearance of a multitude of things. But the static bits of particular things can be declared unreal only if it be assumed that the universal élan and the particular unchanging

things cannot both be real. This assumption, however, can only be made if the law of contradiction is held to be true. The contradiction can be supposed to hold either between the unchanging appearance of particular things and the real change of the universal élan or between the changeability of 'finite particulars' and the endurance of the universal élan. But whatever the reason,—and the two have a seeming contrariety—the presuppositions seem never to have been examined, nor does any such need seem even to have been felt. The law of contradiction seems to be having a subtle influence even on such a thinker as Bergson forcing its entry by the back-door and making him declare the whole world of 'particulars' unreal. Thus if this notion of 'real', which has dominated philosophic thought since its very inception, is to be examined we will have to consider both the necessity and the justification for all the characteristics that have historically gone to build up the notion and, in particular, the law of contradiction, which has been the central pivot around which they have revolved. But before any such detailed consideration, the notions of 'necessity', 'justification' and 'validity' themselves need an examination and an establishment.

That such notions can be matters of linguistic usage and verbal definition, we have already asserted; what we are particularly interested in here, however, is only 'the state of affairs' to which they are generally supposed to refer. The notion of necessity refers to the feeling of the impossibility of the denial of a situation, no matter whether that situation be the pure logical relations of 'if....then' or the perceptual configurations of multiple sense-data. The notion of justification, on the other hand, refers to the feeling that something, until now felt to be arbitrary, has been related to some other situation or thing which, for reasons that we need not consider, is regarded as necessary or self-evident. The notion of validity simply means that persons have agreed regarding the objects or situations which are to be considered as necessary and that with regard to something else a relation of justification has been established.

Viewed in the light of above considerations, the characteristics that have been supposed to constitute the notion of the 'real' seem both justified and valid—but with one reservation only. And this reservation is, whether there can be any grounds at all, excepting the purely linguistic ones, for regarding these characteristics alone as constituting the notion of the 'real'. *If no further characteristic is added by calling these as 'real', except that we feel them to be very important, then we are cer-*

tainly in very grave doubt whether any problem is solved by any such additional characterization. In fact, that a thing should be called 'real' seems entirely superfluous unless, of course, we are specially interested in some specific feature and wish to convey by such an assertion that the thing concerned is possessed of such a feature. Commonsense, when it declares a stick appearing to be bent in water to be unreal, does so only because it is *more interested* in the stick as it appears outside water. So also a hallucinatory table is considered unreal because one cannot sit on it. Science, on the other hand, considers the secondary qualities as unreal, for they are *causally ineffective*. It is *interested more* in producing and controlling the phenomena and hence that which is causally ineffective is, for it, always unreal. In Art, where the secondary qualities alone are *important* as producing the aesthetic experience of Beauty, they are generally regarded as also the most real. That is why the scientific analysis of colours wrings from Keats that famous cry "There was once a rainbow in the sky": the poet finds it difficult to say with Wordsworth "My heart leaps up, when I behold a rainbow in the sky", for he feels the rainbow to be something illusory, something unreal. But a philosopher is supposed to have no interest of his own. Why then the use of such a word that connotes nothing but 'preferential importance'? The very use of the word should be sufficient to throw doubt on such lofty pretensions, and if we have the temerity to peep through the back-hole, we shall find the philosopher coddling his own love—the Law of Contradiction. What fails to satisfy such transcendent love, the philosopher terms unreal. And who shall blame him—for, has it not been said through ages past that "Love is Blind"? But the philosopher will only be irritated at our levity and if he still condescends to say something, he will point to the intrinsic impossibility of anything real being irrational in its nature and thus evading the Law of Contradiction. That 'the real must be rational' has been the first of the presuppositions of philosophical thinking—has already been pointed in our chapter on 'Presuppositions and Implications'. But we now see the central importance of the Law of Contradiction being vindicated by an appeal to this higher and deeper Law. What then are the reasons for this fundamental presupposition and is it anything more than—well, a mere presupposition?

'That something *must* be so' can only be asserted on a *priori* grounds, for the notion involves the logical impossibility of its being otherwise, and this, as Kant told us long ago, can

never be had out of experience. The rationality of the real, therefore, must be established *a priori*, if it is to carry any necessity about it. Hegel is the only person who has tried to give some reason for such an *a priori* necessity, though Kant too, in his own way, tried to show that the Real could not but be conceived as rational and if attempted to be conceived in any other way, would reveal itself as impossible of being conceived at all. Hegel and Kant, then, between themselves, have tried to establish the propositions that 'the Real must *be* rational' and that 'the Real cannot but be thought (i.e., must be *thought*) as rational'. The classic argument of Hegel is that the Real cannot be unknowable, for to be known as unknowable is a contradiction in terms and as everybody knows a 'contradiction in terms' can never be true. On Hegelian principles, this should be taken as a sign of a dialectical contradiction demanding a synthesis but what synthesis could possibly resolve the element of unknowability is difficult to say. The complete synthesis of the categories of 'Inner' and 'Outer', as with all other categories, is found in the 'Absolute Idea' where the subject finds itself completely in the other and the other in itself. The element of 'unknowability' is, therefore, predominant only in the categories of 'Essence' and gets gradually eliminated as we approach the categories of the 'Notion'. But below the complete synthesis of the 'Absolute Idea', the element of 'unreality' and thus of 'unknowability' persists till it gets eliminated or transmuted into the 'Other' of the 'Absolute Idea' which is not really the other. Though the categories of the 'Inward' and the 'Outward' or of 'Essence' and 'Existence' are, as Hegel himself says, immediately synthesised in the category of 'Actuality', yet the abstractive unreality that still remains and that continues to result in dialectical contradictions, does not get eliminated till we reach the complete synthesis of the 'Absolute Idea'.

The elimination of unknowability, therefore, depends for Hegel upon the logical development of his Dialectic. The concrete development of the Dialectic, on the other hand, itself depends upon this element of unreality or unknowability that continuously results in contradictions and thus necessitates the synthesis. Hegel is supposed to have given the final go-bye to the Law of Contradiction, but if closely examined, his whole system would reveal itself as based on it. In fact, it is the moving impulse behind his whole Dialectic. The need of the synthesis is felt *because* the unsynthesized categories lead to contradictions. The sign of reality for Hegel, as for so many other

philosophers, is the same. It is the 'lack of contradiction'—the one measure by which they judge the reality of their table, their friends and their God. Thus the element of contradiction, resulting in unreality, lies at the basis of the concrete development of the Dialectic, for without it the Absolute Idea could not have been shown to have any *concrete content*. What exactly is the status of these categories, excepting the purely *instrumental one* of showing the concrete content of the Absolute Idea and of declaring themselves inadequate as leading to contradictions, is difficult to understand. In fact, they seem to have no status by themselves and whatever status they seem to possess results only from their relations either to the categories they are supposed to have synthesised or to which they themselves have given rise as Antithesis and Synthesis. The doctrine of 'Degrees of Reality' is purely a pragmatic and relativistic insertion in this theory of Absolute Idealism. From the view-point of the Absolute, the question of 'Degrees' does not arise at all, while from every other view-point, there would only be an 'appearance' of reality and not the reality itself. Calling a thing 'less unreal' is not only no solution of the problem, but a definite evasion of it. This problem of 'less' or 'more' should, in fact, have made the philosopher suspect that there was something wrong with his notion of the 'real'. That this notion is a quantitative one would hardly be agreed to by any philosopher of this school or even of any other. Further, if, as we have seen, the Law of Contradiction is the underlying criterion behind the movement of the Dialectic, then it is difficult to see how the quantitative concepts of 'less' or 'more' could be inserted on the basis of this law. There cannot be 'more' or 'less' of a contradiction; either it is or it is not and if it is, it is completely so and if not, then completely not.

The very fact that such a notion has been introduced in spite of this obvious absurdity, should make us suspect some deeper reason behind this almost universal assertion. And this we shall find quite easily, if we remind ourselves of the identity between the real and the valuational which we found among the great pre-suppositions of philosophic thought. It is, therefore, not the Law of Contradiction but the *valuational distance* that creates the notion of 'Degrees of Reality'. The more distant the category from the Absolute Idea—the absolutely real and hence the absolutely valuational—the less real it must be, and so also *vice versa*. The notion of 'distance' here seems to be apparently purely logical in character, but, if examined, would be found to reveal great difficulties. The category that is supposed *immediately* to synthesise the con-

tradition obtaining between the thesis and the antithesis, reveals on a closer examination to give rise itself to a contradiction. And this goes on till we are supposed to reach a category which not only synthesises the contradictions of the categories prior to it, but also does not give rise to any further contradiction. Now, though there seems to be an *immediate* synthesis of the thesis and the antithesis yet it is only apparently so, for otherwise it would not have shown itself so unstable as to give rise to a contradiction. Thus, the 'distance' also is only an apparent 'distance', for even the very first opposition between 'Being' and 'Nothing' does not become really synthesised in the category of 'Becoming' but in that of the 'Absolute Idea'. This 'distance', therefore, reveals itself as something psychological which, nobody knows how, has got associated with the valuational presupposition. The distinctions of quantity thus finding no support among the logical or the valuational criteria, the problem of the status of the categories becomes still more perplexing. But whatever the status, the element of unreality will have to be granted a positive reality if the categories below the 'Absolute Idea' have to be given any status at all. Hegel, in fact, has not denied the negative element a positive status in his Dialectic, but then what makes him reject as unreality that which leads to contradictions we fail to understand.

We have been trying to understand the element of unreality in the categories of Hegel and suggest that the very presence of this element in all of the categories up to the Absolute Idea should be taken as a sufficient sign of the fact that this element is not an element of unreality at all. In this context, we have been using 'unreality' and 'unknowability' as almost identical not because they mean the same thing but because they imply each other. The positive presence of this element of unreality is understandable and incomprehensible on Hegelian principles and, therefore, *intrinsically* unknowable in its ultimate nature. How can that which is All-Real have even a semblance of unreality, is rather difficult to understand. Unreality, therefore, would be an ultimate unknowable in any system which chooses to make this distinction and as there is hardly any philosophical system which can be said to have escaped this infectious contagion, it would be difficult to find one that does not have the ghost of an 'unknowable' in its cup-boards, whether acknowledged or unacknowledged. But, even leaving aside this general question of unreality and therefore of unknowability, if we examine the so-called contradiction involved in the very notion of the unknow-

able, we shall find it to be untenable. Hegel has made out this point as against Kant's doctrine of the unknowable thing-in-itself.

He writes : "It argues an utter want of consistency to say, on the one hand, that the understanding only knows phenomena, and, on the other, assert the absolute character of this knowledge, by such statements as 'cognition can go no further', 'here is the natural and absolute limit of human knowledge'. But 'natural' is the wrong word here. The things of nature are limited and are natural things only to such extent as they are not aware of their universal limit, or to such extent as their mode or quality is a limit from our point of view, and not from their own. No one knows, or even feels, that anything is a limit or defect, until he is at the same time above and beyond it."* And slightly further on he continues : "A very little consideration might show, that to call a thing finite or limited proves, by implication, the very presence of the infinite and unlimited, and that our knowledge of a limit can only be when the unlimited is *on this side* in consciousness." †

These rather long quotations from Hegel, bring out clearly what he wishes to mean by the alleged impossibility of the notion of intrinsic unknowability. If something is intrinsically unknowable, then—and this is all that Hegel proves or wishes to prove—it can never be known to be such. But in spite of this anyone continues to assert the unknowability of things, it is obvious that he must be using the word knowledge in a double sense. It requires no great subtlety to suspect this and this, in fact, is what Kant was doing and with a perfect consciousness too. He writes, for example, in his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic* : "But the bounding of the field of the understanding by something, which is otherwise unknown to it, is still a cognition which remains to reason even at this standpoint, and by which it is neither shut up within the sensible, nor does it stray without it, but confines itself, as befits the knowledge of a boundary, to the relation between that which lies without it, and that which is contained within it." ‡ And he states further : "But this limitation (confinement of *a priori* principles to possible

* Wallace, *The Logic of Hegel*, p. 116.

† *Ibid.*, p. 117.

‡ *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, p. 129, Mahaffy and Bernard's translation.

experience) does not prevent the reason leading us to the objective *boundary* of experience, viz., to the reference to something which is not itself an object of experience, but is the ground of all experience."* The whole section on 'The Bounds of Pure Reason' is replete with such statements and it is extremely surprising how such a thinker as Hegel could ignore such explicit assertions. The type of unknowability which Kant is asserting in these lines, remains completely unscathed by all of Hegel's arguments, for it is not the absolute unknowability against which Hegel has been arguing but the unknowability of a world *per se*, whose *relations* with the world as experienced are alone known. Thus, he writes: "The question now is, what is the attitude of our reason in this *connexion* of what we know with what we do not, and never shall know? This is an *actual connexion* of a known thing with one quite unknown (which will always remain so), and though what is unknown should not become the least more known—which we cannot even hope—yet the notion of this *connexion* must be definite, and capable of being rendered distinct." § Hegel, of course, would have replied that this whole notion of connexionless in-itself, *per se*, or essence is a pure abstraction dissolving into sheer nothing and preserving itself from dissolution only by a *phantom assertion* regarding 'something that is yet nothing'. The categories of 'Essence' and 'Existence' are unreal abstractions and exist only as synthetised in the category of 'Actuality'.

But we are not interested here in judging the relative correctness of Kant's and Hegel's positions, but merely in showing that Kant, *while fully aware of the type of objections* that Hegel later urged, was convinced that they hardly affected his position. If anyone remains unconvinced, even after reading our long quotations from Kant's *Prolegomena*, we shall advise him to read the whole section 57 on 'The Bounds of Pure Reason' from the same book in order to judge our assertion that Kant was completely conscious of the charge of inconsistency that might be brought against him and that he regarded such a charge as completely out of the question.

But even if Hegel's arguments be taken as proof of the knowability of the real they certainly do not prove its rationality. What they prove, if they prove anything, is only the fact that there *must* be some faculty *commensurate* with the nature of the

object of knowledge, and not that this faculty must always be rational or even that all such faculties must be found in man. Of course, if you choose to mean by knowledge nothing except what is 'rational', then the question does not arise. But then Hegel's argument would cease to apply, for, certainly, in that case the mere assertion that something is 'on this side of consciousness' would not be considered to constitute 'knowledge'. In that case, to be 'above and beyond a limit' just because 'you *feel* it' would not be considered 'knowledge' at all. Therefore either 'knowledge' is to be taken in the wide sense of 'consciousness' or 'awareness' or Hegel's argument must be considered inconclusive.

The possible argument for this further characteristic of the 'rationality' of all knowledge may, perhaps, be guessed from the supposedly necessary movement of Hegel's Dialectic. The most generalised awareness, as in the category of 'Being' in the *Logic* and that of 'Sense-Certainty' in the *Phenomenology*, when sufficiently examined, would reveal itself to be nothing but the articulate, concrete, absolute spirit itself. But even if this be granted, Hegel himself would not be able to deny that there *was* a genuine phase of generalised awareness which was *not* the Rational Whole of the concrete spirit itself. The very fact that the complete, self-conscious articulation of this Absolute Spirit had to *await* the coming of Hegel is a sufficient proof that abstract, non-rational awareness *did exist* without developing into the full, concrete consciousness itself. If it be replied that to the extent it was abstract or non-rational, it is bound to be characterised as unreal, we shall only say that 'calling names' hardly matters. To call a thing 'unreal' solves no problem; but perhaps Hegel is trying to show the inadequacy of most categories to describe the real and, if so, he is correct only in so far as his negative assertion is concerned. Positively to say that some category described with complete or greater adequacy, is, as we have already said, incorrect, for quantitative criteria are inapplicable to reality. Further, here we were trying to understand the so-called *a priori* necessity of the real's rationality and, therefore, the argument from contradiction cannot be used at all for it itself stands under the necessity of proof. The assertion, therefore, that there must be some faculty commensurate with the nature of the object of knowledge does not prove either the rationality of the organon or that of the object of knowledge. Rather, the very fact that something is known proves that there *is some* faculty commensurate with it, for otherwise it could not be known at all. But the

* *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

† *Ibid.*, Pp. 121-22. Italics ours.

'what' of this faculty as also that of the object, remains undetermined; what is established is only the *commensurability* of the two. For example, that a thing be visually known requires the co-adaptability of the visual faculty to the object seen. There are light-vibrations which cannot be seen, for the visual faculty is not adapted to receive them. So also there are eyes that are colour-blind or ears that are tone-deaf or even minds that are incapable of appreciating the beauty of a work of art or the moral quality of an action.

We are not, however, trying to revive the 'faculty-psychology', but merely pointing out that the *mode of awareness* intrinsically limits you to the type of object that you can know. Perception may not be called 'knowledge' at all, but then, as we have already seen, Hegel's argument would misfire. On the other hand, it is not a purely linguistic question; what is at stake is the question whether there are different types of awareness, and this, we are sure, nobody would deny. Of course, perception and conception have been regarded as 'confused' and 'clear' representations or rather as different stages in the awareness of the same reality. This view is held not only by philosophers but by scientists as well. And hence, because of its greater clearness, the 'real' is supposed to be better known in thought rather than in perception. Sense, Understanding and Reason, it is urged, do not give us different orders or types of reality, but they are articulations of the same Reality which, because of their inadequacy, press forward till they reach the completest self-articulation in philosophy as Absolute Spirit. But it would be difficult to assert that no residuum is left in this transformation of one level into another. As Hoenigswald puts it: "The question remains as to whether the fact becomes absorbed in the notion without any residue."* In fact, the question hardly remains at all, for the very distinction shows that there is some *basis* of distinction and this basis certainly cannot be the mere adequacy or inadequacy of the level concerned. No one, we hope, would deny the distinction between what Russell has called 'knowledge by acquaintance' and 'knowledge by description', as also the fact that 'knowledge by description' never gives by itself, or even obviates the need of, 'knowledge by acquaintance'. Thought, as Hegel says, may not be a mere opposite of sense, but that it lets nothing escape itself is rather difficult to believe. However much he may talk about the concreteness

* *Twentieth Century Philosophy*, p. 272.

of thought, yet to a person born blind the idea of colour can hardly become concrete by all the dialectical derivation that he can make out of it. What we are urging is that there remains an inescapable residuum, which thought can never grasp and, thus, never find. Hegel writes: "Now language is the work of thought; and hence all that is expressed in language must be universal. . . . Language expresses nothing but universality; and so I cannot say what I merely *mean*. And the unutterable—feeling or sensation—far from being the highest truth, is the most unimportant and untrue."† Whether Hegel thinks the unutterable to be untrue because it is unimportant or because it is not the highest truth is difficult to determine. But whatever the reason, it seems clear that the 'unutterable' is not denied but only that it is considered 'unimportant' or as not the 'highest truth'. The denial of any being to what is unutterable is quite different from regarding it as unimportant or as not the highest truth. In the first case, Hegel would have proved the impossibility of the unutterable; in the second, only that he regards it as unimportant—which is quite a different thing.

It would be interesting here to note that the same reasons which make Hegel regard the feelings or sensations as unreal drive Bergson to assert the unreality of thought. Thought, being essentially static and universal, fails to grasp the intrinsic flux and change of things and is, thus, by its very nature, condemned to be unreal. This 'unutterable' feeling or sensation, however unimportant or untrue, remains uneliminated despite Hegel's herculean labour to show that it is a mere moment in thought. As 'matter' in Aristotle, as 'givenness' in Berkeley, as 'the manifold of sensations' in Kant, as 'the universe to be represented' in Leibnitz—it continues to persist as something alien, something arbitrary to the philosopher's self-constituting, self-explaining 'Thought'. If the individual 'this' of sense-perception cannot be grasped in thought, it is only because thought is thought and not sense-perception. Thought too has its own individuality and determinateness but it certainly is not the determinateness of sense-perception. Thus, if even in sense-perception there is something which cannot be reduced to thought, it is difficult to see how the claim of rationality with regard to all reality can ever be justified. For, there will always be some element of reality which would refuse to undergo such a transformation. No better reason for this can be given than that of Hegel himself

* *Logic of Hegel*, p. 38.

that thought and language are intrinsically and unavoidably universal. If it be really so, then, on Hegel's own admission, the particular individuality of experience could never be conveyed by thought and would thus eternally remain outside the sphere of rationality. It might be replied that leaving aside the 'irrationality' of these elements, at least their structure must be rational. But even the relational structure would have an *empirical determinateness* which would be incapable of any *a priori* determination or deduction. Logic, whether Aristotelian, Hegelian or Mathematical, can hardly determine the 'what' of Existence or even whether anything is to exist at all. That something should exist and, if it exists, what particular relational structure must it have is hardly a matter of logical necessity. Hegel, in whose system, 'Existence' occurs as a category in the development of his Dialectic, conceives of it as unreal and ultimately non-existent, for it, with all the other categories, is absorbed into the complete synthesis of the Absolute Idea.

The relations of logic to reality are difficult to determine. Yet, it may be said with some confidence that the sphere of the latter is far wider than that of the former. Not only that some reality is non-logical in character, but if we examine it carefully, it will reveal itself, at some of its levels at least, even illogical in character. Nobody can deny the fact of fallacious thinking and fallacious thinking is not only non-rational but irrational in character. These levels which are non-logical or illogical in character can easily be dismissed as 'unreal' if we desire to save the 'rationality' of the 'real', but whether it would be anything more than a linguistic triumph we fail to understand. Thus the very fact that something 'is' is sufficient to establish the non-absoluteness of Logic. The further claim that whatever be the empirical determinateness of the existent relational structures or even of the perceptual objects related thereto, they, in all cases must exhibit the purely *a priori* structure of logic can only be defended on the ground of the famous Kantian position that the real cannot but be *thought* as rational. The *a priori* necessity of *thinking* the real as rational accords more with the already quoted argument of Hegel that "language expresses nothing but universality" than with the supposedly necessary conclusion he seems to infer from it. Hegel seems to argue that the particular of sense-perception is unreal, because we cannot *think* about it. But the obvious rejoinder is that the particular of sense-perception is *to be perceived* and not *thought about*. The obvious conclusion, therefore, should have been that an object of thought *must*

be universal and hence rational, for to think is only to think of a universal—a tautology that would have hardly sufficed for the grand system of Hegel.

In fact, Hegel is misconceiving the function of language when he argues "I cannot say what I merely *mean*". The logical linguists of the present day find themselves in the same meshes of linguistic solipsism into which Hegel, in this argument at least, seems to have fallen. Language is only referential and has no intrinsic relation to particularity or universality. Its reference may range from the 'purely general' to the 'uniquely particular' and, in all cases, it should be considered as successful if the 'referent' has been understood. From the unique particularity of both the terms in 'I love you' and 'this red rose' to the most universal category of 'Being', language is able to express all, and the success of the expression on each occasion lies in the fact that we understand the 'referents'. Hegel objects that 'I', 'you' and 'this' are all universals and hence unable to express that unique particularity which some think to be so important, but it is only because *he has chosen* to refer to them as universals. No person who wishes to use the terms 'I', 'you', or 'this' as referring to some uniquely particular object will find himself confused by the supposedly necessary universality or even fail to get himself *understood* by others. This instance should be sufficient to make it clear that words have no *intrinsic characteristics* or *meanings* of their own, but are purely *instrumental* or *referential* in character. The point can be further understood by the simple experiment of listening to a language which one does not know. Thus language, which is in its very nature referential in character, cannot have any intrinsic universality of its own. But leaving aside these confusions arising from a wrong view of language, Kant's position that "the real *cannot but be thought* as rational" demands an independent investigation of its own.

If, "to think of something" is but "to think of it as rational"—and this is what Kant seems to hold—then the contention seems obviously true. But—and this is the point—what do we exactly mean by 'rational' in this context? The term 'knowledge' implies for Kant synthetic 'universality' and 'necessity' and this becomes possible because of the transcendental, *a priori* forms of intuition and the categories of understanding that are logically presupposed by all knowledge and hence necessarily involved in it. The 'rationality' of knowledge, thus, consists in this very involvement of the transcendental categories

of understanding. They, by their involvement, make all knowledge 'rational'. But 'to think', in Kant, is not identical with 'to know'. It is only 'knowledge' and not 'thinking' in general that involves the categories of the understanding. The term 'knowledge' in Kant has a much narrower meaning than in ordinary usage. As Norman Kemp Smith has written: "Aesthetic, moral and religious experience, and even organic phenomena, are excluded from the field of possible knowledge."*

The restriction of the term 'knowledge' to only a particular kind of itself is, however, purely arbitrary. It would be merely a verbal device to prove the 'rationality' of all knowledge when both knowledge and rationality have been defined in terms of the involvement of the categories. Leaving aside the distinction drawn in the *Prolegomena* between Judgments of Perception and Judgements of Experience—a distinction laid aside in the second edition of the *Critique*—the distinction between 'thinking' and 'knowing' continues to operate in the distinction between Noumena and Phenomena. A correlative distinction is supposed to be drawn between 'thinking' and 'judging'. The judgment is always objective and, thus, involves the categories. But it is not so with thinking. Commenting on the relevant section of the *Critique*, Norman Kemp Smith writes: "The opposition is no longer between subjective and objective judgment, but *only* between *association of ideas* and judgment which *as such* is always objective."† Terminological distinctions aside, this is what Kant seemed to be implying in his distinction between Judgments of Perception and Judgments of Experience in the *Prolegomena*.

He writes, for example, in the foot-note on p. 57: "As an easier example, we may take the following: 'when the sun shines on the stone, it grows warm'. This judgment, however often I and others may have perceived it, is a mere judgment of perception, and contains no necessity; *perceptions are only usually conjoined in this manner*. But if I say, 'The sun *warms* the stone', I add to the perception the understanding's concept of cause, which necessarily connects with the concept of sunshine that of heat, and the synthetical judgment becomes of necessity universally valid, consequently objective, and is converted from a perception into experience."‡ The first part clearly refers to the fact that 'sunshine' and 'warmth' are merely conjoined

* *Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 1v.

† *Op. Cit.*, p. 289. Italics ours.

‡ *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, p. 57. Italics ours.

or associated together and however often such a conjunction or association be perceived it gives no necessity. There seems, therefore, hardly any distinction between Judgments of Perception and Association of Ideas except a purely terminological one.

Of course, such a distinction is wrong. But the distinction cannot be saved by putting it one step back and substituting for it the distinction between 'associating' and 'judging'. The distinction between 'thinking' and 'judging' would have to be given up if the proposition 'whatever can be thought, cannot but be thought as rational' is to have any meaning. In fact, Kant's great influence in the history of thought has completely disregarded this distinction between 'thinking' and 'judging'. For example, writes A. C. Ewing in his contribution on 'Kantianism' in *Twentieth Century Philosophy*: "Kant's *a priori* principles hold, not because they are logically necessary in themselves, but because they can, according to him, be shown to be presupposed *in all our thought about anything*, so that we cannot get rid of them *without ceasing to think* and therefore even to recognize physical objects as such, since it is one of Kant's great contributions to show to what extent even the mere recognition of physical objects involves thought."*

Can there be 'association of ideas' without involving the categories, is the whole question? If such a possibility be admitted, as Kemp Smith seems to admit it, then Kant should be deemed to have surrendered his fundamental position that "to think is but to think in terms of the categories" and hence whatever can be thought must be thought as rational; for "to think in terms of the categories" and "to think rationally" are identical. If we distinguish between thought that involves the categories and thought that does not, it would become impossible to establish that whatever can be thought must be thought as rational, if by 'rational' we mean what can be thought in terms of the categories only. Of course, we can adopt the classical way of declaring the thought that does not involve the categories, unreal. But whether it would solve any problem, is more than we can say.

The distinction which is being pointed out by the terms 'association of ideas' and 'judgment' may be connoted by the phrase 'psychological assertion'. Taking the two statements by Kant in the *Prolegomena*, we can see that in the first, he wishes merely to assert the experienced concomitance of sun-

* *Twentieth Century Philosophy*, p. 259. Italics ours.

shine and warmth, while in the latter he also wishes to convey the necessary, intrinsic relationality which he supposes to hold between the two. But this fact of 'assertion' or lack of it, is extra-logical, extra-rational and extra-transcendental in character. In this connection, we might refer to what Meinong calls 'Supposals' i.e., propositions which may provisionally be regarded as true. The difficulty of distinguishing between an 'asserted' proposition and a proposition of this sort is insoluble on grounds of pure logic only.

However, even overlooking these discrepancies in Kant's position and taking him in the light in which he has been understood in the history of thought, we shall find that his doctrine can be true only by becoming insignificant. That to think is but to think rationally, for *all* thinking *logically* involves the transcendental categories of the understanding, is a position which, if closely examined, would reveal a view of 'rationality' that can hardly be considered to be of any significance. Obviously if all thinking is rational, then 'rationality' can hardly be a criterion for the distinction between thinking that is false and that which is true. Further, 'rationality' being *necessarily* involved, by the very nature of its case, in all thinking, it would be equally exemplified not only in the thinking of the so called normal, rational man but also in that of the maniac and the schizophrenic. It is indeed a very strange notion of 'rationality' that makes us accept the thought which is untrue or even that which belongs to a mad man as rational. Categories have been understood by Alexander as 'pervasive features of the real', but if we substitute the term 'thought' for the 'real', it may be taken as an adequate description of Kant's own position. But if the features are '*pervasive*', how can they ever be absent? The category of causality, even if always present, can hardly decide about the truth of a determinate causal relation. That 'the sun warms the stone' and not cools it can hardly be decided by the category of causality which is equally present in both. In fact, Kant was groping about for those relational structures of pure form which seem to be necessarily involved in all thought, being the articulate structure of the very notion of relationality itself.

These pure, formal relational structures have been discovered by modern logic, but their very discovery has brought out clearly the fact that they have got nothing to do with either reality or existence or rationality. Indirectly, of course, it may suggest certain views about reality to be unwarranted, but it is only because it shows itself indifferent to the whole specificity of either

content or relational structure in the real. Logic has revealed itself to be a study of pure deductive, formal structures where with a few formal assumptions we can build a deductive system. These assumptions must be *mutually independent* and *jointly sufficient* for the building-up of the system. But they, then, have no intrinsic or self-obvious *necessity* about them excepting *the necessity of the system*. On the other hand the system itself has no *exceptional necessity* about it—for, there can be different deductive systems, each equally valid from the viewpoint of logic. As in the case of different Geometries, which themselves are nothing but pure deductive systems, the choice between different systems can only be on some grounds of *extra-logical* considerations and never on those of pure logic alone. Thus 'logical necessity' is the purely formal necessity of a deductive system and can never *determine* in any *a priori* manner the character of the Real except that, in any such determination, this fact itself must be taken into account.

We are not unaware of those who have tried to discard such a view of logic on grounds of its 'impotent' formalism and abstractionism. Here is, for example, Bernard Bosanquet, writing in *Contemporary British Philosophy* Vol. I: "But pure thought as an ideal, whether imputed or accepted, of thinking which has learnt nothing from the universe and in no way determines it by affirmation, exhibits itself to my mind as the very type of impotence and self-contradiction, false alike as an imputation by the foes of Reason, and as an aspiration of its would-be friends."* Bosanquet charges such thinking with 'impotence' and 'self-contradiction'. We have no objection to the first charge, for it is a purely adjectival phrase with rather a bad odour about it to describe a state of affairs that is, in essentials, correct. But how it is self-contradictory, is, for us, rather difficult to understand. Bosanquet, of course, has a legitimate right to differ from this view of logic, but he cannot deny that there *can* be such a study of relational structures of pure form, because such a study actually *exists*. One may deny the title of logic to *Principia Mathematica* of Russell and Whitehead and the work related thereto; one may go even so far as to characterise this whole work as impotent, unimportant and useless, but no one can consider it as *non-existent* or as concerned with mere nothing.

However, we were concerned with the inevitably realised

* p. 60.

transcendental structures in thought which would give it an *a priori* rationality and this, as we have come to realise, can only be found in pure form, for form alone can be universal. But the universality of form, even if inevitably realised in thought, would make it neither true nor rational. A formal proposition is a tautological identity of different symbols where their *formal equivalence* gives us the right to substitute one for the other. Just as a proposition in pure logic is not a proposition but a 'propositional function', so also in pure logic there is no truth but only 'truth-values'.* The inferential propositions of pure logic, on the other hand, can only be of the type of 'if.....then'. But whether the 'if' is to be 'asserted' or not remains a purely extra-logical question. Further, this 'inevitability' of realisation is itself not guaranteed by logic, for it shows the possibility of *different* deductive structures which are all *equally* true as far as logic is concerned. This consideration of the inevitability of realisation of categorial structures in thought, if not in Reality, has brought us face to face with the question: "What is rationality?"

The distinction between 'reason' and 'sense-perception' regarded respectively as sources of 'knowledge' and 'opinion', is as old as philosophy itself. Not to speak of Socrates and Plato with whom the contention was a self-conscious assertion, it is already found implicit in the doctrines of the early Eleatics. 'Rational' would, therefore, be that which is known through reason. Plato, for example, discussing the problem of knowledge in the *Theaetetus*, makes Socrates say: "Knowledge does not consist in impressions of sense, but in reasoning about them; in that only, and not in the mere impression, truth and being can be attained." † And later on Socrates is supposed to ask: "How can there be knowledge apart from definition and true opinion?" ‡ Of course, in the end, he is dissatisfied with all of his answers and exclaims: "And so, Theaetetus, knowledge is neither sensation nor true opinion, nor yet definition and explanation accompanying and added to true opinion." And Theaetetus, like the good boy he is, answers: "I suppose not." § But apart from this dis-

* The term 'truth-values' includes both truth and falsity. A 'propositional function' having one term, at least, as a variable, would not be true or false. Its truth or falsity would depend on the determination of the variable. But the formal consequences following from the truth or falsity of the determinate can always be calculated even if we do not know the specific 'what' of the determination.

† *The Works of Plato*, p. 540. Jowett's translation.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 564.

§ *Ibid.*, p. 576.

satisfaction which is so characteristically Socratic in nature, Plato seems distinctly to have held that only Reason gives us the knowledge of 'Ideas', 'Conceptions' or 'Essences' which alone are real in nature. Reason is, then, the faculty, or as Plato would have preferred, 'that power of the soul' which 'contemplates the universal in all things'. And that which it thus contemplates is to be called 'rational'. Later Idealism has taken this clue from Plato and has only differed in its reinterpretation of the notion of the universal. Instead of being the common quality among things, it was conceived as a self-identical, self-obvious notion which involved, with a deductive or dialectical dependence, notions which were not so self-obvious and yet were regarded as valid or real because of this very involvement or dependence. The use of the mathematical method in the hands of Descartes and Spinoza, as well as that of the Dialectic in the hands of Hegel, are the classic instances of this transformation.

The 'rational', therefore, came to mean that which is deductively or dialectically involved in some self-obvious, self-identical notion. This foundational notion was supposed to be that whose denial would involve its own affirmation, and whose truth, by the very nature of the case, would be impossible of being doubted. Descartes' 'Cogito', Spinoza's 'Substance' and Hegel's 'Being' are, in slightly different senses, the classic examples of such a notion. Leibnitz, as we have already seen in another context, gave to this principle a name and called it 'the unthinkability of the opposite'. The notion of 'rationality' was thus taken to mean something opposite to 'arbitrariness'. That an 'object' should stand in its 'determinate objectivity' as *opposed* to the subject was taken as a sign of 'arbitrariness' by Hegel, and hence his tremendous effort to show that the 'object' is a mere moment in the life of the spirit where the spirit finds itself in its other. The same feeling leads, later, to Gentile's 'theory of mind as pure act' where not 'thought' but 'thinking' alone is real. A thought, *when thought*, has become something *determinate* and stands opposed to the subject that thinks it. Thus, by another turn of the same thought, the *thinking spirit* alone becomes both rational and real, for it alone is not 'arbitrary'.

These devious turns in the notion of 'rationality' we have already seen while tracing the various strands that had gone to build up the notion of the 'real'. Commonsense and Science, on the other hand, think of 'rationality' as a matter of 'order', 'law' or 'principle'. 'Chance', 'Impulse' and 'Accident' are the signs of 'irrationality' in the universe. The only difference

is that the 'law' or 'principle' need have no self-necessitating obviousness about it and that the coherence required is not merely deductive or dialectical in character, but primarily empirical in nature. It is a methodological belief of the sciences that the nature of phenomena is completely coherent in character, but this assumed coherence is supposed to be *empirical* and not logical in nature. Yet, even at best, this coherence remains a heuristic hypothesis, for the evidence of the individual sciences hardly points to any such Universal Coherence. And if it is a question of mere methodological necessity, we can only point out that 'Multiformities' are as essential to the pursuit of Science as 'Uniformities'. A still further twist is given to the notion of 'arbitrariness' by interpreting it to mean the non-correspondence of thought with reality. Thus 'rationality' comes to be a character of thought when it correctly refers to 'the state of affairs' it is supposed to refer to.

These different shades in the notion of 'rationality' continuously merge into each other but one thing remains definite—that is, that there is something opposed to this notion which, the philosopher is continually trying to assure us, is not *really* opposed to it. This notion of a '*seeming unreality*' is inescapable on any interpretation of the notion of 'rationality' and, therefore, unless the 'seeming appearance' itself become real, 'unreality' and 'irrationality' would continue to persist. The formal, tautological relationality of the modern logicians and the transcendental, *a priori* logical involvement of Kant are alike unable to give us any ground for distinction between the true and the false, the rational and the irrational. The use of a transcendental category gives us neither truth nor rationality; otherwise a causal law would never have been proved to be wrong.

We have been trying to examine the first great presupposition of philosophy that there is something 'really real' and that it can be known by an exercise of pure thought. We seem repeatedly to have come to the conclusion that the notion of a 'really real' is unmeaning unless we regard some one particular characteristic to be of such great *importance* that its possession or lack of possession becomes of *utmost significance* for us. This, we have tried to suggest—however important for us—is *utterly irrelevant* when seen from the intrinsic viewpoint of the thing itself. Because of this 'intrinsicity'—which, we think, should be meant by the notion of 'reality'—we have tried to suggest that this notion has no opposite to itself. We, of course, have no quarrel with him who finds himself so much in love with

the emotional-adjectival use of the word as to be unable to dispense with it. We shall be completely satisfied if he becomes conscious of the fact that the assertion he is making is a *valuational* and *not a metaphysical* one. The one such characteristic we found the philosophers to be in great love with was the Law of Contradiction. In our attempt to discover the supposed necessity of this law, we were led to examine the two great *a priori* assertions of Hegel and Kant that 'the Real must *be* rational' and that 'the Real must be *thought* as rational'. In that connexion, we tried to suggest that the arguments given for both the positions were *inconclusive* in character. Rather, definite signs of 'irrationality' or 'unreality' had to be admitted by these thinkers and though they could easily be denied, it was difficult to explain them. In other words, the very necessity of an explanation, we tried to suggest, was a sign that all was not well with the rationality of the real. Further, the sense in which Kant's doctrine might possibly be considered to be true, is, we tried to show, so *tautological* in character as to be devoid of any significance whatsoever. We also, in this connexion, tried to understand the notion of 'rationality' and came to the conclusion that the two notions of 'rationality' and 'reality' could hardly be regarded as identical.

In spite of all this, we shall be told, the Law of Contradiction cannot be given up in thought. Russell has called facts of pure logic 'hard facts' i.e., facts which can never be doubted. The Law of Contradiction is certainly one of the basic 'assumptions', in the Russellian sense, of Formal Logic and, thus, can hardly be doubted. Further, we are bound to be told, that "there must surely be . . . some propositions, which are immediately certain, and of which there is no occasion to give any proof, or even any account at all, because we otherwise could never stop inquiring into the grounds of our judgments".* But our answer shall be the same as Kant's, viz., that it can only give us a formal tautology and never be 'sufficient to show the truth of any synthetic judgment'. In fact, it is forgotten by most persons, that the problem of contradiction arises only in our thought and can always be solved by a suitable reformulation of the concepts. We will not point out that the 'undeniable' has been denied and that even among those who have been its greatest votaries, the interpretation has ranged from the deductive to the dialectical. What we wish to suggest

* Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysic*, p. 141.

is that it has only a limited validity and that too most probably in the field of Formal Logic. The great danger that is feared of letting anarchism loose by the denial of this law is strange when we consider the harmony and the agreement achieved by those who have been accepting this law for ages past. Philosophy is known for its proverbial lack of agreements—and was not that Eleatic the first philosopher who said 'A is A'? In denying the absoluteness or supremacy of logic, we are aware of the warning given by McTaggart in his *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, that "no man ever went about to break logic, but in the end logic broke him".* But we shall only add what he himself goes on to add after it: "But there is a mysticism which starts from the standpoint of understanding, and only departs from it in so far as that standpoint shows itself not to be ultimate, but to postulate something beyond itself. To transcend the lower is not to ignore it." Logic reveals its own limitations—and that is what we have been trying to show in this chapter. But with us, as with McTaggart, to transcend the lower is not to *ignore* it.

CHAPTER IV

KNOWLEDGE—SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

The second great presupposition, as we saw in our chapter on 'Presuppositions and Implications', concerns both the organon and the object of knowledge. It is believed, or rather implied, that both of these are unchanging and final in character. A difference between 'opinion' and 'knowledge', as we have already seen, was made as early as Ancient Greece. This difference seemed to have been the result of the existent difference between knowledge that was completely certain and knowledge that was only probable. In Mathematics, the Greeks had found a type of knowledge that was so obviously certain that it seemed to provide the standard for all knowledge that claimed universality, necessity or certainty for itself. Further in mathematics they found themselves in contact with a type of entities the validity of whose relational structure did not depend on any specific instance or set of instances. Yet, though the truth and validity of these entities and their relational structures did not depend on any set of spatio-temporal occurrences, the events themselves seemed to observe the laws of those relational structures. Geometry, which seems to be a relational science of points that, by definition, could not exist, provided, then as now, the back-bone of the Engineering Sciences. Thus it came to be conceived that the nature of reality could be determined by an *a priori* consideration of things, for geometry had shown that the world of existent objects conformed, in an ultimate analysis, to the relational laws discovered *a priori*. Thus, long before Kant, the legislative function of the *a priori* had been recognized, though the Greeks were certainly not the persons to relegate the *a priori* to the realm of the mind.

The certainty of mathematical knowledge combined with the non-spatio-temporal nature of mathematical entities, gives rise to another belief, viz., that reality is essentially non-spatio-temporal in character and that true knowledge consists in our awareness of such a reality. Hence the admission of a 'world of Being', the world of Reality as opposed to a 'world of Becoming', the world of Appearance. 'Unchanging Essences', thus, come to form the content of the Real; for, it is felt that there could be no certain knowledge of that which itself was susceptible to change. The certainty of mathematical knowledge was, in fact,

* p. 299.