

CHAPTER 11

Developments in Indian Philosophy Since the Coming of the British

The history of India's philosophical traditions in various fields underwent a radical transformation with the coming of the British and the spread of their political and administrative domination in India between 1757 and 1857, a period during which the whole of India came under their effective control. However, it is between 1857 and 1947 when the British educational system was firmly implanted on the Indian soil thereby creating a totally new system of education that the actual impact became evident.

The long period of Islamic rule in different parts of India had hardly left any impression on traditional modes of indigenous learning as there seems to have been a strict segregation of Arabic and Persian institutions of learning from those that carried on the maintenance, transmission and development of the classical knowledge of India. Also, the system of patronage of traditional learning was not affected in any way by the new political climate that occurred in different parts of the country. There was some interaction in such fields as medicine, astronomy and mathematics, between Arabic and Persian learning and traditional Sanskrit learning while there appears to have been none in the field of philosophy as there is no reference whatsoever in any of the Sanskritic works to Arabic or Greek philosophy. This is extremely surprising as the borrowing in the field of mathematics from Greek and Roman sources has been not only known from earliest times but was also explicitly acknowledged in Indian texts.

The long history of interaction between Greek, Chinese and Indian centres of learning prior to the coming of Islam is still to be investigated. And, though there are ample references to the achievements of Indian medicine, astronomy and mathematics and the borrowing from them in Arabic and Persian sources, there does not seem to be similar evidence in the Sanskritic sources in India of borrowing from Arabic, Persian, Greek and Chinese achievements in various fields of knowledge of the same order as are found elsewhere. Professor Rahman's extensive bibliography on Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit works in Science from the

eighth to eighteenth century lists 94 translations. However, as Rahman has not taken philosophy into consideration, it is difficult to say whether any philosophical works were translated into Sanskrit from Arabic and Persian or vice versa.

Al-Biruni is supposed to have come to India with Mahmud of Ghazni in A.D. 1000 in search of knowledge in various domains. However, he mainly talked about the *Bhagavadgītā*, the theory of *avatāra* and some of the *Śmṛti* texts which were known at that time. It is not quite clear whether he had any deep acquaintance with the diverse schools of Indian philosophy which had shown a remarkable development and consolidation of their positions by the time Al-Biruni arrived on the scene. Even his references to Buddhism do not take note of the radical philosophical positions which it had espoused or the central position it held in the philosophical discussions of these times. Recent investigations show that Buddhism was a dominant philosophical force in A.D. first millennium and had spread far beyond the confines of what was then known as India. It is also not clear if Al-Biruni had any acquaintance with the remnants of Buddhism which still might have marginally survived in parts of West and Central Asia during his times. In any case, there is little evidence of any substantive influence of Arabic philosophy on the various schools of Indian philosophy during the long period of Muslim rule in various parts of the country.

In the case of the Europeans, the situation, however, was different, particularly in the case of the British presence in this country. Right from A.D. 1800 when institutions of British learning had begun to be established in Calcutta, there was an intense interest in European thought along with a learning of the English language which helped in opening doors not only to a new civilization but also to a different kind of cognitive enterprise in almost all fields of knowledge. In fact, that a society existed for the acquisition of General Knowledge in 1838 in Hindu College is evidence of the desire for a deeper acquaintance with western knowledge. The role that Derozio (1817–1823) and Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833), amongst others, played in the transformation of the attitude of the younger generation of the students towards western knowledge and the enthusiastic acquisition of the same in India is well known.

It is not that the acquisition of Persian learning was not regarded very highly during the earlier period when Islamic rule had prevailed over many parts of India, but it was more in the context of literature and law that it was cultivated and not so much for the knowledge of science or philosophy which still appeared to be the preserve of those who knew Sanskrit well. In fact, Persian was the language of the ruling class and thus had all the prestige which is associated with such a language, particularly as it happened to be the language of administration as well. The English language, too had all these advantages associated with it, but it was also primarily seen as providing access to a particular kind of knowledge and a system of values which gave a radically different foundation to both society and polity in this country. Bengal became the centre of this new enthusiasm as also of the attempt to find some sort of a new creative civilizational response to

this western impact so that its own civilizational and cultural identity was not completely lost.

The movement of neo-Vedāntism has to be seen in this light and the writings from Ram Mohan Roy onwards, who was proficient both in Sanskrit and Persian, should be seen as an attempt to come to terms with this fascination with the West which simultaneously aroused ambivalent feelings amongst those who came in deep contact with it. It is interesting to note that while most of the thinkers in Bengal and elsewhere turned to the *Upaniṣads* for their inspiration, and bypassing the long controversy regarding their interpretation as embodied in the debate between the Advaitins and the non-Advaitins, found in the doctrine of the formless absolute the ground for a new reconciliation between one of the oldest philosophical traditions of India and the challenge from the West which emphasized the knowledge of the world in all its multiplicity and the use of this knowledge for the intellectual, material and cultural prosperity of man. The ideals of equality and fraternity which the French Revolution had bequeathed to mankind and which the liberal British thought brought to India were seen as expressions of the fundamental Vedāntic truth embodied in such Upaniṣadic statements as "*Sarvam Khalvidam-brahman*", underlying the long tradition of Upaniṣadic interpretation right from the *Brahma Sūtras* which had denied access to the *śruti* of a large part of mankind including both women and *śūdras*. Neo-vedāntism also ignored the distinction between *vyavahāra* and *paramārtha*, that is, the ordinary world of everyday life and the spiritual truth which was supposed to be radically different from it and hence was literally of no relevance to the actual empirical concerns in which man was mainly involved. Not only this, it showed little awareness of the conflict between *jñāna* and *karma*, or the life of contemplation and the life of action which had continuously plagued the Indian tradition right from its beginning. Thus, ignoring the whole tradition of more than two thousand years of India's philosophical concerns, the neo-Vedāntins bypassed the different and tricky problems raised by the earlier discussions and debate and gave a radically new interpretation which reconciled everything by vague references to the ultimate unity of everything in the indescribable, formless reality of Brahman that permeated everything and thus was the essence of all that is.

As against this, it was Dayanand Saraswati (1824–1883) in the north who went back not to the *Upaniṣads* but to the Vedas to meet not only the challenge from the West but also the challenge of Islam which had dominated India for such a long time. The presence of Islam was still something of a socio-cultural problem, particularly in the regions to which he belonged even though its political power had been eclipsed by that of the British who had gained almost complete and effective control over most of India. But Saraswati too, bypassed the whole development that had occurred from the time of the Vedas onwards though he did not ignore it so completely as the neo-Vedāntins from Ram Mohan Roy onwards had done as he did controvert Śaṅkara and many others in his *Satyārtha Prakāśā*. But, though there is great difference between the two, there is also a radical similarity between them as both Dayanand and the neo-Vedāntins used

the Vedic-Upaniṣadic heritage for purposes of social reforms which almost no one in the past had done. The social realm was always treated as a preserve of the *Dharma Śāstras* and what was right and what was wrong was always supposed to be determined by the texts relating to *dharma* and *vyavahāra* or the customs prevalent in a particular group or region which was always recognised as authoritative unless it violated some of the basic norms accepted in the *Dharma Śāstras*. In fact, many of the practices which seemed to have been prevalent in ancient times were prohibited on the grounds that they were not permitted in the *kaliyuga*. Sanction for social reform sought in the Vedas and the *Upaniṣads* spilled over, as we will see later, into a desire for political liberation from the British. This was a characteristic feature of many of the neo-Vedāntic spiritual personalities such as Vivekananda and Swami Rama Tirtha amongst others. While there is evidence for some of the saints having taken interest in political matters primarily on account of Islamic rulers, there seems to have been hardly any notion of political bondage or liberation which was clearly evident in the writings and utterances of many of these persons. The demand for political independence was most probably a result of the contact with European thought which occurred at least from A.D. 1800 onwards. One interesting aspect of this phenomenon was the fact that even though there were great differences between the Hindus and the Muslims, they somehow felt closer to each other against the British who were seen as outsiders. This fact became evident in the rebellion of 1857 where both Hindu and Muslim rulers seem to have united to some extent, to fight the British to throw them out of India.

Besides the use of the Vedic-Upaniṣadic heritage for social and political purposes, there was in addition the creation of new institutions to achieve these purposes such as the Brahmo Samaj (1828), the Arya Samaj (1867) and the Prarthana Samaj (1764). These institutions were not based primarily on doctrinal differences or concerned only with spiritual and religious matters. They also had a self-conscious social and political purpose which they sought to realize through the creation of new educational institutions where Vedic-Upaniṣadic traditions were as much a part of the teaching tradition as the new western knowledge. The latter was seen both as a liberating influence from the innumerable superstitions which the post-Upaniṣadic Paurāṇic tradition had encouraged and also as providing an access to modern scientific knowledge which led to power both in the military and the economic spheres. Some of these institutions which in the north, under the inspiration of the Arya Samaj, were called "Anglo-Vedic" schools and colleges and were examples of this dual influence.

It is of course true that the use of spirituality for purposes of social reform was not unknown in the Indian tradition. Most of the saints in the *bhakti* tradition had always had a social dimension as an integral part of their spiritual teachings. The t̄antric tradition was even more self-consciously radical in this respect. However, the present movement was interesting and led not from below but from the top and it was the newly educated in English elite with some knowledge of Sanskrit who were responsible for initiating movements against what was seen as

social evils. In some cases, they demanded legislative action by the British to stop those practices. This was totally new. In India, the Brahmanical or the Islamic elite had earlier not been known to have initiated movements for social reform, nor were social changes through legislation ever attempted except perhaps indirectly by the authors of the new *dharma* and the *Vyavahāra Śāstras*.

The intellectuals of both the neo-Vedāntic and the neo-Vedic movement viewed at the philosophical development that had taken place in India for at least two thousand five hundred years with a critical attitude and some of them were openly contemptuous of what was practised as *Navya Nyāya* in Bengal. Isvarchandra Vidyasagara is the classic example of this attitude, though he is supposed to have been a great Sanskritist himself. He denounced Sanskrit learning as practised in his time and advocated teaching in the English medium as it would provide the younger generation with more relevant knowledge.

The use of the Vedic/Upaniṣadic tradition for the purposes of social reform and political action was facilitated by the fact that the *Dharma Śāstras*, the *Vyavahāra Śāstras* and the *Artha Śāstra* never formed an integral part of what was considered as *śruti* in the Vedic tradition. This resulted in a strange paradoxical situation where the protagonists of the neo-Vedāntic and what may be called neo-Vedic formulations were in direct conflict with the votaries of the orthodox Sanskritist tradition in India as the latter upheld the authority of the *smṛti* texts in the field of social and legal behaviour as much as they did the *śruti* texts in the realm relating to *adṛṣṭa* or the transcendent. On almost all matters of social reform, the orthodox opinion stood firmly against the reformists who derived their information from the Vedas and the *Upaniṣads* interpreted in a certain way and hence did not care for the classical, social, political and legal texts of India.

This was in strange contrast to the persons in Islamic faith for whom the *Shairiat* or the legal rules relating to family and society were as much an integral part of the Quranic revelation as the other parts relating to matters of faith. For a Muslim to be orthodox meant not only to believe in Allah and Muhammad but to believe also in all the detailed variegated rules relating to personal, social and legal behaviour. This entailed that one could not be orthodox in one's religious inspiration and radical in one's thought relating to social, legal and political matters. This fact has been an obstacle in the way of any real innovation or reform in societies, polities and communities where Islam is taken seriously by the people.

Besides the two sources accepted as *śruti* in the Vedic tradition, the *Gītā* had also acquired a standard authoritative position, particularly after the early A.D. eighth century when Śaṅkara had commented upon it along with the *Upaniṣads* and the *Brahma Sūtras* to establish the orthodoxy of his interpretation of the philosophical tradition of India. This had important implications as, besides the Vedas and the *Upaniṣads*, the *Gītā* came to play an important part in legitimizing the new interpretation regarding the role of *karma* or action in the social and political transformation that seemed to inform all those trying to come to terms with the western, primarily Christian, critique of Indian society and culture. In

fact, the Kṛṣṇa of the Mahābhārata became more important than the Kṛṣṇa of the *Śrīmad Bhāgvat*, a fact highlighted not merely in the work of Bankim Chandra who wrote an independent work on Śrī Kṛṣṇa but also in the work of Tilak who wrote a full-length independent commentary on the *Gītā* entitled the *Gītā Bhāṣya* or the *Karma Yoga Śāstra*. Even Gandhi wrote a commentary on the *Gītā* to prove that his doctrine of *ahimsā* was in accordance with it.

Apart from the plurality of authoritative texts even within the Vedic tradition and that the rules relating to personal and civic law did not form an integral part of what was known as the *śruti* in the tradition, there was also the *āgamic* tradition which included not only the Buddhists and the Jainas but many other schools such as the Pāñcarātras, the Śaiva, the Śāktas and the Tantra. These enjoyed an almost equal authority for most of the non-Islāmic and non-Christian people of India and had a fairly close interaction with the so-called orthodox Vedic tradition deriving from the *Vedas*, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Gītā*, even though the last was never given the status of *śruti* in the tradition. This provided a basic plurality for what has come to be vaguely called, "the Hindu tradition".

The differential response to the impact of the West among the Hindus and the Muslims in this country from 1800 onwards may be understood in the following context: the Hindus who comprised all this heterogeneous mass had not only a plurality of traditions but also that the laws governing their personal, social and political behaviour did not form an integral part of what they themselves regarded as authoritative in their tradition. Further, *tantra* which had begun to assume such a dominant force in late medieval times had already questioned the usual norms of personal and social behaviour deriving from the orthodox *smṛti* texts which provided some sort of a basic ground for what was to be regarded as normally acceptable in society. Thus, even prior to the coming of the British in India there already existed a challenge to norms of social behaviour from within as well as from a long tradition deriving from the unorthodoxy of such well-known sects as those of the Buddhists and the Jainas.

The neo-Vedāntic, the neo-Vedic and the new interpretations of the *Gītā* which had become such prominent features of the non-Islamic Indian response to the western impact in this country led to a continuous debate with the orthodox, traditional, Sanskritic scholars who still believed in the authority of the *Dharma Śāstras* with regard to issues of social reform and political action. This provided them the background for all those intellectual enterprises which arose out of the institutional set-up created by the British after 1857 with the founding of Universities at Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. One can hardly understand the thought of, say, K.C. Bhattacharya, the most outstanding philosopher that India has produced in the twentieth century without an awareness of all the intellectual ferment around him. In fact, he is perhaps the first Indian thinker who was self-consciously aware of the problem that was created for India's intellectual traditions by a transplantation of completely alien modes of thought in this country. His well-known address entitled, "*Swaraja in Ideas*" is evidence of this and the fact that two of India's leading modern philosophers, Professors Ramchanda Gandhi and

K.J. Shah thought it necessary to initiate and invite a debate on it in the pages of the *Indian Philosophical Quarterly* is sufficient evidence of its continuing relevance even today. In fact, *swaraja* in ideas was, as important for him as *swaraja* in the field of politics.

K.C. Bhattacharya is the most eminent figure to have emerged on the Indian philosophical scene in the early quarter of the twentieth century and is easily one of the most original thinkers that India has produced. His radical innovations in thought have hardly been noticed or critically assessed and evaluated by his successors until now. And yet, hardly anyone seems to have seriously grappled with the radical innovations that he brought to bear not only on the age-long tradition of India but also on western thought, particularly that of Kant and Hegel with whom Indian philosophers of his generation were deeply familiar.

K.C. Bhattacharya introduced the notion of "alternative absolutes" which is almost a contradiction in terms. For, if something is absolute then, by definition, it cannot have alternatives to itself. The term 'absolute' was introduced in the western philosophical tradition by Hegel and since then it has generally been used in the sense in which he used it. Yet, K.C. Bhattacharya introduced this notion self-consciously to show that the postulation of an absolute was a necessity of thought to resolve a fundamental problematic question or paradox which was found in self-consciousness itself. It was the self-conscious reflection on "self-consciousness" which gave rise to philosophy and the philosophical enterprise consisted first in becoming aware of the paradox involved in self-consciousness and then, secondly, in the attempt to resolve it. As this resolution, according to him, could be attempted in different ways, the idea of alternative absolutes was entailed by the possibility of alternative ways of resolving the problematic question posed by self-consciousness to the philosophical reflection on it. The paradoxicality of self-consciousness consisted that while self-consciousness necessarily involved a relation between consciousness and object, this relationship seemed to be extremely puzzling in character. For as far as the "object" was concerned, its relationship to consciousness was a purely contingent fact and, it did not seem to be affected in any way by its relationship to consciousness as and when it occurred. This, it may be noted, was involved in the very notion of the 'object', as the 'object' was that which claimed an ontic independence for itself and whose nature, if correctly known, was to be that which it would have been even when it was related to no consciousness at all. Consciousness, on the other hand, felt its relationship with the object as something opposed to its very being, for it not only made it dependent on something that was not itself but also as making it enter into a relationship which alienated it from itself. It was not only that the consciousness of the object in its diversity affected it in many ways but that the objectivity of the object itself seemed to challenge it in the sense that it negated it in some sense or the other. The subject, thus, wanted to be rid of the object to remain in its subjectivity, undisturbed by anything alien to itself. The term 'subject' here should be taken as being almost identical with consciousness.

The relation of the subject and the object as revealed in self-consciousness was thus seen as a relationship between two entities, one of which, that is, the 'object' was 'indifferent' to the other, while the subject, that is, consciousness actively rejected the other, that is, the object. However, besides the subject and the object, there was a third term in the relationship, and that was the 'relationship' itself. This, in the context of consciousness was perhaps the most important of all as it 'felt' its 'dependence' on both the subject and the object to be unnecessary and hence wanted to be independent of both the 'subject' and the 'object' with which it felt itself to be unnecessarily entangled. Such an analysis of the notion of 'relation' may seem fantastic but it makes some existential sense when seen in relation to the quality of feeling which pervades consciousness all the time. In fact, the independence of relation from both the terms between which it holds may be appreciated a little better if we reflect that relations themselves have logical properties of their own and that the same relation may hold between different kinds of objects. It may of course be said that however true this may be, a relation in order to obtain must entail the existence of entities between which it obtains. But, in case a relation can engender a relational quality, and if the relational quality were to be of an existential character such as 'feelings' are supposed to be in the context of a consciously 'lived' experience, one may then perhaps begin to see how such a relational quality engendered by the relation of the subject to the object may demand an independence from both to achieve an absolute autonomy for itself where it becomes sufficient unto itself. In fact, both the subject and the object which are revealed to be related in self-consciousness in a paradoxical and problematic fashion feel themselves to be essentially self-sufficient and only 'accidentally' involved in a relationship from which they want to be freed, but somehow find it impossible to do so.

There seems, however, a distinction between the subject and the object not pointed out by K.C. Bhattacharya. For while the object is certainly revealed in consciousness, the subject seems only a shadowy substantive projection of consciousness buttressed by the belief that as consciousness is a quality, it must belong to something, and that something is what is known as the 'subject'. The Buddhists saw through the spurious necessity of this backward projection and proclaimed its illusoriness in their doctrine of "*anattā*" or what is known in Sanskrit as "*anātmavāda*". But, they failed to see the transcendental 'necessity' of the illusory projection, as consciousness seemed to be essentially different from whatever appeared as 'object' to it. The Sāṃkhyan thinkers had grasped this point and were thus led to distinguish the ultimate subject of experience from everything that appeared, or could appear, as 'object' to it. It was this insight which led them to treat not only the body but also the mind, the intellect and even the sense of "I-ness" as belonging not to the self, but to *prakṛti*, that is, that which is totally opposed to consciousness.

K.C. Bhattacharya's thought develops this Sāṃkhyan insight in a remarkable dialectic which almost parallels the Hegelian dialectic and complements it in a way not commented upon until now. Hegel's dialectic moves through negation,

towards a synthesis resulting in an ultimate synthesis where all earlier negations are preserved or transformed into a positivity that is his notion of the absolute idea. K.C. Bhattacharya's dialectic, on the other hand, moves through what may be called a process of identification and de-identification where each step in de-identification reveals the earlier 'identification' to have been both voluntarily mistaken. The dialectic, of course, is that of Sāṅkhya. But it has been given a new turn by K.C. Bhattacharya which again has hardly been noticed even by those who have paid attention to his thought. First, according to him, the very act of de-identification, reveals not only that one is not 'really' that which one thought oneself to be, but that this wrong identification must have been in some sense a 'free' act of one's own, since one can negate or withdraw from it. The second important innovation that K.C. Bhattacharya makes in his employment of the Sāṅkhyan dialectic is that each level of subjectivity which results from the identification of the subject with the object creates its own correlate world of objectivity which alone is 'real' to it at that level. Thus, to the extent that one identifies oneself with the body, the world of sense perception which is the correlate object revealed by it, cannot but be held not only as real but also as the paradigmatic example of what 'real' is or can be. But the moment one identifies oneself as intellect or reason, it is the world of concepts and ideas which begins to assume an overwhelming reality of its own and the world of perception, which alone was earlier held to be 'real', and now is seen as a fleeting instance, a mere shadow, an incomplete and imperfect exemplification of the universal which alone is now considered to be paradigmatically real.

The identification with the intellect or reason is however as arbitrary as the identification with the body. One may, for example, identify oneself with 'will' and, if one does so then only the world of ideals and values is seen as real, for it is that which one wants to realize through action and which alone impels one not only to action but also to find significance and meaningfulness in one's life and the world one lives in. But, for K.C. Bhattacharya, the identification with 'willing' is as arbitrary as it was with the body or the intellect and reason; for, one may as well identify oneself with feeling and, if one does so, it is only the world of emotions and passions with its nuances and shades of joy and sorrow, delight and despair which begins to assume such an overwhelming reality that one cannot even imagine how anything else can be 'real' at all. In the realm of feeling, the object merely becomes the occasion and loses completely its reality whether perceptual or ideational and the subject is only a shadowy projection, for what matters is the feeling and not the one who 'feels' it.

The subtle delineation of the levels of identification and the correlate worlds which alone are regarded as real at those levels has to be carefully seen in K.C. Bhattacharya's writings in order that full justice may be done to it. However, one need not believe that he has exhausted the levels of identification or the correlate worlds that become 'real' at that level of identification. In fact, K.C. Bhattacharya seems more interested in moving from one level to another rather than dwelling in detail at the levels themselves or in attempting a

phenomenological study of the correlate worlds that each level of identification creates and requires for the subjective correlate to be the 'subject' in relation to it. He is in a hurry to reach the subject as freedom, forgetting the lesson from Hegel that the real life of the subject as freedom is in the phenomenology of identification and de-identification along with the creation and dissolution of worlds and not only in the complete withdrawal of the spirit into itself without any correlate world at all with which to relate or to withdraw from. It is of course true that without postulating this foundational withdrawal, freedom would perhaps have no ultimate ontological foundation, but K.C. Bhattacharya seems to forget his own insight that the identification was as much an act of freedom as the de-identification, even though it was only retrospectively realised to be so. He has also not thought of the possibility of a freer re-identification after the de-identification where the former would almost have the same element of 'freedom' in it as the de-identification is supposed to have. ▽

The rich and varied thought of K.C. Bhattacharya demands to be developed in different directions. It is not clear, for example, as to why the problematic paradoxicality of self-consciousness should be articulated only in the way that he has done. Nor is it clear as to why the paradoxicality needs to be resolved only in the manner that he has delineated. The idea of alternatives has to be explored further and the pursuit of the objectivity of the object as an ideal has to be seen almost in the same way as the pursuit of the ideal subject which is freed from reference to any objectivity, actual or possible.

Strangely enough, K.C. Bhattacharya's thought, though leaning heavily on Sāṃkhya with Vedānta and even some strands of Jainism in it, does not seem to have taken into account the possibility of alternative Vedāntic constructions of Rāmānuja, Madhva, Vallabha, Nimbārka and Caitanya which had been at the centre of the controversy in the long debate between the Advaitic and the non-Advaitic interpretations of the Upaniṣadic texts. The construction of the alternative absolute grounded in the ideal of feeling becoming independent of both the terms to which it is related, though interesting in itself, neglects the demand for the relationship with a personal god which has been explored in diverse forms in the Indian tradition. Similarly, he does not seem to have seen the epistemological and ontological difficulties in the Jaina theory of alternative standpoints, even though he has creatively developed the Jaina idea in a new direction. The same seems to be true of the Kantian and Hegelian influences which he has so beautifully interwoven into his system. There seems to be nothing of the transcendental *a priori* in the development of the three alternative absolutes postulated to resolve the paradoxicality encountered in self-consciousness in three different directions. It would have been interesting to work out the transcendental suppositions involved in the three different movements so tantalisingly suggested by K.C. Bhattacharya in his thought. But, regardless of these undeveloped aspects of his thought, there can be little doubt that his mind was one of the most powerful and seminal philosophical one that brought into a unitary philosophical reflection, diverse strands of Indian and western philosophical thought

combining them into a powerful system which continuously challenges the reader to plunge into its profound depths and develop it in new directions.

One of the most original thinkers of modern India who succeeded K.C. Bhattacharya, Kalidasa Bhattacharya (1911–1984) happened to be his son. His *Alternative Standpoints in Philosophy* which though published in 1953, was written as a doctoral dissertation at an unbelievably young age. He tried to provide a logical underpinning to K.C. Bhattacharya's thought and not only developed it in a new direction but also tried to see the whole history of western philosophy from its perspective. Kalidasa Bhattacharya sees the whole history of western philosophy as built around the three alternative absolutes of K.C. Bhattacharya moving in three different directions which he called "philosophy of the object, philosophy of the subject and philosophy of the absolute". Not only this, he developed the logic of alternation as providing the logical and epistemological foundation for K.C. Bhattacharya's theory of alternative absolutes. To do this, he turned to the disjunctive judgement in modern logic and suggested that it is logically more fundamental than the conjunctive judgement which generally is held to be more foundational in the context of logic as it derives from the law of contradiction which is universally conceded as basic to all rational thought about reality.

The disjunctive judgement, as everyone knows, takes two forms. The one treats the disjunction as exclusive while the other treats the disjunction as non-exclusive. Once this distinction is upheld on logical grounds, the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement becomes as fundamental as the exclusive disjunctive judgement which basically articulates the law of contradiction according to which rational thought generally moves. In the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement, the alternatives are related in such a way that while both of them can be true, both cannot be false together. This, it should be noted, is different from the relation of contrariety where the alternatives cannot all be true together, though all of them can be false in the situation as there may be another alternative which has not been mentioned in the judgement. Thus, the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement is supposed to deny *only* the falsity of both the alternatives and hence is 'true' in all the other three situations where either both of them are true, or one is true and the other is false, or the other is true and the remaining alternative is false.

Kalidasa Bhattacharya articulates this relationship in the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement in a novel way and says that in such a judgement the assertion of one of the alternatives may either be 'indifferent' to the truth or falsity of the other, or 'actively reject' the truth of the other. He applies this interpretation to the paradoxical situation in the relationship between the subject and the object as revealed in self-consciousness by K.C. Bhattacharya. According to him, the subject and the object in self-consciousness are united in a disjunctive way so that if the object is asserted as true, it is indifferent to the truth of the other term in the relationship, that is, the subject, as its relationship to the subject is completely contingent to it. This is the well-known realist contention that the fact of being known is totally contingent to the object known and does not affect it in any way

whatsoever. On the other hand, in the case that the other term in the relationship, that is, the 'subject's' truth is asserted, it actively rejects the object in order to be existentially itself. This too is in accord with the well-known idealist position where the ultimate subjectivity of the subject has no relation to the object whatsoever and in fact denies the so-called independence of the object from all reference to any subjectivity.

Kalidasa Bhattacharya's phenomenological reconstruction of the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement overlooks that logically the notion of 'active rejection' cannot be applied in some situations. In case the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement is considered to be in its logicity, it only denies the falsity of both the alternatives and asserts that at least one of the alternatives must be true in order that the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement may be true. It, of course, allows the situation where both the alternatives are true without affecting the truth of the non-exclusive judgement. In fact, the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement is merely one of the sixteen possible logical operators in a two-valued logic with a dyadic logical operator, and has no special privileged position *vis-à-vis* the other possible dyadic logical operators in a two-valued logic which allows all the permutational possibilities involved in the situation.

Despite this qualification, there can be little doubt that the 'phenomenological' existential interpretation of the non-exclusive disjunctive judgement given by Kalidasa Bhattacharya to serve as the logical grounding of K.C. Bhattacharya's theory of alternative absolutes is both extremely original and challenging to philosophical thought, particularly if the logic itself is seen philosophically rather than mathematically.

The significance of Kalidasa Bhattacharya's thrust in this direction becomes evident with the last alternation that he propounds in his book which carries K.C. Bhattacharya's insight perhaps to the farthest point possible. But it is necessary to note here that Kalidasa Bhattacharya reinterprets the notion of alternative absolutes as formulated by K.C. Bhattacharya as ideals immanent in the paradoxical situation revealed to self-consciousness by reflection on itself for resolving the paradoxicality that is revealed in this situation. K.C. Bhattacharya himself had formulated the notion of 'demand' to suggest this direction but had not developed the idea to the fullest extent and further it was not related to the three fundamental paths for man's ultimate realization in the Indian traditions, namely the paths of knowledge, of action and of devotion. Kalidasa Bhattacharya in developing this further suggests that the apprehension of alternative absolutes involved in the paradoxical situation of self-consciousness 'demanding' its resolution in these three alternative directions is also pursued through different paths which have been characterised in the Indian traditions as paths of knowledge, action and feeling, or *jñāna*, *karma* and *bhakti*.

He not only links these three, well-known paths for the realization of the ultimate in the Indian traditions to the alternative absolutes formulated by K.C. Bhattacharya, but also grounds them phenomenologically in his logic of alternation. According to him, in action the object is given only a negative reality as its

positivity is negated in the context of its transformation by action into something different which it 'ought' to be rather than the way it already is. Thus, it is seen in terms of what it should be rather than in terms of what it already 'is'. On the other hand, in knowledge one seeks to understand whatever appears as object not in terms of itself, but rather in terms of the concept of the universal which it exemplifies not only accidentally but also as intermingled with other irrelevancies from which they have to be separated for its truer understanding. Not only this, but at a deeper level, it has to be seen in relation to the forces which have brought it into being and those which will ultimately lead to its decay, dissolution and non-being, that is, in terms of those universal forces which bring it temporarily into being and make it pass away. Thus, for Kalidasa Bhattacharya, the movement of knowledge is a movement away from the specificity of the 'object' and in fact a rejection of it in the interest of something other than itself. According to him, it is 'feeling' that tries to grasp the specificity of the object in its unique individuality, a fact that becomes evident in relation to aesthetic objects which themselves try to grasp the particular objectivity of the objection a way which is not only totally different but completely opposed to the direction that knowledge takes.

Kalidasa Bhattacharya's grounding of these three dimensions of self-consciousness and their relationship to the immanent alternative absolutes formulated by K.C. Bhattacharya is fascinating, but it is not clear whether the way he has understood knowledge, feeling and action is the same as that of K.C. Bhattacharya; at least *prima facie*, there seem to be important differences between the two and, if so, it will be interesting to explore and highlight them further.

Kalidasa Bhattacharya's development of K.C. Bhattacharya's thought in all these different directions deserves serious study as perhaps it is singular in recent Indian philosophical thought that not only a predecessor's thought should be taken seriously but also that it should be developed further in new directions. Kalidasa Bhattacharya moreover, formulates even an ultimate alternation of which K.C. Bhattacharya had not even thought of. His last and final alternation is related to the question whether the alternative formulations that we are forced to make are merely due to the limitations not only of our intellect but also on account of our way of experiencing the world along with the manner in which we are constituted or whether it is an intrinsic and inalienable nature of reality itself. As this is an unanswerable question, we are, according to him, ultimately left with an alternation where we might choose any of the alternatives but where we can never assert on any substantive ground that any one of them *alone* is true.

This is similar to situation that the enterprise of knowledge, in respect to physical reality seems to have reached in its search regarding the real nature of matter that surrounds us everywhere. Present day physics, as is well known, encountered the dilemma with the rise of the study of quantum phenomena resulting in the famous formulation of Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy and the controversy that it gave rise to. The fact that Einstein never reconciled himself to this is well known and though most physicists have opted for the

alternatives which Einstein was not happy with, the choice is as arbitrary as the faith or the belief of others who insist that such could not be the case and that we cannot impose on reality what is merely a consequence of the limitations inherent in the process of 'measurement' itself.

Physicists have only talked of the inherent and immanent limitations involved in any process of measurement, ignoring the question of the intrinsic limitations involved in the structure of the knowing consciousness or in the structure of rationality through which usually one tries to cognize what is real and to distinguish it from that which is unreal. Kant had talked long ago of such a structural limitation involved in all knowledge, but much attention does not seem to have been paid to this aspect of the problem by the physicists. Kant's specific formulation might be questioned, but the generalised issue that he raised is not substantially affected by any questioning of the particularity of his specification. The rise of non-Euclidean geometries does not, in any way, affect the substance of Kant's contentions as has generally been thought by many of his critics. Yet, even Kant's analysis does not seem to have been formulated in terms of an ultimate alternation, as Kalidasa Bhattacharya has suggested, for, Kant chooses one of the alternatives and does not see that the other alternatives are equally possible. Hegel chose the other alternative, as for him, the real was rational and the rational was real. But the choice between Kant and Hegel is itself ultimately the assertion of an alternative and not that only one of them was justified as against the other as they both believed.

The challenging reformulation of K.C. Bhattacharya's theory of alternative absolutes is one of the most remarkable events in the history of Indian philosophy even though it has not yet been seen as such. In fact, the Jainas who are supposed to be the great formulators of the theory of alternatives in the Indian traditions have not seen that even they have to accept an ultimately undecidable alternation between the *srvajñatā* of Mahāvira and the *syādvāda* of the knowledge of ordinary people. Is the knowledge of the *sarvajñatā* itself infected by *syādvāda* or does it, in principle, have to be free of it, is the final dilemma that Jaina epistemology faces, a dilemma which can only be answered by asserting an ultimately irresolvable alteration, thus once again, justifying Kalidasa Bhattacharya's reformulation of K.C. Bhattacharya's thought?

Contemporaries of K.C. Bhattacharya were enormously influenced by him as evidenced by the fact that most of them have acknowledged it. G.R. Malkani, Rasbehari Das, D.M. Datta, T.R.V. Murti and many others have mentioned this in their writings, but hardly anyone has systematically carried forward his ideas or developed them in new directions as did his son, Kalidasa Bhattacharya. Dr. N.V. Banerjee who was also his student and who delivered the first K.C. Bhattacharya memorial lecture, on his well-known essay entitled "The Concept of Philosophy" shows little direct influence, though some trace of it might be found.

Another independent thinker produced by India in recent times is N.V. Banerjee as he has self-consciously repudiated the most widely accepted presuppositions of Indian thought and philosophised independently of both the Indian

and the western traditions. In an extremely bold and radical manner, he looks at almost all the human enterprises in the field of knowledge, art and action as being primarily an 'escape' from the foundational problem which human beings face, which for some inexplicable reason, they are involved in from the very moment of their birth. According to him, man always feels separated and distinct from others while basically his reality demands that he conceive of himself as essentially and inalienably in relation to them. Thus, though for some reason he always conceives of himself as an 'I', his reality consists in the 'We', that is, 'I with others' which he somehow always forgets and so treats others as apart from him. N.V. Banerjee steers clear, thus, of both solipsism and skepticism which, according to him, have plagued philosophical thinking right from its inception as it has concentrated on self-consciousness considering this in abstracted isolation from the 'others' with whom one is in essential relationship. His thought is thus essentially anthropocentric and he argues that human thinking cannot, in principle, but be rooted in the human condition in which it arises and of which it remains an essential part, however, much one may delude oneself to believe in the contrary. But, once the human situation is accepted and human thought seen as an integral part of it, many philosophical problems, particularly those relating to epistemology and metaphysics, become redundant. Philosophical reflection reveals them to be rooted in a foundational fallacy which treats the 'ego-centric predicament' as unavoidable and intrinsically incapable of being overcome even though the fact of human communication, not only with other human beings, but also with the animal world in general, always negates this.

Thus, the very starting point of N.V. Banerjee's thought negates almost the whole tradition of western and Indian philosophy which primarily takes as its starting point, the isolated self-consciousness of the human mind and not an embodied person which is with others and in constant communication with them. His is not the isolated Cartesian 'cogito' or the Husserlian 'transcendental ego' which has "bracketed" the world or the pure *puruṣa* of Sāṃkhya who is the eternal subject which can never be an object to itself or know that there are other *puruṣas* in the world besides itself, or the Advaitic *ātman* which has no 'others' of the non-Advaitic *ātman*s which have an essential relationship only with the Lord and which either have no knowledge of other selves or knows them only as fellow-devotees who are totally immersed in some form or other of *bhakti* or the divine. Rather, it is man in the plural, man not as 'I', but as 'we', the 'we-s' who alone may communicate and have a dialogue or rather a 'multilogue between themselves'.

The denial of transcendence could not be greater and the ultimate acceptance of what had been earlier rejected in tradition as the world of *vyavahāra* has perhaps never been argued as thoroughly at the philosophical level as has been done in Banerjee's thought. It is true that the identity of *paramārtha* and *vyavahāra* or the *samvṛtti-sat* and *nivṛtti-sat* had been maintained by Nāgārjuna earlier, but Banerjee does not accept the notion of a *paramārtha-sat* at all and the reality of the *vyāvahārika* realm, for him is infected by a foundational ignorance which

treats the 'I' as independent of others. Not only this, Banerjee's thought is an even more radical departure from almost all traditional Indian thought as it accepts suffering as an essential part of the human condition rather than seeing the abolition of its very possibility as the ultimate goal of all human endeavour. Banerjee goes even beyond this and not only denies immortality but regards the seeking for immortality as one of the greatest obstacles in the realization of one's essentiality to others and an expression of 'egoistic' centrality which itself is the result of that foundational ignorance which has to be overcome. The acceptance of suffering, the denial of transcendence, whether in the form of *mokṣa* or immortality, along with the rejection of the 'SELF'-centric thought of India are the hallmark of Banerjee's thought which has hardly been given any attention until now by anyone in this country or abroad.

But despite this radical departure from tradition, Banerjee's thought yet shows a deep continuity which perhaps he himself did not recognize. This lies in the notion of a primordial, beginningless *avidyā* which infects the human condition. Through a philosophical reflection on the human situation awareness of what ought not to be actually obtains and thus demands to be overcome and abolished so that the *avidyā* may disappear and truth shine once more. The departure from tradition lies in his analysis of the nature of *avidyā* and the context in which it is supposed to arise and in the nature of the 'demand' to be overcome. It is not in the paradoxical nature of self-consciousness, as argued for by K.C. Bhattacharya, but in the fact that one inevitably considers himself as essentially apart from others which however is not the case. But, as in K.C. Bhattacharya, the notion of 'demand' is accepted. However, the idea of alternatives is totally given up and, in fact, all the enterprises of man including which belong to the realm of morality also are seen as 'escapes' from the basic task of getting rid of the foundational *avidyā* in which man somehow is involved in by the very nature of his psychophysical being.

Banerjee's prescription for the overcoming of this foundational *avidyā* does not consist in suggesting any new system of *yoga* or *sādhanā*. Rather, he takes recourse to formulating three new maxims for human living similar to Kant's three famous maxims of morality. These maxims by which the basic *avidyā* can be overcome or mitigated basically derive from the fact that man continuously behaves through a consciousness that is essentially 'ego-centric' while in reality it is not so. The continuous self-conscious denial of ego-centricity is thus central to the solution and the three principles that he formulates follow from it either directly or indirectly. However, Professor N.V. Banerjee's formulation of the universal principle involved in all morality derives from the ontological rejection of ego-centricity and not from some universalistic requirement which most formulations assume. In fact, Kant's own formulation of the principle generally presented as "Act as if thy will were to become a law universal" presupposes the idea of the universality of law and that the individual will, in case it is to be moral, should be in accordance with it. This formulation by Banerjee, however, does not 'deny' the individuality of the will on moral grounds but on the ground of its

being rooted in a foundational ignorance of the fact that the human reality is the 'we' and not the isolated, unrelated 'I' which Kant accepts along with almost all other thinkers in the western tradition.

Banerjee's radical departure from Kant in his formulation of the other two principles follows from this basic difference in understanding the universality which is implied in all morality. Banerjee formulates his second and third principles as:

1. So behave in any given circumstance that your behaviour is not circumscribed by ego-consciousness but is such as to present itself to be, as it were, any one's behaviour in that circumstance.
2. So behave that your behaviour is in no circumstance governed either directly or remotely by the dread of death and the desire for personal immortality.
3. So behave that your behaviour is on no occasion governed, either directly or remotely by aversion to bear the Cross.

Banerjee's thought bears a striking resemblance to that of Ramavatar Sharma discussed earlier, who not only wrote in Sanskrit but was completely within the old Sanskrit tradition of philosophising even though he lived in the twentieth century. It is extremely unlikely that N.V. Banerjee was aware of the thought of Ramavatar Sharma as this thought was not much in vogue even amongst Sanskritic scholars there having hardly any reference to him or any attempt at a refutation of his views by thinkers belonging to other *saṃpradāyas*. However, as Sharma was invited to give a Sri Gopal Basu Malik Lecture in 1907-08 in Calcutta on Vedāntism, his reputation must have travelled wide. And, as his lectures were given in English, it is very likely that what he said there was not so unknown amongst English-knowing philosophers in the country. Even then, there is little evidence of his influence as neither K.C. Bhattacharya nor any other well-known writer on Vedānta, either from Bengal or elsewhere seem to have referred to him.

These three original thinkers namely, K.C. Bhattacharya, Kalidasa Bhattacharya or N.V. Banerjee, produced by the western system of philosophical education in this country were, however, far less known as compared to S. Radhakrishnan who came to epitomize and symbolize philosophy in India and dominated the Indian philosophical scene as almost its sole representative abroad. This was due to, among other things, his great rhetorical ability to sway intellectual audiences in India and abroad, his occupation of the Spalding Chair at Oxford and the political positions that he occupied after India became independent in 1947. His two volumes on Indian philosophy almost became the standard work along with S.N. Dasgupta's *History of Indian Philosophy* on the subject. Similarly, his *Idealist View of Life, Western Thought and Eastern Religions* and the *Hindu View of Life* provided to many of his contemporaries the support for the generally accepted view about the dichotomy between the West and the East and the idea that most of Indian philosophy was essentially 'spiritual' and 'idealistic' in

character. The publication of a volume on his philosophy in the well-known series edited by Paul Arthur Schilke confirmed the general impression that he was the foremost philosopher from India. However, subsequently his place in the philosophical world of India was seen as more historical rather than philosophical. He seems to have defined religion in such a way that its essence lay in the mystic consciousness which again was interpreted primarily in Advaitic terms. Along with this, is present the usual idea of the formless and unspeakable truth which was articulated in diverse ways and embodied in different forms but none of which could ever, in principle, be adequate or embody it fully. Yet, in all these contentions, he does not seem to have taken seriously the long debate regarding these issues in India's philosophical traditions even though he must have been well aware of them, especially as he himself had written a survey of the field in his two volumes on Indian philosophy. The close relation between philosophy and religion, and religion and mysticism which is supposed to be the hallmark of Indian thought was strongly advocated by him both in his numerous speeches and writings and this helped to strengthen the mystical image of Indian philosophy and culture which has been built right from Ram Mohan Roy onwards and had become almost an axiomatic truth about India.

One of the strange legacies of this presentation of Indian thought and culture was the debate regarding the place of reason in philosophy and whether Indian philosophy could even be regarded as philosophy in the proper sense of the term. Most Indians trained in educational institutions modelled on the western pattern where predominantly western philosophy was taught, had internalised the notion of 'philosophy' as it was usually presented in that tradition. For them, it was a serious question as to whether Indian philosophy could be strictly regarded as an enterprise of reason, as it always seemed subservient to the transrational goal of seeking *mokṣa*. Also, it appeared to be tied down to the acceptance of the authority of some classical text or other and seemed mainly engaged in an exegetical dispute regarding what the authoritative text exactly meant. Many Indian thinkers asserted a radical distinction between what they called *darśana* and philosophy and generally opted for the superiority of the former over the latter, except for a few lone voices.

Radhakrishnan, along with many others, played a decisive part in presenting this deep dichotomy between the philosophical tradition of India and the West, forgetting the long linkage of philosophy with the ideology of the "good life" in the West as well as the long tradition of hard-core ratiocinative thinking in India where debate and discussion was the life-blood of philosophical thinking and where skeptics and agnostics were as frequently found as those who believed in something transcendent. Yet, even the latter were never unquestioning believers, for if they were so, they were never regarded as philosophers.

The assertion of truth and the reality of the empirical life and of the social and political realm was, however, as much a part of Radhakrishnan's thought as it had been with every thinker from Ram Mohan Roy onwards. The combination of the idealistic position in metaphysics, generally of the Advaitic variety with an

assertion of the reality of the empirical world including its social and political dimensions, seems to have been a prominent feature of most of the thinkers who belong to this period. In fact, if we take the articles written in the volume on *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* (edited by Radhakrishnan and Muirhead and published in the Muirhead Library of Philosophy) as a fair representation of the philosophical scene in India during that period, it is striking that most of these thinkers included, subscribed to some form of idealism. Amongst the twenty-five persons who have written on their own philosophy, most of them seem to be inclined towards some form of idealism. The only exception, G.C. Chatterjee has entitled his essay "Common Sense Empiricism". There also seems to be an explicit concern with the nature of the philosophical enterprise and an attempt to demarcate for it a special area as distinct from science and also, as different from a purely ratiocinative exercise. K.C. Bhattacharya's explicit distinction between empirical thought and all other levels of thought attempts to demarcate this as clearly as possible. He considers empirical thought as characterised by the fact that it always refers to that which is perceived by the senses or is perceivable in principle in terms of it. This obviously is a straight positivistic position where all cognitive meaningfulness is defined by translatability in terms of possible sense experience which then would determine its truth or falsity.

K.C. Bhattacharya, however, adopts the strategic move of excluding all such thought from the domain of philosophical consideration and considers philosophy as dealing only with the other three levels or types of theoretic consciousness. These, according to him are pure objective thought which is concerned only with 'meanings' irrespective of whether such 'meanings' have any relation to what is perceived or perceivable, as is necessary in the case of empirical thought. This is the first level of theoretic consciousness where thought frees itself from sensory experience and deals with a 'reality' which is independent of it. The other two levels of theoretic consciousness are designated by him as spiritual thought and transcendental thought. Both of these are concerned not with the object as was the case in the earlier types of thought. At these levels, thought is concerned with itself or rather with the subjectivity that is embodied in the word "I", and in self-consciousness continuously "negates" all that is presented to it or even spoken of as the subject. These two levels he calls spiritual and transcendental thought, the former referring to the self or the subject as self-aware in consciousness, and the other as a negation of even this self-awareness as it objectifies the self to some extent and makes it "appear" as if it were an "object" to awareness. The interesting point about K.C. Bhattacharya's attempt lies in his separate demarcation of the area of philosophy as a cognitive enterprise from science which by his time had become the paradigmatic example of knowledge.

The attempt, however, does not seem confined to K.C. Bhattacharya alone as a number of other articles deal with the same problem in this volume. Ananda Coomaraswamy, T.R.V. Moorthy, V. Subramaniam and Swami Abhedanand have written on the same theme, but none of them seems to have dealt with the problem as focally and as clearly as K.C. Bhattacharya has done. The concern

with philosophy and the concern with the self as the focus of philosophical attention seemed to go together in the thought of most of the Indian thinkers of that period as at least three other articles, by Bhagwan Das, Radhakrishnan and P.T. Raju are devoted to this theme. In fact, the title of the article by Bhagwan Das "*Ātma Vidyā* or the Science of the Self" almost suggests that philosophy and *ātma vidyā* or science of the self are the same.

The self with which the philosophical thought of India had been concerned, both in traditional and modern times, gradually takes a fuller content and becomes more "this worldly" as philosophical thinking moves into the latter half of the twentieth century. N.V. Banerjee had already cut off its moorings from the quest for immortality and relationships with the transcendent, seeing it essentially in relationship to other beings with whom one was, or could be, in possible communication. Even earlier, a moral dimension seems to have been added to it right from Vivekanand onwards, by-passing the deep conflict between *dharma* and *mokṣa* which had characterised Indian thinking in this regard from the beginning. A new kind of anthropocentrism and humanism appears to have taken hold of Indian thinkers and we have the interesting spectacle of a development of man-centred thought in different directions. Thus, we have the radical humanism of M.N. Roy, the value-centred thought of N.K. Devaraj and the anthropocentric and history-centred thought of Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya who, by contrast, is more seriously concerned with the universalistic and impersonal claims of scientific knowledge in his book, *Anthropology and Historiography of Science* (Ohio, 1990). He has argued vigorously not only for science being a human enterprise like other enterprises but also that it has an essentially historical dimension in its development, thus making it as much subservient to the processes of historical change as any other human enterprise. The impersonal and universal presentations of scientific knowledge were thus questioned at its foundations and it became, like everything else, a creature of time and historical circumstance limited by the humanity of human beings who undertook this enterprise.

However, it is not clear whether Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya subscribes to the cumulative and evolutionary base of human knowledge generally claimed for most of scientific knowledge in modern times. Sri Aurobindo had earlier been profoundly affected by the idea of evolution which had swept through almost all areas of human endeavour, and had tried to integrate it in a creative manner with India's traditional thought of which the centre had been the spiritual quest of man. He argued that the central fact of evolution can only be understood in terms of the emergence of mind and the gradual control and transformation of material and vital processes by it in the service of some end which went beyond them, and consisted in the achievement of a state of consciousness which he named as super-mind, and of which it was only very vaguely aware. Mind itself was seen as having different levels with both continuity and radical breaks which can be seen in his ideas of higher mind, intuitive mind, over-mind, culminating ultimately in the perfect stage of super mind. The radical novelty of Sri Aurobindo's thought lies in his insistence on the transformation of matter, life and mind

through forces that are superior to them in status, quality and value along with a rejection of the renunciatory ideal which involved a denial of the reality of this world and the claim that the ultimate truth could only be realised through a rejection of the life of man in family, society and polity. The human being, in this perspective, was himself seen in super-human terms whose mission was to actualize this imminent divine reality which was hidden within him.

Most of these thinkers, however, were the product primarily of British system of education introduced at the beginning of the nineteenth century spreading gradually all over India as British rule penetrated into different regions consolidating its political and administrative control over them. Bengal the key centre in this enterprise was followed by Maharashtra, Madras and U.P. where British educational institutions provided knowledge of western learning in all fields and created a new class of learned men in India with a greater knowledge of western tradition in most fields of knowledge and naturally considered it not only as superior to all previous forms of knowledge but also as the only form of knowledge which deserved that title. This class as it gradually emerged and enlarged itself, dominated the field of knowledge in India by occupying visible seats of power but also as they manned institutions of learning and thus represented what came to be seen as the 'educated' class within this country.

But as the traditional forms of learning also continued during this period and were segregated by self-conscious British educational policy, they provided a subterranean counterpoint to the new dominant educational class in India with hardly any inter-relationship between them. Thus, three different streams of education existed in the British period from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first, and most visible consisted of those who were the direct products of the British system of education in the country. The second, consisted of those who were the products of the new institutions of traditional learning created by the British to maintain and foster traditional forms of learning and Sanskrit studies on the one hand and Arabic-Persian on the other. The third, consisted of those who were the products of traditional institutions which survived the British institutional innovations and were primarily maintained and fostered by non-governmental patronage in British India and by a princely patronage in princely India. There was a certain overlap between the last two as they taught the same kind of texts and courses, though there was a distinct difference in the method of teaching and the way in which examinations were conducted. There was also, a difference in the status of the persons belonging to these two streams, at least in British India, as those working in the British-sponsored institutions had better financial support than the ones patronised by non-governmental agencies. In fact, there was great discrimination in even the salary scales between the institutions of traditional learning fostered by the British and those which gave a western type of education in the newly-created seats of learning. This deliberate policy of segregation and financial discrimination in the salaries given to the teachers belonging to these two different types of institutions had a deep and lasting influence on the intellectual scene in India during the one and a half

century of British influence in the field of education. The whole world of classical knowledge and those who pursued and practised it became gradually invisible to those who came out of the new institutions modelled on the British pattern and thus produced an intellectual environment which was only aware of the western traditions in knowledge as its reference point and treated India's traditional intellectual enterprises either as having had no value at all or as having been completely superseded by the developments of knowledge that had taken place in the West and were, therefore, completely irrelevant to the contemporary quest for knowledge. The two worlds thus developed in almost complete ignorance of each other and had hardly any awareness of the other or interaction. There were occasionally a few persons who were aware of both, but one either belonged to the one tradition or the other and even when one was aware of the other tradition, it was too marginal in character to have any substantial effect on one's thought or one's standing in the tradition to which one belonged.

There was yet another stream which primarily related itself to the institutions of Sanskritic learning created by the British and which made use of those traditional scholars who were completely outside the modern stream for its own purposes. This stream derived from the work initiated by the Royal Asiatic Society which was founded by Sir William Jones in 1784 and which primarily engaged in the work of collecting, editing, publishing and translating classical Sanskrit texts all over the country. The great interest in Indological studies outside the country, particularly in Germany and England, provided an inspiration for the establishment of these types of research institutes all over India, many of which prided themselves on adopting the latest philological and historical methods in Indological research and in publishing texts through a critical comparison of all the available manuscripts, thus resulting in the search for the original texts which had become gradually distorted by later additions.

The establishment of the Royal Asiatic Society in Bengal, the Adyar Library and Research Centre in Madras, the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Poona, along with the creation of such well-known centres of Sanskrit learning as the Sanskrit College, Calcutta and the Sanskrit College, Benaras were important steps in this direction. So also was the launching of a number of publication series such as the one associated with the Saraswati Mahal Library in Travancore, the Gaekwad Oriental Series at Baroda, the Vijainagaram Sanskrit Series and many others resulted in an amazing resurgence of the awareness regarding the unbelievably rich and varied heritage of the intellectual and literary enterprises of India in various fields over at least three million years of its recorded history.

The story of what was achieved during this period of about 150 years since, say, 1800 to 1950, is truly amazing and has yet to be written in detail to discover what actually happened during this period in various parts of the country. However, slowly, the effects of the apartheid introduced by the British in the educational system began to manifest themselves and negated the aim of this whole exercise undertaken by some of the best minds in the country. The dawn of Independence and the imperatives of modernisation along with the massive

training programmes of Indian students abroad under the various programmes launched by the U.S., British, Soviet and European governments had resulted in a situation where a new class of educated Indians came into being who did not know any Sanskrit. This class was totally unaware of the Indian heritage in all fields of knowledge being firmly convinced that there nothing of that kind existed and hence became totally uninterested in it. A situation obtained where most educated people in the country were hardly aware of the living traditions of their own country, as the traditional scholars led a totally different kind of life, segregated in institutions with which they had no contact whatsoever. There was, however, a growing feeling amongst some persons aware of this dichotomous development, that something was wrong and that bridges had to be built between the two traditions and a dialogue established between them.

The most significant step in this direction was taken by Professor M.P. Rege in Poona who organised a dialogue between traditional, well-versed in the philosophical traditions of classical India with modern scholars trained in western institutions of learning in the country who had some knowledge of Indian philosophy and a passing acquaintance with Sanskrit. The innovation of Professor Rege lay in that he not only provided the facility of a bilingual dialogue between traditional and modern scholars, but prepared the ground for it by meeting individually the scholars concerned and explaining to them the purpose of the dialogue. Also, he chose a subject which lay on the borderlands of contemporary and traditional philosophy and formulated the issues which were to be discussed in the dialogue in as precise a manner as possible and in a language which was well known to traditional *paṇḍits*, that is, Sanskrit. He thus created an atmosphere where traditional scholars could feel free to express their ideas in their own language on issues of relevant contemporary philosophical concerns which engaged the minds of those who were trained in that subject in institutions modelled on the western pattern in India. The first dialogue of this kind was organised at Poona in July 1983 and an edited transcript of it was published in 1991 under the title *Samvāda: A Dialogue Between two Philosophical Traditions* by the I.C.P.R., Delhi. The work has been hailed as "the First Exercise in doing comparative philosophy, rather than in 'talking' about it".

The experiment was followed by a number of other activities such as a meeting of the most eminent scholars in the field of Nyāya, Mīmāṃsā and Kashmira Śaivism to discuss pertinent questions relating to their own school of Indian philosophy and to think of ways and means of carrying traditional thought further in the contemporary philosophical context.

The Rege experiment also led to the organisation of Summer and Winter schools in the field of modern logic and Navya Nyāya where modern logic was taught to traditional *paṇḍits* and Navya Nyāya to modern logicians who were interested in it. This experiment was again organised and conducted by Professors M.P. Rege and D. Prahladachar, the latter being one of the most outstanding young Naiyāyikas in the country. The idea of having a dialogue with traditional scholars on contemporary intellectual issues was later extended to the field of

linguistics and a dialogue was organised on current issues in linguistics under the leadership of Professor Rege and Professor Patnaik, the then Director of the Indian Institute of Languages, Mysore. Also, as a consequence of all this activity, it was felt that along with this the dialogue experiment should be expanded beyond the field of classical Sanskrit scholarship to cover Arabic and Persian scholars in the field of philosophy and at least two dialogues were organised, one at Lucknow and the other at Hyderabad where issues in contemporary philosophy were formulated and discussed with scholars in the field of West Asian philosophy with the same facilities for bilingual translations which were such a novel feature of the Rege experiment earlier held at Poona.

This attempt to build bridges and foster a dialogue with the living representatives of traditional knowledge in India was not confined only to the activities that have been mentioned above. In fact, the need for such an interaction was independently felt by many other groups and scholars, chief among whom was the organisation known as PPST that is Patriotic and People-Oriented Science and Technology under the leadership of M.D. Srinivas. This group regularly published a bulletin wherein an attempt was made to revive traditional scientific and technical knowledge and establish creative links with it. Later still, Dr. Navjyoti Singh of the National Institute of Science and Technology for Development launched a similar project entitled in cooperation with the PPST group at Madras. At the level of individual scholarship, Veena Das in the introduction to her well-known work entitled, *Structure and Cognition* argued for "the articulation of both the manifest and the implicit conceptual structures embedded in the texts and the use of them for the understanding of Indian social reality". While Sudhir Kakkar explored the world of indigenous psychiatry and psychoanalysis and established an interactive relationship with it as reported in his well-known work entitled, *Shamans, Mystics and Doctors*.

As a result of all this ongoing activity, a need was felt for a Who's Who of the traditional Sanskrit scholars of India listing many of the living practitioners in each field of classical knowledge that were there in the country with whom a dialogue on contemporary intellectual issues relating to those fields could be meaningfully attempted. As a result of the combined efforts of the ICPR, the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and the Sahitya Academy a *Who's Who of Sanskrit Scholars* was prepared and published in 1991.

The search for a reconciliation of the transcendental and the ordinary 'lived in' life of the world continues amongst thinkers of the younger generation of whom perhaps J.N. Mohanty and Sundara Rajan have made the most serious and sustained attempt in this direction. Mohanty has been at home both in the Sanskrit tradition of Indian philosophy, particularly pertaining to the one known as Nyāya as well as with the western philosophical tradition, particularly the phenomenological existentialism that centered in Europe and beginning from Husserl onwards. He is one of the few Indian philosophers who has an equal command both of Sanskrit and German, not to speak of English, which almost everyone knows well as they have studied in that language. His work on Gaṅgeśa

and Husserl is respected both by Sanskrit-knowing Nyāya specialists and German-knowing Husserlian specialists. His authority is recognised in both the traditions and he is perhaps one of the best persons to interpret one philosophical tradition to the other.

However, while his work on Nyāya is basically explanatory, his work in phenomenology is creatively original and departs from traditional formulations of Husserl without suggesting that he is betraying the tradition of the master. In fact, his distinction between what he has called 'philosophy of suspicion' and 'philosophy of respect' is relevant not only to western traditions of philosophizing in the context of which he has made this distinction but to all modes of philosophising whether western or non-western. "Philosophy of suspicion", according to him, privileges a particular mode of consciousness at the expense of all other modes which it treats as inferior, while the "philosophy of respect" treats all modes of consciousness as almost equally valid, at least at their own level and from their own point of view. This is almost a Jaina position, even though Mohanty has not explicitly said that it is so. There is of course the problem of the relation between these different modes of consciousness and the way they view each other along with the question of the immanent criteria of the "real" and the "unreal", the "meaningful" and the "meaningless" and the "significant" and the "insignificant" within each of them. Besides this, there is the deeper question regarding the compatibility or conflict in the courses of action or *puruṣārtha*, which each of these modes of consciousness may entail. Ultimately, the question is not just one of a recounting of the modes of consciousness and seeking of clarification of each of them within its own perspective, but of the sort of "living" that it demands and the "life-world" that it requires both to sustain it and also to fulfill the ideal immanent in it. This is even more necessary, as for Mohanty, the "life-world" is an integral part of the transcendental consciousness with all its diverse modalities. The relation of the whole of consciousness to the specific life-world and the tension that diverse "life-worlds" pose for different modes of consciousness does not, however, seem to have been intensively explored in Mohanty's work. Not only this, the relation between transcendental consciousness and the modes of consciousness and the relations of both to the life-world has not been given the attention that it deserves. Nor is there perhaps any attempt to explore the relation of the so-called "life-world" to culture and history on the one hand and to biology and ecology on the other, in which it is necessarily embedded.

Mohanty appears to adopt the idea of "originary experience" from Husserl and thinks that the clarification of meaning in each mode of consciousness through a search for the "originary experience" which brought it into being might be seen as the real task of phenomenology without, however, seeing that the notion of "originary" experience is a myth, a convenient construction to help in the search for something that may function as a suitable substitute for the notion of *eidōs* or "essence" that was said to have been given up.

Mohanty's thought struggled with the incorporation of the notions of "corporeality", "historicity", "intersubjectivity" and "communicability" in the idea of

the transcendental subjectivity itself. This, of course, is a heroic attempt, but it not only presupposes that these notions have an unambiguous clarity about them but also that their incorporation into the notion of transcendental subjectivity would not affect it in such a radical manner as to involve an abdication of all that has until now been associated with it. The retention of the term 'transcendental subjectivity' in such a situation would only be systematically misleading and it might be better if some other term which has no misleading past association is substituted for it. What exactly, for example, would the term "subjectivity" still mean in such a situation where subjectivity itself is inter-subjective, and what would "transcendentness" mean if temporality, corporeality and historicity are essentially involved in it? These are questions that need to be attended to as their relation to what is transcendental is the heart of the matter.

Regarding the notion of abstract universal reason and the notions of rationality associated with it, Mohanty suggests the idea of a relationality towards which one strives through some sort of a communicative dialogue between what may be called cultural rationalities or rationalities embedded in concrete, particular, specific cultures. He has developed, the interesting notion of "overlapping *neomata*" which provides some sort of a continuity without involving the essential commonality, a point earlier articulated by Wittgenstein in his notion of "family resemblance" developed in a different context. However, here too, Mohanty does not appear to have seen that cultural rationalities which are themselves not fixed or all of a piece, as the cognitive enterprises in a culture undergo vast changes over a period of time where even paradigm shifts occur, to use a phrase from Kuhn. Not only this, within the same culture, norms of rationality embodied in different realms of culture need not be the same or even cohere amongst themselves as many a time it is the tension between these which gives rise to the dynamics of change in the culture.

There seems to be little or no relationship between what Mohanty has said in the context of rationality and what he has considered to be the proper task of philosophy, as consisting in the activity of what he has called philosophical description. Is this activity "inter subjective", "historical", "temporal", "linguistic" or is it the activity of a pure transcendental subjectivity enclosed within its own intuitions, unwilling to go in any direction whatsoever? He has explicitly distinguished it from deduction or the framing of a hypothesis or the construction of interpretative frameworks or theoretical models, or a rational reconstruction of experience. But if it does not do any of these and only engages in "philosophical description" in his sense of the term, then the question arises as to what is the relation of this "activity" to all other activities which one can probably undertake if one so wishes. This, may not then be "philosophising" in Mohanty's sense of the term but then what is that which makes one undertake one activity rather than another? And at a deeper level what is this freedom which makes one choose between these undertakings amongst which, on Mohanty's argument, there can be no grounds for choosing? In fact, Mohanty does not seem to have conceived of the possibility of even alternative phenomenological descriptions of

what he calls "philosophical facts", for presumably he will grant that there are different philosophers employing the phenomenological method and perhaps differing amongst themselves with regard to the phenomenological description of a philosophical fact. The phenomenologist, it seems, does not develop a decision theory for what to do in a situation where different phenomenologists differ amongst themselves with regard to a philosophical description of the same fact or when the same phenomenologist gives two conflicting philosophical descriptions of the same philosophical fact at different moments of time.

The same situation obtains to a certain extent regarding Mohanty's plea for an ontological non-commitment in respect to the phenomenological description of a philosophical fact and his suggestion that it may be seen either as: (i) linguistic or a meaning structure; (ii) an ontological structure; (iii) a structure of subjectivity or consciousness. This reminds one of K.C. Bhattacharya's theory of alternative absolutes and Kalidasa Bhattacharya's further elaboration of it in terms of a series of ultimate alternations based on the logic of alternatives. However, he seems to have forgotten K.C. Bhattacharya's warning that the conjunction of the alternative is only a vacuous conjunction, for if one is asserted the others are automatically excluded. Further, there is nothing like the notion of "demand" which occurs so prominently in K.C. Bhattacharya's thought where each of the alternative absolutes "demands" its actualization and realization in one's consciousness. Furthermore, neither the two Bhattacharyas nor Mohanty seem to have raised the question as to what "determines" the choice between these alternatives. If there can be any ground for choice between these in principle, then the choice cannot be arbitrary and the notion of 'alteration' will collapse at its foundations. On the other hand, if it is an exercise of pure freedom, then it is a purely arbitrary act "*un acte libre*" as the existentialists call it.

Mohanty's radical distinction between speculative and descriptive philosophy is interesting and has far reaching implications for both the practice of philosophy and the theorizing about it. However, here he seems to fall prey to a false dichotomy against which he had professed so powerfully in other domains. The speculative construction does not remain merely speculative, but has a deep influence on the consciously-lived life of experience which provides a profound backing of "intuitive givenness" on which Mohanty builds his notion of philosophical description. Śaṅkara's Advaita and Plato's pure realm of ideas are not just speculations but have given rise to long processes aiming at existential realization known as *sādhana* in the Indian tradition. Perhaps K.C. Bhattacharya's notion of "demand" might have helped him to bridge the gap which he considers unbridgeable in principle. Also, a recent contention of Professor D.P. Chattopadhyaya may help to bridge the gap in another way. He has contended that the distinction between "mediate" and "immediate" is not as clear-cut as most philosophers tend to assume. What appears to be immediate to consciousness in the present may itself be the result of a long process of mediation when we see it in the context of the historical past of which it happens to be a resultant. This, according to him, becomes clear when we encounter cultural products of

a different civilization and feel baffled by them as we cannot find in our "responsive immediacy" that could make them meaningful to us, just as we find in the presence of those which we encounter in our own culture. The reason for this, according to him, lies in the fact that the "immediacy" of our response to things in our own culture is mediated by a long historical past which we have incorporated into our own consciousness by a process of assimilation and acculturation since the time of our birth.

The concerns of Mohanty seem to be shared by one of the most seminal thinkers in the field of transcendental philosophy, Sundara Rajan. He also appears to have devoted his major works to a reworking of transcendental philosophy, but in such a way that the Kantian enterprise does not result in a loss of what has later come to be called the "life-world". He reformulates the famous Kantian formulation of the problem, "How is knowledge possible" in a deeper and more fundamental manner in the form, "how is life possible", for unless human living itself were not there, there would be neither knowledge nor action. This attempt to relocate self-consciousness with all the transcendental elements involved in it back into the concrete world is evidenced by the very titles of Sundara Rajan's work: *The Humanization of Transcendental Philosophy* and *Transformations of Transcendental Philosophy*. His work entitled, *Towards a Critique of Cultural Reason* marks a significant step in answering the question, "How is life possible", or rather "How is human living possible", as one cannot conceive of human living without its being embedded and constituted by culture. The understanding of culture, thus, and the immanent reason involved in it, is for him, a precondition for understanding the human situation as without it one would only "understand" a certain truncated part of the human individual giving it an illusory, self-enclosed, monadic identity which, in the Kantian perspective, may be supposed to be considered as open to some extent by the consciousness of the categorical imperative. Taking a cue from Ricoeur's work, Sundara Rajan makes a distinction between signification and symbolization, the former where the meaning is relatively "context free" and the latter where it is more context-bound. It is this basic distinction which helps him to move away from the categories of understanding that primarily pertain to the world of nature, understood basically in a context-free manner, to the socio-cultural world where understanding is not only context-bound, but is in principle not possible without it. Sundara Rajan makes another interesting move and distinguishes between objects which can primarily be understood in terms of their "essence", that is, class characteristics or "species" characteristics and those which have such an individual, organic unity of their own, that they have to be understood in terms of their own specific, unique, individual identity and not in terms of any class membership to which they may also belong. This obviously is a characteristic of art objects where individuality is the heart of the matter. Sundara Rajan goes further and makes an even more interesting distinction amongst the latter type of objects. This is based on those that are relatively far more context-free and others which are context-bound. The latter are the "cultural objects" *par excellence* as they find their meaning in the

cultural matrix in which they are situated and to which they belong. This is Sundara Rajan's return from the transcendental retreat of Kant to the individual self-consciousness, locating it without losing the insights of the transcendental withdrawal, into the cultural world where man truly lives and outside which he will feel like fish out of water, and, dies.

Sundara Rajan uses this occasion of the transcendental self-consciousness within a cultural matrix embodying itself in "objects" which derive their whole meaning and significance from the cultural context in which they are embedded to understand and explore once again the meaning of "science" and reformulate the current philosophy of science in the context of this understanding in his work *Beyond The Crisis of the European Sciences*. He examines in it the relevance and significance of the three major issues that have recently emerged in western thought, the linguistic, the feminist and the ecological for the understanding of the activity of "science" as a cultural product of society. He examines in this context, Husserl's Eurocentrism and discusses "science" as a fact, a problem, a possibility and a hope.

Interestingly, Professor Sundara Rajan's concern with the notion of the transcendental is used by him for the understanding of *puruṣārtha* in the Indian tradition and he has made some remarkably new formulations in connection with the understanding of this age-old concept. He has explored the possibility of treating the idea of *puruṣārtha* in terms of the transcendental forms of "willing". He has also applied the hermeneutical method to understand the realm of the political and the phenomenological perspective in order to explore the relation between innovative competence and social change.

The return to the temporal, historical, living world of the embodied being who is a member of society and polity and actively participates in the building up of a common inter-subjective world in cooperation with other human beings seems to be a common concern of most Indian philosophers who have written in the English language after their contact with the western world. But yet, while the emphasis in K.C. Bhattacharya's thought was primarily on a return from the identifications of the self with each succeeding level of objectivity, seeing thereby the essential freedom of man as consisting in this de-identification, it is only in later thinkers starting from N.V. Banerjee that the isolated, de-identified self is understood not in terms of 'freedom' but as deprived and cut off from its relationship with the 'others' which constitute, according to him, the essential reality for the self, and in the fulfillment of this relational obligation lies its real freedom. Kalidasa Bhattacharya stands somewhere in between but basically he has not yet given up the understanding of the self in its "aloneness" and isolation from everything else. In Mohanty and Sundara Rajan, we find the impulse to "return" more self-consciously and concretely formulated; a 'return' which becomes even more emphatically visible in the concern with historicity so explicitly manifest in the writings of D.P. Chattopadhyaya.

The bringing together of Marx and Sri Aurobindo into one common perspective, points to D.P. Chattopadhyaya's concern with the historical and

evolutional dimensions of their thought which, starting from radically-opposed presuppositions, tend to converge in the idea of a future state of man where the empirical contradictions with which he has struggled and lived in up till now will get resolved. The difference in the methodological praxis prescribed by these two thinkers for reaching this ideal state of affairs was perhaps not sufficiently noticed by Professor Chattopadhyaya though it was indirectly reflected in his epistemological concern with what has generally been called, methodological individualism Vs. methodological collectivism. However, as both of these are only methodological tools for the understanding of human reality, they may be easily combined. On the other hand, the difference between Marx and Sri Aurobindo lies in the field of action and the praxis they prescribe for the achievement of transcending the present stage of human society and polity which, because of its structural constraints can never achieve the ideal state of affairs which men desire, without overcoming those structures themselves. Sri Aurobindo's prescription for transcending the present state of affairs is ultimately an individual one and is concerned with the psychological transformation of the individual self-consciousness, geared of course towards the ultimate transformation, of what he has called, the physical, the vital and the mental life of the human individual. It is of course true that Sri Aurobindo does conceive of this great effort of transformation as being collectively made by a fairly large number of individuals in order that such a transformation may be meaningfully achieved at the social level. But, it should not be forgotten that the effort has to be made by each individual at his or her own personal level, even though one may surmise that the success achieved by one will help others to realise their own transformation to some extent.

Marx, on the other hand, prescribes a collective effort by a large number of persons belonging to one class who have been brought together by a historical process labelled as "capitalism" by him. Such a collective, joint effort according to him is the necessary pre-condition of the transcendence of the present structures which alone will ensure a transition to a more desirable state of society and polity in the future.

Professor Chattopadhyaya's concern with historicity, temporality and the concreteness of man in society leads him to examine the claim of science to overcome these limitations and give us a trans-temporal, trans-historical and trans-human truth. 'Science' appears to him to have usurped the claim of religious and spiritual truth to be essentially a-historical, a-temporal and trans-human. And, perhaps it is this aspect of the claim of "science" that led him to question the widely held pre-suppositions about the nature of scientific truth in the "*Anthropology and Historiography of Science*".

The dialectics between immediacy and mediacy, structures that appear to give stability and permanence to human thought and action and the evolutionary and historical perspective that sees them as being the products of long-term processes which have vanished from one's consciousness appears to be the central theme of his thought. If there are laws of evolutionary change and/or of the

unfoldness of history, then there would be some laws, some structure, however hidden, behind the temporal process itself. Also, the transformation of temporality on the plane of history and society on the one hand and human consciousness on the other needs perhaps to be explored a little more closely, even though a concern with both ideology and utopia have played an increasingly significant role in his later work. All these diverse interests of one of the most versatile thinkers of present-day India seem to have finally converged in the inter-disciplinary project which he has launched relating to the history of science, technology, philosophy and culture of India, two volumes of which have already appeared (*Science, Philosophy and Culture. Multi-disciplinary Explorations*, 2 vols. 1996, 1997).

One of the most neglected thinkers of the recent past has been Basant Kumar Malik whose work was published in the West. He has hardly been paid any attention by thinkers in India or abroad. Malik has emphasised in his thought the reality of the "negative" element along with that of the positive. Hegel, had similarly emphasised the equal relevance and reality of the element of non-being in his dialectics. However, Malik does not seem to have developed any special dialectical logic of his own. The triadic form of his dialectic, however, seems to appear in his thinking in the form of a universe with three stages, the first where only non-being exists, the second where both being and non-being are supposed to be there and the third, where perhaps only the being remains. The first is supposed to be monadic, unrelated and beginningless but has an end as it is followed by the world which has both being and non-being in it and thus has both a beginning and an end. The second is not monadic as it is plural and related and is discontinuous in character. The third stage is supposed to have a beginning and no end and has the same characteristics as the first, that is, it is monadic, unrelated and continuous. It is not quite clear however what is the relation between these three universes or whether they are three stages in a series where the first and the third are postulated as logical necessities, for what we actually 'know' is only the second stage as it is the one in which we 'live'.

The notion of non-being (as exemplified, for example, in such instances as shame, guilt, indignation, anger, etc.) taken from the second universe in which we live can however, in no case, apply to the first stage of the universe where only non-being is supposed to exist. The equation of 'non-being' with the purely negative aspect in experience is strange if it is considered to be equally necessary for the positive element to be there in experience. As for the preponderance of the one over the other, it is not quite clear how such a notion will ensure harmony between them. On the other hand, if both the elements are supposed to be equally necessary, then it is difficult to see how one can preponderate over the other for long, as he seems to contend. Not only this, he seems to ascribe the notion of an immanent purpose to the second universe which perhaps lies in the complete overcoming of the negative element and achieving of a harmony whose perfect exemplification is perhaps to be found only in the third phase of his triadic universe.

Ultimately, the same problem faced by all those who have tried to give the element of the negative an ontological position in their thought confronts Malik. Even Hegel or Marx who in spite of their postulation of the negative as an ultimate constituent of what they consider to be 'real', are forced to postulate a final stage where the really negative element in 'negativity' would be eliminated or transcended in such a way that its negativity is completely nullified.

There also remains the problem of making a relevant distinction between contrariety and contradiction and if, as Malik seems to do, one opts for the former as being more fundamental, then one has to find the basis on which the exclusion of one contrary predicate from the other is made. Mere difference is not 'opposition' and much of the 'opposition' between predicates is based on ordinary empirical experience which is open to revision in the light of further experience.

Malik's thought has another interesting dimension consisting in the distinction between percept, image and concept on the basis of which he postulates the notion of perceptual and categorical experience. Perceptual experience, according to him, is only referred to but does not itself refer to anything else. On the other hand, the image refers to the percept along with a temporal dimension such as past and future. The categorical stage perhaps consists of concepts which may refer to the percept if they are empirical but need not do so if they achieve an independence from them. This perhaps is described by him as pure categorical experience which is supposed to be a stage of realization. But, though Malik seems to talk of perceptual and categorical experience, he does not appear to talk of any distinct stage of experience consisting of 'images' occurring at their level.

Malik's thought culminates in his work entitled, *Possibility and Mythology* where he emphasises the reality of the negative element without however clarifying what exactly is meant by the 'negative'. Malik's thought, as it has developed over a period of time, has changed but little attention has been paid to his work or to evaluate his contribution. But at least on a *prima facie* reading, it is clear that his thought deserves more serious consideration than it has received up till now.

J.L. Mehta, whose work on Heidegger is well-known, lived long in the West and faced the challenge of the 'other', the western civilisation at all levels of his being. He responded to it, perhaps, more creatively than either Malik, Mohanty and Matilal who also happened to live in the West for most of the creative period of their life. None of these thinkers seemed to have undergone the encounter with the contemporary West as Mehta seems to have done, even though traces of it may be found in their works. Also, in the case of both Mohanty and Matilal, the response seems to have been primarily 'defensive' in the sense that they tried on behalf of Indian philosophy to articulate and substantiate the claim of 'rationality'. This claim had been disputed by most western thinkers, and in challenging it Mehta seems to have been led to a deeper discovery of his own 'self' and the tradition in which it was rooted by this encounter and dialogue with the western thought and culture. Perhaps, as he was located in the West at the *Centre*

for the *Study of World Religions* at Harvard, for him, the encounter was primarily at the 'existential' and not at the 'intellectual' level. Mehta's last lecture, in fact, was given there only a month before he died. The lecture entitled, 'Problems of Understanding'¹ appeared as almost an obituary note along with his photograph, a rare tribute to an Indian thinker by a western publication.

The very title of the lecture summarises in a deep sense Mehta's own reflection on the encounter between civilisations and the phenomenon of understanding the 'other' which, according to him, leads inevitably to a deeper and renewed 'understanding' of the self. This 'understanding' is, for him, not a one-time affair but a life-long process in which one goes back to one's primordial roots which are always found in those scriptures from which not only one's civilisation itself seems to have taken birth but these have also provided a perennial source of inspiration, challenging all subsequent generations to their 'understanding'. Thus, for him, life was a pilgrimage to a sacred text, and the civilisation and self were 'way farers' on this unending journey which resulted simultaneously in an illumination of both the text and the self.

Strangely, Mehta appears to have followed Gadamer more in this understanding of the enterprise of 'understanding' than Heidegger, his first love and about whose thought he had written with such lucidity and depth of understanding. In fact, he has transposed the problem of 'understanding' from the usual contexts in which it has generally been discussed to the understanding of civilizations by each other, especially relating this to the possibility of an 'understanding' between the different religions which are predominantly associated with them. This identifies civilizations with religions and underplays not only other dimensions of a civilisation, but also the deep cleavages within the religion itself which is supposed to be associated with a particular civilisation and identified with it. Mehta, in a subtle and clever move thus identifies not only civilizations with a religion but with the foundational scriptural texts in which these religions are rooted and thus the usual hermeneutical exercise in respect of 'text' is brought in the understanding of civilizations. The enterprise of "understanding", thus becomes the enterprise of returning to the sacred scriptural texts of one's own tradition in the light of the sacred scriptural texts of another religion which is the foundation of the other civilisation.

But, Mehta had earlier held that "these texts are the products of a way of life adopted by an entire people and in turn have inspired and nourished their faith, that the texts here play a crucial role within the context of a whole way of being living and thinking".² But, if this is so then how can the texts be "understood" if that whole way of living, of which they were the product, has itself substantially changed. Further, Mehta seems to assume that the way of living of a people has not changed substantially over millennia for, if he were to accept this, then the so-called foundational scriptural texts would have lost their intelligibility long ago. On the other hand, if changes in forms of living do not substantially affect the 'understanding' of these texts then they must be supposed to address themselves to a feature of life which remains constant in spite of all the changes in the

forms of living. But if the 'scriptures' of different religions and thus, of different civilizations are different then one would have to argue for 'constants' in life which themselves are different. On the other hand, if the 'constants' are supposed to be the same for all human living irrespective of space and time in which that life is lived then one would have to suppose some super, over-arching scriptural text which is manifested and articulated in different texts. This is the idea of perennial philosophy which, however, is rejected by the devout followers of most religions except perhaps the neo-Vedāntins.

Mehta's metaphor of pilgrimage and 'way farer' are both illuminating and seductive but here, as elsewhere, is the reality overlooked of actual pilgrimages where so-called holy places are full of those who exploit the unwary pilgrim in various ways. Further, the places of pilgrimage themselves are different for the votaries of different religions and thus there seems to be no common place for pilgrimage for all mankind just as there seems to be no overarching text to which all may return, to search for that primordial source of their identity from which everything seems to have originally gushed forth like the eternal spring of life itself.

Mehta tries to overcome this difficulty by suggesting that it is the encounter with the 'other' that makes us understand the 'self' better. But this is to underwrite the primacy of the other in an understanding of one's own self and would go against the long experience of the seekers of 'self'-knowledge who have pursued their own *Sādhanā* without caring much for the other paths to the realization of the self, or even the 'no-self' (*anattā*) as in Buddhism.

Mehta appears to have ignored not only the history of the spiritual pursuit of mankind but also the history of organised religions which are full of schisms and persecution and crusades both against the heretics within and unbelievers outside. The realms of polity, economy and law with which organised religion has been enmeshed always also seems to have escaped the attention of Mehta. Perhaps the 'rule of metaphor', to borrow the title of a well-known book by Ricoeur, has blinded Mehta to these facts and indirectly reveals the essential weakness of this style of thought which has been made fashionable by philosophical hermeneutics following Gadamer and Ricoeur recently.

A little dose of the analytical tradition in philosophy so fashionable in the Anglo-Saxon world of England and America might have helped to balance the perspective of this deep and profound thinker whose work requires to be 'lived' with and pondered over in order to grasp its insights into the human situation.

Like Mehta and Mohanty, Matilal too had chosen the West as his second home and like them, he too encountered the western philosophical tradition on its own ground and responded to it in his own way. He was, however, primarily a scholar of classical Indian philosophy and felt that what needed to be rebutted was the western philosopher's impression that Indian philosophy was not philosophy in their sense of the term as it primarily believed not in reason but in the authority of some primary foundational text. Such texts were known as *śruti* and *āgama*, the former referring to the texts belonging to the Vedic corpus and

the latter consisting of those non-Vedic texts which were regarded as 'authoritative' by the philosophical traditions which claimed derivation from them.

The āgamic texts included not only the well-known Buddhist and Jaina traditions of philosophy, but also the *Vaiṣṇava*, the *Śaiva*, the *Śākta* and other schools in traditions that were allied to these, but slightly differed from them. The rejection of the appellation, 'philosophy' in the case of Indian thinking on this ground may be said to have started from Hegel and has continued to be accepted as an almost axiomatic truth by others following him, including such great names as Husserl and Heidegger. The acceptance of *Śabda Pramāṇa* as an independent *pramāṇa* by most of the schools of Indian philosophy seems to support this view held by most western thinkers during the last two centuries. Matilal, amongst others, tried to rebut this evaluation by establishing the credentials of Indian philosophy in terms of what has been regarded as philosophy in the western tradition.

In fact, Matilal's major work *Perceptions* was written after he was appointed the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at the University of Oxford³ with quotations from Hume, Locke and Flew to this effect. He also admits to the charge against him which some western critics had made of showing a tendency of "leaning over backwards in my writings to show the analytic nature of Indian philosophy"⁴ as he considers it necessary "to correct persisting misconceptions and sometimes even to remove ignorance". Surprisingly, he does not refer to the great European masters who were primarily responsible for this widespread misimpression about Indian philosophy.

The central theme of the book, *Perceptions* is that Indian philosophy may be understood more correctly as an attempt to refute skepticism regarding the possibility of acquiring a knowledge of the nature of what is ultimately real and possibly also of realising it in a more intimate and deeper sense than theoretic cognition is capable of giving. Russell had made a distinction between "knowledge by acquaintance" and "knowledge by description" as two radically different kinds of knowledge. The Indian tradition was perhaps arguing for a deeper truth which is known both by description and by acquaintance which, in a sense, may also be regarded as a characteristic of all empirical science as ultimately, the theoretical truth which can always be in terms of description alone has to be correlated with what is directly experienced by 'acquaintance'.

This aspect of the Indian philosophical enterprise or at least of that part of it which goes under the name of Śāṅkhya and Vedānta was emphasized by Matilal at the inaugural lecture that he gave in the University of Oxford after his appointment as Spalding Professor entitled, "Logical Illumination of Mysticism". Thinkers like Nāgārjuna and Śrī Harṣa may be said to illustrate vividly this aspect of a particular tradition of Indian philosophy. But it is not so much the verification of what is theoretically understood to be the nature of reality that is exemplified in the thought of these thinkers, but rather the intrinsic impossibility for reason to apprehend because of its very nature, what is ultimately real. This, perhaps, is closer to the position of Kant, even though the latter did not

pronounce anything definite on the possibility of what he called 'intellectual intuition' and held that what we call 'knowledge' can never know what is 'real' in itself, because the very structure of reason, makes it impossible to know what is independent of that structure. Bradley, perhaps, would be a more appropriate example in order to understand the position of Nāgārjuna and Śrī Harṣa than Kant.

The analogy with the empirical sciences is appropriately exemplified by K.C. Bhattacharya's way of understanding Indian philosophy. This may be understood as the 'discovery' of certain possibilities by a pure theoretical reflection which may be called strictly philosophical possibilities, which are then realised by a process of *sādhanā* or spiritual praxis. The relation between philosophical reflection which is mainly of a theoretical, ratiocinative and argumentative kind is thus shown as intimately and integrally related to spiritual realization which is supposed to be the distinctive hall-mark of Indian philosophy by many scholars.

The challenge of the western philosophical tradition and its rejection of Indian philosophy as being truly 'philosophical' is felt by many other Indian thinkers besides the one's mentioned above. Thus Professor K. Satchidananda Murty's, book, *Reason and Revelation in Advaita Vedanta* shows his concern for the establishment of reason in its due place in Indian philosophy. Mohanty's recent work on Indian philosophy, *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought* displays the same anxiety. It may be noted that Mohanty has substituted the word 'tradition' for revelation as the later is grossly inadequate in the Indian context where it carries with it all the implications and presuppositions it has in the western theological tradition. Neither the texts designated as *śruti* or *āgama* were ever considered as revelations given to man in the sense in which both the Christian and the Islamic traditions have understood it.

Perhaps the most interesting and a radically different response may be found in the work of Sivajiban Bhattacharya who instead of rebutting the claim made by so many western thinkers has juxtaposed with remarkable lucidity and clarity the two modes of analytical reason in dealing with philosophical problems of a cognate type. He has chosen the most abstract and complex Navya-Nyāya analysis of such key philosophical concepts as *viśayatāvāda* or the theory of objectivity and *nirvikalpakavāda* or the theory of indeterminate perception in the text of Gaṅgeśa. He has discussed these in his two introductions which form part I of each of these two separate volumes. The unwary reader will hardly be aware of the fact that Sivajiban Bhattacharya has contrasted the most recent western discussion of these subjects as handled by such thinkers as Frege, Russell, Geach, Dummett, Carnap, Tarski, Church and others. Unfortunately, few are aware of this fact as the only persons who are likely to consult this work are those who are specialists in Navya-Nyāya and there are not many such persons in the English-speaking world, even in India.

Sivajiban Bhattacharya has a rare mastery of both the western and the Indian traditions of philosophy with a grasp of the specific details of each. This enables him to see the discussion of the problems in the context of their own discourse

and the way it has been developed over millennia by successive thinkers. He has written extensively on various topics relating both to the western and Indian philosophical traditions including the one relating to developments in modern logic in recent times. But, though it is widely respected and admired for learning and scholarship, his work has hardly been the subject of intensive discussion on the part of his contemporaries either in India or abroad.

Professor K. Satchidananda Murty has worked on the Vedānta but is nevertheless neither a committed Vedāntin like Malkani or Mahadevan nor just a profound scholar of one school of Indian philosophy, like T.R.V. Murty whose main work dealt with the central philosophy of Buddhism for which he became justly famous. K. Satchidananda Murty's interests have been wide ranging, and he has written not only on philosophical subjects but also on such topics as *Indian Foreign Policy* (Calcutta, 1964) and *Problems of Peace* (Bombay, 1960). He is, in fact, the only contemporary philosopher in India who has shown an interest in non-Indian and non-western philosophical traditions, particularly those of China and Japan, which are totally neglected by almost all Indian scholars who write as if there were no philosophical traditions outside India and the West. In fact, he has published a book entitled, *Far Eastern Philosophies* (Mysore, 1975) trying to bring to the attention of his colleagues these living philosophical traditions, but in vain as hardly any Indian philosopher has become interested in the subject after the lectures he had delivered at the University of Mysore which were later published in a book form by the same University.

Besides these wide-ranging interests, Professor Murty is perhaps the only contemporary philosopher in India, who is not over-awed by the aura of authority which most western philosophers enjoy in the Indian mind. Like the proverbial child in Anderson's story who could see the Emperor as he was uninfluenced by all the adulation and adoration of the so-called adults about him, he is able to see the follies and foibles of the greatest western thinkers and points them out in his downright, no-nonsense manner. He has commented, for example, that Socrates, the so-called father of western rationality did not only believe in the temple oracle of Delphi but had also vowed to sacrifice a cock to some god of medicine like all other non-rational or irrational mortals. In fact, this is one of the last things he asks one of his friends to do for him as he had not been able to fulfill the vow till then in his life. And, as for Descartes, the father of modern philosophy and the initiator of the method of radical doubt, Professor Murty points out his totally irrational pilgrimage to some sacred holy place in France. It is not that facts such as these are not known to scholars of the subject, but that they are usually underplayed or brushed aside as irrelevant. Professor Murty, on the other hand, not only takes note but openly states what he feels about the views of the eminent writer or thinker who has a great reputation. His lectures at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla, entitled "The Realm of Between" are replete with such judgements.

Another person belonging to the generation of Professor Sivajiban Bhattacharya and Professor K. Satchidananda Murty who has symbolized the very

spirit of linguistic analysis as embodying the essence of philosophy is Professor Rajendra Prasad who has pursued this method with relentless vigour for the elucidation and clarification of diverse philosophical problems and concepts, both Indian and western. Two works containing his numerous articles on various subjects are entitled, *Karma, Causation and Retributive Morality and Regularity; Normativity and Rules of Language and other Philosophical Analysis*. His main work has been on ethics and metaphysics in which, among other things, he has questioned the generally-accepted belief in Naturalistic fallacy in the field of contemporary Anglo-Saxon ethics. He has also subjected many of the Indian concepts such as those of *puruṣārtha*, *mokṣa*, the idea of *jīvana mukti* and *karma* to a searching analysis which raises many new questions about these. His latest work is entitled, *Niṣkāma Karma*.

Most of the writers mentioned here have written either in the English or Sanskrit language, or sometimes in both, as is the case with Professor G.C. Pande whose contributions we have primarily included in the part devoted to developments in classical Indian thought in this period. However, much has also been written in the Indian languages though little attention and no critical evaluation has been made of the work produced in those languages. The work of Nischaldasa, to which we have referred to in the chapter on Vedānta, is an example of this. The work was written in Hindi but later translated into Sanskrit as it was considered to be an important contribution by many scholars who had the occasion to read it in the original language.

The work of Shri Yashdev Shalya, however, falls in a completely different category. He has only written in Hindi and has, over the past four decades, established himself as an original thinker who has combined the Indian and western traditions of thought in a unique manner. His contribution to the cause of philosophy is not however restricted to these writings alone, as he has founded the premier institution, *Akhila Bhārtīya Darśana Pariṣad* for the propagation of philosophy in Hindi. He has also edited a number of philosophical journals of a very high quality in Hindi.

Shalya's main contention is that it is only in self-consciousness and in a reflection on it that one may 'understand' the philosophical quest which consists primarily in 'understanding' both the world and the self and their diverse relations to each other. In fact, it is in self-consciousness alone that the world finds itself 'illuminated' as it gets not only 'known' but also 'felt' in all its beauty and splendour. In self-consciousness, the 'object' occurs at two levels, the first is concerned with what may be called 'object' in general or the 'world' at all its various levels; while the second is the self as 'object' which however also functions as subject to the object in the first sense, that is the world in general. It is this self which is simultaneously both subject and object which seeks a meaningful relationship with the world, that is the pure object *par excellence*, in the modes of knowing, feeling and willing and thus endows it with a meaning, significance and value which it could hardly have on its own without this relationship. But there appears to be a radical difference between the 'object' at these two levels

as the 'object' at the first level, that is, the world in general can be subjected to the various processes of validation and thus be determined as to its veridicality. Whereas the object at the second level, that is, self as object appears as 'self-validating and beyond the process of validation outside itself'. But as the self itself is an 'object' to self-consciousness, this along with that, is the relationship with the pure subject, the self itself becomes a subject of a second order reflection which questions it in its very foundation and begins to see both the object at the first level and the egoity or the sense of I-ness which relates to it as the subject in a new manner.

In this second order reflection, it seems to discover that the essential nature of consciousness consists in its seeking of value, meaning and significance and that it seeks these both in respect of all that appears as object at the first level and also that which appears as 'object' at the second level, that is the empirical self or the ego constituted by the I-consciousness. The two directions of the seeking, however, are inter-related even though one may not be aware of it and the seeking in the external world is indirectly related to the seeking in what may be called the inner realm which itself is constituted or brought into being by the fact of self-consciousness which gives rise to 'egoity' or sense of 'I-ness' and thus provides the foundation for that basic split which characterizes self-consciousness at the human level.

There is an infinity in the pursuit of meaning, value and significance in both the directions, particularly as it seems to be the inherent character of self-consciousness to endow or apprehend an infinite depth in whatever it apprehends as 'object' whether this object be anything in the world or its own self seen as object.

In this sense then, the search for meaning, values and significance in the world of 'objects' at the first level may be seen as an attempt to know the self itself or to get rid of the 'false' knowledge that one may have regarding it. But the seeking for the self is only indirectly present in all such seekings which are primarily directed towards the object. On the other hand, when the self is directly sought, these diverse seekings in respect of the object themselves become the object of reflection and an attempt is made to find as to what exactly their meaning and significance consist in. The feeling of the 'falsity' or 'unreality' of the world may arise in the context of this direct concern with the realization of the true nature of the self and sometimes the seeking for meaning, significance and value in respect of objects at the first level may begin to appear as a hindrance in that process. In the language of the *puruṣārthas*, we may say that the pursuit of *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma* are indirectly pursuits of the ideal values involved in the self-itself, though it is only the pursuit of *mokṣa* that is directly concerned with it.

Thus, the fact that the world is a correlate of consciousness is revealed to self-consciousness through a critical reflection on what is given to it as an 'object'. It is also simultaneously revealed that the world, though a correlate of consciousness, is essentially to be understood as 'not-self' in relation to it.

However, this means that consciousness in its ordinary or natural state is either incompletely or partially apprehended as self as it is overwhelmed by that which is not-self and hence has to regain itself by a process which may be called *sādhana* which essentially consists in overcoming this dominance of the 'not-self' and the achievement of its own primacy and its establishment within itself. This may be called the self as Brahman in traditional language or the self in its complete ideality. However, this is not something which is to be understood as already achieved or established or as something eternally present but rather as something which is achievable through an effort made for its realization. The 'not-self' can thus not be considered to be completely real, even though its existence cannot be denied. Its reality consists in the form of something that is to be overcome and hence it has the same type of reality which defects or imperfections have in the sense that it has an essential negativity about it, a negativity which has a positive effect and which itself has to be negated in order that an absolute positivity may be both asserted and achieved.

Shalyaji's thought shows a continuity with the dominant trends in Indian philosophizing, specially those associated with Sāṃkhya and Advaita Vedānta in the tradition, and it has both the virtues and the deficiencies of that style of thinking. The basic question that has remained unasked is that, if consciousness is conceived of as essentially seeking meaning, significance and value, then how can that which it 'creates' through this activity of 'seeking' be treated as essentially defective and hence something to be overcome. In fact, the term not-self in such a perspective is essentially misleading, for it is that which gives meaning to the self and functions as a 'mirror' in which it recognises itself.

Another problem with this way of thinking is that it only talks of the 'object' at two levels and totally ignores the essential plurality of self-conscious beings where each is an 'object' to all the others. There is, thus, not just self-consciousness but 'self-consciousness', each of them essentially involved in a psycho-physiological matrix, which has a development curve from birth to death, a process in relation to which 'self-consciousness' seems to be a creature as it can do nothing about it. In fact, 'self-consciousness', at least as involved in the psycho-physiological matrix seems to have a 'history' as it is normally only achieved at a certain level of biological growth and does not seem to be there since childhood or the moment of one's birth. The demographic explosion of 'self-conscious' beings poses another problem so far unaddressed by anyone philosophizing in this vein. So is the anomalous fact that not only self-consciousness but even consciousness or life as we know it does not seem to exist anywhere in the universe except on this little planet, earth. The millions of galaxies which astronomical observation has brought to our notice seem to be totally bereft of any evidence of life and, though it is impossible to say, with any certainty, that there is no life in any of the planets circling around the myriad of suns about which astronomers write, there is little doubt that at least in our planetary system there is no evidence of there being life on any planet other than on our own. The challenge that this poses to any consciousness-centric philosophizing is almost impossible to meet

and yet, it is difficult to see how else can man think except in the context of the fact that he finds himself 'thinking'. The foundational paradox of philosophising perhaps lies in this fact that man is essentially caught in what may be called a consciousness-centric 'predicament' which he cannot get out of, but there is no necessity why this 'predicament' should become 'ego-centric' or 'self-centric' when it is obvious that there is a plurality of self-conscious beings and that one achieves whatever self-consciousness one has in the context of a society of such beings who share a common culture consisting of a commonality both of language and a self-remembered, half-imagined past.

However, there are many thinkers who have made, in their own way, significant contributions to the activity of such philosophising under the western impact during the last seventy years or so. A fair representation of these may be found in the various collections on *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* published by various editors. A well-known work under this title in the Murhead Library of Philosophy was edited by Murhead and Radhakrishnan in 1936 and was revised in the form of an enlarged edition in 1952. A volume with the same title was later published under the editorship of Margaret Chatterjee and called the second series containing contributions by philosophers of the next generation. A rough comparison of the volumes in the two series provides some interesting data regarding both the region-wise concentration of philosophical activity in India, as well as the major subjects of interest that preoccupied the thinkers. One may also notice the shifting emphasis with regard to both these if one makes a comparative study of the volumes. One must however allow for the surprisingly large presence of philosophers from Delhi University perhaps because the editor herself happened to be from there.

Even a more representative source of information about the contribution of eminent philosophers may be found in the Presidential Addresses delivered at the Indian Philosophical Congress from 1926 onwards as it may be assumed that the persons so invited were regarded as eminent in their field by their colleagues and that they utilized the occasion to articulate the best of what they had to say on the subject. As all of these addresses have now been collected and published by the Indian Council of Philosophical Research under the editorship of S.C. Dube, they have become easily accessible to anyone who would like to study the development of philosophy in India in the last 75 years of the twentieth century. Many of these thinkers had also been represented in the two series published in the Murhead Library of Philosophy and it would be interesting to compare what they had written there with what they have said in their Presidential addresses. The Presidential Addresses, in fact, have fortunately been organised thematically by the editor in four volumes under the titles.

The recently published, "Subject and Author Index" of the *Philosophical Quarterly*, the first philosophical journal to be published in India, provides additional information regarding the writers who contributed to this journal as also the subjects which they wrote on. However, no analytical study has yet been made of the data provided in it nor any comparative study undertaken with the author

indexes of the following: *Journal of the Indian Academy of Philosophy* founded by Ras Behari Das; The *Philosophical Annual* published by the Department of Philosophy, Madras University; and the *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* whose Subject and Author Indexes have also been prepared by Professor R.S. Bhatnagar and published by Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

Besides the general field of philosophy, in which Indian thinkers, both in India and abroad, have played a significant role and made important contributions, there is also some work which has recently been done in such technical fields as those in modern logic and philosophy of science. Most of the important work in logic has been done by those working in computer science such as the work of Anand Pillay at the University of Notre Dame and Rohit Parikh in New York. The former has contributed to a branch of model theory known as the 'stability theory' while the latter has contributed to the 'recursion theory'. Besides these, is the important seminal work of Anil Gupta, the former editor of the *Journal of Philosophical Logic*, who along with Nuel Belnap has tried to show that circularity is not necessarily a defect in definition, as has generally been supposed since the dawn of logic. He has shown that circular definitions and systems of mutually interdependent definitions are "logically legitimate". This, they call, the "Revision Theory of definitions" which, if accepted, would lead to a basic revolution in the very notion of fallacious thinking. The other important work is that of Amartya Sen, the well-known economist who was recently awarded the Noble Prize for Economics. He has worked on the social choice theory, particularly in the context of Arrow's theorem and also written in the field of social philosophy and ethics.

The work of Amartya Kumar Sen is primarily in the field of economics even though he has made an important contribution in the context of Arrow's theorem as noted above and some other topics in philosophy, particularly those relating to public policy. The contribution symbolizes, in a sense, the astounding success of the implantation of modern traditions of western knowledge in India by the British. Both in the natural sciences and the social sciences, Indian work has been remarkable by world standards and compares favourably not only with most other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America but also with many other western countries such as, say Spain or Portugal or Italy. In fact, the unbelievably remarkable work at the very frontiers of knowledge done in India starting from the first quarter of the twentieth century is even more astonishing as there were hardly any facilities available then. The works of S.N. Bose, Meghanath Saha, C.V. Raman, P.C. Ray, J.C. Bose, Ramanujan and many others are included in this category. After independence, the centre of research in India has shifted, as everywhere else, to more applied fields and the work done in the field of space research and nuclear technology is evidence of this.

The foundations for the development of skills in these fields were laid down by the British in the various institutes they had set up in the country, particularly the ones relating to agricultural research by setting up the *Indian Council of Agricultural Research* and the various surveys of India such as the Archaeological

Survey, the Geological Survey, etc. After independence, under the leadership of Nehru and Sir S.S. Bhatnagar, various National Laboratories were set up in different parts of the country which gradually trained manpower for massive research work in all branches of natural sciences. The same work was done in the field of social sciences and the humanities by such institutions as ICSSR, ICHR, the various academics and the Indian Council of Philosophical Research.

However, though there have undoubtedly been outstanding personalities in almost all fields of modern knowledge in India during this period, it would be difficult to say that they have had any significant impact on the philosophical thinking.

As for developments in the older, Sanskritic tradition of philosophizing it is surprising to note the almost total absence of any influence of the modern ways of philosophizing on it. The two seem to have run almost parallel to each other except in some very recent deliberate and self-conscious efforts to foster some sort of dialogue so that something new may emerge.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. *Philosophy East and West*, Jan. 1989, p.xxxix, I, p. 372.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
3. A Chair earlier occupied by S. Radhakrishnan
4. *Perceptions*, p. 4.

SECTION FOUR