

Why do human beings die so miserably,  
So unhappily with a disease, old age, senility,  
The body shrunk, ugly?  
Why can't they die naturally,  
And as beautifully as this leaf?  
What is wrong with us?  
In spite of all the doctors,  
medicines and hospitals, operations,  
And all the agony of life, and pleasure too,  
We don't seem able to die  
With dignity, simplicity, and with smile.

-J. Krishnamurti  
Krishnamurti to Himself,  
Krishnamurti Foundation India  
Publication, 1991, pp. 133.

विज्ञानतारमरे केन विज्ञानीयात्



अप्य नोपो मय

Vols XIII-XVI

Journal of Darśana

2021-2022

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# Journal of Darśana

Volumes XIII-XVI  
Combined Issue: 2021-2022

**Chief Editor**  
*Prof. Archana Tiwari*

**Editors**  
*Dr Rajesh Kumar Chaurasia*  
*Dr Arvind Jaiswal*



**Department of Philosophy**  
**Vasanta College for Women**  
**KFI, Rajghat Fort, Varanasi-221001**

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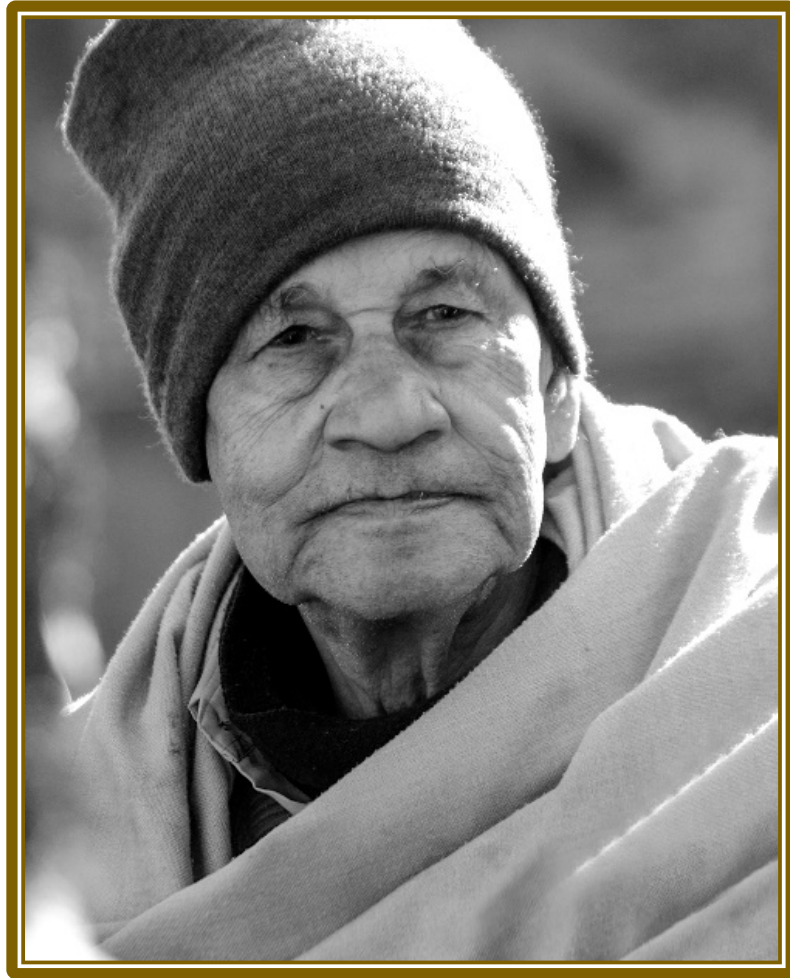
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Dedicated to  
**Prof. Ashok Kumar Chatterjee**  
(1925-2021)



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## Editorial

Shri Yashdeva Shalya posited that philosophy could be deemed truly holistic when it integrates the scientific/theoretical, existential, and spiritual aspects of life. The Journal of Darshan team also subscribes to this comprehensive approach to philosophy. A philosophy should possess scientific qualities by considering and analyzing external objects of the world in its arguments, and it should strive to form a cohesive whole, devoid of contradictions. Philosophy not only embodies a scientific spirit but also can address the quandaries of human existence, its incompleteness, desires, and fears. In addition to the existential criterion, philosophy can also possess spiritual characteristics, not in the traditional sense but in a modern context. In this modern sense, spirituality enables a person to perceive and observe things without bias or prejudice. This represents the ultimate ideal of philosophy, although it is challenging to find in a single philosophy. However, through exploring various philosophies of the world, we can pursue this ideal. The combined volume of the Journal of Darśana aims to fulfil the aforementioned philosophical objectives through a collection of 12 edited research papers. These papers encompass all three dimensions of philosophy: scientific, existential, and spiritual.

We dedicate this combined volume to Prof A.K. Chatterjee (1925-2021), who physically left us on 21 April 2021, but his presence remains through his work, teachings, and in our cherished memories as a kind-hearted individual. Prof Chatterjee is renowned worldwide as a scholar of Yogāchāra-Buddhism, yet his philosophical insights are as expansive as his compassionate personality. His profound understanding encompasses nearly all the fundamental problems of Indian Philosophy. We are pleased to publish his highly significant research work, "Types of Absolutism: A Revisitation," in this combined volume of the Journal of Darśana. While Prof K.C. Bhattacharya initially raised this issue in his work, "The Concept of Philosophy," subsequent philosophers like Prof G.R. Malkani, Prof K. D. Bhattacharya, and Prof T.R.V. Murti attempted to explore it. Nevertheless, the nature of the three absolutes—Knowing, Willing, and Feeling—remained somewhat unclear until Prof A.K. Chatterjee's groundbreaking contribution. Particularly, Prof A. Chatterjee displayed original insights in the development of the Feeling-Absolute.

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We express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to enriching this volume of the Journal of Darśana.

Prof. Archana Tiwari  
Dr. Rajesh Kumar Chaurasia  
Dr. Arvind Jaiswal

## Types of Absolutism: A Revisitation

A.K. Chatterjee<sup>α</sup>

I take this opportunity of drawing your attention to an unexplored facet of Professor T.R.V. Murti's thinking. His contribution to the interpretation of Buddhist philosophy is known and acclaimed the world over. Despite his sojourn in Buddhist territory for some time, he came back to his natural spiritual home, viz. Advaita Vedanta, which remained the philosophy closest to his heart. Though not fully spelt out in his writings, his deep Advaitic leaning is well known through his extensive lectures on important texts. But that he also interested himself in the philosophy of Caitanya might be something of a surprise to many. He did not write anything on the subject but discussed it with some of his students. Let me explain how philosophy of Caitanya served to fill a gap in Professor Murti's thinking

In his Amalner days, he wrote two seminal papers on the philosophy of Absolutism. Absolutism and its types had been a life-long preoccupation with Professor Murti. Professor K.C. Bhattacharya had already explored the possibility of alternative forms of Absolutism, but his delineation of its different types as truth, freedom, etc. had been very abstract, not situated in any historical setting. Following his inspiring lead, Professor Murti continued the analysis and identified the different forms of Absolutism with different schools of Indian thought. Both Professor K.C. Bhattacharya and Professor T.R.V. Murti based their analysis on the three-fold distinction of subjective functions, viz. knowing, feeling and willing. This division of the functions of the mind is the well-known Faculty of Psychology, so long prevalent in Western thought. It has a hoary ancestry, going back to Plato who distinguished between the appetitive, spirited and rational faculties of the soul. It was the dominant psychology of the Middle Ages, Kant based his three

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(Key-Note Address, "Fundamental Questions and Issues in Indian Philosophy: Retrospect and Prospect" - An International Conference to mark the Birth Centenary Year of Professor TR.V. Murti, 18-21 Dec. 2002, at Jnana Pravaha, Varanasi, December 18, 2002.)



critiques on the same division, which was adopted by both Professor Bhattacharya and Professor Murti in their philosophy of Absolutism. But they made an important modification; while Faculty Psychology had made a tripartite division of the mind, the latter thinkers rather thought of knowing etc. as different attitudes the mind could adopt towards what is given to it. They took the subject-object duality as the basic epistemological relation, which could be construed in three mutually exclusive ways. It could be one of knowing in which the only function of the subject is to reveal the object as presented to it, or one of willing in which the subject creates its own object, or again one of feeling in which the subject and its object are evenly balanced, neither dominating over the other. Each of these three attitudes, when pressed to its logical culmination, yields a type of Absolutism. The three functions, as empirically available, are all mixed up, and this confusion of subjective functions, the result of *ajñāna*, produces illusion. When ignorance is dispelled, and each function is disentangled from the rest and is obtained in its purity, it is the Absolute.

Professor Murti, in his Amalner days, identified them with Advaita Vedānta, the Madhyamika and the Vijñānavada respectively. But later, when he came to Varanasi, he discussed with his students the entire problem threadbare and revised his scheme of identification. He still thought that Advaita Vedānta represented the knowledge standpoint in its approach to the Absolute but radically modified his views regarding the two systems of Mahayana Buddhism. Vijñānavada was now construed as upholding the doctrine of pure consciousness as creative will, while the Madhyamika was reassessed as not to be coordinated with any other speculative system. Being a neutral non-positional analysis of all conceptual views, it could not itself be understood as being at par with the views analyzed.

In the new architectonic types of Absolutism, the slot for the Absolute as Feeling remained vacant. Very fortunately, however, an entire set of works dealing with the philosophy of Caitanya was made accessible to Professor Murti, and he could see his way to make good the lacunae that had long made themselves felt in his philosophy of Absolutism. He became convinced that the philosophy of Caitanya represented the approach to ultimate reality through and as feeling.

With the skeleton of Professor T.R.V. Murti's philosophy of Absolutism being more or less delineable, it is time to add a little flesh to the different types. Which was adopted by both Professor Bhattacharya and Professor Murti in their philosophy of Absolutism.

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## I. Knowing

To know an object is to reveal it as it is, without adding anything to it or distorting it in any manner. In knowing, the subject is constrained by what is presented to it (*vastutantra*) and has no freedom in the matter (not *puruṣabuddhyāpekṣa*). The role of the subject is severely confined to bare revelation. That being so, all knowledge is by definition veridical, ruling out the very possibility of any knowledge being erroneous. If the object is always known as it is, it cannot be mistaken for something else (*śarve dharṁiṇi abhrāntam prakāre tu viparyayah*). This idyllic situation is not, however, empirically available. Cases of mistaken apprehension, unfortunately, do occur, pointing to some non-knowledge factor supervening on what is presented in knowledge. This intrusion of subjective elements in every knowledge makes for its falsity. The thing given is as it is, but in the process of being known, it is overlaid by a large amount of subjectivity. Its known-ness, therefore, constitutes its illusoriness.

If we analyze the complex texture of a case of illusion, we may disentangle its various strands, all combining to produce a specious unitary experience. These elements are (1) *adhiṣṭhāna*, (2) *āvaraṇa*, (3) *vikṣepa*, and (4) *adhyāsa*. Even to be mistaken, a thing must be there, without the presence of which the mistake could not have occurred. There is no groundless illusion (*nirādhiṣṭhānakhyāti*). The illusory, not having any reality of its own, can appear only as founded on what there is. But were the real to be known as it is, again there would be no illusion. Hence its reality should be suppressed as it were, must be shrouded in darkness. Apart from this factor of obscuration, something else must be projected instead, but for which the given would simply remain hidden or unknown, but would not appear otherwise. And lastly, what is projected does not appear as another reality, but is identified with what is out there. The real need not be known. Whether known or not, it retains its immediacy, which is not suppressed by its unknownness. It is this immediacy (*idantā* or *sattā*) that makes illusion possible. The illusory stands out, masquerading as a 'this', but it is a borrowed 'thisness', having none of its own (*pratibhāsa mātra śarīra*). Being is prior to being known. The criterion of reality is to be supremely indifferent to the adventitious fact of being known. The real could as well exist as unknown, or as known otherwise. Even prior to being known, it had an intrinsic existence of its own. This unknown existence (*ajñāta sattā*) constitutes its depth or substantiality. That which has no

unknown existence, which is entirely exhausted in merely appearing, must be illusory which lacks any depth.

But how do we know that the object had enjoyed an unknown existence prior to its being known? One might as well suppose that the object is instantaneously precipitated in the very act of knowing. So, there must be a way of knowing the object in its unknown condition - a sort of known unknownness. There must be found a kind of non-empirical consciousness, which is aware of the object, both as known and also as unknown, and also the illusory appearance. This is sakśi-caitanya to which is presented everything, either as known, or as unknown, or again as known otherwise. Unknown-ness is a kind of positive covering by piercing through which alone does knowledge take place (āvaraṇābhībhāva).

Of the four above-mentioned factors constituting an illusory experience, only the first, viz. the ground could be known, according to the strict definition of the term. All the other factors are subjective interpretations, opening the door wide open for all sorts of misconstructions, constituting the falsification of pure knowing. The spiritual demand is to know the real in itself, and not through subjective aberrations. The demand is to be so lost in bare contemplation of the given as to lose the separate identity of the knowing subject. This is the absolute form of knowing in which the known and its knowing coalesce. Knowing is so attenuated, so pure and diaphanous, that the distance between knowing and the known is annulled. It is this distance knowing a thing from outside as it were - that makes room for subjective distortions. To know a thing in the ultimate sense is to be it (*Brahma vida brahmaiva bhavati*). It is knowing by being.

## II. Willing

- A. In willing the roles of the subject and the object are radically reversed. Willing consciousness is autonomous and self-legislating, the object being its own creation. Consciousness wills its own content to come into existence, as the latter has no intrinsic existence of its own. It exists or rather subsists, only as being willed, only as being sustained through the act of willing. Its *esse* is its *percipi*. Consciousness brings forth its variegated contents through its own inner resources, precipitating the objects as it flows along, which are nothing in themselves apart from their being thus created and projected (*vijñaptimātram evaitad asadarthāvabhāsanati*). They are known only as known which is a

truism, unknown existence is a contradiction in terms. The 'blue' and the consciousness of 'blue' is one and the same (Sahopalambhaniyamād abhedo nīlataddhiyoh).

Here again, the confusion of subjective functions takes place, so that will- consciousness is not attained in its purity. Will retains its sovereignty over its content only while willing it. Once willed, the content is already an accomplished fact, and consciousness remains will only so long as the content willed is not realized. As soon as it comes into being, no amount of will can undo its being. It can now only be known. This 'will' is repelled by the actualized content, which constitutes a limitation or negation of it. In the very act of willing the content, consciousness ceases to be will. Hence, here the spiritual demand is to realize a contentless will, willing nothing. Pure will is the Absolute in which all dualism of the act of willing and the content willed is done away with. No empirical will is pure but is ever overpowered by knowledge, making its content independent of consciousness. This is the defilement of will, the work of avidya. What is really willed is taken to be known.

Forms are created in consciousness because of the mistaken notion of there being a real object before it. Objectification is the function of this primary illusion. Consciousness is never objectified of its own accord. When the illusory form of objectivity falls away from it, its subject- function too lapses (grahyābhavā tad agrahāt). The subject acquires all its significance because of its relation to the object; without the latter, it ceases to be the subject even. Externality and otherness, albeit only a mistaken one, are necessary to sustain the internal diversity of the consciousness. The will -consciousness as Absolute is untainted by the subject-object duality. The object is so identical to consciousness that it cannot be distinguished from the latter even as its form. The forms of consciousness are there merely because of the illusory reflection of the object that is not. With the sublation of the latter, the forms are so merged in consciousness as not to be distinguishable even as its forms. When the 'blue' is sublated, even the consciousness of 'blue' lapses. Subjective forms are sustained by the fact of their being projected. Ceasing to be projected they cease to be. There is nothing to stand against consciousness so that consciousness cannot serve as the subject even; citta becomes acitta.

- B.** Consciousness as creative is accepted in many other schools of thought too. The Sautrāntika, Advaita Vedānta and Kant, all maintain that there is a large measure of subjectivity entering into empirical experience. There is something given, and there is also something constructed which is imposed on that given. In all these schools subjectivity is not the sole factor constituting empirical experience, and they can only be described as different versions of 'critical realism'. For the Sautrāntika the ultimate particulars (svalakṣaṇa) are directly perceived, but that is not the cognition of empirical objects which must carry a huge epistemic load. In Kant too, the bare given, as obtained through pure sensibility, remain 'blind' unless they are refracted through the various forms of understanding. This emphasis on the irreducibility of the given prevents these systems from being absolutistic. Absolutism culminates in a non-dual experience, while for Sautrāntika and Kant, the basic epistemological dualism is not sought to be transcended. Kant indeed gives a tantalizing glimpse of the beyond, by hinting at the possibility of the objective thing in itself and the 'T' standing behind the 'transcendental unity of apperception' being essentially identical, but the hint remains only an idle conjecture which is severely precluded by the exigencies of his rigorous dualistic system. Advaita Vedānta too starts an analysis of experience which is very much like that of the critical realist. Thisness (sanmātra) is immediately given in all experience (svapratyayavedya) but, overlaid with subjective constructions as is, it is not known in terms of empirical experience (avedya). This apparent dualism here is not, however, insurmountable. Subjectivity is not another coordinate order of reality, but it is only a falsification of the given and is sublated by correct apprehension. Advaita Vedānta culminates, therefore, in an absolute non-dual experience in which knowing is entirely merged in being, an experience that is not accessible to the other critical realists. But Advaitic Absolute is not, however, the Will-Absolute.
- C.** The theme of creativity of consciousness is pursued by some subsequent schools of thought. The language-school, led by Bhartrhari, discovers several strata of language, from the grossest to the noumenal. The quintessence of language, standing far beyond its external manifestations, is equated with pure consciousness and is termed parā vāk (śabda brahman). Bhartrhari did not recognize the distinction between para and paśyanti. This distinction was introduced later, perhaps by Somānanda, though Kaiyata and Nāgeśa,

referring to the Vedic passage 'catvāri śrngā' etc., think that it implies *parā*. Be that as it may, four stages in the evolution of language are traditionally standardized viz. *para*, *paśyanti*, *madhyamā* and *vaikharī*. *Parā* is language in its absolute sense. It is creative consciousness, essentially Containing the entire universe, constituted by words and their referents, all existing in its womb in an indissoluble unity. Words and meanings all emerge out of it but are as yet absolutely undifferentiated. With the first stirring of its creative impulse, the very faintest differentiation between a word and its object takes place, but both are still in a pure undifferentiated state. As to how this faint flutter in pure undifferentiated consciousness comes about remains inexplicable, in the absence of a fully worked-out theory of *avidya*. There is just the impulse to create, and the process of evolution gets started. The undifferentiated pure objectivity in the *paśyanti* stage is comparable to bare objectivity (*aparicchinnakara bhajana*) confronting *ālayavijñāna* in *Vijñānavāda*. It is mere 'otherness' not differentiated into determinate objects. The first moment of creativity of *para vāk* is similarly only a faint ripple in consciousness, leading to further determination, but yet not determinate. At the *madhyamā* stage, the distinction between words and meanings has become explicit, but language is not articulated into phonemes and morphemes, which is completed in the grossest stage of language, viz. *vaikharī*. The close parallelism between the stages of evolution of *para vāk* and that of *vijñaptimātratā* in *Vijñānavāda* is remarkable indeed.

- D.** Subjective creativity is also a recurrent theme in the various Tantric systems. The ultimate reality is non-dual consciousness (*parā samvit*). But two important modifications are made. First Will, the matrix of all creation, is personalized. And secondly, the will to create is a self-conscious desire on the part of the Absolute, for whatever esoteric reasons. This desire for self-differentiation is an innate power (*śakti*) of *para samvit*, because of which an imaginary 'otherness' is created and projected leading to grosser and grosser stages in the evolution of consciousness. The world of duality exists only in the imagination (*ābhāsa*) of *para samvit*, and as such is real. Everything exists only in consciousness but is projected and externalized as things objectively given. This aspect of *para samvit* is known as *Śṛstikāli*. As *Raktakāli*, it then assumes the role of the knower, there being objects to be known. But it can, at will, take everything back and dissolve them into itself. It is then called

Rudrakali or Bhadrakālī and it rests in itself as pure consciousness. It assumes many other forms, but they are more or less of scholastic interest only. Here one might find an echo of Vijñānavāda, but whether the latter directly inspired the later Tantric systems is a moot question. The Tantric lineage, it might be mentioned incidentally, re-emerges powerfully in the speculative constructions of Śrī Aurobindo.

- E. In different versions of Vaiṣṇavism too, one comes across pariṇāmavāda (Brahmapariṇāma), as against adhyāsavāda of Śankara. In the latter system, we find, as already seen, the knowledge approach to the Absolute, so the Vaiṣṇava theories of creation might appear to endorse the Will-standpoint. But the ultimate reality does not transform its entirety. Even when one talks of Bṛahmapariṇāma, the creative aspect of Bṛahman is confined only to a part, a specific power, or one of the aspects of the multifaceted Absolute (Vṛkṣa iti ekatvam, śākhā iti nanatvam). So creative consciousness represents in these systems only a partial or fragmentary activity of willing and does not lead to the notion of the Absolute as pure Will or pure Act.

### III. Feeling

The feeling attitude of the subject towards its object is one of non-determination by either of the other. No term in this duality dominates over the other, and the two are finely balanced in their reciprocity. The feeling attitude may be generated between the subject and an inanimate object, like a work of art. A thing of beauty is a joy forever, but the question of whether that beauty is intrinsic to the thing itself, or it lies merely in the eyes of the beholder, is a fruitless one since the subject and the object enter into aesthetic experience in all their mutuality. Consequently, aesthetic enjoyment culminates in a non-dual experience, in which the two terms cannot be isolated. It does not lead to Absolutism, however, being only a transitory reflection of the Absolute (Brahmānanda sahodarah). It is enjoyed for a while it lasts and is then lost.

Feeling par excellence emerges only in an interpersonal relationship, and its most exquisite form appears in loving and being loved, ideally realized in the persons of Radha and Kṛṣṇa. The supreme reality (parama brahman) is the ground of everything. Being supreme it has an infinite number of powers, and each of which is infinite in itself. The principal powers (śaktīs) are svarūpa śakti, māyāśakti and jīvaśakti. With the help of māyāśakti the Lord creates the material world, while



with that of jīvaśakti, He appears in the form of finite or atomic selves, which are self-forgetful of their ground, their real nature being shrouded by yogamāya. These two śaktīs are, however, *bahiraṅga*, not constituting the Lord's substance or essence. The divine essence is His svarūpa śakti, which is identical to His real nature. It is, therefore, described as *antaraṅga śakti*. Parama bṛahman is of the nature of *sat* (Being), *cit* (Consciousness) and *ānanda* (Bliss), which are non-different from His essential reality. His svarūpa śakti, therefore, appears in three aspects, viz. *sandhinī*, *samvit* and *hylādini*. Hitherto philosophers have been laying stress on the first two, while the Bliss aspect of the Divine is underplayed and appears in a relatively low profile.

The devotee can approach his object of adoration in two different ways. The Lord may appear to him in His aspect of majesty and grandeur (*aiśvarya*), evoking awe and reverence, but only from a distance. The other attitude is to relish His *mādhurya*, when God appears as the source of infinite delight. Kṛṣṇa etymologically means 'one who attracts', i.e., the supreme attractor. *Sat* and *cit* refer to His *aiśvarya* aspect, while *ānanda* to His *mādhurya*. (It may be mentioned parenthetically that different languages are appropriate to these two aspects of the Divine. To express Divine grandeur, we require the use of classical and archaic languages with sonorous periods, and it is not necessary to grasp their meaning completely so that a respectful distance is maintained between the worshipper and the worshipped. For relishing His *mādhurya*, however, our everyday language suffices to express the little nothings of love.)

The Lord's capacity to evoke love and delight is His *hylādini śakti*, personified as *Rādhā* *ānanda* is His essence, and *Rādhā* is inseparably and eternally associated with that *ānanda*. Love may take different forms that are not all of the same degree of intensity. We have *dāsya* (loving God as His servant), *sākhyā* (loving Him as a playmate) and *vātsalya* (having parental affection for the Lord appearing as an adorable child, but full of mischief nevertheless). But love is developed to its fullest degree only in *kānta bhāva*, which Radha has, who loves God as her eternal and inseparable beloved. There is no room for carnal pleasure (*kāma*) here, as that implies subjugation and exploitation. Real love is born as *rārī*, and develops through different stages of *prema*, *sneha*, etc., till it reaches the ultimate perfection, called *mahābhāva*. The highest peak of *mahābhāva* is called *madana* (maddening delight) which Radha alone has. It must be remembered that Kṛṣṇa is only the object of

Radha's love, but not a subject. Radha alone relishes His sweetness to the fullest extent, and in Her alone does love find its most perfect expression. Kṛṣṇa's desire for relishing His own sweetness remains unfulfilled. This is said to be made good in Caitanya who is a two-faceted incarnation of both Radha and Kṛṣṇa. In Caitanya's personality, subject and object are combined but the subjective aspect predominates.

Radha, as already seen, is the svarūpa śakti of the Lord, being His very essence. Being superior to māyāśakti and jīvaśakti, which depend on it, svarūpa śakti is called para śakti. How could this relation between God and His śakti be conceptually grasped? The latter is inseparably and eternally associated with Him and is essentially one with Him. And yet a difference is imported between the subject as Radha and the object as Kṛṣṇa. Jiva Goswami, the systematic philosopher in the family if we exclude Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja who wrote, however, his magnum opus in Bengali - offers arguments to prove that both difference and identity are conceptually unintelligible (acintya), so far as this transcendental relationship is concerned. Loving is a two-termed relation, there must be the one who does the loving, and there is the one who is loved. One cannot love himself, even in the case of Narcissistic self-love, what is loved must be projected as a pseudo-object, viz. his own reflection. A dualism is necessary to sustain the love- relation. But in the intensity of loving, all difference seems to be obliterated. Kṛṣṇa realizes His svarūpa as a spiritual unity in -the duality of God and His śakti, each as other of the other, and yet non-different from the other. Hylādini is a force of inwardness by which not only is the whole apprehended in its integrity as individual unity, but also the whole itself is apprehended in the essential aspect of its being. One has to intuit the two as one and one as two, and in a true spiritual unity, rigid distinctions and external relations have to be resolved into internal spiritual relations. God's essence or svarūpa appears in its intrinsic character as a spiritual unity that integrates and also transcends differences. Oneness and manyness are logical contradictories, and both are unmeaning in the spiritual context which, Janus-like, must make room for an alogical healing (bhinnābhinnatvādi vikalpascintayitum aśakyoh). Here the loving subject and the object loved are incomprehensibly balanced, and one is not more important than the other. Duality is as it were precariously perched on what is its essential identity. Here feeling as an epistemological attitude reaches its Absoluteness to be ranked along with the knowing and will Absolutes. But unlike the other forms of

absolution, the mystique of love remains inaccessible to mere man witness and take delight in the Divine who can only distance himself.

#### **IV. Deconstruction**

We have thus three alternative forms of Absolutism, taking our cue from the three different attitudes that the subject might take towards its object in the context of the basic epistemological relation. The question inevitably suggests itself as to whether we could have a unified theory of Absolutism in which its different forms could be situated. The very first thing that strikes us is regarding the point of view from which these forms are visualized and differentiated. We seem to be at a vantage point from which all forms of Absolutism appear at the same level. This vantage ground could not be one of knowing etc., since the three subjective attitudes are mutually exclusive. This awareness is a reflection of the theories of the Absolute, and is, therefore, possible only in a higher-order consciousness. If it is a critical insight into how theories are constructed, it must be at a distance from the latter, as it takes up the theories themselves as objects of investigation.

Theory construction will bear closer scrutiny. Theories might be taken as deductive structures. The starting point would be the postulation of a set of axioms, basic terms would be strictly defined and certain rules of inference would be laid down. Then the rest of the system would appear as a series of deductions. This accounts for the existence of alternative systems, which would just be differently postulated. A metaphysician would not be, however, satisfied with such a depiction of his work. A metaphysical system lays claim to truth, and truth (if syntactical truth is excluded) cannot accept incompatible formulations. When two theories contradict each other, then one can either appeal to reason or take the whole issue before the bar of experience. Now the reason is neutral about the conflicting systems. Self-consistency is the only criterion of validity, and so long as the rules of inference have been correctly employed, we would have a valid structure, however unpalatable it might be to the opposite camp. One may seek to refute the opponent by convicting him of self-inconsistency, but the latter might well turn around and do the same to the former. Thus, the whole enterprise would appear to be a non sequitur. Mere logic does not decide between alternative, but mutually incompatible, deductive structures. Each is viable so long as it is internally coherent.

The metaphysician might appeal to experience as the final arbiter of theories. It is an experience that decides whether a particular

system is acceptable. If something is stated that runs counter to our experience, it is to be rejected outright. As Bhāmati puts it, not even a hundred śrutis could make a pitcher a cloth. Along with reasoning, experience has been a weapon that the metaphysician wields in justification of his statements. Knowledge standpoint, for example, is not all deduction and argumentation. Adopting the approach through the knowing function of the subject, one arrives at the notion of 'isness' (sattā or idantā) that is the ground of the world- appearance. But this notion of Being is not merely an idle speculation but is literally experiential. Being is immediately intuited when the illusion is dispelled, and this intuition is the subject matter of Upaniṣadic revelation (*tam tu aupaniṣadam puruṣam pṛcchāmi*).

The difficulty is that by adopting a will point-of-view, one arrives at a radically different formulation of the ultimate reality as creative consciousness, of which objective being is a falsification. By undergoing certain yogic practices (yoga-ācāra), reality is immediately intuited as Pure Will or Pure Act, after passing through several bhūmīs and acquiring different paramitas (jñānam lokottaram ca yat). So, it seems that immediate experience also fails as the clincher, but this might be an over-statement. The conjecture might be hazarded that intuitive non-dual experience does not by itself favour any particular theory. Different theories arise when that experience, which has no content of its own, is sought to be articulated according to different metaphysical biases. Experience as theory-laden leads to the differences.

The fault, therefore, lies neither in logic nor in experience, but in the conceptual apparatus that produces theories. Seen in this way the theories themselves operate as coloured glasses, distorting our vision of reality. Reality would thus be seen as transcending all theory-construction (tatvamācchādya balanam atatvam khyāti sarvatah), as escaping all speculative approaches (*dṛāṣṭavyam bhūtato bhūtam bhūtadarśi vimucyate*). It is not to be approached from the knowledge standpoint, from the will standpoint, or any standpoint whatsoever. The Absolute is not to be identified with pure Being, or again with pure Will or anything to which reason can put a tag on (*buddheragocaram tattvam buddhih samvṛttir-ucyate*). Constructive systems end paradoxically in denying their own initial standpoints. The knowing subject is finally to lose itself and ceases to be knowing even when the distance between knowing and being is annulled. The willing subject so absorbs its creations into itself that it ceases to be willing since it wills nothing. So,

it is not very logical to burden them with identification marks which they are going to shed anyway

These identification marks come from taking cases of empirical illusion as paradigm cases for explicating the structure of world appearance. The knowledge point-of-view takes the rope-snake illusion as its model where the 'rope' is indifferent to its being known as the 'snake'. The will standpoint finds in dream experience a more convenient model where subjective creativity reigns supreme, and dream contents are nothing apart from their being projected. Both approaches, however, take something in the context of illusion as non-illusory, i.e., the ground that makes illusion possible, whether it is objective 'rope' or the subjective dreaming act. Some factor in the context of illusion is indicative of the nature of ultimate reality. The objectivity of the 'rope' exemplifies the objectivity of Being as such, while the dream experience gives a hint about the creativity of Willing consciousness.

But if the illusory is to be rejected totally, then nothing in that context deserves to be salvaged for serving as an identification tag to reality. Everything in the context of illusion is equally illusory (Sarva sunyata). This point of view sometimes appears in Advaita Vedanta too. The Sankśepaśārīraka has a verse stating that only the illusory appears in illusion, and nothing else (*adhyastameva parisphūrati bhramesti, nānyat kincit parispirati bhramesu*), but that is an overstatement. The orthodox position is that Brahman is the ultimate ground of all appearance, albeit as obscured and distorted.

If knowing, willing etc., are all to be discarded in an ultimate non-dual experience (*aparokśānubhūti or lokottara jñāna*), we need not have taken them as our starting point. They simply reveal our metaphysical predilections, leading to alternative constructions (dṛṣṭi). These constructions cloud our vision, producing fragmented, and to some extent, imaginary pictures that hide the totality of philosophic insight. When all approaches are discarded, that itself is the Absolute as philosophic self-awareness (*prajñāpāramita jñānamadvayam*). This is also an Absolute non-dual experience, immediately intuited, but which does not carry spurious identification labels. (*Yada na bhavah nabhavah mateh santiṣṭhate purah. Tadanyāgatyābhāvena nirālamba prasamyati*).



## An Investigation into the Nature of Agent in Nyāya School of Thought

Dr Vidhu Jain<sup>1#</sup>

### Abstract

The concept of agency is vital to any investigation into the nature of human actions, and so is the scholarly need to explore it in Indian Philosophical tradition. Nyāya school of thought, which is a realist school in the orthodox system of Indian philosophy, elaborates upon the nature of the Agency and its relation to the Self, where the agent plays a significant role in the liberation of the Self. This paper explores and investigates the nature of agency/personhood as described in the text *Nyāya Sūtra*. Naiyāyikas put forth many arguments to explain how the agency can only belong to the Self, where interestingly, though essentially the Self is the agent, this Self is independent of other conditions and cannot acquire the characteristics indispensable for the manifestation of the agency. These other necessary conditions viz. body, internal sense, external sense and external objects, for this manifestation, are only auxiliaries and not in themselves capable of independently acquiring agency. In this paper, a serious effort is made to justify the Nyāya claim that only the Self is capable of and has the potential to be an agent, whose actions are responsible for the liberation of the Self.

**Keywords:** Agent, Agency, Action, Self, Nyāya, *Nyāya Sūtras*.

The Nyāya system of thought is a well-known realist and a logical school of classical Indian philosophy. It predominantly deals with the sources and ways of arriving at valid knowledge which finally leads to the realization of the truth. In consonance with the views of other systems of Indian philosophy Naiyāyikas also believe that the ultimate aim of human life is to attain a state of complete cessation of pain and suffering i.e., liberation. Acquisition of valid knowledge and truth ultimately tends towards paving the way for the elimination of pain and suffering of the individual self. The individual self-existing in the world is bound to act. Activity is its very nature and this alone in the form of effort brings an end to the cycle of birth and death. Thus, the

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whole scheme of Nyāya philosophy can be seen to revolve around the individual self who acts, gains knowledge of reality and liberates himself.

In Nyāya tradition the self alone is accepted to be the agent. The Naiyāyikas argue that the material body is indispensable for the self which means the self/consciousness requires embodiment for the manifestation of agency. According to Nyāya, there are two types of selves, the individual selves which are innumerable (*jīvātmā*) and an Absolute Self, which is one and infinite called God (*Paramātmā*), where both these kinds of selves are substances (*dravya*), which are eternal and all-pervasive (*vibhū*). Certain qualities are common to both selves: emotion or desire, cognition, and happiness action. Again, the rates belonging to God are immutable, while those belonging to individual selves are temporal. Here, since the prime focus is on the concept of an agent, I will be primarily concerned with the exploration of the concept of individual selves (*jīvātmā*) as agents.

In *NyāyaSūtra* (1.1.9), Gautama enumerates a list of objects of true knowledge (*prameyas*), and this list begins with the self. Vātsyāyana writes:

*...here, the self is the seer of all things, the enjoyer of all things, omniscient, experiences all things. The body is the place of its enjoyment and suffering. Enjoyment and suffering are cognitions (of pleasure and pain). The internal sense or manas is that which can know all objects. Action (pravṛtti) is the cause of all pleasure and pain; so are the doṣas (defects), that is to say, passion, envy, and attachment. The Self had earlier bodies than this one and will have other bodies after this one until "mokṣa" is achieved. This beginningless succession of birth and death is called "pretyabhāva". Experience of pleasure and pain, along with their means, i.e., body, sense-organs, etc., is "fruit" (phala). "Pain" is inextricably linked with "pleasure". To achieve mokṣa or apavarga, one needs to consider all happiness as pain whence will arise detachment and in the long run freedom.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup>*NyāyaSūtras* (NS, V) of Gotama with the *Bhāṣya* of Vātsyāyana and The *Vārtika* of Uddyotakara, (tr.) Ganganatha Jha, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984, (NS, V), 1.1.9, Bina Gupta, *Cit Consciousness*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 40.

Thus, each self when in conjunction with the body experiences pleasure and pain on account of the performance of actions under the influence of passions, desires and attachments. Also, the assuming of the body by the self happens repeatedly over different rebirths till the time self gets liberated. The association of the self with the body arises on account of the accuracy of the fruits of actions performed in previous births. The body and the senses are the locus of its enjoyment. Activity (*ceṣṭā*), sense organs (*indrīya*) and object (*artha*) reside in a body, which is its substratum. These are the causes producing the body, the objects of senses, knowledge, pleasure and pain. The agent undertakes action by motivation (*pratyana*) in the form of mind, body and speech activity. The agent is possessed of evil (*doṣa*). This incites the agent to act whether it is good or bad. Evils are of three kinds, attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dveṣa*) and mistaken idea (*moha*).<sup>3</sup> The performance of these three activities under the influence of evil tendencies leads to the accumulation of an unseen potency (*adrṣṭa*) constituting merit and demerit that determines the future birth.

Further, the body in which the Self abides is neither without a preceding embodiment nor without a succeeding one. The series of preceding bodies is without any beginning while the succeeding ones are in the serum in liberation (*apavarga*). In particular, the burden of an individual's *karma* is held to be passed from one embodiment to another embodiment and to determine the particular form of a rebirth the person suffers.<sup>4</sup> Both good and bad deeds create *karma*; even refraining from acting may add to the power of one's *karma*. Thus, one cannot attain liberation simply by doing good *karma*, rather one can attain it by doing those kinds of actions which do not increase the burden of merit and demerit and rather decrease or exhaust it.

Each self has to be responsible for the actions performed by them and the results that ensue from their performance. Gautama in *Nyāya-Sūtra* says "No (i.e., the alleged defect of falsehood does not exist), because (the non-attainment of the results of the Vedic injunctions) is due to the imperfections of the ritual performance, of the performer, and of the means employed."<sup>5</sup> It is clear from this *sūtra* that the performer

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<sup>3</sup>NS, 1.1.18.

<sup>4</sup>Potter, Karl H., (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies. Indian Metaphysics & Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika upto Gaṅgeśa*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>(NS, V), 2.1.58.



of the rite or the agent is responsible for an action and its consequences. Another thing which is made clear is that an agent must have volition or desire to do an action. An action, prompted by volition is said to be voluntary action and one who acts voluntarily is said to be responsible for the same. The above can be understood with the following example to understand the meaning of voluntary action. Suppose I want to dive in the swimming pool. And if I do it while other things are constant then I will be the agent of that action. Now suppose it so happens that I am standing on the tip of the slide to jump and suddenly someone standing in the back loses his balance and accidentally pushes me. As a result of this, I fall into the swimming pool. In this case, I would neither be considered an agent nor held responsible for the same as the action is not guided by my volition but by something else which accidentally happened.

Hence, according to the Nyāya position, an agent (*kartā*) comprises intentions, volitions and desires. This conception of agency is ascribed to the self. It is worth mentioning here, therefore, the characteristics of self. For Nyāya, consciousness is the attribute of the self, which is a substance. The self is eternal, real (*sat*), it is not one but many, and it can neither be created nor destroyed. Though consciousness is the quality of the self, it is nonetheless not its essential quality. The ultimate and emancipated self is devoid of consciousness. However, given the appropriate causal conditions available the self alone according to Nyāya is capable of having consciousness. The meaning is that when the self comes in contact with the mind, the mind with the senses, and the senses with the external objects, there is a conjunction which leads to the creation of consciousness in the self. The arising of consciousness in the self can be figuratively described through a chain of conjunctions which is as follows:

Self + Body + Internal Sense (Manas) + External Sense +  
External Objects

The summation of the above causal conditions leads to the emergence of consciousness.<sup>6</sup> According to the Naiyāyaikas, pure or objectless consciousness is not conceivable. The emergence of the consciousness in the self leads to the manifestation of agency in the individual self (*kartā*). For them, the agency is a special expression of

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<sup>6</sup>Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, *what is Living and What is Dead in Indian Philosophy*, New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1977, p. 409.

the self's different capacities and potentialities, which coherently ties them together.<sup>7</sup> As mentioned earlier, the individual self/agent is a complex of body and Self-possessed of certain definite qualities such as virtue, vice, misery, aversion, happiness, cognition and residual trace.<sup>8</sup>

Further, the agency of the self is clarified. It is said that the soul is the inspirer of the organs etc. for an instrument requires an agent (*Ātmendriyādyadhiṣṭhātā, karṇam hi sakṛtakama*).<sup>9</sup> It is explained that the Self imparts sentiency to the sense organs and body and the self is the agent which makes the sense organs work because they are insentient. Moreover, the self is said to be the substratum of merit and demerit and not the body (*dharmādharmāśrayo-adhyaksho-viśeṣasaguṇayogataḥ*).<sup>10</sup> Had it been so that the body was the substratum of these, then the results of actions done by a particular body could not be experienced by another body. The existence of the soul in another's body is to be inferred from its voluntary actions.<sup>11</sup> Voluntary movements are those that result from *pravṛtti*, i.e., inclination. Knowledge, desire, effort etc. do not abide in the body and since voluntary movement is the outcome of effort, the self which is possessed of effort is inferred from its voluntary movements. So, it is clear that the soul is the agent capable of doing voluntary or intentional actions. The body is the locus of the experiences of pain and pleasure. The experiencer is the agent (individual self).

A further claim made by Naiyāyikas is that the doer of an action and the experiencer of its results is the eternal Self. The eternity of the self is proved by processes like remembrance etc. Gautama in *Nyāya-Sūtra* gives an example or examples as the case may be to explain this. He says a newborn infant experiences joy, fear and sorrow and he cannot be said to have experienced those before, so how do these experiences happen? He answers that this can be inferred from the continuity of remembrance and this continuity can only be due to previous repeated experiences which could be possible only during a previous life. It

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<sup>7</sup>Matthew R. Dasti, 'Nyāya Self as Agent and Knower', *Free Will, Agency, and Selfhood in Indian Philosophy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2014, p. 113.

<sup>8</sup>NS, 1.1.10.

<sup>9</sup>*Bhāṣāpariccheda with Siddhānta-Muktāvali of Viśvanāth*. Nyāyapañcānana, (tr.), Swami Madhavananda, Calcutta: Advaita Ashram, 1996, p. 65, v. 47

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, v. 49, p. 78.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, v. 50, p. 79.

follows that the personality continues to exist after the perishing of the body.

Further Gautama clarifies this by saying, “There is the desire for sucking the mother’s breast on the part of the newborn infant, which is inferred from its behavior.”<sup>12</sup> Such a desire is inexplicable without the habit of having had food in the previous birth. It is established that living beings are born as characterized and endowed by desire. Desire again is born of the recollection of the objects previously perceived. The previous perception of objects is not explicable without the admission of a body in the previous birth. Thus, the self recollects the objects perceived while having a connection with a previous body and gets attached to those objects. It is evident that the self, as connected with the two bodies, undergoes rebirth. In this way, the previous body presupposes a further previous body, which again presupposes a still further previous body and so on. As a result, the connection of the conscious self with the body is also without any beginning. Therefore, attachment is without a beginning and there is the identity of the doer and the experiencer.

In summation of the above points, it can be said that according to Naiyāyikas the agent is composed of self, body, mind, sense organs and sense objects qualified by consciousness. Agency belongs to the self and it is said to be the motivator of the sense organs. But this manifestation of agency belonging to the self comes about only when all the components are combined as a complete whole. This is the prerequisite for the performance of actions, whether good or bad. An agent is innately endowed with desires for worldly pleasures and strives for their satisfaction. The desire for enjoyment etc. under the influence of tendencies impels an agent to do actions.



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<sup>12</sup>NS, 3.1.21.

## Aristotle's Ethics and the Concept of Happiness

Dr Monica Prabhakar<sup>1±</sup>

### Abstract

Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* defines *eudaimonia*, as the activity of the soul by virtue. For him, if a person sticks to the mean, which is conforming to moral virtues and also leads a life of contemplation, then he is happy. It is to be noted that Aristotle's definition of happiness or the human good takes into consideration two different views: First, that happiness is identical to virtue and second, that it is a life of pleasure. The first view corresponds to the stoic meaning of happiness. The second is the view of Epicureans. The purpose of this paper is to exhaustively discuss Aristotle's exceptional view of happiness that surpasses not just the stoic and the Epicurean notions of happiness but also that of Plato and how it is embedded in his ethics. It is important to note that he is interested in politics and that his ethics is only a portion of his politics. The ultimate good *eudaimonia* though refers to the happiness of the individuals but they are ultimately citizens who make a happy state.

**Keywords:** Eudaimonia, Aristotle, Ethics, Happiness.

### Introduction

Aristotle at the outset makes it clear that ethics is a practical science. Its subject matter, therefore, is the action<sup>2\*</sup> performed by any rational agents. Every action aims at an end but the end, which the only targets for himself, is his good.

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<sup>2</sup> Here 'action' refers to the moral action which is purposive in nature which can be judged either right or wrong and which is performed by a rational agent *i.e.*, one who is conscious of what he is doing. Action performed by lunatics and children and those which are amoral are not under discussion.

\*Here 'action' refers to the moral action which is purposive in nature which can be judged either right or wrong and which is performed by a rational agent *i.e.*, one who is conscious of what he is doing. Action performed by lunatics and children and those who are amoral are not under discussion.

This good, however, derives its significance from individual preferences. It varies from individual to individual; from society to society; from culture to culture; from one era to the other. For example, for a mathematician the good is solving mathematical problems, for a teacher it is teaching with perfection. These goods or ends are activities themselves, but they could also be the results of activities, for example, a scientist discovering a medicine or an army winning a battle these however can be called the immediate goods. But it is not these particular goods that any rational agent ultimately wants for himself. There is one final and supreme good, which is the aim of every rational agent and to which all his actions and particular goals are directed. This final and supreme good is eudaimonia or happiness.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Highest Good does not admit of a form**

Aristotle guards his readers against giving a Platonic interpretation of the concept of supreme Good. Plato had a firm conviction in the existence of a separate world of transcendent ideas, better known as the world of forms. This world of forms differs from the ordinary world of instability, imperfection, change and destruction in the sense that it consists of universals which are independent of human thought and which have necessity, universality and unchangeability as their character. The sensible world is an imperfect copy of the world of forms. For Plato, knowledge is always Universal. Particular things are known to us because they pair respective forms.

It is under these forms of 'beauty', 'wisdom' or 'courage' that we call a woman beautiful, a king wise or a soldier courageous. They are manifestations of their respective forms. Plato strengthens his point by referring to the example from science. We all know what a square or a triangle is although we have never seen any exact squares and triangles in nature. This knowledge can be attributed to our recollection of the form of the square or the triangle that we apprehended before our birth. Thus, all particulars derive their existence from these forms. And the forms can be known only by the intellect.

The most fundamental form from which all other forms derive their existence, meaning and significance is the form of the Good. The vision of the form of the Good is the highest human accomplishment.

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<sup>3</sup> The actual English translation for the Greek word 'Eudaimonia' is "living well" and "doing well" which for convenience has been identified with happiness.

Plato presents an insight into these forms and the form of the Good in *The Republic* with the help of the allegory of the cave. The allegory is as follows. Socrates asks his friends to imagine men who since their childhood have been imprisoned inside a cave. They are chained in such a way that they cannot move or even turn their heads. There is only a wall in front of them and at a distance burns a fire. Between the fire and the backs of these men stands a low wall along which men are walking with objects like figures of animals, vessels and so on with them. Some of them are talking while some are silent. The chained men see only the shadows of these men on the wall in front of them. Plato compares ordinary men with the chained men sitting in the cave. They are on the lowest stage of knowledge where shadows of physical things are taken as real. One of these men however manages to break his chains and run out of the cave. He for the first time sees the real things – the trees, the mountains and above all the light. In the beginning, this is not a comfortable sight as he is not accustomed to seeing things in the light and has the urge to go back. But he holds on to it and gradually adjusts to the new environment. He now takes stock of all that he sees around himself. Ultimately, he sees the sun, the source of light. This man is now in a position to conclude that it is the sun that makes everything visible. This man Plato compares to the philosopher for it is the philosopher who has the sagacity and discernment to know the real.

It is clear that Plato while referring to the 'Real' i.e., the mountains, the trees and the rest is suggesting that these are merely the forms, they borrow their existence and significance from the form of the Good, which in this case is represented by the sun as it unveils the darkness to reveal the reals.

Aristotle criticizes Plato's theory of forms for it needlessly introduces a separate world of transcendent ideas. He believes that forms Socrates does not exist independently of individual things. They are encountered in individual things that share common attributes.

Aristotle focuses more on the highest form i.e., the form of the Good. He points out that if Plato's theory of forms is accepted then the 'Good' could be predicated on one thing only and our indiscriminate use of the word would get restricted. For we do use it in innumerable ways as in a good doctor, a good knife or a good house. Even if the Platonists say that only those things that are valued and pursued for their own sake are to be called good in virtue of the form of Good, they do not succeed. Certain things like sight, pleasure, and intelligence are valued and

pursued for their own sake, but that does not make them the exemplifications of the form of Good. If it were, then, 'good' would have the same meaning in all of them. "The definition of good will have to be recognizably the same in them all, just as that of white is in snow and chalk."<sup>4</sup> It is evident that the definitions of sight, pleasure and intelligence are different even about 'good'. Thus, for Aristotle, there is no difference between the good and good as he says, "Nor will the good be any better by being eternal, if a long-lasting white thing is no whiter than an ephemeral one."<sup>5</sup> He emphatically states that the good is not to be identified with a separate form or idea in the following words, "good is not a common characteristic corresponding to one Idea."<sup>6</sup>

Aristotle nonetheless is bothered with the problem of finding the ground based on which various things can be called good. Though he suggests two alternative solutions – either all good things derive from or contribute to one good or they are good by being analogous to one another – he does not give any serious thought to them. For he says:

*But perhaps this subject should be dismissed here since a detailed examination of it would be more appropriate for another branch of philosophy.<sup>7</sup>*

It is inferred from what follows in the book that the first alternative is not acceptable to him. The use of 'derive from' only hints at the Platonic view, which Aristotle rejects at the outset. The use of 'contribute to one's good' also is not in tune with Aristotle's vision of the good. This is because there are certain goods like virtue and justice which are good in themselves and thus do not contribute to any further good.

Possibly it is the second alternative that can be attributed to Aristotle. It says that the goodness of one thing is analogous to the goodness of another, for example, what the goodness of sight is to the body the goodness of intuition is to the mind or what the goodness of temperance is to human cravings, the goodness of truthfulness is to self-expression.

Von Wright presents an argument against the second alternative solution. He contends that analogous meanings of words presuppose a

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<sup>4</sup> Aristotle. 1953 *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thomson London: Fontana, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

primary sense attached to them, “and where there is no primary meaning of a word there can be no analogous meaning either.”<sup>8</sup> For example “deep” when applied to thought suggests the analogous use of the word and when applied to the ocean renders its primary meaning.

McGill finds Von Wright’s argument “ingenious but not conclusive.”<sup>9</sup> He believes that ‘good’ has a primary meaning when it refers to immediate unimpeded complete activities and analogous meaning when it refers to activities that will be completed without being impeded in the future. He also says that it is not clear whether it is necessary to know the primary meaning of a word to understand the analogous meanings.

Aristotle, in my opinion, agrees with Plato when he says that all living beings are in an imperfect state. He however goes much ahead of Plato by suggesting a scope for development in them. A plant, an animal or a man grows, develops, reproduces and dies. It is only in the case of man that the highest degree of perfection is attainable. It is therefore extremely important for him to direct all his faculties towards finding out ways to achieve this end. Thus, contra Plato, Aristotle does not visualize a separate world of transcendental forms or ideas. His philosophy rather has a this-worldly flavor. A man can accomplish the highest form of perfection, which he calls Eudaimonia (happiness) through his deeds and attitude.

### **Happiness is an end and not a means to an end**

Aristotle’s ethics is an endeavor to grasp the highest good, the good which is the end of all human activities. In the process, however, he encounters various subordinate ends, which only serve the final one i.e., happiness. As William Hazlitt puts it “I have wanted only one thing to keep me happy, but wanting that have wanted everything”. The importance of the end, Aristotle mentions within parenthesis. He says, the absence of an end “will involve an infinite progression, so that our aim will be pointless and ineffectual.”<sup>10</sup>

Living beings (barring plants and the lower organisms) are constituted in such a way that all their actions tend towards the

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<sup>8</sup> Von Wright, G.H. 1963 *Varieties of Goodness* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, p. 15.

<sup>9</sup> McGill, V. J. 1967 *The Idea of Happiness* New York: Frederick A. Praeger, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Aristotle. 1953 *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J.A.K. Thomson London: Fontana, p. 63.



satisfaction of their desires. The desires in the case of animals are limited merely to the body. Their development, therefore, pertains to the body only. Man, who is endowed with a distinctive faculty of reason can enjoy both the goods of the body and of the soul. Unlike animals, he is conscious of what is good for him. He can sensibly arrange his desires. He alone can aspire to and achieve the ultimate good, happiness.

Happiness is the ultimate or the final good because it is at this stage that all desires reach their highest culmination. Man, indeed, desires wealth, health, honor, virtue, pleasure and intelligence. But these individual goods cannot be identified with the ultimate good, for they are either instruments or constituents of happiness only. No doubt these goods are final in their respects, still they are inferior to happiness. About them, Aristotle says:

*If there is only an end, this will be the good of which we are in search and if there is more than one, it will be the most final of these.*<sup>11</sup> (p.73)

Happiness is something, which is intrinsically good. It is never desired for the sake of anything else whereas everything else is desired for the sake of it. It is the supreme end of all human actions.

There is however a tendency to equate happiness with secondary goods like wealth, virtue, honor and pleasure. Aristotle makes it very clear that these are only subservient to happiness. Wealth undoubtedly is a yardstick of worldly success; it camouflages even the drawbacks in a person but we cannot call it an end in itself. For we do form a sensible question when we ask someone why do you desire wealth. The moment we have an answer wealth gets relegated to the level of the secondary goods. Honor also cannot be treated as a synonym for happiness. People receive honors because of their goodness. Therefore, it is best to be superior and an end to be sought. But virtue or goodness is also not worthy of being identified with the end. Aristotle says that the possessor of goodness can lead a life of inactivity, or who sleeps most of the time or who incurs “the most atrocious suffering and misfortune.”<sup>12</sup> What he means to say is that a person who possesses goodness may not be a happy man, for example, if a child decides against marriage because he has old and sick parents and marriage would amount to their neglect, his goodness does not make him happy. As Oscar Wilde says, “When we

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

are happy, we are always good, but when we are good, we are not always happy.”

It is clear from Aristotle’s treatment of pleasure that it is also not the same as happiness. It is however undeniable that the two are intertwined. Happiness for Aristotle is an activity of the perfect type and pleasure results from the successful performance of an activity. The life of a happy person, therefore, has to be pleasant. “For no activity is perfect if it is impeded and happiness is a perfect thing.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, it would not be wrong to say that pleasure is more of a condition for happiness than a constituent.

Aristotle even considers the views of those who think that pleasure is not to be regarded as good. Some say that pleasure is a process directed towards an end and calling it good makes it an end. Some denounce it saying that it is something that the prudent and the temperate men shun. For others, pleasure impedes reasonable behavior, it is not difficult to get dazzled while pursuing them. Moreover, they are most desired by children and brutes. Some pleasures are even harmful and some bring disgrace. Therefore, they say it is only favorable to avoid them.

Aristotle dismisses these views. He points out that pleasure first of all is not a process; rather it is an unobstructed activity and therefore an end. It is also not proper to say that pleasures are a hindrance to certain activities because a pleasure suitable for a certain activity only enhances our ability to perform that activity. The temperate and the prudent men are wise enough to pursue the right kinds of pleasures and not to get disturbed in case of being denied these pleasures.

For Aristotle, pleasure is something temporary and relative since it is result dependent. Temporary because it might just end with the activity. For example, a man finds pleasure in the company of his friend. As long as the two are together pleasure prevails upon him. But when the friend is gone it is only sadness that draws along because the thoughts of his friend, the time spent together, the activities done together cloud his mind and he is consumed with the desire to meet him or her again.

This drives home another point that pleasure is relative. We may derive pleasure from an activity at a given time. But the same activity may not give pleasure the next or some other time. Likewise, the same activity may be regarded as pleasure given by some men but for others,

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 254.

it may be just a routine. It is because man is of such a complex nature that he cannot invariably enjoy the same thing. As Aristotle puts it, “If any being had a simple nature the same activity would always give him the greatest pleasure.”<sup>14</sup> Monotony provokes boredom. A man who relished coffee some time back may develop a strong dislike for it. Thus, pleasure cannot be identified with happiness.

Happiness, Aristotle claims is the perfect state. And whatever is perfect is self-sufficient. By self-sufficient he means that which is not deficient in anything and that which alone can make life desirable. Happiness, therefore, is never an object of choice. It is “not reckoned as one item among many; if it were so reckoned happiness would obviously be more desirable by the addition of even the least good, because the addition makes the sum of good greater, and the greater of two goods is always more desirable.”<sup>15</sup> But Aristotle makes it clear that there is no scope for any additional good as happiness is all-inclusive. It is complete and it is good.

Aristotle believes that common men make this mistake of identifying happiness with their subordinates because they have a distorted view of happiness. The wise however see it in its totality. McGill on the lines of Aristotle remarks, “Most men have glimpsed more of happiness than they have clearly understood and can often be persuaded that there is more to it than their way of life suggests or exemplifies.”<sup>16</sup>

G. E. Moore instigates a controversy by claiming that it is impossible to define good. All the attempts of the philosophers so far are futile and there is no possibility of a successful one in the future for good is an indefinable, simple and un-analyzable property.

To elucidate, he considers three kinds of definitions – the stipulative the lexical and the descriptive (as it covers complex entities). The stipulative definition is the one that allows a man to stipulate the meaning of a word. The lexical definition gives fixed meanings to a word as in a dictionary. It is the third kind of definition that involves an analysis of the object or the idea to be defined that Moore is interested in. He believes that it is here that the indefinability and un-analyzability of good are made explicit.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>16</sup> McGill, p. 17.

Moore compares 'good' with 'horse'. A horse, which is a complex entity, can be defined because it has various parts and properties which can be enumerated. Moore however wants to consider these simplest terms which are left after the enumeration is made complete, those simplest terms which admit of no further description and are only matters of perception. It is in this sense that 'good' is simple, indefinable and unanalyzable. It is that ultimate term by reference to which other things are defined.

Moore draws an important distinction between the substantive 'the good' and the adjective 'good'. The adjective, good if applied to the substantive 'the good' would make the latter different from itself. Likewise, if all those things that denote and connote the good are predicated on it, no intelligible definition would follow. For example, if 'that which produces pleasure' be a predicate of 'the good' the result would be a tautology for "there is no meaning in saying that pleasure is good unless good is something different from pleasure."<sup>17</sup> Moore further says:

*Everything is what it is and not another thing hence nothing can be identified with another thing so goodness too cannot be thought to be identical with another property.<sup>18</sup>*

According to him the attempt on the part of the philosophers to identify good with any natural property is to commit the naturalistic fallacy.

But Aristotle would not face this problem because 'good' for him is not a "complete concept."<sup>19</sup> It has to mean only when it is applied with "categorical and other specifications"<sup>20</sup>

A remark by Aristotle that is to be considered under this head is that the ultimate good, *i.e.*, happiness is never a matter of praise as other subordinate goods are. We never hear anybody exclaiming – "Good you are happy". Instead, happiness is to be esteemed or valued as an end. We never say to someone, "You should be happy if you want..."

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<sup>17</sup> Moore, G.E. (1903) *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>19</sup> McGill, p. 12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

### **Happiness is an activity of the soul by virtue**

The above delineates a skeletal structure of Aristotle's concept of happiness. To give it flesh and blood in what follows I dwell upon his answer to the question – 'What is happiness?'

Aristotle defines happiness as "an activity of the soul by virtue, or if there are more kinds of virtue than one, by the best and most perfect...in a complete lifetime."<sup>21</sup> What he means by this can be understood in a piecemeal fashion. He begins by analyzing the notion of the soul. He believes that the soul has two parts namely the rational and the irrational. The rational is further subdivided into calculative and appetitive and the irrational is divided into vegetative and appetitive. The appetitive faculty is common to both because it contributes to the desires and emotions in sentient beings. It is partly irrational because all animals have desires and partly rational because man, through his ability can regulate them.

The vegetative part bears responsibility for nutrition and growth and is therefore shared by all living organisms. The calculative segment, which is purely rational, is responsible for providing man with the ability to contemplate.

Corresponding to the two facets of the rational part, which are exclusively human, are the two kinds of virtues – moral and intellectual. The moral virtues have the function of watching or guarding human actions and desires for the sake of direction and control. As knowledge of these virtues enables a man to regulate his conduct and not follow his desires against reason. Their onus is therefore on shaping the character of man. It is not that a man is already endowed with these, neither are they functional on their own. Rather these are to be properly cultivated by discipline and practice.

Aristotle believes that moral virtues are demonstrated in man's actions when he performs them in the best possible manner. 'The best possible manner' refers to the doctrine of the mean, which is the basis of Aristotle's account of moral virtues.

The doctrine of mean states that every action and emotion acknowledge three sorts of responses namely, an excess, a deficiency and the mean. Excess and deficiency are frailties of human character and are therefore reprobated. The mean, however, is an intermediary condition avoiding both extremes. It is the right kind of disposition

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<sup>21</sup> Aristotle, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

towards the right kind of objects. The extremes are the vices whereas the mean is commended as the virtue.

Aristotle presents a list of situations with which these virtues and vices are associated. For example, In the field of fear and confidence, if rashness is excess and cowardice is a defect, then courage is mean. In the field of pleasure and pain, if licentiousness is excess, impassivity a defect then temperance is the mean. What this suggests is that feeling too much or too little for something and acting in an indulgent or spiritless manner are signs of depravity. Whereas showing the right kind of attitude at the right time, towards the right kind of objects or people and with the right motive is the mark of a virtuous man.

Aristotle asserts that mere possession of virtues does not make a man good. Acting by the mean alone makes a man worthy of being called good. The knowledge of a teacher is a waste if he does not impart it to his students. A good teacher performs his functions efficiently.

Aristotle also makes it clear that the actions that a virtuous man performs are not forced but voluntary. They are the result of deliberation and choice. His goodness therefore lies in examining deliberately various alternatives and choosing one, which is the best concerning the situation. He thereby finds pleasure in performing them in the manner in which a music lover enjoys a musical concert. Virtuous men, therefore, lead a pleasant life because they conduct it by some principles that are pleasant by nature.

A man who does not derive pleasure by performing virtuous actions cannot be called virtuous for he might have done it either in ignorance or under compulsion or from some other motive.

Thus, it becomes evident that pleasure is central to the conception of happiness. If we adhere to moral virtues, our life is pleasant, and if we lead a pleasant life, we are happy. As Aristotle puts it, "... pleasure perfects the activities, and so perfects life, to which all are drawn."<sup>22</sup>

It may be argued that Aristotle's suggestion that virtue is the mean between two extremes is incomprehensible. Feelings cannot be judged quantitatively. It is not possible to mark a point say, in the field of fear and confidence as the point of courage and to say that anybody who stands at this point or displays his courage of this degree is possessed with the virtue of courage. The goodness of a man lies in performing actions to the best of his ability. For every man is a

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 322.

complexity in his way. And therefore, two men belonging to totally different fields will view the virtue of courage differently.

Intellectual virtues, on the other hand, Aristotle believes, are superior to the moral virtues. Activities relating to moral virtues account for human happiness and are of a secondary kind. The contemplative activity, which pertains to intellectual virtue, is the highest kind of activity as unlike other activities it is the most continuous and its locus and medium is the intellect which is the divine element in man. The happiness derived from such an activity therefore far exceeds the ordinary human happiness. Talking about human happiness rather than perfect human happiness Aristotle says:

*That perfect happiness is a kind of contemplative activity...The gods in our conception of them are supremely happy and blessed...It follows, then, that the activity of God, which is supremely happy, must be a form of contemplation; and therefore, among human activities that which is most akin to God's will be the happiest.*<sup>23</sup>

Contemplation is the only activity, which is self-sufficient and appreciated for its own sake. The philosopher does not require any accessory or occasion or other men to display the virtue of the highest kind. By contemplation, he also does not gain anything that is “something more or less over and above the action.”<sup>31</sup> Contemplation according to Aristotle thus surpasses all the other virtues whether about statecraft, war or the life of a practical man. For in the latter men always need means and opportunities for the successful performance of their action which lead them to the end desired by them. There is therefore no relaxation in the life governed only by the practical virtues. The contemplative life, however, is marked by leisure. A philosopher who possesses peace can cherish in the while of contemplation. Discussing the relationship between contemplation, leisure and happiness Aristotle says:

*...if it is evident that self-sufficiency and leisured-ness and such freedom from fatigue as is humanly possible, together with all the attributes assigned to the supremely happy man are those that accord with this activity, then this activity will be the perfect happiness for man – provided that it is*

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

*allowed a full span of life; for nothing that pertains to happiness is incomplete.*<sup>24</sup>

Happiness, therefore, consists in the excellent performance of the functions assigned to men and in the exercise of their intellect. Aristotle throughout the book identifies happiness with activity and rejects it as a state of mind. He says:

*Happiness is not a state, since if it were, it might belong even to a man who slept all through his life, passing a vegetable existence, or to a victim of the greatest misfortunes.*<sup>25</sup>

But happiness exclusively as an activity cannot be grasped. For happiness is not an object which when the activity is over will be handed over to the agent. Rather it is to be experienced by the mind. Aristotle, however, does not seem concerned with the experience part. He simply rests content with showing us a way that leads to happiness. The way may lead to happiness but its being itself happiness is doubtful.

One can conclude this discussion by saying that Aristotle's idea of happiness is suitable only for those people who possess extraordinary abilities.

### **External Goods also contribute to happiness**

Aristotle does not overlook the importance of external goods in the life of a happy man. In *Book I* itself he classifies goods as:

- a) external
- b) of the soul
- c) of the body

and specifies that the goods of the soul which refer to the activities conforming to the two virtues are the finest. Describing each of them he says:

*Of these, we say that the goods of the soul are good in the strictest and fullest sense, and we rank actions and activities of the soul as goods of the soul.*<sup>26</sup>

Aristotle is aware of the ineptness of men in accomplishing their tasks without the constant supply of external goods. He says:

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 330.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.



*Happiness needs the addition of external goods...for it is difficult if not impossible to do fine deeds without any resources.*<sup>27</sup>

External goods are indeed a necessary precondition of happiness but their inclusion in Aristotle's conception of happiness makes happiness rather an unachievable goal. For Aristotle does not forget to include the slightest of things among them. His list of external goods ranges from the outward beauty of a man to his ancestry and children, from his having friends to the political influence that he enjoys. He puts it thus:

*A man is scarcely happy if he is very ugly to look at, or of low birth, or solitary and childless; and presumably less so if he has children or friends who are quite worth less, or if he had good ones who are now dead.*<sup>28</sup>

### **Conclusion**

A philosopher of such caliber as Aristotle advocating external goods seems unbelievable. This is where we can distinguish the Greek and Indian philosophy. Indian philosophers (except the Cārvāka) have always conceptualized happiness as a state of non-attachment to worldly things. Aristotle's idea of happiness about virtues is to an extent laudable but the added requirement makes it only too demanding. Why should a virtuous man who happens to be ugly forfeit his claim to be happy? External goods cannot be equated with such things as beauty, birth, parenthood etc. The former is related to action whereas the latter are a matter of chance and fortune.

There seems to be a gap in our understanding of Aristotle. It is not very clear whether he is too insistent on the importance of external goods or he refers to them only as contingent goods, because about external goods as the source of happiness, he says contrary things. For example, at one point he says:

*On the other hand, it must not be supposed that, because one cannot be happy without external goods, it will be necessary to have many of them on a grand scale to be happy at all. For self-sufficiency does not depend upon a superfluity of means, nor does <moral> conduct, and it is*

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

*possible to perform fine acts even if one is not master of land and sea.<sup>29</sup>*

Understandably, certain goods are prerequisites for happiness as they serve as instruments for example wealth, potency, and opportunity. About them, Aristotle says:

*The liberal man will need money to perform liberal acts as indeed will the just man to meet his obligations (for intentions do not show, and even the unjust pretend that they wish to act justly); the brave man will need potency if he is to achieve anything valorous, and the temperate man will need opportunity for how else can he, or any other virtuous person, display his quality?<sup>30</sup>*

He goes on to say:

*On the other hand, the contemplative has no need for such things for his activity; on the contrary, they are almost a hindrance to his contemplation. However, in so far as he is a human being and a member of society he chooses to act by virtue, therefore he will need external goods to enable him to live as a human being.<sup>31</sup>*

This however does not end the problem; it rather adds fuel to the fire. It leaves certain questions to be addressed. These are:

How can happiness be completely identified with contemplative activity if a man cannot live like a human being by only contemplating?

If the practical life is superior to the life of contemplation, then why are moral virtues considered to bring only secondary happiness?

If the external goods are a hindrance to contemplative activity but are essential to moral activity then why does the definition of happiness include both the virtues? To put it differently – Is the definition suggesting that happiness consists in adhering to either the moral virtues or the intellectual virtues but not to both?



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<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 332.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

## Concept of Look in Jean-Paul Sartre

Dr. Jayanti P Sahoo<sup>1∇</sup>

### Abstract

The concept of Look is a major concept in Sartre's existential phenomenology. The problem of "Look" starts only when your very existence is being questioned by others and others treat you not as a subject but as an object. Sartre was influenced by Husserl's phenomenological method, the ontology of Heidegger, and the account of alienation given by Jaspers, Marcel, and Albert Camus. His philosophy is a development of cartesian reflective cogito to pre-reflective cogito i.e., existence precedes essence. At least in his book *L'Être et le Néant* he considers himself a cartesian.

In this paper, I will emphasize Sartre's ontology as Sartre himself said. "I wanted my thought about Being.... Philosophy is an inquiry concerning being and beings. Any thought that does not lead to an inquiry concerning being is not valid."<sup>2</sup>

**Keywords:** Sartre, Concept of Look, Being, Ontology.

Sartre's concept of Look revolves around his views on consciousness, being for itself, being in itself, and being for others. Sartre describes consciousness as an active "explosion" toward objects in the world. Aronson writes,

"Consciousness was a connected series of explosions which tear us away from ourselves, which do not even allow a "myself" the leisure to form behind them. This active consciousness was spontaneous, and as such, a consciousness was nothing at all. It existed only as it moved out of itself, towards objects."<sup>3</sup>

Sartre has given a comprehensive account of the lived body which is in a way related to the concept of Look. Jean-Paul Sartre's chapter entitled "The Body" ("Le corps") in his *Being and Nothingness* has been misunderstood and somehow overlooked as a vital

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<sup>2</sup> Cumming, R.D., "Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre", *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. By Paul Arthur Schilpp, La Salle, Illinois. 1991, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Aronson R., *Jean-Paul Sartre: Philosophy in the World*, Verso, London, 1983, pp. 90-91.

philosophical analysis. His analysis of the body is closer to Marleau Ponty's discussion of the body in his later writings.

Sartre's phenomenology revolves around the concept of the look and the problem of others. It is something unique in the sense that no one before Sartre has understood and specified the problem of consciousness which arises due to the objective social structure. The look defines your conscious existence where the consciousness gets alienated from one's self. The look of Sartre is a specific look that defines my mental state thereby creating a state of alienation. The problem of others is a real problem when the very existence of my being is scrutinized by others. I am unhappy not because I don't want to be happy. However, the environment I want to live in and the world I want to create have already been constructed by someone else. I lost my freedom Sartre writes,

"We can affirm fearlessly that if consciousness is a succession of determined psychological facts, it is entirely impossible for it ever to produce anything but the real. For consciousness to be able to imagine it must be able to escape from the world by its very nature, it must be able by its efforts to withdraw from the whole world. In a word, it must be free."<sup>4</sup>

Sartre's concept of the look defines the psychological conditions of human consciousness and its relationship with being in itself.

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre classifies consciousness as one of two basic types of existence, being-in-itself or *en-soi* (objects) and being-for-itself or *pour-soi* (consciousness). Sartre describes being for itself as nothing. Consciousness is not an entity, but simply "not-this," not the objects of which there is consciousness. Absolute freedom and pure consciousness are the distinguishing characteristics of being for itself. On the other hand, being in itself is completely determined. Possibility, immobility, lack of consciousness, etc. characterizes being-in-itself.

Though by definition the for-itself has an independent existence and free being yet it cannot exist without in-itself. 'In Chapter 1, Part II of *Being and Nothingness* Sartre attempts to deduce the in-itself-for-itself structure of transcendence, projection of surpassing from the most basic feature of the for-itself, that it is "a being, such that in its being, its

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<sup>4</sup> Sartre Jean-Paul, *The Psychology of Imagination*, trans. By Bernard Frelhtman, New York: Philosophic Library, 1948, p. 267.

being is in question.”<sup>5</sup> Thus, the for-itself works within a state of facticity. In this context, it is essential to understand Sartre’s concept of “The Look”.

Kim Atkins writes, “The account of “the look” points out as how the unity of One’s ego and one’s sense of self is penetrated by others’ consciousness, is one of the most interesting aspects of existentialism.”

For Sartre, I am a pre-reflective conscious being. In contrast, when the “Other” looks at me I become an object of evaluation for them in their world just like any other object they encounter. As a consequence, I now become aware of myself as an object (self-reflective). In effect, the consciousness which had been acting in a pre-reflective manner now via 'the look' of the “Other”, views itself as an object fixed in space and time with definable qualities and characteristics.

Sartre’s look specifies how the being for itself is related to the notion of being-in-itself thereby a third relationship came into existence i.e., Being for others.

The “Other” always acts as a mediator between me and myself. The very fact that the others exist and are always my being is scrutinized by them. My experience of the world and the perspective which I develop through the constant presence of others in my life is not a state I was looking for. Hence, for Sartre the “Other’s look” allows me to achieve a sense of objectivity regarding myself. The concept of looks defines my relationship with others. My relationship with others and others’ relationships with me need to be understood within a material, social and psychological framework. Careful analysis shows that in specific situations such as power, relationships, and Authoritarianism the concept of Look plays a vital role in defining your association with others. Others are the necessary ground from which my consciousness gets alienated from my consciousness.

One interesting fact one can notice is that it is through the “others look” I started analyzing myself differently and also it helps me redefine myself differently. Now I am what I am not and what I am not I am. It is the others who create a different world for me and force me to live in a state of unhappiness. Neither I can accept them nor I can deny them.

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<sup>5</sup> Dreyfus Hubert L & Hoffman Piotr, Sartre’s Changed Conception of Consciousness: From Lucidity to Opacity, *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, ed. By Paul Arthur Schilpp, La Salle, Illinois. 1991, pp. 230-231.

Here Sartre is talking about a specific LOOK that is contextual. Sartre writes,

*“The appearance of the other is indispensable not to the constitution of the world and my empirical Ego but the very existence of my consciousness as Self-consciousness”*<sup>6</sup>

Sartre is here referring to Hegel and his views on the other. For Sartre, the Look demonstrates how the self gains thematic awareness of the body. It also creates within my self-consciousness a type of uneasiness about how the body appears to others. However, the Look of Sartre is not straightforward. And many conflicting interpretations have arisen due to apparent contradictions in Sartre's writing.

Sartre begins his account of the look with the other as an object. The Other, seen in the distance, is an object for me, yet different because the things of my world are also objects for that Other. The Other "sees what I see;" my world is present to the Other's eyes without distance.<sup>7</sup> Seen as seeing, the Other presents an animal center (complete, like an object, yet hidden in its autonomy) that decenters my relation to the world. My world "flees" toward the Other, precisely because the Other sees and appropriates it; its immediacy to myself is replaced by an immediacy to the Other.<sup>8</sup>

*The Other is defined not as the absence of consciousness about the body which I see but by the absence of the world which I perceived; an absence discovered at the very heart of my perception of this world.*<sup>9</sup>

Thus, "an element of disintegration" is added to the world. Though nothing has changed, and the world still exists, it now has other meanings. The objects of my world drain away, not into a future (because they are already past), but to a temporal elsewhere. The Other-as-object transforms a world written by and for myself into what must now be read, and I am transformed in turn from a writer of my world to a reader of a world. Two things can be followed from his discussion:

1. If the transformation is a transcendental state, then it is positive

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<sup>6</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, Trans and Introduction written by Hazel E Barnes, New York/London: Washington Square Press, 1992, p. 319.

<sup>7</sup> . Ibid., p. 314.

<sup>8</sup> . Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>9</sup> . Ibid., p. 314.

2. But if the transformation is a negative state and creates stress and anxiety and thereby creates a state of unhappiness then others need to be transcended.

The problem of Others and the Look are the necessary ground through which one can understand not only Sartre's concept of *self-alienation but also his emotional and psychological behavior*. The Look of the Others creates a genuine threat to my existence as an individual being. I am in a state of fear, and uneasiness, and losing my freedom. I am getting alienated from my consciousness. The question arises who is this "Other" about whom Sartre is talking? Is it the human relationships, the authoritarianism of the Institutions, or the politics and power?

Sartre writes,

*"....the original relation of myself to the Other is not only an absent truth aimed at crossing the concrete presence of an object in my universe; it is also a concrete, daily relation which at each instant I experience. At each instant, the other is looking at me". There is a constant thought process going on inside me. Why can't I accept the other the way everyone does? Why do I want the change? Why do I give importance to the other? All these questions disturb me. I speak to myself, cry, laugh and a state of uneasiness is always there in my mental state. Can I speak the truth? The crowd does not want to listen to the truth. The majority doesn't have an opinion as Kierkegaard says. In my conceptual world, I am standing alone and looking for an answer. Maybe someone is there who can understand me not through his/her look but his consciousness. Thus, the Other conceived the individual as only his or her facticity, only what the Other sees, only a particular kind of thing among other things. Sartre further writes,*

"I grasp the Other's look at the very center of my solidification and alienation of my possibilities. In fear or anxious or prudent anticipation, I perceive that these possibilities which I am and which are the condition of my transcendence are given also to another, given as about to be transcended in turn by his possibilities. The Other as a look is only that - my transcendence transcended."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Sartre, Jean-Paul, Being and Nothingness, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

By specifying the role of others in a specific context it's clear that Sartre is not using the term in a generic sense. The concept of Other revolves around the concept of Look. He defined the Other by saying 'The Other is he who looks at me. Sartre writes,

*"...[T] his relation which I call "being-seen-by-another," far from being merely one of the relations signified by the word man, represents an irreducible fact which cannot be deduced either from the essence of the Other-as-object or from my being as subject. On the contrary, if the concept of the other as an object is to have any meaning, this can be only the result of the conversion and the degradation of that original relation. In a word, my apprehension of the Other in the world as probably being a man refers to my permanent possibility of being- seen -by -him; that is, to the permanent possibility that a subject who sees me may be substituted for the object seen by me. "Being seen by -by-the-Other" is the truth of "seeing the Other". Thus, the notion of the Other cannot under any circumstances aim at a solitary, extra-mundane consciousness which I cannot even think of. Man is defined by his relation to the world and by his relation to himself. He is the object in the world that determines the internal flow of the universe, an internal haemorrhage. He is the subject who is revealed to me in that flight of myself toward objectivation. But the original relation of myself to the Other is not only an absent truth aimed at across the concrete presence of an object in my universe; it is also a concrete, daily relation which at each instant I experience. At each instant, the Other is looking at me".<sup>11</sup>*

From this passage, it is clear that Sartre's account of the Look is revolving around two different aspects of the Other, namely; (a) "The other as a concrete being in the world, (b) The Other as a hypothetical construct of sorts built up as the necessary source of my egological disestablishment as the subject of experience."<sup>12</sup>

The same applies to the concept of Look. One way we can understand the Look is to ask ourselves whether the look is deliberate,

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<sup>11</sup>Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Being and Nothingness*, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

<sup>12</sup>Natanson, Maurice, *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, "Others in Being and Nothingness", ed, by Paul Arthur Schilpp, *The library of Living Philosophers*, Southern Illinois University, p 335.



intentional, or hostile. Another way of looking at the theory of Look is that we allow ourselves to be subject to 'the look' of the "Other" that emotions such as pride and shame manifest themselves. Sartre's analogy of a *peeping tom or voyeur* can be employed to illustrate this assertion: if motivated by curiosity, jealousy, or vice I opt to listen or *look through a keyhole*. I am initially in a pre-reflexive mode where my entire consciousness is directed at what is happening on the other side of the door. However, if suddenly on hearing footsteps or a creaking floorboard behind me I become aware of somebody looking at me, *this presence of the Other disrupts my world, I now become an object for the Other in their world*; ultimately, I see myself because somebody sees me. *From being in pre-reflective mode there is a sudden shift to reflective consciousness inhabited by a self*. I now view and characterize my actions through the eyes of the Other; my body bent over looking through a keyhole, I judge myself through the eyes of the Other as a voyeur and as a consequence experience the emotion of shame at appearing such; if I was alone in the world there would be no reason to be ashamed of any of my behavior.

This means that all of a sudden, I am conscious of myself as escaping myself, not in that I am the foundation of my nothingness but in that, I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am a pure reference to the Other. It is in this sense that I experience that I am an object to the other. I am ashamed of my being subject to the sudden interference of Others. I lost my freedom. I am judged by Others. In *Being and Nothingness*, p. 317, Sartre writes,

*"Let us imagine that moved by jealousy, curiosity, or vice I have just glued my ear to the door and looked through a keyhole. I am alone and on the level of a non-thetic self-consciousness. This means first of all that there is no self to inhabit my consciousness, nothing therefore to which I can refer my acts to qualify them. They are in no way known; I am my acts and hence they carry in themselves their whole justification. I am a pure consciousness of things, and things, caught up in the circuit of my selflessness, offer to me their potentialities as the proof of my non-thetic consciousness (of) my possibilities. This means that behind that door a spectacle is presented as "to be seen," and a conversation as "to be heard."*

But all of a sudden, I hear footsteps in the hall. Someone is looking at me. What does this mean? It means that I am suddenly

affected in my being and that essential modification appears in my structure - modifications which I can apprehend and fix conceptually using the reflective cogito.

Thus, for Sartre, the other is nothing but an object. One can use Husserl's words to convey Sartre's point, "I become aware "of another 'I' (as a ) for-itself-I, as I am." And in the "act of being looked at" by what I recognize to be another being with the character of a subject (another "I"), I experience what Sartre terms "the alienation of myself".<sup>13</sup>

To make it more precise we can say that from this example of keyhole three transformations occur to the self-as-object which are as follows:

First, one is given a nature, an "outside;" the self (the "I") finds its foundation beyond itself, in the Other-as-subject.

Second, there is a loss of project, of instrumentality in the world; one understands oneself as the Other's project.

And third, there is a loss of mastery or autonomy; the once autonomous self finds itself no longer self-determining.

Its foundation is elsewhere, lost to the Other's hidden apprehension. Through the loss of self, one gains knowledge of an unknowable Other because one becomes the Other's knowledge. <sup>14</sup>One is transformed from person to personage and becomes an aspect of a situation that is by and for the Other.

The Other's look makes me be beyond my being in this world and puts me amid the world which is at once this world and beyond this world.<sup>15</sup>

The look is always accompanied by shame — the shame of having been rendered an object. However, it is important to understand that by this, Sartre means an existential rather than moralistic shame. Existential shame is the situation of being stripped of one's autonomy as an object for another; it names a formal relation. The content of this relation may indeed be morally shameful, such as being caught peeping through a keyhole, but it is not restricted to such situations. Sartre

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<sup>13</sup> Schacht Richard, *Alienation*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1971, pp. 220-221.

<sup>14</sup> Natanson, Maurice, *The Philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre*, "Others in Being and Nothingness", ed. by Paul Arthur Schilpp, *The Library of Living Philosophers*, Southern Illinois University, p. 320.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

conflates them in his example, perhaps for purposes of starkness; but other examples are instructive. One might be speaking to another intensely, and suddenly encounter the other's look as one of longing, or intimacy. Intimacy is as legitimate content for the look as reprobation at discovering a peeping tom. One discovers oneself to be the object of that intimacy or longing, as a knowledge whose content (project) remains hidden, yet directed at oneself as its object. One might blush, though not because it is a morally shameful situation. Rather, it is the loss of subjectivity as existential shame that would blush.

Sartre says,

*“...shame ... is the shame of self; it is the recognition of the fact that I indeed that object which the Other is looking at and judging. I can be ashamed only as my freedom escapes me to become a given object.” (The Look, p. 99)*  
(important)

Sartre has never denied the concept of shame. He says that my shame is a confession which I have changed into Bad-faith. Bad faith like shame is a confession. Many philosophers claim that Sartre still retains a *solipsistic* position in his analysis of Others.

Significantly, Sartre stresses that the Other does not need to be physically present for 'the look' to encroach into our thinking and being; the mere thought of them can still influence our perceptions of self via the imaginary look and judgment of the Other.

Suppose you are in a park, minding your own business. Everything is fine; there are no special problems at the moment. A few paces off there is another person, sitting on a bench reading a paper and minding his own business too. Everything is normal. Everything is just as we have described it up till now in Being and Nothingness. The whole world constituted by your consciousness, including that other human body, is arranged to refer to a particular point of view — your point of view. Everything refers to you; everything is organized around you — the eye of the camera that is always present but is never seen as a phenomenon on the screen. In short, the whole situation is a matter of your phenomena, along with the promises of further phenomena that would also be yours if you did such and such. We are talking about your phenomena throughout. But now, suddenly, that other man puts down the paper firmly, looks up, and stares directly into your eye. You are startled; you become unnerved. Why? It's because all of a sudden, the world comes on to you differently. Something is threatening about this

man's ominous stare. It's not as though you're afraid he's going to attack you, or anything like that. Let's suppose the man is old and feeble so that there's no question of any physical danger in the situation. Still, you continue to be unnerved by his stare. Why? Well, Sartre says, it is not that he is threatening you with bodily harm. Rather, it's more serious than that. He's a threat to the order and arrangement of your whole world. All rights reserved. Permission is hereby granted to copy this document in whole or in part for any purpose whatever, provided only that acknowledgement of copyright is given. In the very fact of recognizing that there is another consciousness behind those alien eyes, you recognize that there is another point of view on things, a point of view that ON PRINCIPLE you can never occupy. All of a sudden, the world comes on to you as referring not just to your point of view, but to another one too — to another camera. The world is no longer just nicely ordered and arranged around you. It's now arranged around him. Everything stays the same, of course. The trees are still the same color, the bench is still there. And yet it's profoundly different. And notice, there's nothing here that's reflective yet. Everything is still the same, and yet something has dissolved. The world is now his world, a foreign world that no longer comes from you but from him. For example, the values that appear in the world are suddenly his values — values that you can never get in a position to see.

For Sartre, it is 'the look' of the Other that starts the inevitable conflict associated with all social relations; via 'the look' of the Other I experience a sense of alienation from myself as 'the look' is objectifying reducing me to a being-in-itself rather than a for-itself containing a fixed nature and ascribing character traits which are out of my control, in turn threatening my freedom. In an attempt to avoid this sense of alienation, I defend myself by endeavoring to objectify the Other in return, hence retaining my freedom and denying his ability to characterize me. However, in doing so this behavior alienates the Other further leading him to categorize me again in one way or another and so the subject-object cycle begins again.

'Everything which may be said of me in my relations with the Other applies to him as well. While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the Other, the Other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the Other, the Other seeks to enslave me.'

Sartre's foundation for this is borrowed from Hegel's parable of the "Master and Slave" which conveys the tale regarding two self-consciousness (in effect human beings) who each seek recognition and

status in the world. Thus, when meeting the two immediately enter into a fight to the death with each trying to overcome the Other to assert their existence; one consciousness threatens the Other's view of himself as free and independent. However, the paradox is that the death of the other would ultimately eradicate the only witness of that proof therefore the victor allows the loser to live to adopt the role of the master, and the loser becomes the slave; one consciousness exists mediated through another consciousness. Via this dialectic process, both learn that selfhood is a complex of independence and dependency that mere individual existence cannot account for; there can be no master without a slave and no slave without a master. Therefore, it is apparent that all relationships are in effect paradoxical as one cannot live with others but at the same time cannot live without them either, however, relationships are extremely important as they hold the key to fully understanding our being in the world.

Many philosophers and scientists criticize Sartre's account of the Look. They are of the view that Sartre failed to answer the question of how the being-for-itself is related to being in itself. There is no intermediary ground between the two.

Prof. Balram Singh, a scientist, and a scholar thinks that "However, that makes them look nervous, uncertain, and pleading. If one is all that is there, if one is sure of oneself, there is no reason to say it in another way. Another way of saying perhaps tries to capture all those consciousnesses being who may have expressed themselves or may do in the future. That absorption of otherness takes away freedom. We don't exist without others. The only way to accept it with full freedom is to acknowledge ALL, which is infinite".<sup>16</sup>

In an attempt to define concrete relations, Sartre discusses the concept of love, which is built upon the foundation of human existence (for itself) lacking an identity and nature (being-in-itself). In the project of love, my goal is to achieve a totality of being (for-itself-in-itself) through the use of another, which may as a result offer some temporary relief from existential nausea associated with this lack and hence, justify my existence. As explained, without the Other I am a pure transcendence, therefore, it is via recruiting 'the look' of the Other as a mediator, the source of self or personal identity is available to me; the Other is the foundation of my being, I seek the Other to define me by

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<sup>16</sup> Singh, Balram, Professor and President at Institute of Advanced Sciences, Dartmouth, MA; Prime Bio, Inc.

assimilating the Other's perspective with my own. And yet for Sartre, this is a futile project destined for failure. Love must fail due to the nature of consciousness and yet it will forever seek it; freedom (being for itself) will always thwart self-knowledge and identity as consciousness desires to know itself but never will.

Sartre conceives love as a merging of two free consciousness, a fusion forming one consciousness. Ultimately, there is no denying that within the world at large, the self and others are inextricably bound together in an inescapable relationship. Furthermore, we as individuals spend a significant amount of time and effort pursuing and cultivating relationships with others. However, if the reality of this fact is inevitable inter-relational conflict, how do we as individuals manage this challenge? For Sartre, the most typical resolution is the adoption of bad faith.

Whereas, I live life from the inside looking out and away from myself (pre-reflective), in contrast, when the Other looks at me I become an object of evaluation for them in their world just like any other object they encounter; as a consequence, I now become aware of myself as an object (self-reflective). In effect, the consciousness which had been acting in a pre-reflective manner now via 'the look' of the Other, views itself as an object fixed in space and time with definable qualities and characteristics. For Sartre, this is a fundamental point in that the Other becomes a mediator between me and myself; without the Other, I cannot escape my own subjective experience and perspective. Hence, for Sartre the Other's look allows me to achieve a sense of objectivity regarding myself. Sartre contests that the self can only be conceived via the existence of others; prior to the existence of others, the concept of the self is meaningless. Through being aware of the Other we in turn become aware of ourselves.

Unlike Hegel, Sartre argues that the encounter with an Other is not a cognition of something in my world because it is not a question of a relation to an object. For Sartre, the crucial point is that the presence of the other transforms my entire world. In this, my relation to the Other is revealed as an ontological state.

Ultimately, there is no denying that within the world at large, the self and others are inextricably bound together in an inescapable relationship. Furthermore, we as individuals spend a significant amount of time and effort pursuing and cultivating relationships with others. However, if the reality of this fact is inevitable inter-relational conflict, how do we as individuals manage this challenge? For Sartre, the most

typical resolution is the adoption of bad faith (knowing the truth and hiding the truth).

However, it shows that the Look of Sartre should be studied within a specific context, situation, and Spatio-temporal framework. The problem with Sartre is that he has never reflected on the conditionality as given by Nagarjuna through the notion of Śūnyatā which will refine the Look and create a better understanding between subject and object.

Sartre's concept of 'look' should be studied in a specific context, situations, and also within a Spatio-temporal framework. The problem with Sartre's subjectivity is that he has not spoken about whether the 'Look' can be good given the possible conditions. We will miss the line if we apply the look in the general sense of the term. The intersubjective element cannot be denied. The state of look also creates a possible ground where one subject can treat others as a subject, then perhaps facticity will become a state of freedom. The look specifies human behavior towards others. The problem of others does not deny the possibility of recognizing others if we make others not as an object but as a subject.



## Neutrality and Pluralism: The Role of Religion in the Public Sphere

Ankita Kushwaha<sup>1u</sup>

### Abstract

Pluralism is a fact of modern societies, and accommodating pluralism is one of the crucial challenges for contemporary societies. There are different views on what consists of a meaningful life. Different religious worldviews have different conceptions of a meaningful life. Those who have a particular worldview want to live their life accordingly. People's conception of the good may create conflicts on how to organize social, political, and economic institutions. Different religious views are different conceptions of a meaningful life, and people want to organize their aspects of life according to them. Therefore, the question of the role of religion in shaping public life becomes vital.

Secularism is a political doctrine that seeks to manage the relationship between the state and religion to maintain religious tolerance and peace. In general, it is associated with the idea of neutrality. But in the Indian context, the state is not solely committed to the principle of neutrality. This paper discusses the role of neutrality in the Indian context. What is the role of religion in the public sphere in the Indian context? Can the neutrality model of secularism resolve the problem of caste and religion-based discrimination and oppression?

**Keywords:** Religion, secularism, pluralism, neutrality, *sarva dharma samabhāva*, tolerance.

### Introduction

Pluralism is a social fact. Every society has groups of people who are different from each in terms of race, religion, caste, gender, etc. People have different core beliefs that constitute their meaning of a good life. These core beliefs sometimes may conflict with other beliefs. Those who are in power may claim supremacy of a particular belief over others and can also use it to gain or sustain the power. Therefore, it is assumed that there is a need to regulate the relationship between power and belief.

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Secularism, as a political doctrine, deals with the relationship between religion and power. Many non-western societies attempt to borrow secular principles to deal with the problem of state and religious conflicts. Many scholars have rightly observed that secularism is a product of a specific historical and political context; hence, one should be careful in applying it to other contexts where there are no such historical and political experiences exist. “What North Americans and the British now call secular government emerged from a series of debates about religious freedom and toleration, which reached their climax in seventeenth-century England.”<sup>2</sup> The debate on religious toleration and separation of religion from civil society emerged from dealing with approximately 30 years of religious wars. These wars are known as the Wars of Reformation. The Reformation challenged the Catholic Church’s authority and led to religious wars. Persecution on charges of heresy became very frequent. Thinkers like Bayle, Spinoza, Locke, etc., started contemplating how to maintain peace and harmony in a plural society. Thus, the question of religious freedom, separation of religion from the state, and tolerance became crucial in Western societies.

In France, political power was interlinked with dogmatic Roman Catholic institutions. So, the monarchy and church were targeted during the French Revolution. The revolutionaries aimed to realize the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Freedom of religion is one of the rights. French secularism maintains that the state and religion must be separated. Neither religion should have authority over the functioning of the political institution nor the state should interfere in religious matters. Maclure and Taylor observe that “the French law on *laïcité* established the separation of church and state while decreeing freedom of worship for every citizen... separation and neutrality aimed to ensure the equality of citizens and went hand in hand with the recognition and protection of individual’s freedom of conscience and religion.”<sup>3</sup> French secularism focuses on avoiding religious domination on the state’s institution and protecting individuals’ freedom of religion by separating religion from the public sphere. *Ankita Kushwaha*

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<sup>2</sup> Perry, John, “Anglo-American Secular Government” *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Maclure, Jocelyn, and Taylor, Charles. *Secularism and Freedom of Conscience*. USA: Harvard University Press, 2011, p. 22.

On the other hand, American Secularism does not concentrate much on separation, yet it values the idea of freedom of conscience or religious freedom. It accepts the neutrality model of secularism. “US secularism is expressed more as a guarantee of freedom of religion than as a civic identity to replace religious affiliation. Separation of church and state is simply the mechanism by which that freedom is secured.”<sup>4</sup> It asserts that people can have different conceptions of the good, and subjects should be free to live according to the same. By separating religion and polity, the state ensures freedom of religion.

The discussion on the relationship between religion and politics started during the independence struggle in India. The crucial challenge was making a just and peaceful society by removing religious and caste-based discrimination and violence. Secularism in India as a political principle aims to deal with this challenge. However, when secularism is adopted in the Indian context, it departs from the general notion of state-religion separation. It takes a new meaning because many thinkers argue that religion is integral to Indians’ life and cannot be privatized or limited. For instance, Gandhi argues that religion cannot be separated from politics. Therefore, despite limiting religion, the state must respect all religions equally. The respect should be non-preferential. Nehru’s secularism is sometimes translated as *dharma nirapekṣatā*, i.e., neutrality towards religion. Thinkers like Bhargava and Chandhoke criticize the neutrality model. They argue that tolerance is not the only end of secularism. The primary purpose is to make a just society, so secularism is a multi-value doctrine.

However, critics like Nandy and Madan argue secularism is an outcome of modernity and a colonial mindset. Nandy maintains that secularism in India is futile as it can neither remove religion from politics nor maintain religious tolerance. It also tends to be based on religion as ideology and is less concerned about how religion as faith can be harmonious. Moreover, he argues that in a traditional state like India, communalism can be tackled with the conventional idea of religious tolerance because, for him, India, traditionally, has been a land of religious harmony and tolerance. Thus, he supports the active assertion of religion in the polity.

Madan also maintains that Indian secularism must be rethought. For him, secularization and secularism have a necessary relation. He

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<sup>4</sup> Copson, Andrew. *Secularism: A Very Short Introduction*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2019, p. 29.

also reminds us that there is an essential relation between secularization and Protestant Christianity as it allows a distinction between secular and religious. In his analysis, “the privatization of religion, through the assumption by the individual of the responsibility for his or her salvation without the intervention of the Church, is very much a late Christian idea.”<sup>5</sup> Contrary to this, South Asian religions, he claims, do not allow such bifurcation; therefore, secularization cannot occur. He proposes that social conditions in Europe are different from South Asia. The marginalization of religion is neither required nor possible in a multireligious country like India.<sup>6</sup> He also argues that a language cannot be translated into a different language because people’s experiences shape the meanings. Therefore, he also claims that secularism will be useless as people’s experiences differ. He suggests that there is an urgent need to rethink what secularism means in South Asia.

Therefore, it becomes essential to rethink the following question: what is the suitable role of religion in the Indian polity? Is the neutrality model appropriate for it? What are some serious objections to the neutrality model? Is secularism’s alternative model fruitful in the Indian context? How should the state interact with religion and vice versa? The paper is divided into three parts. First, I will discuss Locke, Rawls, and Charles Taylor’s position on the state and religion relation and the development of secularism’s neutrality model in the West. Second, I will discuss some problems with the model in the Indian context. At last, I will discuss whether an alternative model is suitable.

### **Locke, Rawls, and Taylor on the Role of Religion in the Public Sphere**

The debate on the relationship between the state and religion can be traced back to John Locke. Locke’s support for separating the two spheres was a solution for ending the holy war and maintaining a peaceful society. He admits that different sects of religions have to find a way to live together. He argues against religious persecution by the state and holds the idea of religious tolerance. His distinction between secular and sacred is based on Christian theology that maintains the two aspects of individuals’ life, transcendental and profane. Locke also

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<sup>5</sup> Madan, T. N. “Secularism in Its Place.” *The Journal of Asian Studies*, vol. 46, no. 4, [Cambridge University Press, Association for Asian Studies], 1987, pp. 747–59, p. 753. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2057100>.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 757.

holds that there are two aspects of human life: to fulfil civil interests like health, liberty, property, etc., and to fulfil sacred interests such as attaining salvation. Only the former comes into the domain of the magistrate. It is not the government's job to help the people achieve religious goals "because the care of souls is not committed to the civil magistrate, any more than to other men. It is not committed unto him, I say, by God; because it appears not that God has ever given any such authority to one man over another as to compel anyone to his religion."<sup>7</sup> The state should not force religion on its subjects but tolerate other religions.

Moreover, Locke's argument for separation aims to argue against religious persecution by the state and favors religious tolerance. He holds the state must tolerate different religious beliefs and practices. He maintains that there is a need for distinction between secular and sacred; religion should be kept aside from the civil interest and rights of the people.

Locke seeks "the possibility of state autonomy from all sectaries."<sup>8</sup> State autonomy is related to the idea of state neutrality. The state should not have control over religious institutions, nor would religious institutions influence or control the functions of the state and vice versa. Further, Locke (2010) asks some critical questions on whether coercion and persecution are valid means for the salvation of the people. Is forcing somebody to have faith in something that s/he does not believe acceptable? And, who has given the authority to the state to do so? Religious tolerance, for Locke, is essential for preserving justice, equality, civil interests, and goods.<sup>9</sup>

However, Locke also put a limitation on toleration based on his religious (Christian) conceptions of good. He argues for tolerating other concepts of God or religion but maintains that Catholicism and atheism are intolerable. Catholicism, for him, is a problematic religious view as it challenges authority; hence, it is intolerable. In contrast, those who deny the existence of God should not be tolerated because he says, "The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides also, those that by their Atheism undermine and destroy all religions, can have no pretense of religion whereupon to challenge the Privilege

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<sup>7</sup> Locke, John, A Letter Concerning Tolerance, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Berlinerblau, Jacques, "Political Secularism" The Oxford Handbook of Secularism, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> Locke, John, A Letter Concerning Tolerance, p. 10.

of a Toleration.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, Locke’s argument of religious tolerance does not prioritize the idea of religious freedom primarily; rather, it is derived from a certain kind of religious conception where atheism and Catholicism are intolerable. His concept of separating political laws and goals from that of the religious is also taken from Christianity. Hence, he seems to favor one religion over others and does not maintain the principle of neutrality.

Similarly, Rawls discusses religion’s role in the context of modern democratic states. Rawls’s *Political Liberalism* aims to deal with the problem of accommodating diverse, comprehensive doctrines in a modern democratic state. Schoelndt and Gerald rightly point out, “Rawls’s political liberalism was not simply a new approach to political theory, but part of the wider rethinking of the relation of moral and social theory.”<sup>11</sup> Rawls maintains that the political institution of a just society should not rest on any religious or philosophical worldview. The state should not favor any particular comprehensive doctrine, religious or philosophical. He says that justifications for any political policy should be based on public reason. Public reason does not solely rest upon comprehensive doctrines but also incorporates other important values such as freedom and equality. People will use their reason under the “veil of ignorance” and subscribe to principles of justice. For Rawls, the veil of ignorance is a hypothetical situation where the agent is ignorant about her social status and future life plan. In such a situation, Rawls insists, she will choose general political values like freedom and equality. Thus, he holds people should keep aside their conception of the good in making public policies. He acknowledges a diversity of conflicting comprehensive doctrines may lead to instability. To resolve it, he uses the idea of “overlapping consensus,” which holds that people in terms of common interests support political values over their comprehensive doctrines. It should not provide any preferential treatment to any conception of the good. “In short, the state should be *neutral regarding competing conceptions of the good.*”<sup>12</sup>

Political liberalism assumes that, for political purposes, a plurality of reasonable yet incompatible comprehensive doctrines is the

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>11</sup> Schoelndt, Chad Van and Gaus, Gerald, “John Rawls’s Political Liberalism,” p. 286.

<sup>12</sup> Perry, John, “Anglo-American Secular Government” *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism*, p. 12.

normal result of the exercise of human reason within the framework of free institutions of a democratic constitutional regime. Political liberalism also supposes that a reasonable comprehensive doctrine does not reject the essentials of a democratic regime. Of course, a society may also contain unreasonable and irrational, even mad comprehensive doctrines. In their case, the problem is to contain them so that they do not undermine the unity and justice of society.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, Rawls insists that political liberalism accommodates different reasonable religious or philosophical conceptions about living a good life. These conceptions may be incompatible with political values, yet they accept them. People are rational and reasonable; they will agree with essential political values.

Additionally, Charles Taylor (2011) advocates that secularism is the state's neutrality toward religious and non-religious worldviews in a democratic state with religious diversity. He proposes the redefinition of the term to tackle the problems that arise in diverse democratic societies. He argues that for a legitimate sovereign state, there must be a common identity of the citizens. A redefinition of secularism plays a vital role in building a common identity and mutual trust. He holds that the earlier definitions of secularism as the separation of church and state are no longer relevant in modern plural democracies because it puts religion as its opponent. It aims to make such institutional arrangements to keep faith away from public places. It shows a resentment toward religious symbols and practices that leads to insecurities among minority religions.

Whereas Taylor (2011) maintains that secularism is not rival to religion. To clarify it, he makes a distinction between secularism and secularization. Secularism is a political doctrine, whereas secularization is a social process that attempts to transform people's minds. Secularization aims to decrease religious beliefs and practices, but secularism has not had such an objective. Therefore, he maintains that one can be a secularist without being secularized. It means that adopting the doctrine of secularism secularization is not required. Hence, Taylor redefines secularism as state neutrality and equality of respect for religious and non-religious/philosophical viewpoints. For him, secularism is a secondary doctrine adopted to achieve three primary goals of the French Revolution, i.e., liberty, equality, and fraternity.

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<sup>13</sup> Rawls, John. *Political Liberalism*. 2nd ed., United States of America: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. xvi.

Thus, his model does not put religion on its opposite side; instead, it aims to fulfil these fundamental goals.

Furthermore, Taylor's Secularism attempts to a peaceful and harmonious accommodation of diverse communities. It aims to build a sense of mutual trust and security among the various groups so that no one feels marginalized. The earlier definition of secularism cannot complete the task because it aims to marginalize religious worldviews into the private sphere. Many religious communities do not share the idea, as separating state from religion he argues, is derived from Christianity. So non-Christian minorities might feel left out if secularism as the marginalization of religion is adopted. He suggests that whatever norms a society adopts are derived from the values of the majority culture or religion.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, a secular state must not send the message to the migrated minorities that their views on how a society must be organized are not welcome as it is different from the majority. Hence Taylor advocates for the neutral model of secularism that does not end up prioritizing secular worldview over religious worldview.

The limit of Taylor's neutrality model (along with Indian models) is that it cannot deal with inter-religious and intra-religious conflicts in a heterogeneous society where each group or community needs a different solution for its problem. For instance, untouchability and other caste-based discriminations have religious foundations. They sometimes lead to greater violence and injustice towards a particular group. Here, the neutrality model cannot help in dealing with caste-based intra-religious conflicts. State intervention is needed and justified in such a case. As temple entry to a Dalit can be denied in the name of religion, it does not allow him/her to exercise the freedom of religion. Hence, Taylor's neutrality model is not sufficient in India as it assures some groups' religious liberty but not for all.

Through state neutrality and equality of respect, Taylor attempts to build mutual trust among various groups of a plural society but is the model competent in doing so? The conditions of many minority communities are so vulnerable that being neutral does not cultivate mutual trust. Some communities are more socially backward and discriminated against based on their practices and views. The different

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<sup>14</sup> Taylor Charles. "Why We Need a Radical Redefinition of Secularism." *The Power of Religion in the Public Sphere*, edited by Jonathan Van Antwerpen and Eduardo Mendieta, 3-57, New York: Columbia University Press, 2011, pp. 3-57, p. 48.

conditions of these groups demand different treatments. If the state provides equal treatment to every community, their problems remain unresolved, and their conditions would not improve.

### **Gandhi on the Role of Religion in Polity**

Gandhi was a very harsh critic of modernity. He was a traditionalist but supported secularism. He tries to define it in his way. But many of his critics accuse him to be a pseudo-secularist or anti-secularists as he believes that religion cannot be separated from the public sphere. Additionally, he has very firm faith in the Hindu religious value system as the basis of an ideal society. He calls an ideal society a *Rama Rajya*. As *Rama Rajya* is itself related to the Hindu religion, religion plays a very important role here. So, it is crucial to ask what would be the role of religion in Gandhi's *Rama Rajya*. Is his ideal state secular?

To answer the above questions, let us understand what Gandhi means by *Rama Rajya*. According to Gandhi, it is 'the rule of the God'. God, for him, is the one and only; he does not talk about any specific God believed by any particular religion. Moreover, he also says that those who do not believe in God can understand the *Rama Rajya* as 'the rule of the Truth,' for him, there is no duality between the two. Gandhi's idea of *Rama Rajya* tries to show that a society based on traditional norms can have modern values like freedom and equality. He asserts:

*It can be religiously translated as Kingdom of God on Earth; politically translated it is perfect democracy in which inequalities based on possession and non-possession, colour, race, creed or sex vanish; in it, land and state belong to the people, justice is prompt, perfect and cheap and, therefore, there is freedom of worship, speech and the Press - all this because of the reign of the self-imposed law of moral restraint. Such a State must be based on Truth and nonviolence and must consist of prosperous, happy and self-contained villages and village communities.<sup>15</sup>*

Ram Rajya, according to Gandhi, is a secular and democratic state in nature that is based on the idea of Truth and non-violence where

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<sup>15</sup> The Hindu, 12.6.1, quoted in Chandra, Bipan, "Gandhi, Secularism, and Communalism", *Social Scientist Vol. 32*, pp. 3-29, pp. 14-15.



freedom and equality can be realized. As Gandhi believes in attaining *pure svaraj* (complete freedom) for attaining the Truth and vice versa, a secular state is necessary where every individual can practice his/her religion because religion is the way to attain God and God is the truth. Therefore, in Gandhi's thought religion is a very important aspect of an individual's life.

Gandhi's idea of religion as an essential aspect of one's life is necessary to understand. By religion, he does not mean Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc., or any other sectarian beliefs. Instead, he refers to the values these different belief systems hold. "In asserting that politics should be based on religion, he meant that it should have a moral foundation in dharma or a code of conduct or, usually for Gandhiji, in Truth and non-violence, and not in religion in the denominational or sectarian form or terms of sectional or sectarian beliefs."<sup>16</sup> For Gandhi, religion refers to the common morality, which itself is based on the idea of Truth and non-violence. He, further, holds that as the different religions are nothing but the different paths to reach the same goal, the Truth, therefore, all religions should be treated equally. So, his idea of secularism is based on the notion of '*Sarva Dharma Sambhava*' which means equal treatment to all religions. For him, the state should not marginalize religion but maintain equal treatment and respect for all religions. Treating equally assumes neutrality in the sense that state interference would be prohibited in religious matters. But religion would still play an important role in deciding what values a state may adopt, as for Gandhi religion is the source of moral values.

Hence, Gandhi's Secularism is not a complete separation of religion and state. He maintains that political actions must be guided by morality, thus, they should not be separated from one's religion. Hence, Gandhi asserts, "Yes, I still hold the view that I cannot conceive politics as divorced from religion. Indeed, religion should pervade every one of our actions. Here religion does not mean sectarianism. It means a belief in the ordered moral government of the universe... This religion transcends Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc."<sup>17</sup> Gandhi tries to

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Gandhi, M.K., Harijan, 10.2.40, in Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol. 71, pp. 177-8.  
[https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg\\_volume\\_thumbview/NzE%3D#page/212/mode/2up](https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/cwmg_volume_thumbview/NzE%3D#page/212/mode/2up).

conceptualize religion in terms of morality. He wants to go beyond the sectarian notion of religion.

*Ram-rajya*, for Gandhi, is also the well-ordered moral government of God though it is not a religious state. Because no matter which religious belief the citizens of the *Rama Rajya* hold, it is their nation, and they belong to it. One may ask if this is the case for why Gandhi calls his ideal state a *Rama Rajya*. For Gandhi, it is *Rama Rajya* because he is a Hindu, belongs to the Vaiṣṇava sect of Hinduism, and believes in Lord Rama, so a just society, for him, is the rule of Rama. Likewise, for a Muslim, it could also be a rule of Allah. Similarly, it could be a rule of the Truth for an atheist. Hence, Gandhi's idea of *Rama Rajya* does not contradict his idea of secularism. People with different beliefs can translate it accordingly. Gandhi's *Rama Rajya* is the conception of a secular state where people of different beliefs can live together and can assert and practice their different conceptions of good and the state would not interfere with it.

The problem with Gandhi's Secularism is that it can never deal with the oppressive nature of the religion as it rests on the idea of equal respect. The equal treatment model assumes homogeneity of status among various religious communities. It neglects the fact that all religious groups are not equal. Also, the members of the status of different religions are not the same. Some religious groups are more dominant and end up oppressing others. Hence, equal treatment or respect cannot be justified in a diverse society like India.

### **Principled Distance**

In "The Distinctness of Indian Secularism," Rajeev Bhargava replies to some of the important criticisms of secularism. He argues that the notion of secularism is contextual. According to contextual secularism, the form and content of secularism can vary from context to context. It contains contextual moral reasoning based on distinct historical experiences. Thus, unlike the neutrality model, it recognizes the conflict among various values of a diverse group and tries to accommodate them. A democratic state upholds multiple values; secularism as a value helps the democratic state to realize other values. "Multiple values such as secularism encourage accommodation – not the giving up one value for the sake of another but rather their reconciliation and possible harmonization, i.e., to make each work without changing the basic content of apparently incompatible concepts

and values.”<sup>18</sup> He argues that the contextual secularism model is developed to accommodate diversity in a particular context. The same solution is not valid in every society for maintaining pluralism. Every society has distinct challenges and hence distinct solutions. The crucial challenge for India is to end caste and religion-based oppression and according to Bhargava, Indian secularism is significant for the same.

Hence, Bhargava challenges Nandy and Madan, who maintain that secularism is not relevant in the Indian context as it is formulated to deal with problems in the West. They argue that A western concept cannot be fruitful in dealing with issues in India. Whereas Bhargava stresses that Indian secularism is distinct from the Western conception of it because it is conceptualized to deal with the problems in post-independence India. He sees tolerance as the preliminary value of secularism and maintains that secular ideas live much earlier than their conceptualization. It starts with securing peace and tolerance. But the real development can be seen when the state starts to protect the religious liberty of individuals. He asserts that although traditional secularism is derived from Christianity, it “is a sufficient but not necessary part of the background condition of modern secularism. Modern secularism may be helped by the presence of traditional secularism but it can also be nourished by the other tradition of peace and toleration.”<sup>19</sup> Hence, he holds that secularism can be founded in the Indian tradition of peace and toleration.

According to Bhargava, Indian secularism is distinct from Western secularism. Neither it separates religion from the state completely, nor does remain neutral on oppressive religious practices. Instead, it is rest on the principled distance model. It is an appropriate model to accommodate diverse communities in the Indian context.

“Indian constitution departs from the stereotypical Western model in two ways. First, unlike the strict separation view that renders the state powerless in religious matters, they enjoin the state to interfere in religion. Second, more importantly, by giving power to the state in the affairs of one religion, they necessitate a departure from strict neutrality or equidistance.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Bhargava, Rajeev, “The Distinctness of Indian Secularism.” *Indian Political Theory: A Reader*, edited by Aakash Singh and Silika Mohapatra, New York: Routledge, 2012, p. 112.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

Thus, for Bhargava, secularism does not mean strict non-interference or mutual exclusion, or neutrality towards religions. Rather it is, as the Indian constitution accepts, a principled distance by the state toward religion. It means that the state can interfere in religious practices that undermine fundamental values like justice, equality, liberty, etc. It also means that the state can support or ban some religious practices or institutions if it promotes constitutional values. Therefore, Indian secularism, for Bhargava, is a multi-value doctrine, *i.e.*, it is to fulfil various values like liberty, equality, democracy, peace, etc.

### **Is Religious Tolerance a Suitable Alternative to Secularism in India?**

Scholars like Ashis Nandy, T.N. Madan, and Partha Chatterjee argue that the root cause of the failure of secularism in resolving communalism lies in its very structure. Nandy and Madan maintain that secularism is a product of modernity. Nandy says that being modern is considered the opposite of being religious or traditional. Whereas India is a profoundly religious state, secularism is forced on it as it does not share the idea of separation between religion and state. Likewise, Madan argues that in Western states, secularism is followed by secularization, the social process. Secularization, according to him, marginalizes religion. But as India is a deeply religious state, it should not marginalize religion, he argues. For them, many Indian religions do not share the view that religion and politics can be separated. Therefore, secularism is insignificant in the Indian context. It cannot bring tolerance and peace to India. Rather, they argue that the remedy to deal with religious conflicts and discrimination can be found in Indian traditional values. They hold that there is always a scope for religious tolerance in these traditions. The solution to communal conflicts should be derived from these traditions only, not from some foreign concepts. However, this position ends up glorifying the tradition and neglects to see the inherent intolerance within the tradition itself. Caste hierarchy and the notion of purity are also part of traditional values. They have been one of the major causes of discrimination and injustice in India for many centuries. If we keep glorifying traditional or religious values without critically examining them, the possibility of religious reform internally gets closed. The problem is that these thinkers do assume that the past was very glorious and the problem of religious intolerance was never a major issue in ancient times. But is it so? Caste-based injustices have always

been there. War among various religious sects happened in the past also. So, one can ask whether the recovery of traditional values is enough.

Additionally, the recovery of old values of religious tolerance is not enough for removing communal hatred from people's minds. The aim of a modern democratic state is not just only to maintain religious tolerance and the mere coexistence of different groups. Rather, the purpose is to make a just society and realize the primary goals of constitutional values. Making a foundation on religious or traditional value systems solely may lead to internalizing and glorifying some problematic social norms and practices.

### **Conclusion**

The above discussion shows that the neutrality principle faces various challenges in maintaining pluralism in India. As it aims to equal treatment to all, it disregards the special needs of various oppressed communities. It also assumes that all religious communities hold equal status and neglects the fact that there is a hierarchy within a religious group. The social and economic situations of communities differ; a political principle must acknowledge these differences. If not, it would make already marginalized communities more vulnerable. Precisely, maintaining neutrality is not enough to abolish caste and religion-based intolerance. Therefore, treating religions alike and taking a neutral approach towards religions are not justified in the Indian context.

Additionally, secularism in India must assert something that goes beyond to principle of neutrality and tolerance as it attempts to maintain pluralism and a just society. It admits that oppression occurs within a religious community by its members as well as by members of another community, secularism deals with both kinds of oppression. It attempts to achieve constitutional ideals such as justice, freedom, equality, etc. by fulfilling the particular requirements of marginalized groups. It is compatible with special rights for marginalized groups.



## Michael Bratman: The Notion of Shared Agency in Meshing Sub-plans

Lizashree Hazarika<sup>1v</sup>

### Abstract

This paper focuses on one of the major controversies of collective action i.e., Shared Agency. The objective of my paper is to explain the relevance of shared agency in the theory of collective action where I have dealt with questions like- Is it possible to consider one as the agent or as the same agent when he performs in a shared action? How can we talk of shared agency, even when performed by different individuals in a group? Where is the agency located in a shared action? Based on the paper Shared Intention by Michael Bratman, my goal is to present and analyze the notion of shared agency in terms of meshing sub-plans and the impossibility of reducing the agency displayed in a shared action to the mere summation of intentions of individual agents, where the essence of shared agency lies in cooperation.

**Keywords:** Shared Agency, Michael Bratman, Collective Action.

### Introduction

Discussion on collective intentionality shows two opposite ways— On one hand, the aggregative or summativists account shows the intentions of collective action are the mere summation of individual intentions of the members in the group. The opposite is that there is a kind of super-agent or collective mind over and above individual intentions. The idea of shared intention proposed by Bratman is an alternative to both of these types of explanations. Shared Intention, as he exposes is the state of affairs where the attitudes of the individuals are interrelated in a public domain and so it is neither the summation which explains sharedness and not even a collective entity which is somewhere not in space. But the role of intention is taken in terms of practical reasoning, in terms of planning agency overcoming the traditional view of intention in terms of desire and beliefs. He relates the theory of intention and planning, as he points out that planning is a central feature of human action. He avoids positing a plural agent; rather

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explains collective intention in terms of interrelated individual attitudes with common contents, i.e., shared by the individual participants. I will present Bratman's conception of shared intention and how it applies to understanding shared agency.

The shared agency is explained in terms of creative construction from individual planning agency to a step higher, as a part of an individual's plans. Since we are purposive agents and have both present- and future-directed goals, we can structure and form plans. My paper attempts to expose the structure of human agency: how does the agential claim differ in terms of being an individual and the same individual belonging to the group? This paper is structured into three sections followed by a conclusion: The *first section* deals with the nature of agency, where I have discussed the difference between individual agency and shared agency, here I will try to present Bratman's conception of intention and how he applies it to the case of shared agency. In the *second section*, I will try to situate Bratman's view of shared agency in *view 4* and state reasons for the limitation in the other three views. This section deals with the sufficiency of meshing sub-plans to explain shared agency, here discussion centers on the constitutive element of shared agency. The *third section* deals with the relevance of coordination in explaining shared agency not as something detached from the individual planning agents. Here I have explained the cooperative element present between the agents which can neither be reduced to the summation of the preferences of the members nor something over and above the preferences of the members. In the fourth section, I conclude that shared agency is essential to explain a shared action but it is not what we get as a result but rather what is there because of which we get our shared result.

### **The Nature of Agency**

Agency is the exercise or manifestation of the capacity to act, a form of intentional action<sup>2</sup>, where I am the agent and I can act and reflect on my activity in terms of the free choices I make. My action cannot be determined by something outside, it cannot delimit my agency. In terms of my activity, I am aware of the fact that I am acting and making rational deliberations. Some philosophers have argued that in intentionally acting one fails to understand the agency because sometimes it reduces actions to just mere happenings. For instance: The

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<sup>2</sup> <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/agency>, first published Mon Aug 10, 2015.

class is held regularly, and I intentionally attend it since it happens to be a class. Is the class merely happening or is it what I actively perform? Is there a possibility of understanding shared agency in the midst of acting regularly, in the class, that we all attend it? It becomes suspicious on such an account whether the individuals participating in the group hold their agency or it is just a mere happening or a compulsion. Whether each obtain separate agencies or is it about one agency being shared?

In performing an activity, there is striving, to secure personal goals (of gaining knowledge, or to impress the teacher) but the shared agency is not distributive but a connection we share. Because when one acts one does according to one's will in terms of independency and takes their own decisions but when the situation is of group participation, then where is the agency located? Is it in the individual or is it in sharedness of preferences? When it is said that individual acts in collective action, it is not the case that he is always the locus of a series of happening of causal push and pull. So, the discussion on shared agency becomes much more relevant and interesting.

The central idea in Bratman is that of human agency, which is characterized by two facts- On the one hand, it is a temporally extended agency as our actions spread over time. On the other, we are social agents and our actions are related to other agents.<sup>3</sup> He presents a parallel between the theory of intention in the case of individual action and its view of intentions in shared action. If individual intentions control and coordinate one's agency insofar as it develops in time, a shared intention does the same when we act with other agents. That is to say, shared intention encourages coordination not only between my actions along different phases in time but also between the actions of different agents involved in a shared activity. To talk of action, there is an intention, and we act because we are purposive agents since we have not only present-directed intentions but also future-directed intentions<sup>4</sup>. As we act, we can reflect and control our activity as these play important aspects in understanding agency.

Bratman places his idea of *intention as plan states, where our agency is embedded in planning structures*<sup>5</sup>. The intention is not taken

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<sup>3</sup> Bratman, Michael. E. 1987. *Intention, Plans, and Practical Reason*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Bratman, Michael E. 1999. *Faces of Intention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 5.



to be a state in the mind but in terms of future-directed intentions, where my intention is a state of planning and consistency being maintained from the present time to the extended realm. We do not simply act from moment to moment, instead, we settle on complex and, typically, partial and hierarchically structured-future-directed plans of action, as these play basic roles in support of the organization and coordination of our activities over time. The shared agency is not explained completely in a detached manner from the individual agency or the other way, but he shows the structural construction from the individual to the shared agency.

Intending is being aware of one's attitude and not being estranged from one's self, where one is the source of active participation. As the individual intentional agency is described through the plans, I plan, and as there lies a demand for consistency between the means I take towards the end, the similarly shared agency is explained through the plans we make together and the presence of coordination and cooperation in meshing sub-plans. It is difficult to compartmentalize individual agency and shared agency; they are not on par with each other. Bratman tried to understand shared agency through the participatory intentions of the members of the group and their effect on each other.

#### *Individual Agency and Shared Agency*

In the case of joint activity, the content of the individual intention is the joint goal, Bratman considers that aggregative views of individual intentions are not enough to understand shared agency. He rejects that a shared intention is the sum of coincident individual intentions. Such aggregative views are criticized on the fact that two agents intend to do  $p$  does not guarantee in any way that they intend to do  $p$  together. This requires a certain interrelationship between the intentions of the various agents involved.

In the case of *Individual agency*: When I reflect, I understand myself as the same agent-me-begins develops, and is completely temporally extended and coordinated activities and projects; my agency is, in this sense, temporally extended.<sup>6</sup> It is about how I plan, and maintain consistency in my plans within now and then. I report or

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<sup>6</sup> Bratman Michael E. 2000. Reflection, Planning and Temporally Extended Agency, *The Philosophical Review*, Duke University, Vol. 109, No. 1: pp. 35-61 Accessed: 05-04-2017 17:27 UTC, p. 35.

express my plans for acting. In this case, he says that we report a shared intention, I intend that we j. But in reporting, there is no privilege of one being the authority while the intention is shared. There is a deeper meaning of agency being shared; it is the activity of both the participants and their coordination. The location of shared agency lies in the individuals within their web of attitudes and their interrelations.

*The shared agency* is the understanding of the performance of two or more individuals together in a group<sup>7</sup> where each forms an attitude of mutual support. It is the state of cooperation where one is actively engaged and treating others as co-partners. The shared agency has an inbuilt nature of being cooperative in an action where both commit to a single task and in the presence of the other, where the other is aware of my part of the contribution to the activity. One may say that Shared agency is where each is acting in pursuit of those things, he/she wants or values in part in light of what one believes the other is doing and knows the other's action depends in part on what the other thinks he/she will do. In general interpretation it is seen that in a shared activity, there lies demands for equilibrium and expectations of the outcome depend partially on each other of being obligated and committed. Bratman shows how planning resolves the issue of shared agency, where one has to go beyond this strategic equilibrium<sup>8</sup> and does not view normative relations as essential.

### **The notion of Shared Intention to explain Shared agency**

Bratman posited shared intention in the shared agency, as he said the shared intention is a state of affairs which out in the public, it is not present in the minds of the individuals but is within their interrelation. Similarly, a Shared agency also cannot be taken as a collection of agencies held by each individual within the shared activity. The shared agency is something more fundamental and not easily graspable. Bratman tries to avoid the problem faced by Searle in explaining collective intentionality, where an individual mind has the collectivity which is a primitive phenomenon. He does not explain shared-ness through shared-ness, so he uses examples which are neutral joint-act-types.

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<sup>7</sup> Bratman, Michael E. 1999. *Faces of Intention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 148.

<sup>8</sup> Bratman Michael E, (2014), *Shared Agency: A planning theory of acting together*, USA: Oxford University Press, p. 41.

Bratman proposes to understand the meaning of shared intention as:

1. Individual intentions which make up the shared-ness, are interrelated in a specific way, not that shared-ness itself had shared-ness hidden within.
2. None of the intentions of the individuals involved is in itself a shared intention.

In a shared intentional activity, there lies a shared agency, not several shared agencies of the different individual agents. No individual alone can have a shared intention; it is only through the activity of members; in a group we can form a shared intention. The planning conception of intention allows us to understand that my conception of our doing  $p$  plays a different role in my plans than my conception of my doing  $p$  in the case of individual action. In both cases, we are faced with problems and rational demands of consistency and coherence. When I intend that we do  $x$ , the content of the intention is not under my control that we do  $x$ . To be able to say: I intend that we  $p$ , I need to see your execution of  $p$  in some way affected by me. Bratman wants to show that a set of individual attitudes with certain contents interrelated especially can support the coordination aimed at a common goal– the coordination that characterizes a shared intentional activity. By ensuring the coordination of sub-plans and providing a framework for meshing, he has explained shared agency within the shared intention, where one's reasons for sharing the activity may be different from others in the same group but this does not cause a limitation. Matching Intentions does not guarantee our sharing that intention, because in sharing there is an element of mutual support and interdependence of willingness. There are limitations even in knowing or being aware of each other's intentions but this does not cause any hindrance to shared activity until there is a shared agency. My discussion below shows, how the three views are insufficient in explaining shared agency but later in the *view4* though he has not explained explicitly, he managed to give a tinge of shared agency. But I have tried to expose how Bratman understands meshing sub-plans and the way of regulating it, unfolding the nature of shared agency.

### *Insufficiency of three views*

#### *View 1*

We intend to J if and only if  
I intend that we J and you intend that we J

(Content: Painting the house. Mutual Knowing and Mutual Responding are absent here)

Content matching does not ensure shared agency because one remains unaware of the other's intention, it looks like a command or a necessity to intend  $J$ .  $A$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$ , and  $B$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$ . These intentions matching the content of  $A$  and  $B$ , while necessary, are insufficient to ensure a shared agency. For example, both can have the intention to go from the  $J.N.U$  to  $D.U$ , not knowing that the other also has that intention (private sphere). Hence it can produce a collective action but not a shared one and nor a shared agency can be situated here. Bratman further tries to bring further possibilities:

*View 2*

- 1)  $A$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$ , and
- 2)  $B$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$ .
- 3) 1 is common knowledge.

(Mutual response and knowing are present but mutual support is absent, the possibility of a coercive factor)

This shows that these two conditions do not ensure the presence of a shared intention because there will be no coordination that makes it possible.  $A$  and  $B$  may intend to go together from  $J.N.U$  to  $D.U.$ , even if each of them knows that each intends to kidnap the other. Even if it is mutually known, it does not guarantee cooperation because they do not want to coordinate their actions with the successful execution of the other's intention to direct them to a common goal. Rather they want to hinder the ability of the other to act intentionally and bypass the other's intentional agency. In response to this, Bratman adds further a new possibility:

*View 3*

- 1) *1a)*  $A$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$ , *1b)*  $B$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$ .
- 2)  $A$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$  according to *1a* and *1b*;  $B$  intends that  $A$  and  $B$  do  $x$  according to *1a* and *1b*.
- 3) 1 and 2 are common knowledge

(Presence of different sub-plans because we may have different reasons in intending that shared activity, absence of cooperation)

But so far, these conditions only ensure that every participant has an individual plan in which the intention of each participant to do together  $x$  is effective. But it does not ensure that each participant has the intention that the various sub-plans on how to do  $x$  are jointly

coordinated and consistent. Of course, there is a shared conception of *x*. However, there is no doubt that differences about how to make *x* could prevent the necessary coordination for cooperative action, where the sub-plans can be self-profit. There is a need for the efficacy of intention of each other, where intentions need to be interlocked<sup>9</sup> (It is not that each believes that each has an appropriate intention but here the content of each of intentions of each includes a reference to the role of other's intention. The intention is being partly filled by me and partly by you.)

The shared agency does not itself involve any self-profit but a shared profit. As he says, the shared intention needs to function to unify and organize our intentional agency to support coordinated planning. How will cooperation work within the sub-plans that do not match? There is a need for the execution of shared agency by me and in part by you, through our cooperative activity. Therefore, Bratman introduces a final requirement, where Shared agency can be situated appropriately.

*Situating View 4 in Explaining Shared Agency*

1) *1a*) A intends that A and B do *x*, *1b*) B intends that A and B do *x*.

2) A intends that A and B do *x* according to *1a* and *1b* and the meshing sub-plans of *1a* and *1b*; B intends that A and B do *x* according to *1a* and *1b* by *and because of 1a and 1b* and meshing sub-plans of *1a* and *1b*.

3) 1 and 2 are common knowledge<sup>10</sup>

(Presence of cooperation in terms of negotiating)

*View 4* is taken to be the heart of share agency, it is normally taken that there is essentially structured obligations or non-conditional commitment among co-participants to explain shared agency. One may object that I can only talk of my agency, how is it possible to talk of shared agency, it is beyond my grasp but this itself is not a great objection. It is possible to talk of your agency when I see that you are effectively participating in a shared activity and are mutually supportive of what I am doing, in a way we are both trying to achieve what we have as a goal. Bratman gives a model to show how the shared agency can be formed. This is not by matching sub-plans but by meshing sub-plans.

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<sup>9</sup> Bratman, Michael. E. 1993. Shared Intention, In *Ethics*, Vol. 104, No.1: pp. 97–113. University of Chicago Press, p. 104.

<sup>10</sup> Bratman, Michael. E. 1993. Shared Intention, In *Ethics*, Vol. 104, No.1: pp. 97–113. University of Chicago Press, pp.103-107.

Because when I and you have a place in a shared activity, there has to be proper planning and coordination in the planning, to coordinate there have to be negotiations.

It is not necessary to say that A and B come to have a shared intention that they have already their sub-plans fully coordinated in the manner. But part of this will happen after having a shared intention. In fact, we can be involved in negotiations on how to do  $x$  as we begin to do  $x$ . It is in this latter case that we continue bargaining showing having already the shared intention. And each participant is willing to adjust the plans accordingly. The sub-plans can mesh when these sub-plans may be co-realizable (successfully executed). His *view 4* meshing sub-plans succeeds in situating shared agency because it tries to place agency even with differing preferences for the shared goal.

### **Meshing sub-plans**

Now the question may arise what are meshing sub-plans and why is the meshing significant to explain Shared agency?

Meshing means cooperating, and this cooperation is attitudinal where both individuals are motivated to share the act. This way sharing may not be expressive and neither may be inexpressive but it can be expressive-inexpressive. When one shares an act, he is not imposed by and neither is carried away by the other by explaining the profits of the acting. But in sharing one subsumes his self-profit intention to a larger whole not before acting but in the process of acting. It becomes impossible to argue that one acts only when the other believes that he will act in the same manner as the other will. Because there can be cases where only in the process of acting it, I realized that we have the shared intention and we are willing to compromise anything to achieve that shared goal. So, there lies a shared agency in willing to give up the self-profited goals for a larger spectrum. Meshing hereby means very willing to compromise within the shared act. It is a kind of negotiating that is both expressive and inexpressive in different ways. There may be cases where I and my roommate share the intention of cleaning the room together. In the process of acting my roommate asks me what I would like to start with sweeping or swapping. I said let's divide the work- you do the sweeping and I do the swapping, here there is a motivating factor of cleaning the room in whichever way it is possible. Meshing seems to explain that even I am about to sweep but this does not mean that I only must get the broom and hers to bring the bucket. But Meshing is a kind of engagement in the shared activity with its fullness where one is

willing to adjust one's plans accordingly for the other member. There is no level of hierarchy in the thought of the participants where each is the partner of the other in that shared activity. This highlights that meshing sub-plans explains the significant aspect of shared agency which is explained in the section below.

*Sufficiency of meshing sub-plans*

The shared agency is an interrelated attitude and not something as an aggregation or individuation but a common attitude where there is mutual coordination of both parties. It is not formed out of a sudden but it can be appreciated in terms of the extended activity, there is a need for coherency between means and end. For instance: our shared intention of painting the room shows that there lies a shared agency in terms of our coordination and negotiation of our sub-plans. Shared agency constitutes – mutual responsiveness and support, constant deliberation on those plans, mutual interdependence, and negotiations.<sup>11</sup> The intention of sharing an activity builds a holistic impression of me being a part of the goal and you being a part of the same goal and each treating the other as a co-participant. The aim of shared activity lies in sharing the goal and also sharing the plans to effectively achieve that goal of painting the house. Bratman holds that having shared intentions does not necessitate us to have the same goals and to know our sub-plans. It permits differences in the reasons why we intend to do *x*, and accordingly with this, it also permits differences in bargaining power between agents.

In addition, sub-plans on how to do *x* do not have to be completely consistent; they only have to be coordinated. This shows that there is a rational pressure in meshing sub-plans where my reasons for in participating painting the house may be different from yours but still, it can be shared intention to paint together with adjusting our sub-plans of how to proceed in the work. Supporting the other's execution of its part of *x* is a matter of rationality, not necessarily a matter of meeting a moral standard according to which we must keep our promises. It is not the case that commitment to the obligations explains the nature of shared agency but it is only in the process of engaging in our plans, it becomes co-realizable. This suggests that in a shared activity, each agent does not only intend the group to act, even with the sub-plans but one has the idea

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<sup>11</sup> Bratman, Michael. E. 1999. *Faces of Intention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 94.

of meshing plans with the other. This meshing should be in the content of the individual's intention<sup>12</sup> because we have to maintain a commitment to our meshing. The willingness to structure plans accordingly where my part is explained by you and your part by me. Suppose our sub-plans happen to be agreed on red. We may still ask how I will dispose of it to act as if you were unexpected to announce a preference for blue. It may be the case that I may force you to plan according to me, but in that case, there is no shared agency, though one may jointly perform.

The shared agency is constructed within the coordination of plans between the participants where I am aware of the relevant intention of yours and at the same time, I know that you are aware of mine. But this awareness does not seem to guarantee us at the beginning of the shared intention but as time passes by and the shared agency is formed. In terms of cooperating, I will try to be responsive to yours and you will try to be responsive to mine, not only in pursuit of a shared goal but also see the other as co-participants. Bratman is not talking about sharing one plan because it is commonsensical to think that different individuals will have different plans. There is no guarantee of matching sub-plans but needs to mesh those plans. In trying to mesh, one is aware of the preliminary steps to be taken to achieve the shared goal and the aspect of coherence between means and end, i.e., negotiations. This idea of meshing sub-plans of Bratman can secure healthy relationships in social understanding. Because acting in a shared activity, can bring along the idea of mutually supporting each other and in this manner exercise shared agency. Both have to intend to mesh sub-plans, to adjust with each other in acting together.

### **Conclusion**

Bratman delivers a functional approach to the shared agency in terms of how the shared agency operates in terms of shared activity. He outlays the relevance of cooperative elements between the co-intentional agents where both intend to mesh the sub-plans. The shared agency is important for understanding our sociality and how we are related to each other. Understanding of shared agency can lead to a larger dimension of pursuing common interests with proper negotiations for better development. The shared agency is not to be taken as

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<sup>12</sup> Bratman, Michael. E. 1999. *Faces of Intention*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 100.



something present before cooperation or something over and above cooperation. The shared agency is the constant construction in terms of our both actively participating in a shared goal. But sharing a goal does not itself define shared agency, rather shared agency is an attitude we hold in sharing an activity. One has to hold the willingness to cooperate in the activity we share, and there is an implicit structure of rational pressure of not acting out of compulsion. Bratman has taken a constructive approach in trying to give a framework of meshing sub-plans to explicate shared intention. I have observed that his theory tries to locate the agency to a shared understanding, but this shared ness cannot be grasped out of a sudden. Shared agency is a kind of growth, which extends in time, not like a state of mind but it is in the public domain of interrelated attitudes.



## Existentialism as a Philosophy of Human Existence

Manglam Keshav<sup>1E</sup>

### Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to see existentialism as a philosophy of human existence where the concrete existence of the individual is given precedence rather than a man in general. Existentialism as a philosophy considers “*individuality as supreme and attempts to reach the inmost core of human existence in a concrete and individual fashion*”<sup>2</sup>. And it is this concrete existence of the individual which happens to be the entry point while encountering the world of experience or the other. The importance of existence as being before essence is being articulated and a critique on the rationalists’ conception of essence being prior to existence is being made. The paper suspends the questions concerning universal or objective value (say, the essence of man) rather the existential questions concerning freedom, choice, responsibility, and authenticity which are central to human existence are made into account. The problem with concrete human existence, especially the varied aspects of existence in different moments of hope, despair, anxiety or faith, the meaning of the concrete lived experience of an individual without any isolation of social, political or cultural contexts been emphasized in the paper. In the end, the practical approach of existentialism in addressing the varied emotions and predicament of concrete human existence is being appraised and an argument in favor of existentialism is being made by criticizing the counter viewpoints which treat existentialism as nihilistic and pessimistic.

**Keywords:** Essence, Existence, Freedom, Choice, Facticity, Authenticity, Anxiety.

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<sup>2</sup> Javid A. Mallah, “Historical Roots and Basic Themes of Existential Philosophy: An Analysis. In Pune Research World: An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies. (Vol. 1, Issue 2. August, 2016), pp. 1-2.

## Introduction

Existentialism as a philosophical movement came out as a protest against the dominant rationalistic and idealistic traditions of the prevalent time which overemphasized the universal essential aspects of human existence and ignored the concrete, finite situatedness of human beings. The foregrounding of existentialism as a philosophy of human existence can be seen in the Socratic dictum, 'know thyself' where it is important to know oneself because it is by knowing oneself one can be aware of his existence and can define his life. Existentialism as a school of philosophy became popular in twentieth-century philosophy when people were undergoing the upsets and uncertainties of two world wars. The concrete, individual existence of human beings which has been trivialized by the then-dominating rationalistic schools, was a matter of celebration for Existential Philosophy. Broadly, there are two main strands of existentialism, namely, the theistic and atheistic where the former strands have philosophers like Buber, Kierkegaard and Gabriel Marcel and they accept man's relationship with God as an important philosophical problem and while the later strands include philosophers like Nietzsche, Sartre and Heidegger who do not accept God's existence.

The traditional conception of philosophy as a rational exercise, as an analysis of concepts and universalization of ideas was challenged by the notion of Existence which happens to be a new mode of philosophizing in the existentialist tradition. The attempt of prioritizing the essence over existence, making the existence of the individual enveloped in some universal rationality was solely attacked by Existentialists. And with existence as a new mode of philosophizing, the conditions of human existence, the problem encountered by concrete human beings, and their struggles, conflicts, and traumas in life, was given supreme importance in Existentialism. Instead of subsuming the individuality of human beings in any grand narrative, the living reality or the concrete existence of human beings has been given special recognition. This individual existence happens to be the entry point to the world of experiences through which one tries to understand the other. As William Barret puts it, "*Existentialism is the philosophy that confronts a human situation in its totality, to ask what the basic conditions of human existence are and how a man can establish his meaning out of this condition.*"<sup>3</sup> The individual concrete sense of

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<sup>3</sup> William Barret, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Random House, 1962), p. 43.

existence is given due importance and nothing as invariant, impersonal or a prior essence is given precedence over existence.

For existentialism, humans first exist and then they shape their essences by the choices they make. Thus, for existentialism, it is the existence which precedes essence where human beings are free to make choices, become responsible for their actions and posit their subjective values. Human beings define meaning to their own life, their existence and also to the world around them in their subjectivity coping with the challenging concepts of life like freedom, responsibility, facticity, authenticity or anxiety.

### **Human Existence as the Subject of Existential Philosophy**

The central feature of existentialism is that it is the philosophy of the subject rather than of the object. Here human existence stood itself as the subject and philosophizing begins from man rather than nature. Existentialism, *“as a type of philosophizing endeavors to analyze the basic structures of human existence and calls individuals to an awareness of their existence in its essential freedom.”*<sup>4</sup> According to existentialism, what is distinctive about a human being is not that he is an instance of any timeless essence or subject of his circumstances rather he is characterized by a unique manner of existence. Existence is always understood as something concrete, particularly in terms of ‘here and now’ i.e., in space and time and it is through this first point of encounter of existence as ‘here and now’, one tries to comprehend the other. This existence stands as the entry point to the world of knowledge and understanding. The idea of existence is not derived by logical abstraction but it is the real, concrete, temporal, contingent being of human existence. It stands before any conception of essence or *causa sui* substance rather it is the very bodily existence of an individual which is primordial to everything else.

Existentialist philosophers who consider the nature of the human condition as a key philosophical problem try to address the problem through ontology. They try to know the ontology through existence, through the very investigation of the meaning of being. But this investigation of being does not take place in terms of the ultimate source or something invariantly present in all sources.<sup>5</sup> Neither is this being to

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<sup>4</sup> Bhadra, M. K. (1990): A Critical Survey of Phenomenology and Existentialism, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> The way being understood in pre-Socratic Greek philosophy as through which everything emerges out.

be understood as an intangible and immutable idea of which all particulars are instances,<sup>6</sup> nor it should be understood in terms of causal substances; but this being should be understood in terms of meaning. How we are going to make sense of our existence i.e., giving meaning to ourselves and the world. To understand the world, the nature of existence needs to be understood.

### **Precedence of Existence over Essence**

Although the meaning of one's life lies in the very embodied life of the individual Descartes has conceived mind and body as separate individual substances and emphasized the 'thinking substance' as the essence of mankind. For Descartes the reality of existence is dependent on its essence, i.e., the thinking substance, 'I think therefore I am'. The attempt to prioritize the essence over the existence was not peculiar to only modern philosophy but it has its past foregrounding and prospects also. Within the rationalistic tradition, Plato gave supreme importance to ideas which were the essences of the transient particular existent things. The essence is given predominant superiority over existence in the entire history of philosophy and rationalist thinkers like Hegel make the particular existence absorbed in the absolute idealism. These rationalistic trends tend to subsume the individuality and particularity of existence in the universal totalitarian essences. The entire reality of individual existence perceivable through experience was subdued by rational essences which were mere logical abstractions made common for all.

The entire reality of the particular entities which were downplayed by these rationalistic trends by emphasizing the essence over existence- was questioned by the Existentialist philosophers. As we have seen above that for existentialists a priori, invariable, impersonal conception of reality doesn't matter but what matters for them is the concrete individual existence and that existence becomes the entry point to the world of knowledge and understanding. In the words of A.M. Richie, "By existentialism, one means the philosophical attitude which consists in the clarification and the realization of the significance of existence as such. By existentialism, one means the mode of being which is specific and originally of man, and irreducible to that of any

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<sup>6</sup> The way being was conceived by Plato in his 'theory of ideas'.

other entity, thing, or object subsisting...”.<sup>7</sup> Existentialists have always countered the reductionist approach regarding the nature and essence of man and try to keep the uniqueness of concrete and real existence against any kind of abstraction or absolutism. For it, existence is before essence because man first exists and then creates his essence by exercising his freedom. As Kierkegaard, also says “man acquires essence through existence.” A similar view can find in Blackham’s ‘*Six Existentialist Thinkers*’, where citing Sartre he writes, “...for Sartre, there is no creator of man. Man discovered himself. His existence comes first; he is now in the process of determining his essence. Man, first is, and then he defines himself.”<sup>8</sup> Man, first of all, exists as nothing, then he attempts to fill his nothingness and becomes what he makes for himself. He has no fixed nature or essence, he is becoming and creating his essence by exercising his freedom which he has. He is conceived as “*a free, responsible, aspiring and striving to become*”<sup>9</sup>. It is in this regard, the celebrated dictum of existentialists, ‘existence precedes essence’ (as given by Sartre) is reflected as human beings have no a priori essence that determines their existence.

### **Exposition of Some Existential Concepts**

This precedence of existence over essence is possible through freedom by which an individual can create his essence through his choices and actions. Freedom happens to be the central idea in the entire existential narrative where it not only involves our ability to choose but also to refrain from choosing the given alternative and being responsible for the made choice. It is often considered a compulsory factor and a burden because the human being is free to choose and is bound to face the consequences of that. As Sartre says, “*Man is condemned to be free*”<sup>10</sup> He is condemned to take his own decisions, to choose from the alternatives. Once thrown into this world, he is responsible for every action and reaction. There is no escape from freedom as it is not a property rather it is the structural condition of being human and if we try to escape freedom then we are in “Bad faith”.

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<sup>7</sup> Richie, A. M., “Language, Logic and Existentialism” in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 10, 1950, p. 398.

<sup>8</sup> Blackham H.J. *Six Existentialist Thinkers*”, Macmillan Co., Landon ,1951, p. 18.

<sup>9</sup> Sartre; “Existentialism” *The Philosophical Lib.* New York ,1952, p.18.

<sup>10</sup> Sartre, Jean Paul. *Human freedom* (ed.) W. Baskin, phil. Lib., New York, 1966, p. 40.

Freedom always goes along with choice-making because *the ontological structural meaning of freedom lies in choice making* and choice is the concrete actualization of freedom. Another existential theme of wide importance which comes with freedom and choice-making is ‘responsibility’. Both freedom and choice-making together imply responsibility, i.e., one has to be responsible for the choices he makes. Responsibility comes as derivative from the notion of freedom since one is condemned to make free choices therefore, he must be responsible for what happens to him. Any kind of belief in denial of responsibility is the refusal of our free existence which subsequently leads to bad faith and inauthentic existence. Thus, another concept which comes in close connection with freedom is ‘authenticity’. Authenticity develops as a result of the realization of freedom, responsibility and the individual concrete life. It is to live in a way that is in tune with the truth of who they are as humans and in the world in which they reside. After making a choice we have to become committed to it and it is the commitment where authenticity lies. Being authentic means being true to yourself, your character and your commitment despite external difficulties. According to Sartre, “*Authenticity consists in adopting human reality as one’s own*”.<sup>11</sup>

Another significant concept of existential philosophy which emerges as the corollary of freedom is anxiety. It is the choice and responsibility which brings anxiety into play when an individual while reflecting on his existence is confronted with finding the meaning and purpose to live an authentic life. One’s act of choosing sometimes becomes a source of anguish or anxiety as while making an existential choice there always occurs remorse of not preferring one alternative over the other. These dreadful situations constitute our existence.

Also, there stands another significant concept that existential philosophy addresses is ‘facticity’. It is called ‘givenness’ as a quality or state of being a fact. We have no choice over it as it is *structurally before our choice*. The thrownness of man into his particular existential situation i.e., in the very circumstances in which he is placed, can be understood as facticity. But this givenness is not fixed and confined because man always has the freedom to exercise to transcend life’s givenness. Individuals can transcend the facticity of life with their own choice and ability and reach a world of possibility. *Facticity is partly*

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<sup>11</sup> Thilly, Frank. *A History of Philosophy*, Central Book Depot, Allahabad, 1958, p. 261.

*given and partly there is the possibility of becoming other than what is given, with the exercise of freedom and choice-making.* However, the most important aspect of human existence which is inevitable is “Death”. As Sartre calls it, ‘the impossibility of all possibilities’ which no one can transcend or escape from. It is the reason an individual’s existence is permeated by dread, anxiety and fear and one has to be prepared to face dread, anguish, and fear resolutely.

### **Emphasis on Existential Problems**

One can see existentialism as emphasizing nearly all the aspects as well as the distinctive qualities of an individual’s existence. It conceives human beings not as the ‘thinking subject’ but as the ‘existent subject’ who feels, wills, loves, hates and calls him to face the problems and realize the possibilities of his existence as a ‘concrete individual’. With a special emphasis on individuality, *it explicitly deals with the existential situation and the problems faced by the individual like, angst, dread, anxiety and anguish about concrete human existence.* It empowers an individual to see his finitude on one hand and freedom on the other. The various aspects of human life in the moments of finitude, hope, fear, anxiety, despair, death etc.-, the problems of concrete human existence which were never discussed in traditional philosophy, were brought into attention in the existential philosophy. By focusing attention on the concrete individual, existentialism tries to isolate the concrete human being from all those factors that connect him to the totalitarian absolutist narrative where specific individuality is subsumed.

Although one can criticize existential philosophy as pessimistic, a narrative of autobiographical anxiety, filled with despair, sorrow and loneliness, it is not such pessimistic because it deals with the genuine problems of concrete existence, tries to search better future for man and prescribes responsibilities to each man. The problem of individual existence, which is sidelined by all traditional philosophies, has been taken into account. In this sense, it is a ‘practical philosophy’ making individuals free from all illusions. Individual freedom and uniqueness which are subjugated in essentialism, have been given supreme importance in existentialism. As Mary Warnock herself says, that “The common interest which unites the existentialist philosophers is the



interest in human freedom”<sup>12</sup> and this is the reason why she characterizes existentialism as a committed and practical philosophy.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we can see existentialism as a philosophy of human existence, which has its foregrounding in the Socratic dictum, “know thyself”, which attempts to see the basic conditions of human existence and the way a human can make meaning out of this condition. Without reducing the individuality of man into any overarching grand narrative, it explicitly deals with the existential situation of the individual and addresses the problems faced by an individual in various aspects of life. Here human existence stands itself as the subject and philosophizing begins from man rather than nature. According to existentialism, what is distinctive about a human being is not that he is an instance of any timeless essence or subject of his circumstances rather he is characterized by a unique manner of existence. Most importantly, instead of emphasizing an individual as mere thinking subject, it conceives them as the ‘existent subject’ who feels, wills, loves, hates and calls him to face the problems and realize the possibilities of his existence as a ‘concrete individual’. Indeed, as a practical philosophy, it considers the existential questions concerning freedom, choice, responsibility, and authenticity which are central to human existence and searches for better prospects and future.



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<sup>12</sup> Warnock, Mary. *Existentialism*, Oxford University Press: London, pp. 1-2.

## Investigating the Pure-Consciousness with a Special Reference to the Linguistic Analysis of Bhartrhari

Rajnee Devi<sup>1±</sup>

### Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to do a conceptual analysis of the notion of pure consciousness. It mainly deals with the notion of pure consciousness as discussed by Bhartrhari in his *Vākyapadīya* specifically in *Brahmakāṇḍa*. Further, it also elaborates on how the notion of reflecting inwards or moving towards the origin (or the pure consciousness) in *Vākyapadīya* different from the notion of pure consciousness held by Western philosophers. Bhartrhari deals with the supremacy of the word principle which contains all powers in it but is it feasible to reflect on this word principle and become conscious of it? To analyze this the paper is divided into three sections: the first section deals with Bhartrhari's *Śabda* which is the *Śabda-tattva* and everything that comes out of it. The second section discusses language, thought and consciousness, and the third section analyzes the notion of pure consciousness in Bhartrhari's *Vākyapadīya* in the East and phenomenologist's account in the West.

**Keywords:** Pure-consciousness, *Śabda-tattva*, reflect, *Vākyapadīya*

### Introduction

This present paper is an effort to understand the linguistic element in Indian philosophy, which is discussed by Bhartrhari in his *Vākyapadīya* or *Trikāṇḍī* as it is divided into three *kāṇḍas*. The first is *Brahmakāṇḍa* the second is *Vākyakāṇḍa* and the third is *Prakirnakakāṇḍa*. Bhartrhari's *Vākyapadīya* is a thought-provoking work. It is one of the foundational texts in the Indian grammatical tradition which is based on the Sanskrit grammar and linguistic philosophy. In Sanskrit, 'sentence' means *Vākya* and 'word' means *pada*. So, the *Vākyapadīya* means the relation between the sentence-word. The theories discussed in *Vākyapadīya* brought out of *Mahābhāṣya*. As it is the introductory work on *Mahābhāṣya* of

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*Patanjali*. Generally, language consists the letters, words and sentences i.e., *varnavāda*, *padavāda* and *vakyavāda*. In Indian philosophy, other thinkers like Mīmāṃsakās and Naiyāikas have also presented their opinion on the speech principle.

In Mīmāṃsakas, we can see that a sentence is just a collection of words and a word is a collection of letters thus, it is the letter them which is primary. However, on the other hand, the Naiyāikas maintain that the word is primary and also the letters which are used to form a word and their sequence or order are also equally important. Since “isolated sound-atoms cannot individually present the meaning”<sup>2</sup>, thus, it should have a proper order like ‘SILENT’ and ‘LISTEN these both have the same letters but have different meanings and it happened because of the arrangement of letters. Bhartṛhari unlike the other Indian philosophers gives more preference to the term *vākya*. He maintains that the sentence is indivisible and it is the primary unit in language. *Vākya* is that expression which lies inside every individual.

In *Vākya-padīya*, he was looking for that common source from which the expression arises, the expression here refers to “the expression of human speech and the expression of nature as well”<sup>3</sup>. As many points out that Bhartṛhari is a Grammarian. But he is not a grammarian in the sense that he has given a specific theory of language like the Western philosophers rather he is a grammarian in the sense that he did a reflective inquiry into our use of meaningful expressions. In this reflective inquiry, one reflects from the outer universe towards the inner principle of knowing. It is that inner consciousness which is the ‘*vidyā eva*’ or ‘knowledge in itself’<sup>4</sup>(as presented in the verse given below) in which its truth may be explained. As he presented in the verse;

“*satya vizuddhis tatro 'kta vidyai 'vai 'ka-pada-'gama  
yukta pranava-rupena sarva-vada 'virodhina*”<sup>5</sup> (stanza  
1.9)

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<sup>2</sup> Matilal, B. K. *The Word and The World: India's Contribution to the Study of Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 80.

<sup>3</sup> “Language and science- Bhartṛhari Questioning”, p. 1.  
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/3cd1/10d6b340d330f11f65dbde09c81586c1f8e5.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Subrahmanyam, K. *The Vakyapadiyam of Bhartṛhari Brahmakanda*. Sri Satguru Publication, 1992, p. 7.

As it is explained that it is the origin which is the ultimate truth where there is no additional particle mixed up with the truth. In the Western tradition, some philosophers deal with the concept of pure consciousness and also make claims related to pre-reflective consciousness which is there even before the consciousness. So, we can see the thinking about the language and the consciousness in the Eastern and Western accounts.

Now the questions which may arise here and which I shall investigate in this paper are -

- How does this process of reflection take place in Bhartṛhari's linguistic analysis?
- How does the notion of reflecting inwards or moving towards the origin (or the pure consciousness) in *Vākyapadīya* different from the notion of pure consciousness held by Western philosophers?
- If it is the consciousness which reflects through language then is it possible to reflect on our consciousness through language? If it is possible then, in that case, the consciousness on which we are reflecting is the same as that of pure consciousness about which Bhartṛhari wants us to reflect or is it something which is of a higher level which contains all the truths in it?

To develop a better understanding of the notion of pure consciousness. We need to move forward and need to investigate the notion of pure consciousness discussed by Bhartṛhari in detail.

### **Bhartṛhari's Language and Origin of the World.**

Bhartṛhari gives importance to the language so much so that he believes it is a "*śabda - tattva*" which is the form of Brahman i.e., "the unity manifested as many"<sup>6</sup> from which the world originates which for many philosophers looks similar to the Vedantin's Brahman. Bhartṛhari used the term "*śabda brahma*" means it is the 'word', which is the supreme reality and all-powerful. Hence, the *śabda-tattva* which is identical to Brahman is the *śabda-brahman* which ultimately is the creator of all things. It is the basic principle through which one is aware

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

of the consciousness as well as the external objects of the world. Bhartṛhari conceives the whole reality as one. Reality is the 'word' from which all the other things in the world are manifested. So, the world is not the reality rather it is the appearance (*vivarta*) of the *śabda-tattva* which is identical to the ultimate reality i.e., Brahman. This is the central theme of the *Vākyapadīya*.

According to him, the concept of existence in the empirical world appears as plural but they are bound by a common essence which is the *śabda-tattva*, the language principle. In *Vākyapadīya* he asserts the identification of *śabda-tattva* which is the word principle with the *brahman*, the absolute reality. *Brahman* is the ultimate reality which has no beginning and no end (*anādi nidhanam*). It is the cause of the existence of everything else. It is the *brahman* which is the essence of *śabda* and it got transformed itself into speech.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, speech, according to him, is a verbal expression of our thoughts. Even the thoughts that one has requires language. As Matilal states that *Śabdāna*, "language" is, thinking; and thought vibrates through language.<sup>8</sup> He thinks it is a kind of activity or a "vibration of consciousness"<sup>9</sup>.

In the external world, there are expressive sounds which are of two types. In (VP I-45) it is stated, "In the words which are expressive the learned to discern two elements: one is the cause of the real world, the other is used to convey the meaning."<sup>10</sup> Here, out of the two elements mentioned in the verse, one is cause and the other is an explicit expression which acts as a necessary part mainly in the process of verbal communication. It can also be understood as 1) *Vaikhary*; the sounds produced by the movement of organs like tongue, mouth etc. and 2) *Madhayamāśabda* is the eternal Śabda which is in the mind. It is the *sphota śabda*.<sup>11</sup> The one which is the illuminator and present in the mind generates a force to produce an effect in the form of the uttered word which is illuminated.

It can be further understood with the *śabda* and *nāda* distinction.<sup>12</sup> *Sphota śabda* in reality is the whole, indivisible and

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<sup>7</sup> Iyer, K. A. Subramania. The Vakyapadiya of Bhartṛhari with the Vritti. Poona: Deccan College Post Graduate Research Institute, 1965, p. 1. V-I.

<sup>8</sup> Matilal 1990. p. 85.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>10</sup> Iyer 1965. p. 52. V I-45.

<sup>11</sup> Subrahmanyam, K. The Vakyapadiyam of Bhartṛhari Brahmakanda. Sri Satguru Publication, 1992, p. 30. Verse 44-45.

<sup>12</sup> Iyer 1965. p. 54, V-48.

without sequence. It is the substratum. In the process of communication, the expressive explicit words are mere sound expressions of *sphotaśabda*<sup>13</sup> which is the unity. On the other hand, *nāda* is the effect of the appearance of a word or sphota, which is the “sequential utterances of sound elements.”<sup>14</sup> It is this occurrence of sound elements that reveals the *sphota* of the speaker. Apart from the speaker in the communication process, there is also a listener. All those who are listening to the expressive sounds can grasp them only when they have a prior understanding of the *sphotas* in their mind. The listener’s prior awareness of the meaning of sphota is a necessary condition to complete the verbal communication process. Since the prior awareness of meaning by the listener is the cause of nada or sequential utterance.<sup>15</sup>

As that of Bharṭhari, similar thoughts seem in Noam Chomsky’s theory of “universal grammar”<sup>16</sup> according to which all human language has a way to ask a question, affirm something, negate something, etc. There is a basic structure in all human languages. Though in this paper our aim is not to go in-depth with the language principle but to analyze Bharṭhari’s concept of pure consciousness in Indian philosophy and see different views from the West on the notion of pure consciousness. So far, it seems that Bharṭhari’s ‘word’ has a much deeper meaning as compared to the meaning that Western linguistic philosophers tried to put forward. However, in Western linguistic philosophy, there appears no place for metaphysics. According to Ashok Aklujkar, Bharṭhari put forth two versions of creating one is the strong version and the other is weaker. As per this strong version ‘everything including the physical things originated from Brahman’<sup>17</sup>. The cause of everything present in the lived world is Brahman.

So, in the present section, we have found that Bharṭhari begins his *Vākyapadīya* with the first verse where he has mentioned that the world comes out of *Śabda*. Here one may say that what if there is no

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<sup>13</sup> Bharṭhari has discussed the sphota theory in his *Vākyapadīya* mainly in verses 44-49 75 77 81 93, 97, 102, 103, 106.

<sup>14</sup> Matilal, B. K. *The Word and The World: India’s Contribution to the Study of Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 86.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 86.

<sup>16</sup> Chomsky, Noam. "Language and Problems of Knowledge." *Revista Internacional de Filosofia*, 1997, pp. 5-33.

<sup>17</sup> Aklujkar, Ashok. "The Word is The World: Non-Dualism in the Indian Philosophy of Language." *Philosophy East and West*, 2001: 452-473, pp. 461-462.

language in the world? But the main argument that Bharṭṛhari tries to put forward is that it is a language which is the most fundamental system. If there is no language in the world then people may express themselves through some gestures or maybe through some other means but that also contains the language of one or a different kind, which leads to a ‘communication’ among humans and because of which people can understand what other is expressing. Let’s have a look at Bharṭṛhari’s first verse where he marked “word” as primordial;

*anādi-nidhanam brahma śabda-tattvam yad akṣaram |  
vivartate r̥tha-bhāvena, prakriyā jagato yataḥ ||<sup>18</sup>*

अनादिनिधनं ब्रह्म शब्दतत्त्वं यदक्षरम् ।

विवर्ततेऽर्थभावेन प्रक्रिया जगतो यतः ॥ 19

Bharṭṛhari maintains that it is the Brahman only from which the world comes. The world that appears to us is the *śabda-tattva* Brahman. He attributes the world to the Brahman, to the language. It is one reality but appears as many in an explicit form.

Language, Thought and Consciousness

Since, a word is primordial so, without language or *śabda*, it appears impossible to think. When one thinks about something like ‘this is a notebook’ here with the help of words, one can frame his/her thoughts. Not even just this but with the help of these words which are connected to make a sentence and the meaning that the sentence bears, helps to express the inner feeling or what Bharṭṛhari calls the expression of consciousness. Thus, it is the language or *śabda* which plays an important role in human thinking. Ashok Aklujkar while discussing the pivotal role of *śabda* or language in framing thoughts, writes that “The thought infused with linguistic signs that is postulated as an entity preceding an utterance cannot come into existence unless the linguistic signs are stored, metaphorically speaking, in a deeper layer of our mind.”<sup>20</sup> It means that words are stored somewhere deep in our mind where there contains the ultimate truth that no one can deny. Here, the question may arise how do we come to know about that inner principle?

To deal with such problems, we need to understand this with our experiential dimension. When one experiences something like if you

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 462.

<sup>19</sup> Subrahmanyam 1992. p. 2.

<sup>20</sup> Aklujkar 2001. p. 458.

experience a coffee mug and if you reflect on that particular experience, it directs us towards our inner mental state, which is the one having that particular experience. While experiencing the outer mundane world we are conscious of everything that we experience but to be self-conscious we need to reflect on our inner mental states. However, a question may arise here, whether the consciousness arises along with the experiences or is it there beyond the experiences. It may further lead to another problem related to the inexperienced state. As Bhartṛhari says that consciousness is the one “which each individual may find underlying beyond our experiences.”<sup>21</sup> Thus, it is that which is present as a truth stored in the background.

Consciousness is of two types: 1) object consciousness and 2) self-consciousness. To deal with the notion of pure consciousness we will specifically take into account self-consciousness. According to the Western philosophers, talking about the reflection which guides one towards the inner consciousness it is said: “When consciousness directing its ‘gaze’ at itself, taking itself as its object, and thus becoming aware of itself, is commonly known as the ‘reflection theory of self-awareness’.”<sup>22</sup> It seems that when one reflects on the consciousness then the consciousness becomes the object of experience as this same view is also propounded by Brentano. Although, taking a dual object of consciousness and not talking about the subject who is conscious of these two stages is criticized by Husserl as it gives rise to “Internal Infinity”<sup>23</sup>. As one mental state will need another mental state to take the first as an object of enquiry and the second again need another object and so on.

Bhartṛhari, however, is not dealing with such consciousness on which we can easily reflect like this and which becomes the object. As in the act of reflection, one needs another higher-order mental state which can reflect on the lower one. Therefore, Bhartṛhari rather than arguing for reflective consciousness takes a metaphysical approach and argues for the pure-consciousness. It is the ‘pure consciousness which is the source of objective expressions.’<sup>24</sup> By pure means that which is not in the spatial-temporal realm along with other entities. It is the supreme Brahman who holds all the multiplicity of power.

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<sup>21</sup> Language and Science-Bhartṛhari questioning p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Zahavi 1998. p. 21.

<sup>23</sup> Zahavi 2006. p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Language and Science: Bhartṛhari Questioning p. 4.



### The Concept of Pure-Consciousness in East and West

When we have experience of something it can be expressed through words. The experiences keep changing so do the words and language, but the knowledge that we gain from the experiences is unchangeable. As Bhartṛhari writes ‘it is the knowledge that continues underneath, as the supporting background of our changing and differing experiences’<sup>25</sup>. It is the knowledge which contains truth. Bhartṛhari talks about the power of words as he writes “*śābdanam eva sa śaktis*” in his *Vritti*.<sup>26</sup> He calls it the living power which expresses consciousness through feelings, thoughts and actions. These expressions appear in the form of words or language only. Now one may say that an action is something which is performed by our physical body and in performing an action one is not using any word or *śabda*. But the point which needs to be made clear here is that the action which one performs needs some language so the person who is performing that action knows what that action indicates and also it helps others to understand, what that particular person wants to tell. When we reflect on the expression it directs us again back to inner consciousness. So, it is a circular process of reflecting and expressing what took place because of language.

While explaining the process of communication Bhartṛhari maintains that a linguistic expression which exists in the human mind as speech potentials (*śabdabija*) have 3 three stages; The three stages are expressed in *vritti* VP. I-142. as ‘This Science of Grammar is the supreme and wonderful source of the knowledge of the threefold word, comprising many paths, of the *Vaikhari* (the Elaborated), the *Madhyama* (The Middle One) and the *Pasyantī* (the Seeing One).’<sup>27</sup>

These could appear as a distinction between body, mind and consciousness. The first means ‘elaborated’ it refers to the bodies which articulate the objective expressions of the bodies. The second means ‘mediating’ the mediator in the act of experience is the mind and the third one is ‘seeing’ it is the seeing of pure consciousness lying in the unaffected background. This pure seeing is associated with the pure being. It is the essence which is present everywhere. The light which illuminates all.

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> Iyer, K. A. Subramania. *The Vakyapadiya of Bhartṛhari with the Vritti*. Poona: Deccan College Post Graduate Research Institute, 1965, p. 125.

This pure seeing directs us towards some phenomenologists like Heidegger's *Dasein* which is the authentic being the one who illuminates everything else. Also, Sartre claims that there is a 'pre-reflective consciousness'. It is the stage prior to consciousness. According to Sartre, "Pre-reflective consciousness has no egological structure. As long as we are absorbed in the experience, *living* it, no ego will appear."<sup>28</sup> It means that it is such a state which is beyond human thinking or reflection and if we go beyond our reflection, we have self-awareness in every experiential act but are not aware of it in a reflective way. So, it is something which is there without becoming aware of it. If we become aware of it, it will no longer remain in the unthematic plane and becomes reflective. To know something means to thematize it and frame it in word sentences but the pre-reflective awareness is the *minimal*<sup>29</sup> form of awareness that cannot be thematized as it is indescribable like the Brahman. It is the tacit form of awareness which comes immediately before reflective self-awareness. In *pre-reflective self-awareness*, one does not attend to the different phases of experiences rather, one *lives through* them, and reflection attends to what is present in conscious experience.<sup>30</sup>

Similarly, it can be seen in Aklujkar's "Word and the World" that "The word 'Word' can cover a particular sound (i.e., a particular sound sequence) and the anchor of that sound in the mind. Words are not lost when the sounds vanish. Most of them are preserved somewhere in us for significant lengths of time"<sup>31</sup>. When we talk about the spoken word it contains sound and it is not the word which ceases to exist when the sound ceases rather the place is somewhere deep inside the consciousness. It seems that the words are present in our mental state whether we utter them or not, whether we reflect on them or not, they are there in a pre-reflective form.

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<sup>28</sup> Zahavi, Dan. (Ed.). 2000. Exploring the Self: Philosophical and Psychopathological Perspective on Self-experience. John Benjamins Publishing Company. Amsterdam-Philadelphia. pp. 55-74, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> For more details see, Zahavi, Dan. "Two Takes on a One-Level Account of Consciousness." *Psyche*, 2006: 1-9. The term minimal is used by Dan Zahavi which refers to the awareness which is there in all living experiences but cannot be talked about.

<sup>30</sup> Russell, Matheson. *Husserl: A Guide For The Perplexed*. Ashford Colour Press Ltd, Gosport, Hampshire. 2006, p. 139.

<sup>31</sup> Aklujkar, Ashok. "The Word is The World: Non-Dualism in the Indian Philosophy of Language." *Philosophy East and West*, 2001: 452-473, p. 458.

Furthermore, the notion of pure consciousness is dealt with by the major phenomenologist of Western tradition like Husserl. By 1910, Husserl argues for the phenomenologically reduced ego, in contrast to the empirical ego. He introduced the method of *Phenomenological reduction or epoche*<sup>32</sup> to bracket worldly beliefs and prejudices to reach pure consciousness. This pure ego is the supreme ego from which everything else comes into existence. It is the *transcendence in immanence*.<sup>33</sup> However, the notion of the pure ego of Husserl received criticism for being abstract and isolated which cannot be a part of the experiential world. As a part of the experiential world, we cannot rely on something abstract.

On the other hand, Bhartṛhari considers the word as the origin of everything else even God as well. But phenomenologists deal with this pre-reflective consciousness in the form of the presence of a minimal form of self in every act of experience does not talk about the pre-reflective as a pure or abstract notion in the long run. Therefore, we can see that each tradition believes that there is something superior to us or beyond our thematization which is there holding the power even without revealing itself directly to us although these traditions are dealing with this notion of pure consciousness in a different way.

Bhartṛhari presents language as the base because of which we know the world. He maintains that the absolute word is absolute Brahman or reality and it is consciousness but one may raise a question here how can something which is the pure-consciousness and unchanged or the essence make the changes happen in the world? To this, we may say that the words which are used in a particular context may change their meaning when used in different contexts but they also have a foundation, that pure one which itself remains unchanged and can grasp experiences that we have. The consciousness about which he is talking seems different to that of the Western tradition. As in the Western tradition generally, philosophers deal with the notion of self and consciousness Dan Zahavi claims that it is the minimal self which is present in its minimalistic form in all of our experiences and it is already there in the pre-reflective sense. It may appear that phenomenologists are dealing with the experiences that we as an

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<sup>32</sup> Lawhead 2002, p. 530.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Gurwitsch, Aron. "A non-egological conception of consciousness." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1940: 325-338, p. 327. As Gurwitsch quotes from Husserl's *Mediation's Cartesians*.

existent being can experience in our first-person perspective but Bhartṛhari appears to include various experiences and he is including the metaphysical notions to understand pure consciousness. Each of these traditions deals with the concept of this ultimate reality in a very different way. We may find some similarities at some point but these both have presented their views in different perspectives. So, it would not be plausible to say that they both are completely different on the one hand and that they are similar on the other.

### Conclusion

This is concluded from the above-presented paper that the concept of word or language as the foundation of the world which in itself is the pure consciousness as what Bhartṛhari is talking about, seems a little heavier compared to the concept of this pure consciousness presented by the philosophers of western tradition. It has been understood that the phenomenologist may have put forward the claim that when we reflect on our consciousness which is having the experience then it may become the object of experience but even if we accept this. Then, for such a consciousness we again need a higher level of consciousness through which we can reflect on the previous one. In such a case may arise the problem of infinite regress. Although the other notion of pre-reflective self-awareness seems convincing to understand pure consciousness. On the other side, Bhartṛhari tries to put forward a concept of pure consciousness which contains unchanged words which is the truest form of knowledge. It appears as if he has presented it in a border way as he is trying to deal with it metaphysically. Also, it seems that Bhartṛhari's *śabda-tattva* includes all various types of experiences from spiritual experiences to mundane world experiences. But western phenomenologists may not include spiritual experiences. However, both tradition deals with this notion in a very different sense as the Westerners are dealing with consciousness in a more conventional and very natural way and which may cover limited boundaries and Bhartṛhari appears as trying to put it infinitely, dealing with a kind of spiritualistic sense. Here, spiritualistic means the way where we are trying to connect with the world in a form of power or force. Bhartṛhari trying to connect the word or *śabda* as a pure consciousness which is the supreme, the Brahman.



## Understanding 'What is': Krishnamurti's Etymological Art

Kanchan Gogate<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Krishnamurti's etymological articulation is not confined to referring to the dictionary meanings of the words but he goes to the genesis of a term. The intent of the paper is neither to interpret Krishnamurti nor to convey what he meant. However, the possibility of misconstrued meaning cannot be ruled out if a listener is not attentive. For instance, what Krishnamurti meant by meditation is utterly different from a general perception of meditation. Though there are no connotations and denotations in a Krishnamurti discourse, there are underlying tones that are subtler. Understanding the subtlety of Krishnamurti's import comes with an insight into his etymological art and not with the efforts to interpret. Thus, this paper will inquire etymological art of Krishnamurti's language and words.

To begin with, this paper will talk about the need for understanding the peculiarity of the terms that Krishnamurti used. It will also dwell upon Krishnamurti's pointing out towards limitation of words and language. The paper will illustrate the etymological art of Krishnamurti with examples. The sequencing of themes in Krishnamurti's speech is more spontaneous and clinical and never chronological. It will also help us understand the dialogical and conversational tone of Krishnamurti's speeches where he always took listeners along. Bereft of ideological propaganda and persuasion, Krishnamurti discourse can be a catalytic agent for self-inquiry.

**Keywords:** Meaning, Krishnamurti, What-is, Etymological Art.

Krishnamurti minced no words when he used them. Seemingly simple and straight, Krishnamurti's language has peculiar precision and profound perfection. He used language knowing its limitations well. Advising listeners not to get caught with his words, he conveyed his import with exactness. While Krishnamurti's speeches barely contain referencing, quotations, religious and social jargon, he opened up many

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possibilities of ‘a non-metaphoric discourse’.<sup>2</sup> He didn’t use language in the traditional sense. Therefore, words like ‘Freedom’, ‘Awareness’, ‘Meditation’, ‘Love’, ‘Relationships’ or ‘Knowledge’ assume non-conventional implications. Krishnamurti always preferred to go to the source of the word when he used them. To him, ‘freedom’ implied pure freedom, not freedom from something or of something. His emphasis on un-conditioning comes with an insight into ‘what is’. Therefore, this paper tries to illuminate Krishnamurti's etymological articulation, which precisely helped him convey ‘what is.’ He defined intelligence as the ability to perceive what is.

### **When Krishnamurti uses language**

On the limitations of language, Tibetan Buddhist scholar Samdhong Rinpoche observes, ‘Buddha didn’t answer the questions which referred to the absolute... because language is limited. Language knows only alternatives. Beyond alternatives, language cannot comprehend.’<sup>3</sup> He further adds that Krishnamurti is one of those masters who had understood the deceptively of I, me and that image. ‘Krishnamurti described it in modern language. He didn’t use technical or philosophic terms.’<sup>4</sup>

David Skitt, who has edited many Krishnamurti books, underlines the need for readers to get accustomed to Krishnamurti’s language. ‘Though Krishnamurti’s vocabulary is simple, it is by no means easy to understand either on a first or later reading. As he said, “You have to learn my vocabulary, the meaning behind words.”’<sup>5</sup> Krishnamurti was rather well aware of the conditioning associated with language. Each word brings certain associations in its trail. That is what Krishnamurti meant by conditioning. The brain associates words as per its conditioning, earlier experiences and preconceived notions. The word flower may remind us of trees, gardens and colors and may prevent us from ‘seeing’ the actual flower. Krishnamurti was trying to take us to the arena where the import of the word lay beyond subjective linguistic

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<sup>2</sup>John Briggs. *Metaphor, Religion, and the Possibility of Metaphor in Non-Metaphoric Discourse*, "Within the Mind: On J. Krishnamurti (Madras: Krishnamurti Foundation India, 1982, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup>Rinpoche Samdhong and Mendizza Michael, *Always Awakening, Krishnamurti's Insight, Buddha's Realization*, Hay House, 2016, p.46.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* 65.

<sup>5</sup>Skitt David(ed) in the Introduction to *To Be Human*, J Krishnamurti, Shambhala, 2011, Kindle edition, location 210)

associations. Therefore, at the very outset, it is pertinent to know the peculiarity of Krishnamurti's words and language. Using words just as markers, symbols and buoys, he was rather conveying what lay beneath the word. He simply pointed out what is and insisted that we understand what is and not what we perceive something to be. Krishnamurti's discourses are never intended to bestow any new understanding of words or language, nor is he here to build new rhetoric. He is not building a new dogma or a system or a method with words. Instead, he is insisting we raze all tall structures of conditioning that our brain has raised through centuries.

He did not use words and language to philosophize, intellectualize or verbalize. He simply used them as a vehicle to convey 'what is'. Thus, understanding 'what is' may probably happen when we simply stay with what he is pointing out without translating it into our language. Before delving deeper into the etymological art of Krishnamurti, let's first see what he meant by art. The word art may remind us of creativity and aesthetics, but what Krishnamurti implied was something radically different.

*The word art means putting everything into its right place.<sup>6</sup>*

To begin with, he didn't say words are valuable or magical nor did he say words and language are redundant. There is also a subtle distinction between words and language. Words indicate verbalization, the concretization of the non-verbal while language is verbal as well as nonverbal. There is communication with and without words. To him, words and language were a means and not an end in themselves. He asked his listeners/readers not to get caught with his words. Because

*Word is not the thing.<sup>7</sup>*

Putting language and words into their right place, he insisted to check 'whether we use language' or language used us' or 'we drive language or language drives us'. To Krishnamurti, it was important to see that listeners or readers didn't become 'slaves to his words or language.' Nevertheless, he also was aware of the paradox that we have to use words to transcend words. Going a step ahead, Krishnamurti observes that if we use words wisely, knowing their meaning, the right

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<sup>6</sup> The art of listening, seeing, learning and living, Public Talk 4 Ojai, California, USA - 10 April 1977 (Source for all Krishnamurti talks henceforth is <https://jkrishnamurti.org/> accessed on January 28, 2020) .

<sup>7</sup> Is there thinking without the word? Public Discussion 5 Saanen, Switzerland - 01 August 1976.

sense is conveyed. When language is used unemotionally, there is no identification with the word.

The words are important because they convey a certain meaning, ... Either language uses us, or we use language... In realizing that, the slavery to language, but if we know how to use language, the exact meaning of words, the content and the significance of the depth of the word, then we are using language unemotionally, un sentimentally, not identified with a particular word, then we can communicate with each other directly and very simply.<sup>8</sup>

While reading and listening to Krishnamurti, it is essential to note that one must avoid all identifications with words. To him, the right communication demanded the speaker and listener be on the same page. Exact meaning can be conveyed when they are bereft of emotional associations and personal identifications. For example, the very word 'love' may trigger some memories or heartbreaks or even trauma. In this case, there would be no conversation when a listener has psychological content associated with the word love. He talks about referring to the dictionary meaning of the word because it is objective. To him, truth exists independently irrespective of according to someone.

We are using the language unemotionally, language which is pliable, and correct according to the dictionary, so we can both of us communicate with each other very simply and directly... when we use the word unemotionally, the word which hasn't got tremendous psychological content behind it. Can we do this?<sup>9</sup>

His usage of the adjective 'pliable' and the adverb 'unemotionally' is significant. Emotionality to the words may make us lose their meaning. Again, it seems he is making a subtle distinction between meaning and interpretation. Meaning is objective, straight not subject to conditioning while interpretation is a subjective phenomenon. When individuals attach their meaning that becomes interpretation. Krishnamurti was never in favor of interpretation, and neither did he expect listeners and speakers to agree or disagree with him. He didn't encourage anyone to speculate 'what Krishnamurti probably meant'. He rather inspired others to 'discuss, criticize and go into it. .... Tear

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<sup>8</sup> Public Talk 1 Brockwood Park, England - 26 August 1978.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



Krishnamurti book into pieces.... that is not interpretation.’<sup>10</sup> Language is pliable as long as speakers and listeners are controlling it.

The purpose of understanding his etymological art is twofold, clarity in communication and to inquire together into the whole problem of living. To him, the inquiry is important because it doesn’t lead us to conclude. To inquire is to examine, and research to find out and not conclude or infer.

*Without any reaction to the word... we can enquire into this whole problem of our way of living<sup>11</sup>*

Again, with words and language, he implied the conditioning, notions, and ideas which were controlling our lives. The brain cannot function under any pressure and he showed how language acts as a great pressure on us.

*So one of the factors in our life is that language acts as a great pressure on us and therefore distorts not only communication but the clarity of thinking.<sup>12</sup>*

Though Krishnamurti is not a thinker, philosopher, theorist or system-maker, his approach is systematic. He starts his speeches with his definition of art, asking us to give words their right place, not to get into the midst of them. This is implied to go back to the source meaning of the word unemotionally. This etymological art, therefore acts as a theoretical point of departure at the beginning of the speeches. Incidentally, Krishnamurti also brings our attention to the fact we have to use words to describe their limitations as well. Not to forget words are the verbalization of all our conditioning,

*We are using words to describe all this. After all, the word is a symbol to indicate that which has happened or is happening, to communicate or to evoke something... To see this as a whole is to give the word its right place.<sup>13</sup>*

Being free of words becomes important when we want to see what is and the word prevents the actual perception of ‘what is.’ About Krishnamurti’s language, Henry Miller says, ‘This sort of language is naked, revelatory and inspiring. It pierces the clouds of philosophy... and restores the spring of action. There is something about

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<sup>10</sup> Krishnamurti J, A Door Open for Anyone: Krishnamurti on Study Centres, Krishnamurti Foundation of India, 2017, pp 64-65

<sup>11</sup> Public Talk 1 Brockwood Park, England - 26 August 1978

<sup>12</sup> Public Talk 1 Ojai, California, USA - 01 April 1978

<sup>13</sup> Krishnamurti J, The whole movement of life is learning.

Krishnamurti's utterances which makes the reading of the books seem utterly superfluous.<sup>14</sup>

### **Etymological art of Krishnamurti**

We have seen how Krishnamurti defined art as putting things into the right place. Though Krishnamurti was not a linguist or language philosopher, his approach was etymological, which is going back to the source of the word. The dictionary defines etymology as 'an account of the origin and development of a word or word element'. More than referring to the dictionary meaning, Krishnamurti often preferred to go to the genesis of the term. More than agreeing or disagreeing with the dictionary meaning, Krishnamurti's etymological art bestows upon us a new insight into what is'...

As scholar Hillary Rodrigues, points out, "When discussing a particular phenomenon, Krishnamurti often began by the etymology of the word associated with that phenomenon. He pointed out how the etymology was either appropriate or unsuitable."<sup>15</sup> For example, the word meditation comes from the root to measure and actual meditation has nothing to do with measurement. Vedanta, which comes from its Sanskrit root Vid means to know and is defined by Krishnamurti as the end of knowledge.

Is Krishnamurti a philosopher? Stephen Smith, who is associated with Krishnamurti's teachings for years, elaborates it at length. 'Given that Krishnamurti himself used the term in its etymological sense, that is, as one who loves wisdom or truth, it behoves us at this juncture to consider the teachings not only in the light of their 'truth content', but also more generally as to where they have purchased in man's overall reflection upon life and himself'.<sup>16</sup>

To bring attention to 'what is', Krishnamurti pointed out the facts in human life. At the very outset, he expects the listeners to be 'serious' because a certain quality of seriousness is required to inquire into when the whole problem of living. This etymological art starts with going to the genesis of the existing problems and finding out if we have accepted it as a way of living or are willing to change it. Krishnamurti's

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<sup>14</sup> Miller Henry, J Krishnamurti, the Master of Reality, in *The Mind of Krishnamurti*, Luis S R Vas (ed), Jaico Books, 1971, p. 278.

<sup>15</sup> Rodrigues Hillary, *Krishnamurti's Insight*, Pilgrim Publishing, Varanasi, 2001, p. 38

<sup>16</sup> Smith Stephan, J Krishnamurti as a Philosopher, *The Links*, no. 28, 2008-2009 p. 36.

approach is etymological to the whole problem of living. Fundamentally concerned with humanity, the content of Krishnamurti's speeches revolved around the fundamental revolution of man.

Understanding his etymological art, perhaps, may save us from misunderstanding Krishnamurti. As a scholar, Allan W Anderson, who held a series of 18 dialogues with Krishnamurti, explains, 'I have only one claim. Since the last quarter...I have unflaggingly attempted not to misunderstand him...and in claiming (so)...I am using words to express a matter within the sphere of the truth and falsity of existence. This entails existing in what one has understood, and there only being what one is, is true.'<sup>17</sup>

This etymological art should be better illustrated through examples: Conflict, fear, thought, memory, knowledge: Contents of consciousness.

Krishnamurti examines how conflict is the root of psychological problems. While explaining conflict, fear, thought and knowledge, he shows how they are interrelated and how one arises from the other. Psychological becoming leads to conflict. His fundamental concern is why have we accepted conflict as something inevitable. Can there be life without conflict?

*Conflict is a very destructive thing, inwardly as well as outwardly; and I want to find out if there is a way of living without being in conflict.*<sup>18</sup>

The ending of conflict is essential because conflict kills sensitivity, intensity and passion. The mind in conflict is incapable of finding out the unknown. When Krishnamurti was invited to the United Nations, he pointed out our attention to the very fact that conflict begins with individuals and families and finally reaches the global level. When individuals conflict with themselves, how could we talk of peace?<sup>19</sup> Therefore, conflict is the beginning point to identifying the problems. He doesn't define conflict, simply points out the fact that it exists wherever there is division. And how is thought responsible for conflict?

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<sup>17</sup> Anderson Allan W, *On Krishnamurti's Teaching*, Karina Library Press, Kindle edition, location 475.

<sup>18</sup> Why are we in such conflict? Public Talk 3 Saanen, Switzerland - 30 July 1961.

<sup>19</sup> Why can't man live peacefully on the earth? Public Talk New York, USA - 11 April 1985.

*Thought is the response of memory, the past. When thought acts it is this past which is acting as memory, as experience, as knowledge, as an opportunity*<sup>20</sup>

He observes that the thought is the root cause of the conflict and it brings division. Defining thought as a response to memory helps us in giving thought its right place. He quickly correlates it to knowledge. He goes to the Sanskrit and English roots of the word knowledge means to know.

*The known is the past, therefore knowledge is the past. Knowledge cannot be in the present. I can use knowledge in the present.*<sup>21</sup>

Krishnamurti hints at knowledge as an accumulation of experience. Something in the past and which involves time. He doesn't deny that technological evolution and progress are the result of human knowledge. It is the knowledge that has made scientific progress and invented computers. He doesn't say knowledge is unnecessary. Knowledge and memory are required in day-to-day functioning. But with his astute etymological art, he asks, what is the place of knowledge? Here he comes to the limits of knowledge. Is there any psychological revolution at all and what is the role of knowledge in the transformation of man?

Krishnamurti has given considerable attention to the problem of fear. Instead of giving a definition of fear or going to the root of it, he rather explains how fear is the basis of everything. What he talks about is the 'fact of fear.'<sup>22</sup> To Krishnamurti, it requires a great deal of inquiry to understand the subtleties of fear because 'fear is an idea, abstraction, actuality as well as reality.'<sup>23</sup> He doesn't isolate fear of a particular type. Rather he calls all the suffering, anxiety, nervousness, and sorrow that is all fear. He said fear is time.

*You may not be afraid of anything now, sitting here, but, in your consciousness, there is fear - in the unconscious or*

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<sup>20</sup>Krishnamurti J, Ending Thought. Urgency of Change.

<sup>21</sup>Knowledge and Transformation of Man, *Wholly Different Way of Living*, Gollancz 1991, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup>What is the fact of fear? Dialogue 2 Brockwood Park, England - 05 October 1984.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

*the conscious. There is this terrible thing called anxiety, pain, grief, suffering and fear.* <sup>24</sup>

Conflict, knowledge, memory and thought, which involve psychological time, are the basis of the problems of human life. The brain or mind trapped in them cannot function to the optimum. To Krishnamurti, they are the contents of consciousness. He defined consciousness as its content. The brain keeps on recording. Freedom from them probably can make us attentive to investigating the problem of living.

When knowledge is given immense importance in the world, Krishnamurti questions it. 'Epistemologically, Krishnamurti takes an approach, which is novel and fresh... Why has he rejected conventional methods and grounds needs to be properly assessed, says a scholar in her paper 'Epistemology of Krishnamurti'.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Krishnamurti's words are pointers, are they not? As Rinpoche notes, 'Krishnamurti reminds us again and again that the word is not the thing... what he is pointing out is the state which is not communicable in words.'<sup>26</sup>

#### **Key terms of Krishnamurti:**

Given the expanse and volume of Krishnamurti's speeches and other writings, it will not be possible to deal with key terms he used but we can see a few of them to illustrate his etymological art.

**Time:** Time is chronological and psychological, outward and inward. Chronological is a clock time, day, night, today, tomorrow, or time taken to learn a skill, language, or knowledge. Psychological time is all becoming. Mind slave to time is incapable of inquiring or being aware.<sup>27</sup>

**Death:** There is a dying and therefore a living when time, space and distance are understood in terms of the unknown. Dying moment to moment is necessary to be born new.<sup>28</sup>

**Action:** The verb 'to act' means to do, and to do means the movement in the Present. Action can only be when there is only the acting, not; I have acted or will act.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Time, action and fear, 4<sup>th</sup> Public talk Saanen July 20 1975.

<sup>25</sup> Sardesai Arundhati, *Epistemology of Krishnamurti*, 456.  
<http://www.unipune.ac.in/snc/cssh/ipq/english/IPO/2125%20volumes/23%2003%20&%2004/PDF/23-3&4-9.pdf>

<sup>26</sup>Always Awakening, p. 97.

<sup>27</sup>Death and Time, 9<sup>th</sup> Public Talk, England May 21, 1961.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup>What is the Correct Action? 4<sup>th</sup> Public Discussion, Ojai, 13 April 1978.

**Responsibility:** The word responsibility means the ability to respond (to a situation).<sup>30</sup>

**Freedom:** Freedom is the direct perception. 'Freedom from' is an abstraction, but freedom in observing 'what is' and going beyond it is actual freedom.<sup>31</sup>

**Religion:** Religion then is an inquiry and that inquiry has no path.<sup>32</sup>

**Relationship:** Relationship is the mirror in which we see ourselves as we are. All life is a movement in a relationship.<sup>33</sup>

**Love:** Love is not attachment, jealousy and hatred. Freedom is essential for love ... rather than the freedom which comes in the understanding of this whole structure and nature of the centre. Then freedom is love.<sup>34</sup>

**Meditation:** Meditation is the whole of life. That is the beauty of meditation. It is not something set aside; it covers and enters into all our activities, thoughts and feelings.<sup>35</sup>

### **The subtle distinction between shades of words**

He made the subtle distinction between the shades of words. Not only listeners or his audiences but even experts who held dialogues with him approached him with preconceived notions. Discussions flowed with Krishnamurti questioning those basic assumptions. For example, when Krishnamurti asks us why do we get hurt? He is questioning the very idea of I. What is this me? What gets hurt is the image of me. If we stop recording, is it possible not to get hurt at all?

Verbally understanding Krishnamurti is one thing and the actual understanding is another. Krishnamurti may stand at one shore and one trying to understand this whole process on another distant shore. Being troubled by not being able to understand can happen, Ravi Ravindra, one such exponent of Krishnamurti has indeed an honest confession, 'I am troubled because I do not know how to reconcile the call I hear from the distant shore with the realities where I am. A bridge cannot be built from here to there. Can it be built from there to here?'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Wholly Different Way of Living, p. 72.

<sup>31</sup>Second Public Talk, Bombay, 10 February 1971.

<sup>32</sup>What is a religion to you? Small Group Discussion:3, Brockwood Park, October 14, 1984.

<sup>33</sup>The Mirror of Relationship, Public Talk 2 Madras (Chennai), India - 26 December 1982.

<sup>34</sup>Freedom and love, Public Talk 1 New Delhi, India - 19 November 1967.

<sup>35</sup>Public Talk 4 in New York, 28 April 1974.

<sup>36</sup>Ravindra Ravi, *Krishnamurti: Two Birds on One Tree*, Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1995, kindle edition, loc.p. 190.

With subtle distinctions in shades of words, he questioned all we had believed so far. This art has led to a more direct perception. Some classic examples could be:

**i) Truth, reality and actuality:**

He always made it clear that the truth is not a matter of individual perception. There is no your truth and my truth. He always made a distinction between reality, actuality and truth.

Reality was something that is created by thought. The world of reality is the movement of thought and all the things that thought has created. Reality is the construct of thought. The moment we are aware of the actual thing, the Actuality of reality, the relation to reality changes. When we live the reality that is not the truth. Incidentally, he has not defined the word truth. Truth is perceived, not measured by words.<sup>37</sup>

What is the relationship between reality, actuality and truth? Reality is created by the thought and it is psychological. Being aware of the actuality of reality can help us understand what truth is not. In a dialogue with Rahula Walopa and other Buddhist scholars, we can see, Krishnamurti being questioned several times, what is truth? He has brushed it aside till he is making a clear distinction between reality and truth. At last, he comes to the truth, not with words, but in terms of negation, what it is not.

*I can't go to the truth; I can't see the truth. Truth can only exist, can be, or is only when the self is not.*<sup>38</sup>

**ii) Intellect and intelligence:**

To Krishnamurti, everything that was the construct of thought is incapable of perceiving the whole.

Like reality, Krishnamurti calls intellect a product of thought. Intellect is the capacity to perceive, reason, understand, and grasp. Intellect being a product of thought is mechanical and fragmentary. It

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<sup>37</sup>Reality and Truth, 1<sup>st</sup> Public Talk, Saanen, 13 July, 1975.

<sup>38</sup> What is truth, Freedom and love, Public Talk 1 New Delhi, India - 19 November 1967.

<sup>38</sup> Public Talk 4 in New York, 28 April 1974.

<sup>38</sup> Ravindra Ravi, *Krishnamurti: Two Birds on One Tree*, Quest Books, Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1995, kindle edition, Location 190.

<sup>38</sup> Reality and ion with Buddhist scholars, 1, Brookwood Park, 28 June 1979.

cannot perceive the whole because it is acting and uses intellect as a means of understanding. Talking of intelligence, he says that the dictionary says it is the capacity to read between the lines but he wouldn't go into it. He wants to transcend the dictionary meaning and use it in a different sense, not at the level of thought because it is limited. Intelligence is the capacity to see the truth that thought is limited. The capacity to put thought into the right place is intelligence. Attention or awareness can only be when the thought is not operating and that is intelligence. 'So when there is complete attention, with your heart, with your mind, with everything you have - to attend. Then that intelligence begins to operate.'<sup>39</sup>

That intelligence is not individualistic. It cannot be your or my intelligence. One cannot operate intelligence. When we see limits of thought and intellect, intelligence operates on its own.

When I say, I have the responsibility to use action, then... am going to use intelligence in my corrupt way. Whereas intelligence operating has its action<sup>40</sup>

### **Understanding part and the whole**

It could be a single lecture, a series of lectures, dialogue or a discussion, Krishnamurti generally said all that he had to. Even a small part of Krishnamurti's write-up contains the essence of his core philosophy. Clarity was one of the outstanding characteristics of Krishnamurti's discourses. He is clear that one has to negate society completely. 'The idea of complete sterility of all deliberate effort forms an essential part of Krishnamurti's teaching and has been expressed by him with great clarity in his talks.'<sup>41</sup> It is because he was focused on seeing life as a whole and not as a fragment. 'Enquiring to understand the whole problem of living' has been his fundamental concern. Seeing everything as a whole and not into fragments can trigger insight into 'what is'.

The seeing then is immediate action...therefore perceiving life as a whole, death as a whole, love as a whole, living as a whole, which

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<sup>39</sup> Intellect and Intelligence, Public Discussion 4, Ojai, April 14, 1977.

<sup>40</sup> The action of intelligence, Public Discussion 2, September 14, 1972.

<sup>41</sup> Sarmah Prantika, American International Journal of Research in Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, 5(2), December 2013-February 2014, p. 173.



means sane, healthy, holy - H-O-L-Y - holy, therefore you don't have to seek something sacred beyond yourself...<sup>42</sup>

Krishnamurti cannot be classified as a thinker, religious teacher, mystic or philosopher because according to him, these are all fragments, constructs of thought. Life cannot be understood just by seeing a part of it. There could be no singular approach to fear, anxiety or sorrow. His etymological art illustrates how one problem has its basis in others. He asks the right question. Can fragment or part understand the whole? It is thought or intellect that brings divisions and he answers this question, 'I cannot see it, because the intellect is a part and you cannot use the part to understand the whole'.<sup>43</sup> Krishnamurti's unusual style of discourse stemmed from his sense of wholeness,<sup>44</sup> observes a scholar.

### **[The whole] Art of seeing, listening and living**

'How' doesn't work with Krishnamurti because he is clear about how brings method and requires time whereas Choice-less-ness is instantaneous, in a moment. Humans are indeed selective observers and listeners. He brings our attention to the fact that how the acts of seeing and listening are indeed born out of self-interest. We listen or see according to our prejudices, preconceived notions, and ideas. Seeing is also colored with past knowledge and experiences. Listening happens when we are free to listen without interfering, evaluating or interpreting. Seeing is without the screen, just seeing what is. It all happens without asking how and not by wanting to do it.

So, we are bringing order to consciousness. Not by wanting order, not by making an effort to bring about order, but by listening, seeing, and learning. To listen there must be no direction.... To see there must be no distortion. And to learn, not to memorize, there must be freedom to observe, to learn, to watch.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> To live a life that is whole, Public Talk 3 Brockwood Park, England - 08 September 1973.

<sup>43</sup> Why are we fragmented? Public Talk 2 Madras (Chennai), India - 10 January 1971.

<sup>44</sup> Rodrigues, p. 40.

<sup>45</sup> The Art of Listening, Seeing, Learning and Living- Public Talk 4 Ojai, California, USA - 10 April 1977.

### **Insight into ‘what is’?**

‘Total insight into what frees mind into emptiness.’<sup>46</sup> Again, though he defines all three words ‘insight’ and ‘what is’ differently, his approach is holistic, seeing as a whole and not as a fragment. Insight can be better understood by what it is not. It is not an analysis, evaluation, product of thought, endeavor or intellect. He simply says, ‘It is: to perceive something instantly, which must be true, logical, sane, and rational. Insight must act instantly.’<sup>47</sup> It is pertinent to understand what Krishnamurti is indicating by insight is different from what it is perceived to be. Krishnamurti is talking about the insight of what is. This is as opposed to what should be. The brain for years is accustomed to the patterns of what should be. In that aspiration ‘to be’, the brain is continuously accumulating and repeating. There is no change. The moment we are aware of ‘what is’, that pattern, repetition, there is insight. Insight is seeing awareness and internal and external observation. ‘When you see that, the whole structure of the brain has changed: that is insight.’<sup>48</sup>

### **Etymological Art: Catalytic agent into self-inquiry**

As Anderson puts it, ‘He...was the single most decisive influence of any living teacher I have personally encountered. His approach to self-inquiry was lucid, unwavering and correcting.’<sup>49</sup> With illustrations, Krishnamurti’s etymological art has helped him use words in a particular sense and not in a general sense. Though there is no prerequisite to understanding Krishnamurti, the chances of ‘understanding what is’ are multiplied when we recognize the word in the sense, he uses them. ‘Religion’, ‘freedom’, ‘intelligence’, ‘Meditation’, and ‘Relationship’, all have a different sense in Krishnamurti discourse. Therefore, etymological art is not interpretation or evaluation. It is to question, investigate and find out what Krishnamurti is saying without interpreting it.

Krishnamurti has written and spoken for several decades. He has also said ‘Word is not the thing’. That is indicative of the fact that Krishnamurti has used words and language. Not out of intellect but he spoke with insight and intelligence and understanding that ‘what is’ may

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<sup>46</sup> Krishnamurti J, *Wholeness of Life*, HarperCollins, 1981, p. 182.

<sup>47</sup> Questions and Answers, 1, Brock wood Park, 28 August 1979.

<sup>48</sup> Insight’ 4<sup>th</sup> Question and Answer meeting, Saanen, 26<sup>th</sup> July 1980.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson Allan W, *On Krishnamurti’s Teaching*, Karina Library Press, Kindle edition, location 121.

awaken our intelligence. 'Krishnamurti archives comprising speeches, dialogues, discussions and autobiographical writings run into 120,000 pages of typed manuscripts, nearly 7000 photographs, 2500 audio clips, 550 video clips and 20 films between 1900 and 1986'.<sup>50</sup>

Krishnamurti had a sequence in his speeches which was more clinical than chronological. In what sense is clinical? The chronological sequence is linear with a beginning, middle and end. With Krishnamurti, there is spontaneity and no chronology because he says the first step is the last. Krishnamurti would start with the contents of consciousness and dwells on awareness, meditation or intelligence to see 'what is'. It is clinical because he approached it scientifically, rationally, and logically without making it elusive. Rinpoche puts it for us again, 'Krishnamurti does go along this systematic path. He takes the whole realm of thought as one package and awakened as another package. That makes the challenge of awakening understandable and communicable in modern language.'<sup>51</sup>

He went to the basics of what he spoke. He invested a great deal of time and energy into defining what he was talking about. His speeches too are dialogic and not monologic or unilateral. He invited his audiences to investigate the problem of life together with him. He spoke at a level where thought didn't operate and explored the possibility to observe where we understand the limitations of thought and intellect.

Can Krishnamurti's discourse be a catalytic agent in self-inquiry? The etymologically catalytic agent is the one that triggers the process without its active participation. Luis Vas observes 'Krishnamurti acts like a catalyst in a chemical reaction... hopes to force his audience to think for itself, to be aware of mental process and physical reaction.'<sup>52</sup>

Refusing to be your clutch, support and authority, Krishnamurti is there, simply pointing out. Etymological art would serve the purpose to understand what is being pointed out and putting it into the right place. The meaning-making process with Krishnamurti may lead to interpretation while investigating it may give us 'insight into what is'. Understanding the words and the language in the sense Krishnamurti used them can get the import without direction and distortion.

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<sup>50</sup> Rodrigues p. 21.

<sup>51</sup> Always Awakening p. 140.

<sup>52</sup> Luis S R Vas, "General Semantics as an Introduction to Krishnamurti" in Mind of J. Krishnamurti, Jaico, 1971, p. 181.

Krishnamurti's discourse should be a catalytic agent in self-inquiry because as he has said, 'you don't have to understand the teachings but you have to understand yourself'.<sup>53</sup>

### **Krishnamurti and the sacred**

Ironically, Krishnamurti spoke all his life asking us not to get caught in words. Etymological art more or less delineates verbal portrayal! Allen W Anderson, who held a series of 18 dialogues with him, narrates an incident where Krishnamurti, during recording just stands up and says, "I have been talking about this whole of my life and nobody has understood."<sup>54</sup> Luis S R Vas questions if 'Krishnamurti is a great liberator or a failed messiah'. Krishnamurti denied being the world teacher and the latest biography on him by R E Mark Lee is titled 'World Teacher'. As Lee observes,

It is possible that in the sixty years of his teaching life, he spoke directly to more people than any other person recorded in history, and thus, in a divine sense, fulfilling the prophecy of being a teacher to the world.<sup>55</sup>

Anderson gives an interesting remark on this 'contradiction in terms' which exemplifies Krishnamurti. 'Lao Tzu and Krishnamurti seem at one in Tzu's line: Tao does nothing, yet nothing is left undone.'<sup>56</sup>

Leave alone interpretation or analysis, Krishnamurti never wanted teachings to be looked upon as 'sacred'. The symbol is never real. The word never contains the whole, however cunning the description. The word sacred has no meaning by itself; it becomes sacred only in its relationship to something...<sup>57</sup>

Words cannot describe Krishnamurti's teaching. Even if they do, that cannot be real. Insight into Krishnamurti, perhaps, meanders through the realm of the mystic. There goes a Zen saying, 'If you meet Buddha on the road, kill him.' Did anyone hear Krishnamurti resonating with it?



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<sup>53</sup> Krishna P (prof), *A Jewel on the Silver Platter, Remembering Jiddu Krishnamurti*, Pilgrim Publishers, Varanasi 2015, p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Anderson, Location 269.

<sup>55</sup> R E Mark Lee, *World Teacher: The Life and Teachings of Krishnamurti*, Hay House, 2020, p. 27.

<sup>56</sup> Anderson, Loc. 178.

<sup>57</sup> Krishnamurti's Journal, Brockwood Park - 30th September 1973.

## Mind-Brain Problem and the Holistic Approach of J. Krishnamurti's Philosophy

Chetan Kumar<sup>∞</sup>

### Abstract

Mind-Brain relation is a very fundamental question of philosophy. The view about mind and brain which is taken here is slightly different from our general understating of brain and mind in philosophy. Some philosophies take the mind as an expression of our brain and the brain as a bio-instrumental substance but we will see in the paper that the mind is a much more complex phenomenon than the body or brain. It seems that Krishnamurti thinks that the mind and consciousness are more fundamental than our brain and memory. The brain is a biological instrument full of memory stuff but the mind is a real source of our all creations and inventions. The mind is the spectator of this objective world and it is always beyond our thoughts and memory. But the brain is the storehouse of memory and thoughts. In this paper, I am going to discuss Krishnamurti's view on the brain and mind. The main point is how his idea critically reconstructs Descartes's view of mind and consciousness and what is the ontological position of thinking in his philosophical questionnaire sections which are available on you-tube. In this paper, I am going to show the technicalities of the mind-body or mind-brain problems which are even more relevant in the 21st century and how the philosophical enquiries of J. Krishnamurti help us to resolve the problem more holistically and synthetically.

**Keyword-** Mind, body, Phenomena, Numina.

### Introduction

The mind-body/brain problem is independently formulated by modern Western philosophy. The founder of the problem is Descartes who gives the causal reason of the universe and leaving being, which is an interaction between two attributively different substances mind and body. The mystical explanation of Descartes for body and mind generates curiosity to know the way of interaction between them. Since both are mystical so Descartes gives a solution with the axiomatic divine

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intervention for interaction but it cannot be known fully to anyone. Similarly, just after Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz are on the same side which is questioned by Hume and further the things are reconciled by Kant but it somehow fell in the domain of idealism which is criticized by cosmological materialism by V. N. Mishra but it is the similar Cārvākiian approach. The Philosophy of Krishnamurti rejects these bipolar of materialism and idealism. His philosophy never denies materialism and idealism. He gives positions of materialism, idealism and the actual place of mind and consciousness.

### **Definition and Categorization**

How we capture consciousness in the brain is known as the mind-body problem of Western philosophy. Descartes conceptualizes two substances mind and matter for the whole creation and the formation of this universe and living creatures. God is a singular self-existing being in Descartes's philosophy who creates two mutually independent substances mind and matter as the elements of his creation. The mind is a thinking substance and thinking is a conscious process of the mind. The mind has many properties like imaging, understanding, willing, perceiving, desiring, dreaming, and, etc. But the process of understanding and rationalization is the attributive property of the mind, and the rest of the properties get developed in the mind due to the connection of the brain to the mind which is just an organ of the body like other organs, though both understanding and rationalizations are considered in the single property which is known as rationalization or the intellectual ability of the mind. Understanding and thinking are treated synonymously and both of them come under intellect. But the mind has no extensions to occupy space and in contrast, the body (and brain) have extensions and it is divisible because of its complex structure but the mind is a simple substance without parts.

### **Krishnamurti on Brain**

The brain is the center part of the function of our senses. The brain is the center of all the senses. In this way, if we sharpen our sensitive ability then our mind becomes more active. It is the center point of all our remembrance of the past; it is the storehouse of individual knowledge and experience. So, it is limited within its confinements. It has many functions like thinking, planning, reasoning, etc., but all its functions are limited in time and space. For these peculiar reasons, it has not the capacity to make the formulating understandings

of the thing which is whole in itself, complete in itself, which has the totality of its existence. “The brain must wash clean of all these cunning devices.”<sup>1</sup>

If one may ask about the element which has such an affirmative response of totality, completeness and wholeness, then it is known as the mind. According to Krishnamurti, the mind is complete and whole because it has full of emptiness. The mind can be knowable by the brain when it overcomes its conditioning, greed, envy, ambition and many such bad psychic attitudes. Love exists inside the completeness of the mind. Through this tunnel, one may enjoy the feeling of pressure of immense vastness like an ocean. The paradox is that, although the mind is simple to know and it has its simplicity of presence but the experiences of knowing certitude center on its knowledge. The brain has many things for experiences like cars, people, and billboards. We are in the domain of experience of such objects which are the causal elements of all colors of pain. To overcome such a situation of pain we have to develop the brain because the brain has merely the experience of pain. Its developments have a certain way from ‘the cause, the reaction and from the violence’ to non-violence and such kind of attitude. At this time brain has developed from a primitive state to a refined, intelligent, technical state but it gets the confinement of space-time. To be in the situation of slavery is very humble but it cannot change with name, cloth or identification with ideal and heroic acts, a powerful country and many such activities. It is the act of the brain to be in the slavery situation which starts with the wrong equation, that is equation brain to the awareness of completeness which is certainly the mind but not the brain.<sup>2</sup>

This salvation of mind is easily seen in the form of making habits and practicing mental control. A disciplined brain is a confined brain it is a fearful situation. One may become used to such situations. These are the habit which destroys freedom. A disciplined existence is a life of conformity; in conformity, there is no freedom from fear. Habit destroys freedom because any habits such as drinking, smoking, doing a particular work and the “organized religion with its beliefs, dogmas and rituals deny the open entry into the vastness of mind. It is this entry that

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<sup>1</sup>Krishnamurti’s Notebook., p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

cleanses the brain of space-time. Being cleansed, the brain can then deal with time-space.”<sup>3</sup>

The sense of complete emptiness of the brain means the dilution of the effects of reaction and memory of the brain, i.e., the mind-full person is no more to be known through their personality which has been remerged by memory or he is not more affected by memory. This kind of withering away implies time but it is time that ceases and not the ending of memory.<sup>4</sup> It is a kind of ‘timeless expending’ and its quality and degree of intensity are certainly different from any type of passion and feelings of the brain. Moreover, this intensity is not related to any type of qualities that are quarried by the brain such as desire, wish or experience and memory of those experienced remembrance. “The brain was only an instrument and it is the mind that is this timeless expanding, exploding intensity of creation. And creation is destruction.”<sup>5</sup> If the brain will have lost all its responses, then it cannot be more than an instrument of observation. At that time will not see through its eyes but it will be an unconditional brain which transcendent the time and space of individual phenomena. It will be the essence of all brains.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Krishnamurti on Cognition**

Our brain registers outward things like trees, mountains, and rivers, it accumulates knowledge, technique and much more with the help of experience. We are also habitual in making observations, choices, condemnations and justifications respectively with the help of Experience. We gather all the outer things in our subjective world turn inward to look at our inward accumulation of objects and build up constructively organized reasonable ideas. This kind of inward formation cannot be developed within a certain limit of the observation of the observer. “This inward gaze is still the outward look and so there's not much difference between the two. What may appear to be different may be similar.”<sup>7</sup> But in the brain, we have a certain inward observation which does not the outer thing that comes from outward to inward. The brain and the physical organ eyes have not such capacity to make comprehension of seeing into the totality but they have partial way of seeing. They have all capacity to be in completeness but they are in the

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 25.



manner of limitation to choose and judge in the particular way but they are passively aware of their natural aspect. At that level, the inward seeing has not the boundary of time-space. In the light of this neutrality, a new perception may be born.

In the morning time when one wakes up then he/she/it may gather only certain experiences. It is a waking experience which contains a living feeling of joy and it may take place in the life of almost all being and it is coming from the past. The feeling is filled up with ecstasy from the outer world which is not self-induced. It is “being pushed through the system, flowing through the organism, with great energy and volume.”<sup>8</sup> The brain is not taking part in such feelings; it cannot make any remembrance of such feelings but register them as fact. I am using this ecstasy as a feeling but for Krishnamurti, it is not a feeling, sentiments, or emotion respectively “but as solid and real as that stream crashing down the mountainside or that solitary pine on the green mountain slope. All feelings and emotions are related to the brain and as love is not, so was this ecstasy. It is with the greatest difficulty; the brain can recall it.”<sup>9</sup>

### **Krishnamurti on mind**

Our main problem is raised with words. The words are the dead things but they have a defined meaning but we have to think about something that has its existence just beyond the words and descriptions. It would be the center for all of creation and very pure that can clean the brain of every thought and feeling. It is always in the state of seriousness and luminosity which destroys and burns up all kinds of thought and feeling. It has no limit to measurable, it is immovable, impenetrable, a solidity that has the light like in the heaven. Initially, it was existing in the eyes and breathes. Its existence in the eyes makes them see. The capacity of seeing from those eyes was compliantly different from the eyes of the sense organ though both of them were the same. Those eyes only have seeing capacity which was beyond the time and space. At that time impenetrable dignity and peace were the essence of all functions and activities. Since ethics and virtue are the creation of the brain and at that time even the brain had not evolved of world and language so that thing was just beyond all virtue and sanctions of man. There was the presence of love which could be perishable (partially). Love had the

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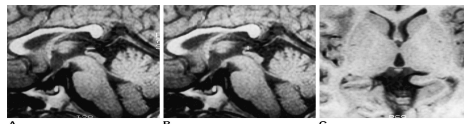
<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

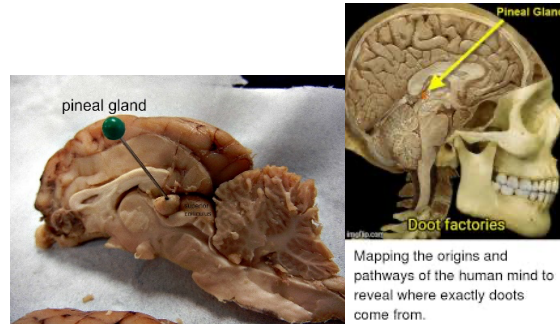
delicacy for the creation of all new things in which some things were vulnerable and few were destructible but love was still beyond all such things because it was imperishable, without any name and not to be known-ability by any means and individual. It is certainly unpenetrated and untouched by any course of action. It was so pure, unmarked beauty. According to Krishnamurti, it might be affected by the brain in a very intensive manner that did not happen before. It was the activity of thought so it is a trivial thing but we have the necessity of thought but is trivial. Our relationship got changed by its occurrence is like the biggest natural digester “As a terrific storm, a destructive earthquake gives a new course to the rivers, changes the landscape, digs deep into the earth, so it has levelled the contours of thought, changed the shape of the heart.”<sup>10</sup>

### God and Idealism

Descartes gives the theory of interaction between mind and body. Both of these substances are to be connected with the pineal gland with the help of divine intercourse. The mind has no empirical position but it is located inside to pineal gland. Here I use the word location for the sake of understanding but the mind is a non-locative substance because a location always has some configuration and certainly mind has not had such a location. This pineal gland is just the thorough connection between mind and body which is known as the causal linkage between mind and brain. Since the pineal gland is a causal linkage between two mutually alienating substances mind and the brain so it is located in the middle of both hemispheres of the brain. It is something like a junction of whirlpool for the impulses of mental substance which commands the bodily functions or the bodily impulse move in the mind for the formation of perceptions, dreams, desires, etc. Similarly, the body has the attributive property of extension and all remaining properties which are seen in the body and matter, taking place by its movement. In this way, heaviness, density and color of the extended are known but at the time of Descartes, we did not know the gravitational force and any other force so for Descartes motion in the material world is generated by the mind and God.



<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 27.



Biological and Material Existence of Pineal Gland.

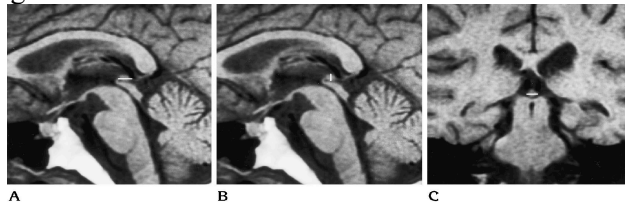
It is a contradictory view that the material object itself becomes a junction for the connection of material and spiritual substance and this material object is known as “Pineal Gland”. It is a material object because it has an extension<sup>11</sup> and it releases a hormone which activates the biological clock to maintain the sleeping sense and mensuration

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<sup>11</sup>Total 129 120 249

MR images of the pineal gland in a 4-year-old girl with myelomeningocele (volume 37.5 mm<sup>3</sup>).

- A, The length of the pineal gland (*white line*) is 5 mm on the T1-weighted sagittal image.
- B, the height of the pineal gland (*white line*) is 3 mm on the T1-weighted sagittal image.
- C, the width of the pineal gland (*white line*) is 5 mm on the T1-weighted axial image.



MR images of the pineal gland in a 19-year-old man with cerebral contusion (volume 68.3 mm<sup>3</sup>).

- A, the length of the pineal gland (*white line*) is 6.5 mm on the T1-weighted sagittal image.
- B, the height of the pineal gland (*white line*) is 3.5 mm on the T1-weighted sagittal image.
- C, the width of the pineal gland (*white line*) is 5 mm on the T1-weighted coronal image.

It is M.R.’s imagination to capture a team of scientists to know the size variables of the pineal gland with different age groups. It is published in- Sumida, *AJNR Am J Neuroradiology* 17:233–236, February 1996, p-235

cycle in females. If the hormonal secretion gets misbalanced then the person would suffer from a mental disorder which is known as insomnia, a sleeping disorder. This gland is also found in those animals that are inhabited for sleeping. But For Descartes, at that time, it seems to be a tunnel to connect spiritual haven to the material world. So, Descartes's solution is taken as the fairy tells of God, mind and world.

The same solution was running in different ways by Spinoza and Leibniz, they all were in the turmoil of divine intervention and did an extravagant reasoning for the establishment of their ideas for body and mind. Spinoza gave some interesting arguments that God has many different qualities but human beings can recognize only the mind and body or the rationality and extensions. The reason for such an argument would be that human only has a mind to recognize the mental property of God and the mind can affect the body so the mind has a relatively knowing capacity in comparison to the body and with this property, it can also know the body. But it opens the get for all remaining creatures that they can recognize the remaining property of God according to their ability and quality. If we think about Spinoza's argument then we can find that human beings have the telescope of mentality to see the hidden ability of God which is called the divine mentality then the human mind has a capacity for reflection which reflects God's mentality and since the mind is a matter of subjectivity so it reflects the God's mind subjectively.

This idea helped to develop the concept of reflection of monads in Leibniz's philosophy, in which, each monad reflects the whole universe and all remaining monads subjectively according to their appetite for reflection. In this manner, mind and body/brain is a monad which reflect each other to develop a causal link. In this way, the causal intersection between mind and body may stabilize but the philosopher David Hume denied causal theory because we have no perception of cause and effect Kant re-corrected Hume and gave the notion of synthetic a-priory to stabiles the causal theory of philosophy and he gave the argument that the thinking soul and body or extensions are mere the representation of the mind and since they are just the represent so the causal links between soul and body have stabilized by a priory faculty of the mind<sup>12</sup>. In this way, Kant had passed a mysterious judgment on the body or external world that the external world is unknowable and

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<sup>12</sup> Translators of Critics of Pure Reason, use sole as the thinking substance to reduce the ambiguity of confusion between mind and body.

what we know those all are just a representation of the mind but he never denied the external world. But Hegel pointed the question on Kant that if we don't know about anything then how we can say about it? He gave a dialectical way of knowing in which two opposite substances would be known in the journey of consciousness in the time interval from one situation to another by this process consciousness may develop itself and situations get changed according to time. A bud gets changed into a flower and a flower into a fruit and so forth. Hegel is correct for the situations of life and the development of empirical consciousness or he may be right for the sake of the Indian philosophy of self-realization because, through the understanding of changing situations, any person may practice the concept of detachment. Although self-realization may solve the misty of the mind and brain relationship Hegel's dialectic process cannot apply to substance because substance and situations are two different things. Here I have mentioned the modern age problem and the respective endeavors of some leading philosophers of those days. Their arguments are appreciable in the development of the literature of philosophy but these do not give any substantive satisfactory urge for the curious personalities.

### **Idealism and Cosmic Realism**

Cosmic realism is advocated by the latest Indian thinker Dr V. N. Mishra. Dr. Mishra gives the theory of conceptualization which is the process of knowing by human beings. According to Dr Mishra, a conscious being can know the consciousness and the consciousness comes out from the universe which gets descent in humans and manifests in the mind. This mind is an instrument of knowing. Consciousness realizes everything through the mind of a human and it is the paradoxical situation that the universe itself is a creator, producer and even reproducer of everything including consciousness and the supper conscious beings like humans but this universe knows nothing. Since consciousness is a product of this material world so mind is also a material stuff and it can easily connect with the body/brain<sup>13</sup>. It is a similar move but in the reserved direction because very early philosopher Emmanuel Kant had given the same way of solution in the shadow of the rationalist school of philosophy. According to that theory, like all remaining things mind and body are also a mere representation

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<sup>13</sup> Mishra, V. N., *Samsāra and Nirvāṇa A Unifying Vision*, D.K. Print World (P) LTD, 2017.

of mental stuff so they can easily stabilize the mutual causal relation between each other. Both can become cause and effect of each other simultaneously. Here we can see that we have two different arguments of Mishra and Kant regarding the solution to this problem. Some scholars give a mid-path way of the solution by the concept of synthesis methodology of Hegel, to synthesize two polar solutions. According to this method, mind and body are considered as theses and anti-theses respectively<sup>14</sup>. Both of these are synthesized by the suitable causal connectivity with each other. But the main problem is that if one becomes a cause the other becomes effects of it and then this process will never reverse. For example, if the mind is a cause, then the body would be an effect of the mind but reverse will not possible. It is the mistake of Descartes to take the body as the causal substance of the mind. But Hegel himself never formulates these terms because he does not believe in any formulation. According to Hegel, a spirit is free to choose the path for its development but for every further development of its consciousness it synthesizes all initials opposite and supportive experiences ideally but not the actual opposites like Descartes's Mind and body.

Like Mishra, Sartre also gives a solution to the materialistic approach by defining the mind as a product and parts of the human brain moreover he considers consciousness the doer and can negate itself for the acceptance and connection with the empirical world. But consciousness is not a doer it is an experiencing one as it is mentioned in Indian philosophy.

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<sup>14</sup>I have explained the Hegelian notion because Sartre uses Hegel's term The-in-itself for matter, The-for-itself for consciousness. The matter is considered as the thesis, consciousness is considered as antithesis and the third stage would be the synthesis of matter and consciousness that is the in-itself-for-itself. This thing is used by Sartre for showing the relationship between mind and body/brain on page no 145 of his book of Being and Nothingness. This idea is advocated by V.N. Mishra (a formal economic advisor of the Government of India) in his book *Phenomenal Consciousness and Mind-Body Problem in East-West Perspective*, D. K. Print World (P) LTD. 2019. One more thing Sartre Accept the world in the negation of consciousness but according to chāndogya upaniṣad chapter six section 2.1 nothing come out from nonexistence there was something because nothing comes from nothing. So, consciousness does not in the negation of the world.

The main problem of one thought is to deny its opposite thoughts like Kant and Mishra and if a person who tries to give a synthetic approach for the resolution of two opposite would be a supporter of the philosopher like Hegel. Similarly, idealists would be a supporter of Kant and Descartes, then we never get a proper solution to the problem without removing such biasedness.

A philosopher Krishnamurti is not a follower or supporter of anyone but a man who has a good learning and understanding capacity. He never denies the actual world but he also accepts the actual existence of both of the supernatural element's consciousness and soul. He resolves the Kantian problem of numina by accepting the outer world as an actual world and the real world as a phenomenal world. For example, Christ has a solid existence in the real world of Christianity but not in another human.

### **Behaviorism and Qualia**

The modern age people never got the solution to mystical aspects of the mind because it was the dogma of Plato a theory must be universally accepted for its conformation of knowledge and truth. This dogma ruined most of the concepts of Western rationality. In the era of universal acceptance, a new group of philosophers had come and they were experimentalists and were called scientists. The word science has come from German costume which means the systematic knowledge developed and gained by humans<sup>15</sup>. These scientists had faith in the bible as Descartes had but they were trying to demonstrate everything just for the sake of clarification. Galileo experimented with free fall to know the air resistance and he discovered the time square formula for free falling body and Newton discovered the law of gravity. After a long time, the logical positivism movement use the principle of truth functions to resolve the metaphysical problem and unresolved problems abounded out to the course of philosophy which might have the solution to the body-mind problem. For example, a Lecture on metaphysics volume one by Sir William Hamilton might have the solution to the

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<sup>15</sup> In today's world we can put spying dogs and some machines in this category as developing beings in the same ways. Even we are doing study and research on machine ethics and animal ethics. At University of Delhi, dept of Philosophy a lady is doing PhD in Machine ethics so she presupposes the machine might have a mind. Well in some Western university, it is quite common. Well, a dialogue in the Bollywood movie "Three Idiots". 2009. "Well trained animal" by Ranchhoradass Ckhachkar (Amirkhan)

body-mind problem. Despite this kind of issue, western philosophy has some contemporary theories although they have chronologically developed themselves in the shadow of Plato and logical positivism they cannot give a proper solution to the mind-brain problem.

First is behaviorist, Gilbert Ryle had questioned Descartes categorization of dualism and he claimed that it was like a Ghost in the machine in the name of mind in the body. In his book *Concept of Mind*, he argues that everything is just a part of the system and that a system is a whole in itself. For example, if a person comes to visit Cambridge University and he visits many departments and libraries but still he is trying to find the university which is just a hole of parts (departments and library), in a similar manner mind, is part of a biological system of a person. So, he negates the dualism as he argues that the reduction of mental states and processes into the physical states and functions and vice-versa is considered under the pre-supposition of mind and matter. The existence of mind and body is like that someone has pair of gloves in both of his hands but he/she cannot affirm both of gloves at a time. If we handle it logically then two opposite expressions may exist but the logical opposition cannot give us the existential affirmation. Ryle gives another example with the world rising likewise- “tide is rising, hope is rising, and the average age of death is rising”<sup>16</sup> Here the world rising has some logical connection between these three statements but still they do have not a sense of connectivity for the sake of understanding. He further argues “It just as a good or bad joke to say that there exist prime number and Wednesdays and public opinions and navies; or that there exist both minds and bodies.”<sup>17</sup> For Ryle, it is just a myth for Descartes’s time of political need but not having a use for this time. This argument leads to the other theory of mind which is called Behaviorism, according to which the mental states can be known by behavior expressions by that the mind can be informative and we can reduce the mind into the expressive domain of language and by that the mind can be objectified but the main problem is that the expression is an expression of a subjective mind which varies according to the expression of people so there are no fix parameters for the expression of mind even the fast answering of psychological questions have lots of ambiguities and

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<sup>16</sup>Descartes’ Myth by Gilbert Ryle in *Philosophy of Mind Classical and Contemporary Readings* ed by David J. Chalmers, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2002. P -38.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*



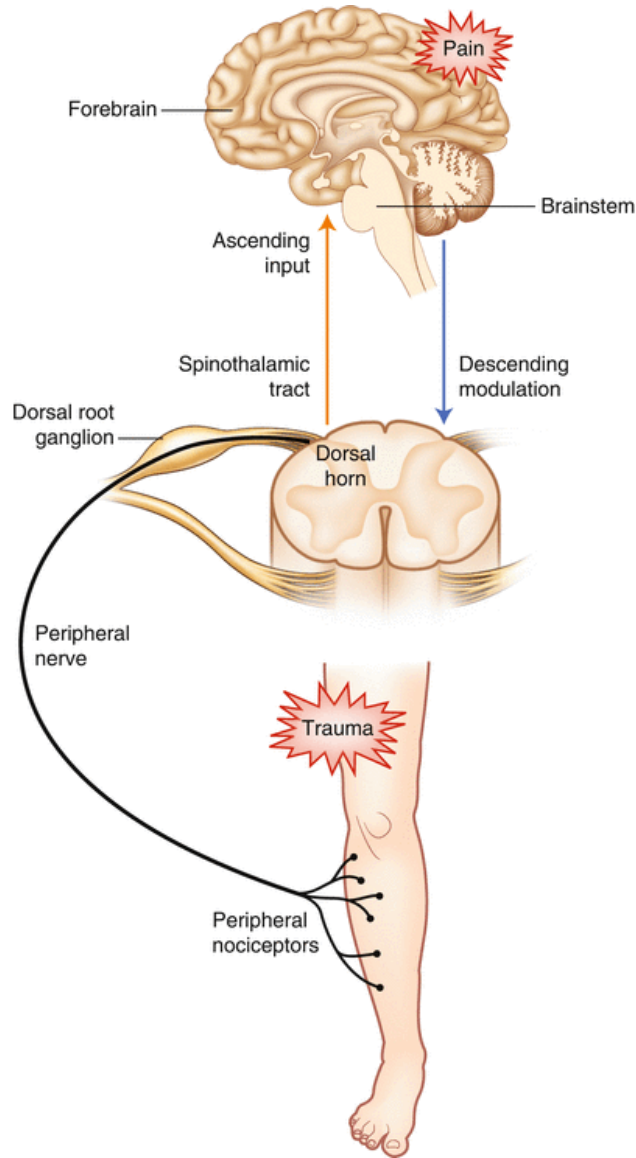
confusion but we need a proper informative conception of mind like the mathematics or science.

The whole contemporary Western philosophy is trying to objectify the mind via pain. How the pain occurs? Since the behavior expression “ouch” has a very variable sense for different people of different costumes and places. So, the other theory which is known as identity theorist which gives the neurobiological explanation of pain, which is a c-fiber firing and a sumo capsule, can relieve us from pain because it may overcome c-fiber activation. We should need some information about pain. Pain is a sensation and its “nature can be expressed by man only”<sup>18</sup>. There are infinite numbers of pain fibers in the whole-body including bones. Physical pain is a kind of damage to tissues or injury of body parts, etc. The stimulation of pain may transfer from one neuron to other neurons through the process of divergence and from neurons to the spinal cord and then to the thalamus and from the thalamus to the cortex. Pain in one body part cannot be localized in all different body parts except the brain for the rescue reactive process. It is the messages which transfer via neurons to the thalamus by the process of divergence and then through the process of convergence the pain starts to converge into the thalamus and then upshot to the cerebral cortex for the recovery of damage of that painful body part. When the pain starts to accumulate in thalamus for the further transmission, which is located in the mid-brain, then the mid-brain releases chemical endorphins which are called internal painkillers. The amount of secretion of endorphins varies from person to person<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup>Gopinath Gomathy, *The Brain: A Precious Possession*, National Book Trust, Reprint 2013, p 37.

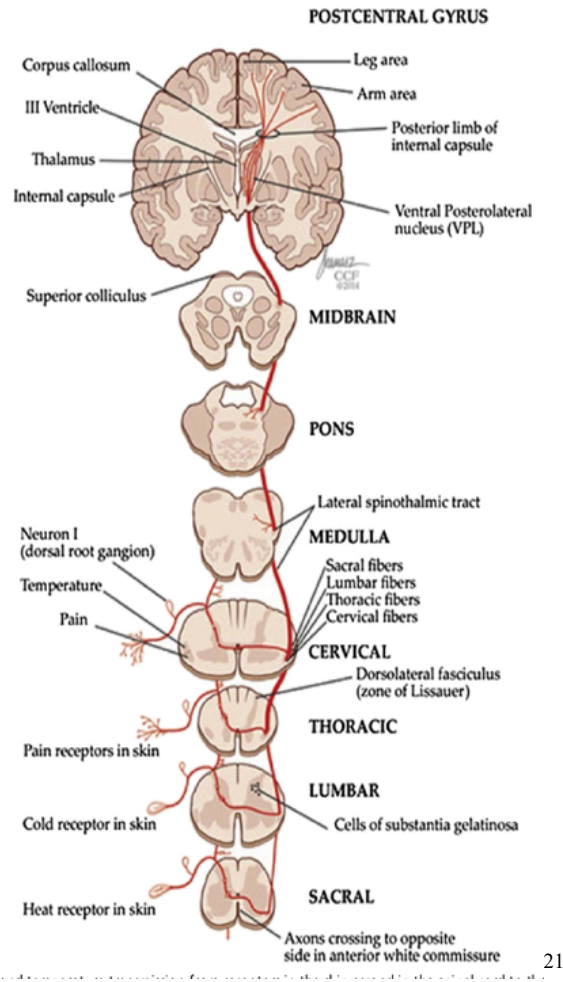
<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 36-39.



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<sup>20</sup><https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Basic-anatomy-and-physiology-of-pain-pathways.-Bourne-Machado/f60c78d4a89c8ee2a74736c04d78609ebff962bc/figure/0>.

“Pain and temperature transmission from receptors in the skin ascend in the spinal cord to the postcentral gyros via the lateral spin thalamic tract. First-order neurons transmit this sensory information via pseudo-unipolar neurons that enter the spinal cord in the Lissauer tract where they synapse in the Rexed lamina. Second-order neurons from the dorsal horn then decussate at the ventral commissure and ascend



It demonstrates the pathway of pain in the leg or foot area. The final receptor is the forebrain.

in the lateral spin thalamic tract before ending in the ventral poster lateral nuclei of the thalamus. Third-order neurons then project to the postcentral gyros. (Courtesy of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation, Cleveland, Ohio.)” Published in Neurosurgery clinics of North America 2014 Basic anatomy and physiology of pain pathways.  
<sup>21</sup>[https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiW3L72yanmAhUYSX0KHaL\\_AY8QjRx6BAGBEAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com%2Fchapter%2F10.1007%2F978-1-4939-1737-2\\_24&psig=AOvVaw0if4DTxx1xaKqVjkTjbO3B&ust=1576015087293955](https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&source=images&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwiW3L72yanmAhUYSX0KHaL_AY8QjRx6BAGBEAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com%2Fchapter%2F10.1007%2F978-1-4939-1737-2_24&psig=AOvVaw0if4DTxx1xaKqVjkTjbO3B&ust=1576015087293955).

These two demonstrations can easily objectify the locus of pain but the problem is related to qualia. The quality of subjective experience may vary from person to person and as it is mentioned just before that the secretion of bio-chemical painkillers varies from person to person. So, the pain and its feeling are a matter of subjectivity not only qualitatively but also quantitatively. These subjective qualia have no demonstration and reason so it is known as an explanatory gap between mind and brain and it is profoundly known as a hard problem of consciousness in the philosophy of mind. John Searle has some rejection of this theory as he says “Conscious states have a subjective mode of existence in the sense that they exist only when they are experienced by a human or animal subject. In this respect, they differ from nearly all the rest of the universe, such as mountains, molecules, and tectonic plates, which have an objective mode of existence.”<sup>22</sup>

Searle gives a solution to this problem by taking the mind as a first-person phenomenon and an element of consciousness but he cannot able to define the subject and personhood properly. Descartes defined the subject as thinking stuff as we know in his famous quotation “I think therefore I am”. He gets this self by questioning and eradicating the doubt-full thing and finally, the remaining substance is a thinking self. It is not an empirical self but Searle tries to relate the self to memory the identification of name and form<sup>23</sup>. This name and form of self is superimposed in the mind by the external world but the self is a very different substance from this world so it cannot impose anything on the self via name, form and memory although all are related to first-person identity but not to the mind.

But it was clearly stated by Descartes that only humans have a mind but if we take other creatures then we find the qualitative nature of experience and subjectivity in all creatures. For example, the peanut of the same natural cover of the same taste cannot grow similarly even if we provide equal watering and other care farming. Subjective uniqueness is the affirmation of Leibniz’s law of differentiation.

Despite such things, Krishnamurti never blamed such physical pain on the body he was talking about the sorrow and how we can overcome it. If we are in particular pain and suppose no medication can be provided for that so in place of urges and demand to come out from

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<sup>22</sup>Searle John, *Mind: A Brief Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2004. pp. 135-136.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 286-291.

such intense peculiarity it is better to live with those situations. In Krishnamurti's words- "To be utterly free of all such urges and demands is arduous. But yet it is essential to be free from them or else the brain breeds every form of illusion. The urge for the repetition of an experience however pleasant, beautiful, fruitful, is the soil in which sorrow grows. The passion for sorrow is as limiting as the passion for power. The brain must cease to make its ways and be utterly passive."

### **Krishnamurti and the solution**

This subjectivity is the main problem for the mind and brain relationship. How we defined the quality of subjectivity. The behaviorism view of solution contains ambiguity because each man has a different behavior expression so it is hard to understand the mind the second corresponding is functionalism which gives the causal role of explanation for mental states which may vary from species to species, moreover, the mental states can be realized by the different physical state of the brain like pain or other objects but know the question comes for the qualia or quality of subjective experience. If we think on the matter then we find there is a war between two sets of dogmas in which one is objective and the other one is subjective.

For Krishnamurti, there is oneself, which is exercising in all living creatures and basically in all humans. We all want the objectification of our subjectivity which is a major problem in our society. We are always trying to negate the things, which is not suitable for our affirmation. This is the basic reason for the negation of behaviorism. If we accept subjectivity, then why not accept the language, which is the expression of subjectivity? Each mind can connect to the world and it is formularized its transcendence by the help of expression and demonstration. These expressions are not ambiguous but it has a uniqueness of each brain or mentality which cannot be understood. It cannot be conceptualized. We cannot pass any judgments on that. We cannot even follow and learn from others but by ourselves. And for Krishnamurti, we all should be like that. If we remove all our memory or learned things then our brain would be like which respects the unique behavior expressions of others. For Krishnamurti, we all are seekers of māyā which are mere imaginations. These are the things, which are theoretically running in our brains. We gather these from

books, from teachers, and institutions like family and society<sup>24</sup>. These are the ways by which we lose our simplicity this simplicity does not as like wearing a simple dress or eating un-spicy food but it is a simple mind that can be a spectator who may welcome all uniqueness because uniqueness has newness and this newness is mindfulness, the consciousness<sup>25</sup>.

We live with our real nature which is the memory-based self. This is the real problem of our alienation from the actuality and we are trying to find the truth like mind or body from the inside of our phenomenal world. Only this is the reason, Kant argues that the actual nature of the world is unknowable. It is not only the unknowingness of the material world but we cannot know ourselves. If we want to know the actuality of ourselves and the material world then we should go beyond the *māyā* of analytic a priori and synthetic a priori and the rest of the Kantian category of Judgment and Knowledge. We should come out of the mental space and time and empirical self-consciousness of Kantian notions. All Kantian philosophy gives the clear-cut conception of *māyā* and Kant has named them the phenomena of rational individuals. The *Numina* is an actual truth which contains all sorts of existing substances but it is not real. This is a truth and we can know it when we come out of our real nature which is being formulated by many number elements of the brain like languages, thinking, memories, and so on. This temporality of the brain is formalized by a cluster of memory which is the main reason for our ignorance. We know everything through the memory of the past but the present is a moment which expresses itself through observation and awareness. By observation, Krishnamurti means just looking at something as it is without mixing it with your past reason and ideas of accumulated knowledge. If we mix the past with the present then it means we engage in the reflections of the past without any newness.

This feeling of simple newness is the connection of the transcendental mind to the material world because this present is being created by the mind of the universe, the supernatural being. If we want to be connected with the mind of the creator to this whole universe then we have to come out of all conceptions and realities to actualize the

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<sup>24</sup> What is it the human mind that wants to follow? Krishnamurti- Official Channel, Youtube, 6 Dec 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Krishnamurti, freedom from the Known, pp. 14-16.

actuality of this natural world<sup>26</sup>. It is the kind of connection that can be stabilized by yogic practices between mind and brain and from the brain to the natural world which is known as the material world of Descartes.

If someone asks Krishnamurti: what is the difference between the mind and the brain then he replies that a brain is a conditioned object of thoughts, languages, and conceptions. It is a bounded stuff which has limitations and the mind is the unconditioned and infinite thing which is beyond our languages and thoughts. It has the true essence of natural intelligence<sup>27</sup>. If someone asks about the relation between mind and brain then he replies that the conditioned part of the brain is the brain but the unconditioned area of the brain can be called as mind<sup>28</sup>. It is an actual self and consciousness within all living beings and it is not multiple in numbers but it is a unique single mode of consciousness<sup>29</sup>.

But our main paradoxical situation which leads to all kinds of confusion and *māyā* for Krishnamurti is the ruling of conditionings over the un-conditionings. If we eradicate or overcome the excessive conditions by stopping muttering in our mind which Kant calls the process of conceptualization and understanding then we can enjoy a more blissful life which is the bliss of un-conditionings, the actuality over conditioning. In this way Krishnamurti stabilizes, the one-way causation from mental to physical which can be called mental causation but because of the reverse order of conceptions which lead all our psychological energy just for the sake of dogmatic realizations fascinated us into the turmoil of falsifications. In this way, Krishnamurti has resolved brain/body and mind problems synthetically because in his theory consciousness is a part of the mind with infinite limits and this consciousness circulates in the brain and from the brain to the body and from the body to the rest of the society. In Indian philosophy, we treat the mind and consciousness as different entities but never talk about the brain. The theory of condition and non-condition has some *Vedāntic* approaches and in the West, from Descartes to the present time people are arguing for mental mind and physical brain. Now these days neuroscience can demonstrate the thinking reason of the brain through

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<sup>26</sup>Krishnamurti, *Truth and Actuality*, pp. 6-9.

<sup>27</sup>Is there a difference between the brain and the mind, Krishnamurti-Official Channel, Youtube, 19 July 2015.

<sup>28</sup>What do you mean by brain, mind and consciousness? Krishnamurti –Official channel. Youtube, 22 January 2017.

<sup>29</sup>If human consciousness is one, why is one person happy and the other unhappy? Krishnamurti –Official channel. Youtube 19 Jan 2014.

MR technology. They can show all faculty of *antahakaraṇ* as the parts of the brain process. The emotions and “feelings arise in the neo-cortex.”<sup>30</sup>

Not only these are the case, even the ego-originated self of Sāṃkhya which is called *Mahat* and this *ahaṃkāra* has occurred sake of other mental stuff. This mental stuff is being formalized by the memory of the brain. The brain has many areas for the locations of memories that combine to develop for the recognition of the present. These memories also help to develop the conception of personality in the form of self. All these arguments give the profound assertion of the brain but Krishnamurti synthesizes brain to mind and simultaneously present the definition of the mind as an un-conditioned entity but it might be a part of the material stuff of our brain if it is not touched by all process of conditionings like customizing, language, conceptualizing and more things like that. This is a holistic and synthetic approach to the definitions of mind and brain which in itself resolve the problem of the relationship between the physical and mental realm. Moreover, it shows no such bifurcation of physicality and mentality but it is just for the condition being who realize it but cannot actualize it. This would be a reason for the everlasting body/brain and mind problem of Rene Descartes.



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<sup>30</sup>Damasio-Descartes' Error Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain, Avon Book, New York, 1994.



## Philosophizing Education: J. Krishnamurti and Other Modern Thinkers Approach

Amrita Tripathi<sup>¶</sup>

### Abstract

Philosophizing and critical Evaluation is an integral part of the education process, there is no doubt about that but before that, we have some essential things to introspect like what we teach, what we ought to teach, and the purpose of our teaching. etc. We need to ask ourselves if is there any way that evaluation becomes a self-analyzed and introspection-based method or way than merely an examination evaluation. The teaching-learning process is incomplete without proper ethics and evaluation, obviously, but this ethics and evaluation primarily must be inward than outward and it can be taught through the legacy and wisdom of our ancestors and modern thinkers like J. Krishnamurti. It can be learned and taught and most importantly can be applied in life. The goal of ancient thinkers, sages and contemporary modern thinkers and ethicists' way of teaching and philosophy of education was to rediscover wisdom, ethics, and morality. It was their primary syllabus. For instance, in Sanskrit, the language of ancient India, Buddhist wisdom was called — Anuttara-Samyak-Sambodhi, meaning the perfect ultimate wisdom. The Buddha taught us that the main objective of our practice or cultivation was to achieve this ultimate wisdom. This concept of education was not new, it can be traced back to the past during the Vedic and Upanishadic period and also in the future when Rabindra Nath Tagore, J. Krishnamurti, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi etc., thinkers concerned about holistic education and considered education as a way of life which transform the character, personality and life as a whole, and the good thing about their approach is that philosophically we do not find any contradiction among their approach instead of their ways compliment to each other. All of them taught us that everyone has the potential to realize this state of ultimate wisdom, as it is an intrinsic part of our nature, not something one obtains externally. All knowledge and wisdom are in our samskara(memory), a teacher just excites that and takes us on the path of learning and researching for truth and enlightenment of the

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true self. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the ethical and moral teachings, techniques and overview of ancient thinkers, J. Krishnamurti and some other contemporary modern thinkers' wisdom which can help us to attain the bonafide purpose of education which is to build up our character and personality. The educational legacy which we find in the Vedic, Upanishadic, Buddhist, and contemporary modern philosophy, is rare to find, we need to explore their wisdom for the betterment of the society and world. It is essential to get back to our roots because when some particular ruling ideology has misinterpreted the whole education system of our civilization and culture, as the Impact of British rule. The paper concludes that the philosophical, educational, moral and psychological maturity which we can attain through the Vedic, Upanishadic, Buddhist, and new-Vedantic ways of teaching can help us to secure total human perfection which ultimately ensures giant strides for everyone, to rediscover the meaning and goals in life which can make this life most worth living.

**Keywords:** Philosophy, Education, J. Krishnamurti, Way of Life, Contemporary Thinkers.

*"To Understand Life Is To Understand Ourselves And That is Both The Beginning And The End of Education" —J. Krishnamurti*

*Ātmadīpobhava*, know-thyself, self-realization, and self – actualization etc. ideals have been an essential part of philosophy and education since antiquity to modern times whoever takes the philosophy of education in holistic forms. Generally, it is considered that there is no philosophical consistency between the ancient philosophy of education and modern thinking regarding education. For instance, some thinkers consider that J. Krishnamurti's ideas do not complement other philosophies of education and other thinkers, they show contradiction (following *Reductio-ad-Absurdum*). But if we closely look at the thinkers and philosophies which have been discussed in this paper, we will find that there is no contradiction among them, instead of they complement one –another or even each other. This thing we will try to formulate with this paper. We will try to explore –

1) What is education? what is its philosophy? what it ought to be with references to the thinkers which have been discussed in this paper?

- 2) Comparative study of the ancient philosophy of education with contemporary modern thinkers with special emphasis on *J. Krishnamurti's* philosophy of education.
- 3) Presenting J. Krishnamurti's philosophical ideas regarding education concisely and clearly while the majority of thinkers consider him intuitive and mystical.

“Every system of philosophy or education in India is a quest for Truth, which is the same, always and everywhere. The modes of approach differ, logic varies, but the purpose remains the same – trying to reach that Truth.”<sup>1</sup> when swami Vivekanand is quoting this legacy we are not proclaiming that other cultures and civilization has not got such sort of legacy, but want to show that our educational foundation and purpose since antiquity has been holistic in nature, and this thing needs to be realized and explored further, why such a great personality is proclaiming such kind of thing? There would be something that can help us to attain perfection.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Education of Antiquity: Exploring the ancient legacy**

India has a rich tradition of learning and education right from antiquity. This legacy has been transferred from generation to generation either through an oral or written medium. A single feature of ancient Indian civilization is that it has been molded and shaped in the course of its history more by ethical, moral and spiritual purposes than any course of life. The total configuration of ideas, practices, and conduct is called Dharma (Virtue or Duty) in this ancient tradition. Indian culture is suffused thoroughly by ethical, moral and spiritual values. The approach of our forefathers to life, their subtle analysis and codification of duties, all indicate their cherished spiritual values. Their political, as well as social realities, were not circumscribed within narrow geographical bounds. Their attitude to life was characterized by the width of vision and they identified their duty with devotion to the ideal of ‘summum bonum’ of mankind. Multi-dimensional and holistic progress of all mankind became the sole objective of their teachings and philosophization.

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<sup>1</sup> Vivekananda, Swami, *Parliament of world Religions in Chicago*, 1893

<sup>2</sup> No study of the source of Indian culture, education, philosophy and thought is complete without an adequate acquaintance and understanding of the ‘Vedic Literature’. The Vedic literature represents the most important and intrinsic part of life of the India people.

“Learning in India through the ages had been prized and pursued not for its own sake, if we may so put it, but for the sake, and as a part, of religion. It was sought as the means of self-realization, as the means to the highest end of life viz. Mukti or Emancipation”<sup>3</sup> ancient Indian insight lies in the fact that it considers that Education must aid in this self-fulfillment, and not in the acquisition of mere objective knowledge.

### **Education as A Philosophy of Life**

The legacy of ancient education is that it gives foundation to the philosophy of life for the whole of humanity and all living being. although we find that *vairagya* (detachment) is the primary value of the ancient Indian education system even though in India the importance of action in this material world is not overlooked. The doctrine of action (Karma) occupies a very significant place in the Indian system of life and education. Action or Karma should not be for the redemption of mankind. This has been the ideal of the doctrine of karma as also of the educational system of ancient India. Hence, the ultimate object of devotion for an individual is self-realization or perfection and not this world. The material world is the lab of the human soul where the individual has to receive systematic education for bringing about self-perfection. Simple living and high thinking as the moral basis of education for self-development have been the motivating factor in Indian culture since antiquity because it is the best medium to live life in tranquility. Consequently, the individual has been bidden necessarily to gain both kinds of knowledge, materialistic and spiritual. All fields of vidya or knowledge were thus divided into two broad streams-the *parā-vidyā* (the higher knowledge, the spiritual wisdom) and the *aparā-vidyā* (the lower knowledge, the secular sciences.) The latter is needed to live a comfortable life here and prepare a strong foundation for the higher goal. The former helps one to be fully prepared for the hereafter. Hence a balanced combination of both is advocated so that everything and everyone can maintain the concept of Rita (a state of peace, prosperity and harmony).

Materialistic education embodies various aspects of the knowledge of physical sciences. It is for a student that the developed social structure exists. The student engaged in the pursuit of material

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<sup>3</sup> Mukherjee, R. K., Hindu Civilization Longman, Green and Co. London, 1936, p. 111.

knowledge has consequently been treated as the fulcrum or the axis of the social structure, for in his development lies the well-being of society. Spiritual knowledge has been regarded as the means of attaining the final beatitude. For the realization of the great truth, deep meditation in privacy is essential and hence the individual has been bidden to take recourse to severe penance (Tapa) once again. The devotee of spiritual knowledge has been enjoined to keep aloof from material objects and to consume himself wholly in self-meditation because the main elements constituting divine or spiritual knowledge cannot be understood and realized through hearing or using the intellect. These can be realized only through divine graciousness. The ancient Indian system of education is pervaded with the desire for bringing about salvation and final beatitude along with the full physical development of the individual in the same manner as the philosophy of life is shot through by the spirit of dharma. The Indian system of education caters to both physical and spiritual solitariness, which preserves its beauty.

## **2. Key Ideas of Ancient Indian Education**

Ancient Indian Education had evolved strictly on the foundations of Indian epistemological and philosophical traditions. The idea of the ephemerality of life and the world, the concept of ultimate death and the futility of mundane pleasures had provided them with a special angle of vision. The entire educational tradition originated from these principles. Thus, the Indian sages devoted themselves to the study of a Supra-sensible world and spiritual powers and molded their life accordingly. The ultimate aim of education emerged as the Chitta-Vrittinirodha (the control of mental activities connected with the so-called concrete world). However, education did not neglect the development of the pupil's powers for his all-sided advancement.

### **2.1 Knowledge Related to Life**

During the ancient times in India, the learners away from the haunts of din and distractions and temptations of the material world, amidst beautiful natural surroundings, sitting beside the guru or teachers, would comprehend all the intricate problems of life through listening and meditation (*Sravana, manana, nididhyāsana*). He would not remain contented with mere bookish learning but acquire fairly practical knowledge of the world and society through close contact with the people. An attempt was made to make the learner (*śiṣya*) capable of experiencing the Supreme truth himself and moulding society

accordingly. They learned the essence of life and the world so that nothing can shock them while facing any problem, today a little problem can make us feel hesitate and even some of us lose human value just to prevent it or cure it immediately, otherwise, so many psycho-somatic problems occur.

## **2.2 Holistic Development as a primary goal of Education**

The close association between the teacher (guru) and student resulted in holistic development. The residence of the pupil at the house of the teacher accompanied by a sense of devoted service had been a unique tradition in ancient India. The pupil, through such close contact with his teacher, would naturally imbibe his qualities through emulation. This was regarded as indispensable for the fullest development of his personality because the teacher was supposed to symbolize all the good ideals, traditions and codes of behavior of the society from where the pupil hailed. Today, *Ashramas, Varna-Vyayavastha and Purushartha's* education may not seem sound but during that period spiritual goal was always to be taken into consideration thus for that time and space it was not something unusual and injustice. Since today self-realization, wisdom etc. types of spiritual goals are all too absent in education systems thus there is nothing to be surprised about if any disharmony occurs in an individual or public life.

## **Teachers as Spiritual as well as Intellectual Guides**

Teachers occupied a pivotal position in the Vedic System of education. The teacher was a parent surrogate (Parent Substitute), a facilitator of learning, an exemplar and inspirer, a confident, detector friend and philosopher moral educator, reformer, evaluator, character and personality builder, importer of knowledge & wisdom and above all a guru, religious & spiritual guide. The relationship between the teachers and pupils was regarded as filial in character. The teacher was the spiritual father of his pupils. In addition to imparting intellectual knowledge to them, he was also morally responsible. He was always to keep a guard over the conduct of his pupils. He must let them know what to cultivate and what to avoid. He must instruct them as to how to sleep what food they may take and what they may reject. He should advise them as to the people whose company they should keep and as to which of the villages and localities they should frequent. During the Vedic period, learning was transmitted orally from one generation to another. Great importance was attached to the proper accent and pronunciation

in the Vedic recitation & these could be correctly learnt only from the lips of a properly qualified teacher. The spiritual solution depended almost entirely upon the proper guidance of a competent teacher.

Thus, the purpose of Vedic and Upanishadic education was high in nature which concerns the holistic development of everyone. Ample opportunities were provided to everyone for the development of their character and personality. The preceptors took personal care of the pupils, which resulted inevitably in holistic development. The educational system of the Vedic and Upanishadic periods achieved pronounced success in connection with character formation, development of personality, and contribution to knowledge in all branches of learning as well as social well-being and material prosperity. The Vedic and Upanishadic education was essentially spiritual, ethical and moral in character, yet it did not ignore the material aspect, the evidence whereof is available in the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda. Thus, it points unmistakably to the future evolution of Sanātana culture. We can trace this legacy even in the *Lokāyata Darśana* and their teaching, for instance, *Cāṇakya Arthaśāstra* talks about the *Artha* and *kāma* but he gives the foundation of *Dharma* to both without which both are futile because so many problems will be knocking on our door without ethics, morality and *dharma*.

### **New-Vedānta and some modern thinkers' contribution to education empowerment: an overview**

Neo-Vedānta, also called Hindu modernism, neo-Hinduism, Global Hinduism and Hindu Universalism, are terms to characterize interpretations of **Hinduism** that developed in the 19th century. The term "Neo-Vedānta" was coined by Paul Hacker, in a pejorative way, to distinguish modern developments from "traditional" Advaita Vedānta. Neo-Vedānta has been influential in the perception of Hinduism, both in the West and in the higher-educated classes in India. It has received an appraisal for its "solution of synthesis".

Among the main proponents of such modern interpretations of Hinduism were Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Radhakrishnan, who to some extent also contributed to the emergence of Neo-Hindu movements in the West. Neo-Vedānta has been influential in the perception of Hinduism, both in the West and in the higher-educated classes in India. It has received an appraisal for its "solution of synthesis."

### **J. Krishnamurti and education as a way of life**

Among the great Indian educational thinkers born in the nineteenth century, Krishnamurti was the youngest as well as the most philosophical and revolutionary. Unlike M. K. Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan, the three other contemporary Indian educational thinkers who achieved international status, Krishnamurti were against conformity and mediocrity-based education and fashioned his language to communicate his thought. Most of the other Indian thinkers base their teachings on ancient Hindu tradition and philosophers like Iqbal carry the Islamic tradition. But Krishnamurti, on the other hand, did not endorse the obsolete and failed methods and doctrines. Considering education as the 'exploration into the world within' he spreads his message 'The whole movement of life is learning.' He rejected all organized religions denying the fact that tradition could become a true guide to Truth. Although his various original approaches to teachings give him somewhat a different place among contemporary thinkers, it cannot be denied that there are some Buddhist, Vedantic and existential elements in his teachings.

In human history, mention is made of rare individuals who had the objectivity and the perspective to understand the human predicament. Remarkably most of these prophets echoed the same Truth. 'Know thyself' was probably the common advice offered by all prophets. But as we are blinded by our possessiveness for our own 15 thought creations, we fail to pay attention to this most important dictum. Instead of trying to look inward and trying to understand what they had created, we try to interpret the words of the prophets as beliefs, almost literally. We follow paths, that our nervous systems and their beliefs have laid to ensnare us. Krishnamurti also stated the same truth but in a different way and stated how self-knowledge can help an individual to awaken intelligence and thereby to be an integrated individual. Though educators of different times talked about some changes in society through education yet, it is J. Krishnamurti who considered education as the first and foremost and the only means to bring about social and individual transformation.

### **Know Thyself, Ātmajñāna: One of The Primary Goals of Krishnamurti's educational approach and philosophy**

Modern psychology and psychological theory or therapies have adopted this philosophical legacy (the concept of knowing thyself) and consider self-knowledge to be one of the essential elements of a happy



and tranquil life. Greco-Roman philosophy emphasized the know thyself, from Socrates to stoic philosophers everyone was concerned about self-knowledge and in Eastern philosophy it is one of the essential paths for liberation and freedom of the self.

Now the question is genuine to the philosophical mind what does it mean to know thyself or Ātmajñāna? What sort of state it is? Etc. The answer to this question is as similar and complex as defining philosophy and its nature. As there is not a single conception about the definition of philosophy and its nature so though the conception of self-knowledge is debatable. But the good thing is that the historical study of cultures and analysis of this concept can give a sense of progress towards this idea of 'know thyself'. Know thyself or Ātmajñāna is a moral epistemological injunction in which an individual is aware of one's nature and personality. This assertion, imperative in the form, represents and motivates that man must stand and live according to his genuine nature. Man has to look at himself. To find what? By what means? These two questions are fundamental.

The what, at first. Indeed, this invitation to introspection and retrospection must be connected to the philosophy of antiquity. Knowledge is inherent in man, not outside it is one of the primary conditions or presuppositions for this path or goal. Wisdom is learning to recollect. How, then. This knowledge of oneself can be achieved only through the critical or neutral method, that is to say, the dialogue between the soul and itself, or between a student and his teacher. An individual who is in the quest of this goal needs to be in the role of questioner, as an attendant emotional, psychological, spiritual and intellectual etc. This method of the philosophy of antiquity is very ancient and pristine as well. Quest for the goal and keeping the notion that someone knows nothing knows he or she knows nothing, and has nothing to learn, but can help its followers to discover the truths they have in them.

In their quest for the wisdom of self and life, the ancient philosopher's rupture from the status quo was radical. Greek thinker Socrates challenged the whole false conception or notion of knowledge through his method of the quest, Plato and Aristotle searched for the 'Eudaemoniac' state through wisdom, courage, temperance and justice to bring harmony and flourishment in an individual as well in the society. The Cynics owned little, lived on the streets, and openly shunned and mocked false social norms and conventions which were nothing more than conformity and mediocrity. The Epicureans removed

themselves from conformity notions and mediocre society altogether, setting up their small community of philosophers and emphasizing the training of one's desires and passions. The Stoics' sought to construct an inner impenetrable fortress, unaffected by either men or gods.

Eastern philosophy, especially Indian philosophy (Bhartiya Darśana) is not an exception in terms of discussing the philosophy of life. Indian philosophy can be compared with Greco-Roman philosophy for its methodology and goals. The Socratic method of quest and question is similar to the *vāda* or *vāda* of the Upanishadic method which is actually in the foundation of Bhāratīya Darśana<sup>4</sup>, the ancient Roman philosophy of Epicureans can be compared with Lokāyata Darśana, stoic virtue ethics can be compared with the hidden value of Bhartiya Darśana's asceticism (*vairāgya*), detachment etc. so we can proclaim the philosophy of antiquity has almost similar methodology as well as paths whether from the Greco-Roman philosophy or the ancient Indian philosophy.

Along with instigating and motivating a transformation of self and seeing the world with new philosophical insight, the ancient philosopher or the philosophy of antiquity suggested becoming an autonomous individual, meaning an individual who is a "law unto himself", a state of full self-knowledge or awareness. This thing has very applied strength which can help an individual to become what one truly is. The modern psychological theory known as emotional intelligence focuses upon this fact of knowing thyself. Emotional intelligence is actually the capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically.

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<sup>4</sup>There was, for a considerable period of time, a very lively and extensively practiced tradition of formal debates in ancient India. These debates were conducted, sometimes with royal patronage, to examine various religious, philosophical, moral and doctrinal issues. *Vāda*, the good or honest debate, is constituted by the following characteristics: Establishment (of the thesis) and refutation (of the counter-thesis) should be based upon adequate evidence or means for knowledge (*pramāṇa*) as well as upon (proper) hypothetical or indirect reasoning (*tarka*). The conclusion should not entail contradiction with any tenet or accepted doctrine (*siddhānta*). Each side should use the well-known five steps of the demonstration of an argument explicitly. They should clearly recognize a thesis to be defended and a counter thesis to be refuted. Nyaya darshan is a very fine example of *vāda* or *vāda*. (*Bimal Krishna Matilal; Jonardon Ganeri; Heeraman Tiwari (1998). The Character of Logic in India. SUNY Press. p. 2.*)

And this thing can be sassily formulated from the philosophy of antiquity where the concept of knowing oneself or Ātmajñāna is broadly discussed.

The utility of this concept is very applied as well is important too for the flourishing of the world and humanity. Ethical crises or issues like environmental ethics, humanitarianism, social and political issues like religious pluralism and multiculturalism etc. type of burning issue can easily be tackled if an individual can attain this self-realized state. the golden principle of morality, *Atmadipobhava*, *sarva-dharma-sambhāva*, etc. type of social and moral values culminates in the conception of Ātmajñāna or self-realization. If we are not aware of our true self then due to false knowledge (Avidhya) we will guide ourselves with false convictions and notions which is proposed or motivated by immoral acts and desires and do not take others and anything into consideration, which results into crude relativistic.

### **Tagore as a pathfinder for modern education**

He upheld that the child learns the first lessons on freedom from nature which is the basic source of knowledge. According to Tagore, the ideal school should be established amid fields, trees, and plants, under the open sky and far removed from human settlements. This would keep the children away from the turmoil of daily life. More importantly, living in the forest was associated with austere pursuits and renunciation. Firm on his ideas, Tagore set out to develop an appropriate system of national education for India. He founded the Ashram school at Santiniketan in 1901 with an emphasis on nonduality (*Advaita*) in the domain of knowledge, friendship for all, and fulfilment of one's duties without concern for the outcome(s).<sup>5</sup> Her education was combined with disciplining of the senses and one's own life. In talking about education for Life, Tagore did not ignore the significance of science teaching. He did value inventions and discoveries in so far as they made life less burdensome. What he condemned, however, was the race for material prosperity at the cost of creative genius and dignity. It may be understood at this stage itself that for Tagore, education stood for freedom from ignorance and passion and prejudice.

“In every nation, education is intimately associated with the life of the people. For us, modern education is relevant only to turning out clerks, lawyers, doctors, magistrates and policemen. . . . This education

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<sup>5</sup>Gandhi stayed with Rabindranath Tagore at Santiniketan for about a month.

has not reached the farmer, the oil grinder, or the potter. No other educated society has been struck with such a disaster. ... If ever a truly Indian university is established it must from the very beginning implement India's knowledge of economics, agriculture, health, medicine and of all other everyday knowledge from the surrounding villages. Then alone can the school or university become the center of the countries of living. This school must practice agriculture, dairying and weaving using the best modern methods... I have proposed to call this school Visva Bharati."<sup>6</sup>

He believed that the basic task of education was to produce, gather develop, and disseminate knowledge to the younger generation. In the Vishva Bharati, two autonomous institutions survive the Kala Bhawan (the school of fine arts) and Sangeet Bhawan (the school of music and dance). Tagore is no more but the ideals of education he laid down and the institutions he established keep him alive in the minds of the people.

### **Swami Vivekananda: Man-Making Education**

Identification of the aim of education advocated by a thinker is central to the study of his educational thought. Vivekananda defines education "as the manifestation of perfection already in man."<sup>7</sup> the keynote of Vivekananda's educational ideas follows: "Knowledge is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from the outside; it is all inside. What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'. What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. There are two sides to the understanding of this definition and aim of education as advocated by Vivekananda. On one hand, through his metaphysical outlook, Vivekananda shaped his concept of education and on the other, one has to appreciate the socio-political condition of India and how Vivekananda reacted to it or how he wanted to change it.

To impart and promote the study of arts, science and industries;  
To train teachers in all branches of knowledge abovementioned and enable them to reach the masses;  
To carry educational work among the

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<sup>6</sup>Jha, Narmadeshwar. 1997. "Rabindranath Tagore." In Zaghoul Morsy (ed.) Thinkers on Education. Vol. 4. New Delhi: UNESCO, Oxford & IBH Publishing.

<sup>7</sup>Vivekananda's definition of education 'as the manifestation of perfection already in man' is an extension of his metaphysical stand which is Advaitic in nature.

masses; and to establish, maintain, carry on and assist schools, colleges, orphanages, workshops, laboratories, hospitals, dispensaries, houses for the infirm, the invalid and the afflicted, famine relief work, and other educational and charitable works, and institutions of a like nature? Etc. was the top priority for swami Ji regarding the evolution of education in India. Education is a life-long process towards the fullest development of human personality. All education is, in the ultimate analysis, self-education. The pupil is to develop his inherent knowledge. His helpers are his teachers as well as nature in which he lives, moves and has his being. For Vivekananda, education is a process in which young minds will receive strength, energy and vigorous character. Under this process, they will mold themselves in such a way in which weakness has no part to play. Thus, the larger and nobler aim of education would be 'life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas'. The entire educational method and program should keep this high objective in view.

Yoga has a very large impact on swami Ji's character which can be seen in his ideas on education also "There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration." From the nursery stage to the university stage, we shall have to provide appropriate methods of value education. In this respect, the method of concentration as envisaged by Vivekananda is of immense value. Concentration is to be based on the principle of Raja-Yoga; concentration of the mind is the source of all knowledge. "The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even if the lowest shoe is black, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes be better? Thus, character formation is a major aim of education this objective must be kept in view by all the teachers in a school. It should be the guiding light or force for the educational progress of the schools.

### **Aurobindo: Integral Education**

Sri Aurobindo's Perspectives and Theories on Education were largely based on the idea that any system of education should be founded on the study of the human mind. The reason is simple: while the material with which artists deal is inert, that of educators and educationists is highly sensitive. The major defect in the European system of education is precisely its insufficient knowledge of psychology. The means through which education could be made meaningful was to acquire an understanding of the instruments of knowledge and develop a system of

teaching which was natural, easy, and effective, The teachers need to accept their role as that of a helper and guide not as an instructor who imparts knowledge, trains the mind of the children, and makes impositions on them. At best, the teacher = can make suggestions and encourage the children to acquire knowledge for themselves. Admittedly, children of younger age need greater help and guidance than older children. The children should be given the freedom to choose their qualities, virtues, capacities, capabilities, and careers. It is improper to impose one's ideas on them. Education needs to be geared toward drawing out the innate abilities in children and perfecting them for noble use. Furthermore, the children should be made familiar with and aware of all that surrounds them and what meets them on a day-to-day basis, e.g., natural-physical environment, sounds, habits and customs, and nationality. The purpose here is to foster free and natural growth, for these are the prerequisites of genuine development.

Sri Aurobindo proposed complete education of a subject(s) encompassing teaching-learning about it's their different aspects and dimensions. This stood out in contrast to the modern teaching system wherein children are taught portions of several subjects. Consequently, they are not able to master any subject. The older system was to teach fewer subjects but delve deep into each one. Sri Aurobindo felt that the practice of teaching a lesser number of subjects with great thoroughness was more appropriate in so far as it built 'real culture'. "It is the spirit, the living and vital issue that we have to do with, and there the question is not between modernism and antiquity, but between an imported civilization and the greater possibility of the Indian mind and nature, not between the present and the past, but between the present and the future. It is not a return to the fifth century but an initiation of the centuries to come, not reversion but a break forward away from a present artificial falsity to her own greater innate potentialities that is demanded by the soul, by the shakti of India."<sup>8</sup>

### **Radhakrishnan Perspectives and Theories on Education**

Radhakrishnan believed that an education system should be geared to both train the intellect as also instils grace in the heart and in doing so bring about balanced growth of an individual. The students should not only be intellectually competent and technically skilled but

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<sup>8</sup> Sri Aurobindo (1920-21, cited here from 2000: 208-209,  
<http://egyankosh.ac.in/bitstream/123456789/27371/1/Unit-3.pdf>

also civilized in their emotions and refined in their purpose because their worth Theories on Education as members of society desire not solely for intellectual ability or technical skill but devotion to a great cause. This was crucial in the present age marked by greed anxiety, defeatism, and severe constrain on independent thinking. People in the modern age are given to accepting whatever society and its channels of expression (e.g., film, radio, television, newspaper) put into circulation. Intellectual integrity remains at stake. A significant way to free oneself from the debilitating effects and strain of modern life was the study of literature, philosophy, and religion that interpret higher laws of the universe and provide a philosophy and an attitude to Life. Hence, one must learn to read the classics that deal with the life and destiny of humankind. Quiet study of classics develops independent reflection. Individuals master philosophy, and acquire more knowledge in universities - places of higher learning.<sup>9</sup>

“But buildings do not make a university. It is the teachers and the pupils and their pursuit of knowledge, these make the soul of a university. The university is the sanctuary of the intellectual life of a country. The healthy roots of national life are to be found in the people. They are the wellsprings of national awakening. They are the spirit behind the revolutionary movements of society. When we give education, we start a ferment of debate and discussion of first principles. The educated youth will voice their thoughts and find fault with things as they are. We train in this university not only doctors and engineers but also men and women who think for themselves. They will not judge everything by the party line. If we destroy the initiative, the freedom of the people we do so at our peril. If men lose intellectual vigor, the future of civilization is bleak indeed.”<sup>10</sup>The students of a university need to be trained to fight ignorance, injustice, oppression, and fear. Indiscipline among students rises when they are not trained to deal with the problems of life with fortitude, self-control and a sense of balance. Those serving

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<sup>9</sup> On November 4, 1948, the Government of India appointed the University Thinkerson Education-I Education Commission under the chairmanship of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. This commission, therefore, came to be referred to as the Radhakrishnan commission. The major task before this commission was to suggest improvements in higher education. The Commission clearly stated that the teachers occupy a crucial place in the education system. It is their responsibility to inculcate right values and truth in students along with generating interest in the field of study.

<sup>10</sup>An address at Moscow University on June 18, 1956 by Radhakrishnan.

in universities are in a position to prepare a mindset that would accept the idea of the establishment of a world community with a common consciousness and common conscience. An important function of the university was the advancement of international understanding and international peace.

### **Conclusion**

We have come to realize that Indian thinkers on education weave strands from philosophy and pragmatism together as warp and woof. According to them, the scope of education extends beyond letters and words to encompass the totality of being. Meaningful education, they lay down, is preparation for life, for meeting challenges squarely, and for self-enrichment. Education is freedom from fear, false authority and ignorance leading to liberation, this essence can be traced throughout the history of the philosophy of education which we discussed in this paper. Once the learner and teacher have a clear sense of ethics, morality and of the sublime approaches of our great thinkers and philosophies they will surely going to attain perfection in education and its purpose. For this we do not need to worry, our ancestors and careers have considered this thing carefully that's why we can easily attain the pearls of wisdom in the form of ethics and moral education in their approaches. In this sense, it is both the means as well as the ultimate objective of life which is essential to teach in education and also for the empowerment of education. It is the same spirit which we find in J. Krishnamurti's ideas regarding the philosophy of education. We can conclude about him that, he aimed that integration through education, the whole task is to awaken the individual .it should aim to encourage every pupil to find out his/her peculiar individual talent and develop it as fully as possible which we find in the whole philosophy and thinkers which we discussed in this paper. Thus, at last, we can conclude that there is no contradiction between the ancient philosophy of education and contemporary Indian thinkers including J. Krishnamurti's revolutionary philosophy of education. Sri Aurobindo's integral education, Vivekananda's man-making education etc. all will lead to the same goal which will resonate with J. Krishnamurti's ideas at some point in time.





## To the Authors...

### Scope of the Journal

The objective of the journal is to explore solutions to the challenges faced by the human mind and society through critical and creative philosophizing. In order to achieve this goal, the writer of the Journal of Darśana may consider the following areas of focus:

- Philosophising History of Philosophy
- Metaphysics (Study of the nature of existence)
- Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge)
- Ontology (Inventory of what exists)
- Social-Ontology
- Axiology (Study of values, such as truth, validity, beauty, and goodness)
- Logic
- Aesthetics
- Hermeneutics (Study of understanding and interpretation)
- Normative Ethics
- Meta-philosophy
- Meta-ethics
- Practical Ethics
- Applied Philosophy
- Animal Ethics
- Medical Ethics
- Business Ethics
- Environmental Ethics
- Social and Political Philosophy
- Philosophy of Art
- Philosophy of Culture
- Philosophy of Religion
- Philosophy of Language
- Philosophy of Education
- Philosophy of Management
- Indigenous Philosophical Thinkers
- Philosophy of Psychology
- Feminist Philosophy
- Subaltern Morality
- Philosophy of History
- Philosophy of Science and Technology
- Philosophy of Logic
- Philosophy of Mathematics
- Philosophy of Mind
- Phenomenology
- Analytic Philosophy
- Continental Philosophy
- Post-Modern Philosophy
- Classical Indian Philosophy
- Comparative Religion
- Philosophy of War and Peace
- Gandhian Philosophy
- Philosophy of J. Krishnamurti
- Philosophy of Post-independence Indian Thinkers
- Philosophy of Economics
- Philosophy of Law
- Philosophy of Physics

- Philosophy of Biology
- Philosophy of Yoga
- Care Ethics
- Soteriology and Philosophy of Liberation
- Philosophy of Sport
- Philosophy of Film/Cinema
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- Philosophy of Literature and Literary Theory
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