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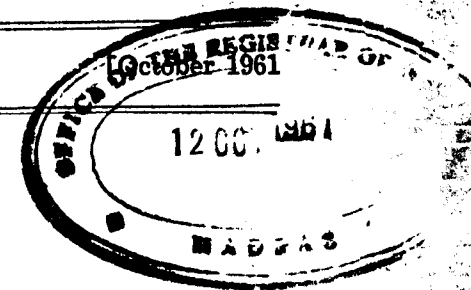
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## THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY

Vol. XXXIV, No. 3]

[October 1961

### On Categories

*by*

DONALD WALHOUT

To delimit effectively the scope of this paper requires us to state immediately that our subject is the idea of category itself and not the presentation or analysis of particular categories. This restriction makes the paper "meta-categorical" in nature, and within this restriction we shall set forth through historical considerations and logical analysis a reconstructed conception of the idea of category.

Any treatment of categories appropriately begins with reference to Aristotle. We need not be committed to supposing, however, that there can be evolution in the concept of category, as if the only task of later philosophy were to check over Aristotle's specific list of categories, questioning this one or that one, eliminating one and substituting another, revising and adjusting the list. There can be development not only in the lists of categories proposed but in the very concept of category. We shall see at the outset, in connection with our preliminary definition, why this is so. At the end of the paper we shall suggest a revised conception of category which appears justified by contemporary thought and fruitful for future philosophy. Between this beginning and this end there will be several dialectical steps to be traversed.

### *The Meaning of Category*

For Aristotle categories appear to have a combined grammatical, logical, psychological, and ontological meaning. Grammatically

and logically they mean the most generic kinds of predicates that can be assigned to different subjects. Psychologically they are the most general ways in which the mind, using logic and language, thinks about the different things that exist. Ontologically they are the various ultimate genera of being manifested by the existing things of reality. The ontological meaning is fundamental for Aristotle, since it is the warrant behind the other uses of the concept. That is, we speak, judge, and think as we do because we perform these acts in relation to the ways in which things actually exist.

A category, then, in the Aristotelian sense, is any ultimate, distinguishable division of reality. It is a mode of being, a type or kind of being, a manner of existing, a way of having ontological status, an ultimate demarcation of reality. The particular categories—substance, time, place, quantity, and so forth—comprise an exhaustive inventory of the different ways in which anything can have ontological status. They constitute the highest genera of being exemplified by the more particular portions of being.

There have been four principal modifications of this doctrine of categories in Western philosophy. One of these may be due to a simple confusion rather than to a deliberate reinterpretation. In this confusion the meaning of categories has been altered from that of signifying the different types or divisions of reality to that of signifying universal properties belonging to each thing that exists. Categories, in short, have been confused with, and taken to stand for, what the medieval philosophers called transcendentals. This confusion is illustrated in the following quotation:

....I adopted the position of Aristotle that the proper task of metaphysics is to investigate being *qua* being; to identify those relatively few basic characteristics that apply to all the phenomena of existence, to existence *as* existence. These universal categories apply only to *existential* subject matters, but not to abstractions from existence such as mathematics and logic.<sup>1</sup>

Another example may be cited from a history of philosophy which also gives earlier the original Aristotelian usage. In reference to Aristotle we read: "It is impossible to think of any real and existent thing except as subsumed under one or more of the cate-

1. Corliss Lamont, et al., "A Humanistic Symposium on Metaphysics," *Journal of Philosophy* (Jan. 15, 1959), p. 45.

gories....The categories are different kinds of being...."<sup>2</sup> But in connection with Peirce we find: "The categories are general and universal in that every category belongs to every phenomenon, although one category may be more prominent than the others in a given phenomenon."<sup>3</sup>

In this confusion of kinds of being (categories) with universal properties (transcendentals), there is a simple case of taking what is true of the whole as being true of the individual parts. That is, while it is true that the categories *as a whole* apply to all existents, it is not true that each category *individually* does so. For example, categories like place and quantity do not appear to apply to immaterial existence, which Aristotle certainly recognizes. Again, the categories of acting and being acted upon do not apply to the Unmoved Mover, which is in Aristotle's system a real existent. We are not to think of categories, then, in the more Platonic sense of universal properties present in every part of being, but rather as the significant, distinguishable cuts of reality, under some one of which, but not necessarily under all, each part of being is subsumed. We may take the following quotation as one sample reflecting a more accurate interpretation of Aristotle: "The categories may be described as a list of predicates, one or other of which declares the mode of its essential being belonging to any subject that exists."<sup>4</sup>

One is semantically free, of course, to use the term category to refer to the other concept of transcendentals. But then another term will be needed to cover the discipline left behind by the transfer. It seems best, logically and metaphysically, to preserve the distinction, since an important investigation would otherwise be blurred. It also seems historically best to preserve a meaning of category closer to the original meaning, so as to avoid needless confusion.

The second modification in the doctrine took place when Scholastic philosophers made the sharp distinction between created being and uncreated being. It was clear that categories like time and quantity could not apply to uncreated being, and so the whole list of categories was interpreted as referring solely to created be-

2. Frank Thilly, *A History of Philosophy*, revised by Ledger Wood (Henry Holt and Co., 1955), p. 103.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 600.

4. H. W. B. Joseph, *Introduction to Logic*, (Oxford University Press, 1957 printing), p. 40.

ing. Categories became the widest genera under which the things of the finite, created world could be subsumed.

The rejection of this modified usage is not contingent upon an appraisal of the distinction between created and uncreated being. A rejection might, for instance, rest on a charge of arbitrariness. The modification means that categorical inquiry is confined to only a segment of being. Yet all of being must be included if one is searching for the fundamental kinds of being that there are. In a sense this was recognized, since the doctrine of analogy permitted one to categorize uncreated being, although it would not be described in this way. The logical point here is that "kinds of being" necessarily encompasses all of being. And the historical point is that useful continuity is preserved when the term category is kept for the larger area of its original reference.

The third and fourth modifications will be discussed in other contexts later and need only be identified at this point as the Kantian and the existentialist reinterpretations. Kant holds that categories refer only to the world as structured by the mind, and existentialism maintains that they refer only to being as viewed from subjective concern.

Three elements of a preliminary definition of category stand out from the foregoing remarks. The first is generality of predication. Categories are the most generic predicates, drawn from the various classes of being, which are attributable to subjects. The second element is ontological reference. Categories designate the various divisions of being into which particular "be-ings" are classifiable. The third element is what might be called significance for distinction. Categories are those aspects of being which, taken as ultimate, the philosopher regards as most significant to be distinguished. Taking these elements together, the definition reads: a category is any of various modes of being which are the most generic for predication, ultimate in ontological reference, and significant for distinction.

The third element requires further comment since, as the flexible hinge in the definition, it can carry us beyond Aristotle and is therefore the key to any reinterpretation. It seems clear that any particular list of categories at which a philosopher arrives depends in part upon what he considers important in reality to be distinguished. Thus some of the categories which Aristotle distinguishes receive little attention from later philosophers. Kant's list differs from Aristotle's, Hegel's from Kant's, Whitehead's from

Hegel's, and so forth. This would only be explainable if there are involved in these lists the philosophers' judgments as to what is interesting and important enough to call attention to as ultimate. This does not mean that philosophers are really in agreement and that they only differ in emphasis. When Whitehead replaces the category of primary substance with the category of actual occasion, there is a difference not only in emphasis but in propositional, descriptive truth. Nor do we mean to assert, at the other extreme, that categories are the products of the philosophers' private interests and imaginations. Systems of categories are attempts at objective discovery and description and are not subjective expressions alone. All that is being claimed here is that selection on the basis of significance, which does involve a subjective component of selectivity, is one element in the systems of categories which philosophers propound.

If this be so, if categories always involve some amount of selective discrimination on the basis of judged significance, we can see how transformations may occur in the concept of category. As systems of categories develop and are modified, the concept of category, which after all is not independent of categories, is itself extended and modified, just as the general concept of science is shaped and extended by the developments within particular sciences. If there is selective discrimination in the various sets of categories, there must be a similar elasticity in the concept of category. In this way there is evolution possible in the conception of category, even within the historical aura of the meaning of the term. Kant, for instance, set forth both a different scheme of categories and a novel conception of category. We shall not follow Kant's particular lead in the sequel; yet he provides an illustration of the argument offered here. To conclude, the factor of selective discrimination on the basis of judged significance permits a reinterpretation of category which has at once historical relatedness and contemporary timeliness.

#### *Options Concerning Categories*

Before reaching our conclusion, however, we shall prepare the way by considering the alternatives in five options concerning categories.

#### *Stipulative or Constitutive*

The first option is whether categories are arbitrary linguistic proposals or whether they are structural features of reality or

experience. The first of these alternatives maintains that metaphysical concepts, and hence categories, have only a linguistic status, so that analyses of categories are analyses not of being but of words, either those which are actually used or those which are recommended for use. Thus any system of categories claimed by a philosopher as ultimate is in fact a stipulative linguistic system on his part. The other alternative insists that categories are structures of being itself and that language is only a means for making this reference. Categories are constitutive of what is, or at least of what is as knowable.

It would seem evident, to begin with, that the particular items most usually chosen for inclusion in systems of categories are not stipulated items. It would seem absurd, for instance, to say that time or space or actualities, which often appear in the lists, are constitutive of nothing else but language. The same could be said for some other proposed candidates. The philosopher's linguistic descriptions are formulated in response to what he apprehends as the significant features of the world actually encountered by him. The categories are derived from what is taken as constitutive of the world, so that their intended reference at least is objective. If it be argued that the philosopher is always deluded about this intended reference and that his categories are always linguistic stipulations only, the objection would involve a self-contradiction since the speaker, in order to be voicing a truth, would be presupposing such a metaphysical knowledge of reality and experience as would enable him to pose the objection as sound.

If the individual categories are not stipulative, it would be impossible to claim that an entire system, which is comprised of such categories, is stipulative.

But systems of philosophy are not in agreement, one hears. Does this not mean that they must be linguistic stipulations? No. It would be more accurate and less misleading to say of a system—if this be our estimate of it—that it is false, partially false, or incomplete, than that it consists of linguistic proposals. We may believe that a philosopher's system has only a linguistic status as far as its truth value is concerned; but this is far different from saying that categories themselves have only a linguistic status. The system has a merely linguistic status only if it is false, i.e., does not correspond to the actual categories of being. But to be false the system must have an objective reference, and this reference must be the actual, constitutive categories. We must conclude,

therefore, that while a given system may be thought to be largely linguistic in character, analyses of categories are nevertheless analyses of being, and the philosopher of categories is analyzing not words alone but words as symbols of being.

#### *Phenomenological or Ontological*

If categories are more than linguistic entities, what precisely is their status in being? Are they structures of experience or structures of reality—categories of appearance or categories of things-in-themselves? The first of these alternatives holds that knowledge is confined to phenomenal experience and cannot penetrate to reality itself. Yet within this confinement thought can discover those indispensable structures that make phenomenal experience what it is. Beyond this there might be categories of reality; but these, it is urged, are unknowable. The second alternative asserts that categories pertain to reality itself, that they are ontological as well as phenomenological. Moreover, it is possible for thought, to some extent at least, to apprehend real categories.

The difficulty in the purely phenomenalist view is the difficulty in avoiding, try as one may, any ontological adumbrations. It can readily be seen that Kant, for instance, despite his disclaimer oath on metaphysics, employs a number of concepts which suspiciously approximate categories of reality, e.g., the noumenal self, freedom, the objective there-ness of things-in-themselves, the lack of accord between things-in-themselves and human reason. The breakdown of phenomenism comes in trying to separate the phenomenal from the noumenal, the phenomenological from the ontological. This separation requires some contrast and comparison, and such comparison requires in turn categories drawn from both sides of the separation in order to make the comparison meaningful. Thus concepts have a way of referring to the real, despite our attempts to box them in. If it be said that we can know *absolutely* nothing about reality, even that it is unknowable or even that it is real, it may be questioned whether an intelligible concept is being entertained here at all. At least it may be questioned whether in this case one means by the phenomenal world anything different from what metaphysicians mean by reality.

Yet the ontological positions of philosophers differ, we hear again. Does this not prove that categories are phenomenal only? Such a conclusion, if it purports to be an "explanation" of the

differences, would have to regard the categories as *privately* phenomenal, since if they were regarded as *objectively* phenomenal the same differences in interpretation could be pointed to among phenomenologists themselves, and nothing would be explained. But if categories are only privately phenomenal, the philosopher would be a virtual solipsist, which is plainly absurd. We may think, of course, that any given philosopher's set of categories represents little more than his own private fancy as far as truth value is concerned. But in this case it would be more accurate to say that *his list* of categories is phenomenal, not that categories themselves are. It would be still more accurate to say that his list is false or incomplete, and to be false assumes an ontological reference to real categories.

#### *Contingent or Necessary*

Are the categories of being contingent or necessary? There appears to be a cluster of questions contained in this simply phrased option. (1) Is it a necessary truth that there are categories? (2) Are the particular categories of being contingent or necessary? (3) Are philosophers' lists of categories contingent or necessary? (4) Are contingency and necessity among the real categories of being?

Concerning the first of these questions, if it is not necessarily true that there are categories, then it might be the case that there are none. But if there were no categories, then we could not think or know being at all, since there would be no general, unifying concepts through which being could be thought or known. Yet we must assume that we think and know being to some extent, for to deny this conflicts with experience and also involves a self-refutation. Therefore, we must assume it as necessarily true that there are categories of being through which being is thought.

Can we go on to say that the particular categories of being are also necessary? That is, could the actual modes of being be other than what they are? It is logically conceivable, i.e., not self-contradictory, to entertain the thought that being might exemplify other hypothetical categories different from the ones which it does in fact contain. But since there is nothing, by definition, outside or beyond being, taken in the broadest sense, which could possibly account for the categories being other than what they are, this logical conceivability can hardly be regarded as a real possibility. Therefore, the actual categories of being must in reality be necessary categories. From this point of view metaphysics is, in one phase, a search for those necessary modes

of being, one or more of which must be exemplified by anything that exists. This doctrine should not be confused with the different doctrine that every individual occurrence coming under the categories is a necessary occurrence. Individual existents may come and go contingently, even though the general ways in which they might exist do not.

Shall we also say, then, that the philosophers' lists of categories are also necessary? Obviously they cannot all be necessary, since they often conflict with one another. Are these lists then contingent? This would not be accurate either, for it would mean that they might or might not be true, whereas if some of them are false they could not possibly be true, assuming that the categories themselves are necessary. It is best not to speak of the philosophers' lists as contingent or necessary at all, but rather as true, partially true, or false in our estimation. If they are true, they are necessarily true, since they describe necessary structures; and if they are false, they are necessarily false. But we cannot say, short of final certainty, that a given list is necessarily true or false. There always remains a limitation in certainty which might be called subjective contingency. So we cannot say that a given list is necessarily true; but we can say that if it is true it is necessarily true. The philosophers' lists, then, claim necessity if they are true; they seek to express what is necessary; but they are subject to error.

Finally, if it is a necessary truth that there are categories, and if the particular categories of being are necessary, does it follow that all being is necessary being, excluding contingency? No, we cannot admit this as a consequence. There is no reason why there cannot be necessary categories of being which cover individual existing things that are themselves contingent. It is not inconsistent to say that there is a necessary category of contingency or a necessary category of freedom. There could be both necessity and contingency of existence quite compatibly with necessary categories. Our discussion is not concerned with estimating the claims for contingency in existence; but it is relevant to point out that necessary categories do not exclude contingency of real things.

#### *Natural or Non-natural*

The fourth option is whether categories are exclusively natural, in the sense in which naturalists in philosophy would use the term, or whether they indicate non-natural realities as well. It

cannot be our aim, at this "meta-categorical" level of discourse, to debate the issue between naturalism and its opponents in philosophy; but two categorial confusions pertinent to the issue may be noted.

The first is illustrated by the quotation from Lamont made earlier. In that approach categories are thought of as universal properties of things, and then, since candidates like mind, personality, and purpose do not qualify as universal properties, they are excluded from the naturalist's list of categories. If, however, categories are thought of not as universal traits but as different modes of being, non-natural candidates like mind will demand an equal bearing. The same remark must be made concerning idealism, which may, since natural categories are not regarded by it as universal, deny these to be real categories at all. Of course it is disputable how the term category should best be defined, and in any case a definition cannot solve the controversy. We are alleging, however, that it is more fruitful to think of categories not as the thinnest possible traits qualifying anything whatsoever, but as the stubborn and irreducible types of reality that there are. From this point of view it can perhaps be seen more easily how cautious one must be in withholding ultimacy from any of the persistent categories from which human thought has been unable to escape.

A second confusion can be avoided if we focus on the statement that categories have a status of ultimacy. This means they cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed by methods designed for less than ultimate levels of thought, but can only be justified or dismissed by dialectical considerations. This point is relevant to naturalist and non-naturalist alike. The naturalist cannot, on pain of begging the question, exclude non-natural categories on the ground that they are not warranted by the methods of verification appropriate to the natural order. Likewise the idealist cannot exclude natural categories by means of a mystical method applicable only to a spiritual order. Ultimate categories can only be determined by an appeal which can embrace at least the possibility of all candidates.

The final option to be considered carries us directly into our intended reconstruction and hence to the concluding section of the essay.

#### *Existence or System*

We have witnessed in recent philosophy a recrudescence of that perennial if sometimes sublimated Platonic concern for a trans-

formed existence. In this movement Kierkegaard and Nietzsche stand out immediately, and other names come quickly to mind when these are mentioned. In this approach to philosophy categories have been proposed which are not merely revisions of previous lists, but are repudiations of the very attempt to frame a descriptive or prescriptive metaphysical system of categories. This movement rests, for the most part, on a despair of reaching any system of categories in the traditional sense, and therefore on a conviction of the futility and unimportance of speculative metaphysics. Turn rather, it is urged, to the greener pastures of intimacy, to the depiction, illumination, and recovery of our own existence within the realm of being. This at least we can know. Categories are not the necessary structures of being as being, but rather cuts into being which are screened through the passion of human subjectivity and which dramatize the human situation and its relations to being.

Thus there have arisen such categories as subjectivity and objectivity (Kierkegaard), Dasein, Existenz, and the Transcendent (Jaspers), *en-soi* and *pour-soi* (Sartre), problem and mystery (Marcel), and the I-thou and I-it relationships (Buber), just to mention some typical examples. Although these illustrations come from modern Western thought, the approach under discussion should not be conceived as confined to contemporary existentialism. Indeed, the aim behind this approach is perhaps better expressed in the following quotation which refers to another culture altogether.

Writing of Indian philosophy, Heinrich Zimmer states:

India...has had, and still has, its own disciplines of psychology, ethics, physics, and metaphysical theory. But the primary concern—in striking contrast to the interests of the modern philosophers of the West—has always been, not information, but transformation; a radical changing of man's nature and, therewith, a renovation of his understanding both of the outer world and of his own existence; a transformation as complete as possible, such as will amount when successful to a total conversion or rebirth.<sup>5</sup>

The option before us, then, is that between metaphysical categories and existential categories, the one type purporting to be an objective description of reality as it is, the other an illumination

5. *Philosophies of India*, (Meridian Books, 1956), p. 4.

of our subjective existence within that so-called reality. But it may be asked first why we should regard these existential depictions as categories at all. Are not such thinkers turning their backs on categorial analyses altogether? The approach in question does retain, we believe, a connection with metaphysics. This may be seen if we recall that one element in the basic definition of category is that of significance for distinction. This element means that the categories a philosopher depicts are those modes of being he finds significant to be distinguished. The existentialists may be interpreted as meeting the definition. In their own way they are concerned with being and its modes. They have a radically different orientation of significance from that of rationalist metaphysicians, and they contemplate being from a radically different frame of reference, viz., that of the passionate subject rather than that of the dispassionate observer. Yet their categories have ontological roots and implications, even when we remember the claims of some of them that metaphysical truth is unknowable. We may say that metaphysical categories are concerned with being as being, while existential categories are concerned with being as existed or as related to the existence of subjects. There are different motivations and interests involved; but in an important sense both approaches are concerned with being and its ultimately significant manifestations.

What shall we now say of the option? Certainly it is possible to note difficulties in both of the alternatives. Any system of metaphysical categories, for instance, must acknowledge that there is always a particular vantage point from which the individual thinker composes his system. There is also a perennial danger, as the history of systems testifies, that the ship of metaphysics may falter in the quiescent waters of remoteness, unimportance, or disinterest. Existential categories, on the other hand, are partial in scope; they are representations of being reflected through the one mirror of subjective concern. Some of their proponents also assume without justification that we are completely cut off from any intelligibility in reality. If metaphysics may falter in the sea of remoteness, existential thought may founder in the bosom of rhapsody and incoherence. The difficulties in one side, however, do not *ipso facto* establish the greater validity of the other alternative. Shall we then try to escape both sides by steering our course along the safe and uncommitted shoreline of linguistic analysis? To state this possibility for what it plainly is, is the first step toward dismissing it—not in order to refute it, but to relegate the value of its aim to that of an assistant. Linguistic analysis,

we may ask, of what? And we cannot long avoid the answer, "Words which stand for concepts of being." Philosophy cannot exist without ontological commitments, even though it may announce to the contrary.

If in this option we cannot be satisfied with either alternative alone, and if we cannot reject both of them together, we shall somehow have to incorporate both into our conception of categories. But this outcome is not reached merely by default; these two human interests, the metaphysical and the existential, must be synthesized on pain of narrowness and incompleteness. This is what appears to us, then, to be the distinctive connotation which the idea of category ought in the future to bear, namely, unification in a single synthesis of the metaphysical and existential perspectives on being. Metaphysical attempts at an impartial, objective description of reality cannot be abandoned, because the desire for truth cannot be abandoned. Existential attempts at a concerned, subjective illumination of being in relation to the participating self cannot be abandoned, because the aspiration for authentic existence cannot be abandoned. Both approaches to being must be retained, but both must be unified in a transcendent perspective. The results of such a synthesis will be what we mean by the ultimate categories of being. And so we have reached the culmination of our exposition: categories, we suggest, are those aspects of being which are generic for predication, ontological in reference, and simultaneously illuminative of the natural theoretical divisions of, and the existential concerns in, being as being.

What, in conclusion, does this "meta-categorial" analysis imply concerning the actual inquiry into categories? It implies primarily that, while the knowledge of being can only be discovered and not invented, the aspects of being which are selected as significant for distinction, i.e., as categories, will be those which embody in the same concepts both metaphysical and existential illumination. There will be no juxtaposed sets of categories or opposed approaches requiring a choice of one or the other. We cannot afford to lose the Aristotelian penchant for objective truth; yet we cannot remain content with the isolated detachment of his approach. Nor can Thomism be regarded as having dealt fully with the existential dimension of philosophy. At the same time we cannot yield to existentialism in its abandonment of metaphysical categories in favour of purely phenomenal modes of thought. If we cannot return placidly to pre-Kantian philosophizing, neither can we accept the Kantian bifurcation as the prolegomenon to all

future existentials.<sup>6</sup> We shall not consider adequate anything less than a simultaneous display, in the same concepts, of both metaphysical and existential meaning.

If such a conception appears to be asking too much of a system of categories, there is the overbalancing consideration that this dual yet integrated emphasis is, of all tempers in philosophy, the one that is most natural to man as inquirer. Such a conception of categories is, in any case, the one that appears to us called for by the status of philosophy after six decades of the twentieth century.

6. I propose this word to designate the enterprise of existential thinking, analogous to metaphysics as the enterprise of metaphysical thinking. Several subject matters in philosophy are designated by corresponding words: metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, semantics. Why not existentials?

## The Concept of Consciousness in Advaita Philosophy— Not a Study in the Advaita Philosophy

by

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The Advaitins assert that consciousness is one and eternal. The aim of this paper is to make a descriptive study of this assertion. In other words, this assertion seems to go against common sense and usage. Common sense is not shocked if it be asserted that mental acts or acts of consciousness occur and cease to occur, and are accordingly many and transient. But the assertion of the Advaitins shocks it. Hence, we may, in the spirit of Prof. Moore, ask an Advaitin making the assertion: what on earth do you mean by the words occurring in your assertion?, what is the analysis of it? True, common-sense need not be granted sacrosanct validity. We need not deny that usage is vague and may mislead. But we cannot treat this as a consideration for certifying the assertion of the Advaitins as intelligible and not shocking. We must press for an analysis of it. The analysis need not be in the favourite form of Prof. Moore. It need not exhibit the equivalence between an analysandum and an analysans. It may be an analysis by discrimination (or what amounts to the same thing, by inspection). It may lay bare the conceptual system that makes the assertion intelligible. It should make us familiar with the language system that permits us to speak in this way. Such an analysis we must demand. The aim of this paper is to meet this demand. It will make a descriptive study of the assertion of the Advaitins. To put it differently, it will try to find out the language system that the Advaitins recommend, but will not discuss the question if the recommendation is commendable. It will say a few words on the decision procedure, but will not make any attempt to decide the merit of the language system recommended by the Advaitins. Its aim is descriptive and not recommendatory.

The Advaitins start from *laukika anubhava* or unformalised common sense. They admit that such common sense distinguishes between a consciousness of blue and a consciousness of yellow. But then they argue that this is not sufficient to establish the view that there are different acts of consciousness which occur and cease to occur. This is a philosophical theory, and unformalised

common sense knows nothing about it. To put it differently, the Naiyāikas hold that consciousness is neither one nor eternal. They opine that there are many conscious acts and that they are transient. If they be asked for the grounds for holding such an opinion, they will in all probability refer to unformalised common sense. Now, in the opinion of the Advaitins this is quite insufficient. The Nyāya theory has formalised the unformalised common sense, but this is not the only possible formalisation. The acceptance of the Nyāya theory is not a necessary condition for accepting unformalised common sense. One accepts it long before one is a Naiyāika. Similarly, unformalised common sense is not a sufficient condition of the Nyāya view. So the relation between unformalised common sense and the Nyāya formalisation of it is not one of implication, and this is as it should be. For if the relation had been one of implication the question of proposing an alternative theory would not have arisen at all. The Naiyāikas have formalised the unformalised common sense in one way, and the Advaitins do it in another way. They hold that from the fact that unformalised common sense distinguishes between a consciousness of blue and a consciousness of yellow, it does not follow that there are two different acts of consciousness, one showing the blue, and the other the yellow. For, it may very well be the case that there are here two different objects and one consciousness taking notice of them on different occasions, and not two different objects and two different acts. Indeed, in the opinion of the Advaitins, this is the case. Unformalised common sense need not be formalised in the Nyāya manner. We may formalise it even if we deny that there are different acts of consciousness. So the real point at issue between the Advaitins and their critics is not who are falsifying unformalised common sense, but who are formalising it happily. The issue is not one that can be settled by an appeal to observation. For this appeal to observation is either an appeal to unformalised common sense over again, and so incompetent to settle the issue, or makes use of a formalised conceptual apparatus and hence will fail to find out anything that will be admitted even when a different conceptual apparatus is used. The issue is not one that can be settled on empirical grounds. It is not factual. How it is to be settled is a different question, and we do not dare to ask it. We can only attempt to find out the language that permits us to speak as the Advaitins do, and also the considerations that are offered for proposing it.

The Advaitins argue in favour of the proposal made by them that consciousness of blue does not differ from consciousness of

yellow as consciousness, but only as referring to blue. So it is reasonable to conclude that we have here not two different acts of consciousness but one identical individual consciousness showing the blue on one occasion and the yellow on another occasion. It goes without saying that the argument is inconclusive. For the identity under consideration may not be the identity of an individual, but only that of the members of a class. The Naiyāikas and the other critics of the Advaitins are not slow to point this out. Obviously, two different analogies are at work. The Advaitins and their critics are using two different models. Thus, the difference between a consciousness of blue and a consciousness of yellow is in the opinion of the Advaitins analogous to the distinction between Julius Caesar, the friend and benefactor of Mark Antony, and Julius Caesar, the husband of Calpurnia, or to the distinction between the *ākāśa* (ether) as characterised by a pot and the *ākāśa* as characterised by an abbey. But in the opinion of the Naiyāikas it is analogous to the distinction between two members of the same class, say between two 'a's, one typed quickly after the other on the same sheet of paper and from the same type-writer. Thus, the Advaitins and their critics make use of different analogies and for different reasons.

We may now try to unearth the analogies and to see why the reasons for choosing the analogy of the critics are deemed incogent by the Advaitins. In the opinion of the Naiyāikas a consciousness of blue is felt to be an occurrent. So is a consciousness of yellow. Hence it is almost incomprehensible why a different analogy should be chosen. But this reason fails to satisfy the Advaitins. They hold that this feeling is not a constituent of unformalised common sense. That is, to characterise something as an occurrent is to characterise it also as temporal. But is consciousness temporal? Does it occupy any position in time? The Naiyāikas answer these questions in the affirmative, and quite consistently. Indeed, the statement that consciousness is an occurrent is the logical equivalent of the statement that it is temporal. Their assertions and denials go together. And as the Naiyāikas cannot deny that consciousness is temporal, they also cannot deny that it is an occurrent. Similarly, as the Advaitins cannot accept that consciousness is temporal they cannot accept also that it occurs. Hence, they cannot admit that the feeling referred to above is a constituent of unformalised common sense. The statement that consciousness is an occurrent is a member of the language system of which a statement like 'time is real' is one of the basic statements. But this is not the case with the Advaitins. They do not grant reality to

time. According to them time is phenomenal only. And, if the unformalised common sense be unconditionally acceptable or absolutely presuppositionless, if, that is to say, it is what a thorough phenomenological reduction that has blown away all conceptual impositions certifies it to be, it cannot express itself in statements like consciousness is an occurrent. The argument of the Naiyāikas that consciousness occurs or that it is temporal, and hence neither one nor eternal, is, in the opinion of the Advaitins, *asiddha* or not securely founded. It should not be said that the opinion of the Advaitins is unsatisfactory in that it introduces a highly dubious metaphysical proposition. For the proposition that time is real is also metaphysical, and cannot be above suspicion. True, the proposition that time is real does not loudly announce itself to be dubious or metaphysical as does the proposition that it is phenomenal. But it is a metaphysical proposition nevertheless; and precisely because it is metaphysical, it can contradict the proposition that time is phenomenal. As no 'ought-statement' can be sought to be established or dis-established by an 'is-statement', so also a metaphysical proposition can be neither contradicted nor corroborated by a non-metaphysical proposition. And, if while doing ethics we commit the naturalistic fallacy when we ignore the rule that no 'ought-statement' follows from an 'is-statement', we behave equally inelegantly when we do metaphysics and do not honour the principle that a metaphysical proposition does not follow from a non-metaphysical proposition. Anyway, the opinion of the Advaitins should not be dubbed queer on the ground that it is metaphysical, or founds itself on a metaphysical proposition. We should judge similarly the following argument of the critics and the Advaitins' treatment of it. Thus, the critics argue that conscious acts are many and transient in that a conscious act belongs to a subject and there are many such subjects. To this the Advaitins reply that the distinction between the conscious subject and consciousness, as well as the distinction between one such subject and another is itself phenomenal, and accordingly their thesis cannot be disestablished by what the critics say.

The critic may say that the assertion of the Advaitin is unintelligible for the following reason. A conscious act is different from the object to which it refers. Thus, the consciousness of a table is different from the table of which it is conscious. By parity of reasoning, the conscious act that is conscious of this conscious act is different from it. Accordingly, there should be more than one conscious act. He who denies this cannot even say that consciousness is one and eternal. To this the Advaitins reply that

consciousness is a reflexive fact. We are not conscious of consciousness as we are conscious of an object like a table. To be conscious of consciousness is not the same thing as to be conscious of an object. Consciousness is self-revealing. Accordingly, the consciousness that articulates itself in the statement under discussion is not something different from the consciousness that is designated by the subject term of the statement. As the critic has failed to notice that consciousness is a reflexive fact, so he has thought otherwise. Indeed, the Advaitins would continue, the chief reason for the critic's inability to decide in favour of their analogy is his failure to see that consciousness is a reflexive fact. If he had noticed that consciousness is self-revealing, he would have noticed also that a consciousness of blue would have shown itself to be different from a consciousness of yellow as a consciousness, if it were really different. That is, the critic also admits that a consciousness of blue is indistinguishable from a consciousness of yellow if blue and yellow be bracketed off. But he explains this non-discrimination, or the feeling of identity, by arguing that they are two exceedingly similar members of the same class. But one is permitted to make such an assertion only if one asserts further that consciousness is not self-revealing. If one holds that consciousness reveals itself, then one must hold also that while showing its object it will show itself, its difference from its object and other conscious acts also. The statement that we fail to distinguish between two acts of consciousness by leaving out their objects, as they are two exceedingly similar members of the same class, is meaningful only if consciousness be not reflexive, and has no place in a language that uses 'consciousness' to stand for a reflexive fact. Similarly, the Advaitins would argue, the statement that consciousness is an occurrent can have no place in their language system. For to hold that consciousness occurs is to hold also that it was absent, that its antecedent absence (*prāgabhāva*) is annihilated and it comes into existence. Similarly, to hold that it ceases to occur is to hold also that it becomes absent, its emergent absence (*dharmābhāva*) occurs. But in the language system of the Advaitins such statements are meaningless. The assertions on the antecedent and emergent absences of consciousness are to be made by consciousness, and it cannot make such assertions without contradiction. In other words, in the language-system of the Naiyāikas or some critics of the Advaitins 'consciousness' does not stand for a reflexive fact. Accordingly, a statement about the absence of some consciousness, say a consciousness of blue, is not made by this consciousness but by another consciousness which

is about this consciousness. This consciousness about consciousness is about absence but is not itself absent, and an assertion about absence of consciousness is permissible. But in the language-system of the Advaitins, 'consciousness' stands for a reflexive fact, and so an assertion about a consciousness, i.e. an assertion about its absence (if such an assertion is possible) is made by it. Accordingly, a statement about the absence of consciousness is in its logical character analogous to a statement like 'I am the son of a barren mother'.

It may now be argued that the statement that consciousness is a reflexive fact only implies that a consciousness, say that of blue, while showing its object shows itself also, and not that it cannot be the object of another consciousness. The Naiyāikas hold that we are conscious of consciousness only retrospectively, and the doctrine that consciousness is reflexive denies this. But the essence of this denial is that this is not always the case. An occurring consciousness (*vartamānaṁ jñānaṁ*) to be revealed does not wait for another consciousness, but a past or a future consciousness does. The statement that consciousness is a reflexive fact is not incompatible with the statement that it is an occurrent. A language-system without doing violence to the consistency principle may admit both of them. The reply of the Advaitins to this argument is obvious. They would say that the argument rests upon an inadequate interpretation (or a different interpretation) of the statement that consciousness is a reflexive fact. To admit this statement is to admit not only that consciousness while showing its object shows itself also, but also that it can be immediate without being an object. Indeed, the essence of the view that consciousness is self-revealing is that it is never revealed as an object. Hence, according to the Advaitins, as we are never conscious of consciousness as an object, the two statements under consideration cannot be deemed compatible.

Thus we see that in the opinion of the Advaitins consciousness is not known as an object. It is not unknown either. It is known uniquely. It becomes immediate without being an object. And this is the analysis of the statement that consciousness is a reflexive fact. Obviously, this statement or the statements into which it is analysed are metaphysical. That is, they are not decidable either on empirical or on *a priori* grounds. They need not be deemed meaningless. Or, as Prof. Stenius in course of his analysis of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* has observed: "In reality the 'condemnation' of philosophy as 'nonsense' is no true condemnation at all.

It is true that philosophical propositions are nonsensical, 'meaningless', in the sense that they have no clear content, but this does not mean that philosophising as a mental activity is 'meaningless' in the sense of 'aimless'.<sup>1</sup> These statements are not aimless. They invite us to formalise experience in a particular way, to adopt a particular point of view. They are, in short, constituents of a recommended conceptual framework, or, a language system. So we may say that when an Advaitin asserts that consciousness is one and eternal, he is recommending a language to us in which the word 'consciousness' is used to stand for a reflexive fact.

But why does he make this recommendation? This recommendation is not aimless. But what is this aim? The discussion of this question assumes two other discussions, viz. what is the nature of the language that is recommended?, and in which language do we talk when we talk of linguistic recommendations? Obviously, we cannot discuss these questions in full. We can discuss them only briefly. The language-system is not formal. The constituent statements of it have a non-verbal appearance, and this appearance is natural. They need not be interpreted before they assume the non-verbal air. Besides, the relation between the language-system recommended by the Advaitins and those recommended by their critics is not analogous to the relation that holds between the Euclidian geometry and the non-Euclidian ones. The language-system recommended is not formal. But it is not a descriptive semantic system either. It does not make use of a formal calculus and does not possess a system of semantic rules to interpret it or to link it with experience. True, it employs the expressions and the truth operators of ordinary language, and so may be said to possess a calculus and a system of semantic rules. But the same expressions and the same operators are used by the critics of the Advaitins also. So it is a descriptive semantic system in appearance only. That is, the language system recommended is for metaphysical purposes. Hence we may ignore the question if it provides us with rules of truth, or rules that state under which conditions a sentence of this system can be verified. But still we cannot call it a descriptive semantic system. Besides, we cannot ignore that there are here no atomic or basic propositions. Whenever we scrutinise the statements, we notice that from a strictly logical point of view no one of them is atomic. They presuppose one another. The statement that consciousness is one and eternal becomes intelligible when it is seen that consciousness is

a reflexive fact. But it is not a truth function of the second proposition, for the Sāṃkhya philosophers also hold that consciousness can be immediate without being an object; but they do not accept it, do not think that it is reasonable to hold that there is only one consciousness. Similarly, the Vijñānavādins accept the proposition that consciousness is reflexive as the Advaitins do, but this does not prevent them from holding that consciousness is momentary. So it is clear that the language-system is not a descriptive semantic system. Indeed it is doubtful, if it is a system at all. That is, apparently it is a system in that it consists of many statements, and these statements form a logical whole. But only apparently. For there are not many statements here. To hold that there are many statements is to invite the objection that the system either pays no respect to the consistency principle or moves in a vicious circle. There is, so to say, only one statement here, and the system is a system only apparently. This is true not only of the language-system under consideration, but of all the systems recommended by the metaphysicians. Anyway, the language-system under consideration is neither a formal nor a descriptive semantic system. But it is also not meaningless. It aims at something. What that something is we shall see presently. But before that, let us develop this argument and try to see the nature of the linguistic recommendation.

It is obvious by this time that the language-system recommended is neither formal nor semantically descriptive, and that it uses expressions and operators of ordinary language. So it may be said that the language under consideration is the ordinary language given a metaphysical twist. This is not the outcome of some lurking confusion, because the twist is not given aimlessly. The twist given to the ordinary language ceases to be just ordinary. It becomes a different language, a language that uses familiar words in unfamiliar senses; and the different twists as given by the different metaphysicians bring into existence different such languages. But all these languages move within the ambit of ordinary language, and no Humpty Dumpty should pay it extra. This is our answer to the first question. And the answer to the second question is also clear. The different language-systems to be compared must meet on a common platform, and this platform is the parental language, or ordinary language given no metaphysical twist. Obviously, this ordinary language is not what is ordinarily called ordinary language. The language of Tom, Dick or Harry, that is, what is ordinarily called ordinary language, is not metaphysically neutral even if Tom, Dick or Harry are not metaphysi-

cians. So the ordinary language to which we should refer is in a technical sense ordinary. Hence the question is: Is there such a language? Is it language? It seems that the Mādhyamikas of India answered the question in the negative. The essence of their view seems to be that there is no language when there is no concept employment, and when all concept using is brushed aside language is also brushed aside. The language contemplated is no language at all. The argument that if there were no such language then the metaphysical systems that have been built by twisting would be like the grin of the Cheshire cat which may be there even when there is no cat would have been judged by them to be inconclusive. For from the fact that there is a twist it does not follow that something has been twisted. The twist or conceptualisation is the work of *Trṣṇā* and it can introduce the phenomenal not by tampering with the real but out of nothing, which is not a formidable something but nothing literally. Such a heroic answer may not appear satisfying to all of us. We may think that by a process of phenomenological reduction it is possible to arrive at the absolutely unformalised sense. The Advaitins at least thought in this way. They did not speak of phenomenological reduction. They would have disliked the term. But they would have said that when we go through a certain discipline and enjoy the state known as *nirvikalpa samādhi*, then we arrive at this purely unformalised sense. In *nirvikalpa samādhi* we are, but are not conscious of anything. Neither are we unconscious. We are as consciousness, as conscious of consciousness, the 'of' being non-prepositional. Hence, the Advaita recommendation. The critics of the Advaitins do not accept this recommendation as they construe the state of *nirvikalpa samādhi* differently. They also like the Advaitins try to formalise it, but they formalise it differently. Indeed, the distinctive character of Indian philosophy is that all the systems are attempts at formalising *nirvikalpa samādhi*. The Cārvākas are exceptions. Rather, they deny that there is anything to be formalised here. The Mādhyamikas go deeper than the Cārvākas. Whereas the Cārvākas deny the philosophical necessity of formalising *nirvikalpa samādhi*, but do not deny that ordinary experience may be formalised, the Mādhyamikas deny this also. The Naiyāikas and other critics of the Advaitins who believe in substance-philosophy formalise it by holding that not as consciousness but as soul substances we are in this state. Anyway, this is the motive behind the Advaita recommendation. It is not aimless. In western philosophy this motive is hardly visible. But the western metaphysicians also make linguistic recommendations inspired by some motives. The

motive may be the formalisation of moral behaviour, or of aesthetic behaviour, or of political behaviour or something else. The motive of the Advaitins is the formalisation of *nirvikalpa samādhi*. They think that it is impossible to accept it unless it be also accepted that consciousness is self-revealing and one and eternal.

This is the analysis of the statement of the Advaitins. It shows that the statement is not an assertion but a proposal. It is a proposal to use the term 'consciousness' in a particular way. But the proposal is made in the form of an assertion. This is not without reason. The linguistic recommendation is not just Humpty-Dumptish. The considerations behind it are not linguistic. True, they are not factual. But they are not linguistic also. Indeed, we may call these considerations both factual and linguistic, and neither factual nor linguistic. If we are not ashamed of speaking in a very cavalier fashion we may say that they are what they are. That is, what is being considered is what it is to be a conscious being. We are concerned with the problem of being or of being a conscious being. The problem is not one that permits itself to be treated scientifically. Whatever assertion we make will be a very general assertion. It will resemble an inductive assertion. But this induction is neither instantial nor non-instantial. We cannot confirm or disconfirm it as we do an instantial or a non-instantial inductive assertion. So the problem cannot be called a scientific problem. Neither can it be called a problem of usage or a problem that can be solved by a linguist. It is not a pseudo-problem either. True, whenever we discuss it we move in an area of indeterminacy. But that is not sufficient for calling it a pseudo-problem. Anyway, there seems to be only one way of discussing it, and that is by offering different ways of speaking about it, or to change the way of speaking, different ways of conceptualising it. The statements that we make are not declarative. They are recommendatory. And this is true not only of assertions that we make in metaphysics but also of those that we make about it. We cannot say that metaphysical assertions are nonsense, unless we use the term 'nonsense' in a Pickwickian sense. Similarly, without being Pickwickian we cannot describe them as either factual or linguistic, or as both factual and linguistic, or as neither factual nor linguistic. As in metaphysics we do not describe, so we cannot describe it, and that we cannot describe it is not a description. Rather a metaphysical proposition is descriptive only in this sense. The peculiar nature of metaphysics is that not only its statements but also the statements about it are devoid of determinate content.

## Philosophical Analysis and Religious Language

by

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The Philosophy of Analysis in its earlier form as Logical Positivism not only attacked metaphysics at its root, but also went to shake the very foundations of Religion. It did not care so much about denying God's existence but rather insisted that statements about God had not, and could not have, any meaning for us. This religious implication of Language Analysis has been less noticed than the anti-metaphysical implication; yet during the past ten years it has been increasingly observed and has provoked not a few reactions.

When Professor John Wisdom in 1945 read a paper on "Gods" at a meeting of the Aristotelian Society, he presented the case for our belief in God in a very careful way, and those of you who read his paper must surely remember his illustration of the untended garden which still produced some very nice flowers even though the weeds had not been removed. One visitor in the garden concludes that there is an invisible and unheard gardener; another visitor refuses to believe it. Professor Wisdom then examines how each of the visitors can be justified in his attitude. He concluded with this confession: when we inquire in this way into the reasonableness, the propriety of belief in gods, there occurs to us a double and opposite-phases change; we feel as if there was something, some power; and yet we have to correct and adjust a great many aspects of that feeling. New techniques like the one of psycho-analysis might seem to explain many things; but it remains that other elements still speak to us of our oneness with God.<sup>1</sup>

In 1948, Bertrand Russell had a debate with Father F. Copleston for the 3rd Programme of the B.B.C., on "The existence of God". Bertrand Russell took the position of an agnostic, not of an atheist: namely, he does not believe that he can prove that God does not exist, but he does not think that God's existence can

1. *Logic and Language*, edited by A. Flew, Oxford, 1952, pp. 185-206.

be proved. Father Copleston brought in the argument from contingency to prove God's existence, but Russell held that he understood only one type of necessity: the one applicable to analytical propositions, namely those propositions which it is self-contradictory to deny. Russell went further to state that he did not believe that one could look for the cause of the totality of objects. The first part of the debate concluded in this way:

"Copleston: It may be that the scientist doesn't hope to obtain more than probability, but in raising the question he assumes that the question of explanation has a meaning. But your general point then, Lord Russell, is that it's illegitimate even to ask the question of the cause of the world?"

"Russell: Yes, that's my position."

"Copleston: If it's a question that for you has no meaning, it's of course very difficult to discuss it, isn't it?"

"Russell: Yes, it is very difficult. What do you say — shall we pass on to some other issue?"<sup>2</sup>

Then they went on to discuss the argument from religious experience, but since Father Copleston himself admitted from the start that he did not regard religious experience as a strict proof of the existence of God, the issue could not be forced in this line either.

In 1948, Professor Findlay published in *Mind* an article on the question: "Can God's existence be disproved?" and in his answer to the question he went much further than Professor Wisdom and Lord Russell, holding the view that God's existence should be considered as disproved. He wrote:

"The religious frame of mind... desires the Divine Existence both to have that inescapable character which can, on modern views, only be found where truth reflects an arbitrary convention, and also the character of 'making a real difference' which, is only possible where truth doesn't have this merely linguistic basis. We may accordingly deny that modern approaches allow us to remain agnostically poised in regard to God: they force us to come down on the atheistic side. For if God is to satisfy religious claims and needs, he must be a being in every way inescapable, One whose existence and whose possession of certain excellences we cannot possibly conceive away. And modern views make it self-evidently absurd (if they don't make it ungrammatical) to speak of such a Being and attribute existence to him."<sup>3</sup>

2. Bertrand Russell: *Why I am not a Christian*, London, 1957, p. 155.

3. *Mind*, Vol. 57, 1948. Quoted from *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, edited by A. Flew and A. MacIntyre, London, 1955, p. 55.

This view provoked strong reactions as we can make out from subsequent articles and exchanges of replies in *Mind*. The text of the whole controversy has been published in "*New Essays in Philosophical Theology*" edited by Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre.<sup>4</sup>

Another discussion took place in the periodical called "*University*" about Theology and Falsification, and Antony Flew asked which kind of experience would lead one to admit that the affirmation of God's existence may be considered as disproved. And the question met answers which ranged, to justify religious language, from an appeal to special *blicks* or standpoints which are quite justifiable in some circumstances, to the claim that Religion is a special field with its special problems and special context.

In the face of the attack on religion by the language analysts, some theologians of Oxford took up the challenge very seriously. We find among them E. L. Mascall, M. B. Foster, B. Mitchell, I. M. Crombie, Austin Farrer, etc. They formed a group known in Oxford as "The Metaphysicians". The group published a book: *Faith and Logic, Oxford Essays in Philosophical Theology*, containing essays on such subjects as "The Possibility of Theological Statements" by I. M. Crombie and "How Theologians Reason", by G. C. Stead.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Mascall published a separate work: *Words and Images, A Study in Theological Discourse*.<sup>6</sup>

Also in 1957, Professor Ian T. Ramsey gave us his book: *Religious Language, An Empirical Placing of Theological Phrases*,<sup>7</sup> in which he studies especially the language of the Bible, in function of his theory of religious situations for which an odd language is permissible.

More recently still, Ninian Smart, a former Oxford student and a Lecturer in the History and Philosophy of Religion at London University, published his book: *Reasons and Faiths, An Investigation of Religious Discourse, Christian and Non-Christian*,<sup>8</sup> and here he gave a great deal of attention to the language of Buddhism and Hinduism. He rejects all attempt to analyse religious language in a uniform way, and he tries to show that religious lan-

4. *Op. Cit.*, pp. 56-75.

5. Boston, The Beacon Press, 1957.

6. London, Longmans, 1957.

7. London, S. C. M. Press Ltd., 1957.

8. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.

guage is logically variegated. There are different strands of religious discourse which must be recognized. This will prevent us from over-simplifying our definition of religion.<sup>9</sup> He finds inappropriate the common distinction between reason and revelation and also all attempts to prove God's existence.<sup>10</sup> "It is wrong, he says, to intellectualize religion".<sup>11</sup>

The answers which the "Metaphysicals" of Oxford have offered to the linguistic analysts were courageous, but, on the whole, they strike me as being made too directly from the religious fold itself, within which meanings can be easily attached to religious propositions. In this way, Religion appears too much, it seems to me, as an attitude which one takes and defends from within, without there being some logical priority for a rational proof of God's existence.

On the other hand, I would not favour the higher-order "Neutrality" of N. Smart, in philosophy of religion, by which he tries to place himself above the level of natural theology to examine the utterances and activities of all religions. This seems to me to be a too exclusively historical or phenomenological standpoint. Unless the basic problem of the philosophical proofs of God's existence is tackled, one can never, I think, have an ultimate criterion to judge the value of the various religious languages.

Among the historic forms of the argumentation for God's existence, the ontological argument has held for a time a great place. But it had been criticized and rightly rejected, even before Kant. I do not admit it; for, truly, one cannot pass from the idea of the Necessary Being to its reality, but only to the idea of existence as contained in the idea of the necessary.

The cosmological argument has also been criticized by Kant. He put the argument in this way: "If something exists, an absolutely necessary being must likewise exist. Now, I, at least, exist. Consequently there exists an absolutely necessary being."<sup>12</sup> Now, Kant thinks that to vindicate the major premise of this syllogism one must appeal to the conception of the most real being, and thus he thinks that the ontological argument is being re-introduced here. I should question his analysis here, for the existence of the

9. *Op. cit.*, p. 197.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 200.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 202.

12. *Critique of Pure Reason*, Everyman's Library, p. 333.

necessary being is not derived from its notion, but from the existence of the effect which obliges us, not only to conceive, but to affirm its cause.<sup>13</sup> Kant will, of course, pursue his objection against the argument and say that the principle of causality is valid only in the sensible order where the principle can be applied to the phenomena, but that it cannot be applied to the transcendent order.

The refutation of Kant may not be easily carried out, but, if I may suggest a way of escape to his criticism, I must point out that, though much of his analysis of our knowledge is true, yet it is incomplete. He makes, I think, an imperfect analysis of what our actual knowledge implies.

Knowledge is not simply an imposition of unifying forms, as are the categories; in that case, the Supreme Form under which all others would be grouped, would still be a formal entity and not a Real Absolute Being. Knowledge is an action, as Fichte, the successor of Kant, has well pointed out, and as an action, it places itself in reality with all its conditions of possibility. Now to affirm any particular object as finite, as sooner or later we must do, and this without any explicit comparison with the Infinite, since we do not know It yet, we must make an implicit affirmation of the Infinite itself, and not simply conceive Its idea. For how could we say absolutely that any particular object is "something", a finite thing, if we had no standard to go by? And yet the standard here cannot be any other particular finite, for the latter too, to be recognized as finite, requires the same absolute standard. The implicit affirmation of the Infinite is the condition of possibility of the affirmation of the finite, and as necessary as this latter affirmation. Now the criterion of critical philosophy is to accept as valid what must be affirmed. Here it is the necessity of affirming the Infinite which we have to accept.

We may recall here Bertrand Russell's difficulty in his dialogue with Father Copleston. Russell accepted only the formal necessity of an analytical proposition and of its elements. His attention could have been drawn to the very necessity of the action of thinking and its elements. Here action is being determined not only by the finite objects, but also by the Infinite object which renders possible the affirmation of any other objects.

13. Cf. F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. VI: "Wolff to Kant", London, 1960, p. 298.

Proofs of a transcendent reality may not be easily grasped and this one, which we have merely delineated, should be vindicated by the refutation of many objections which can be made. Yet if it stands in its main result, it immediately indicates the way to show how statements about God can become meaningful: positive perfections can be attributed to God as the Cause of all other perfections. The rules of such attribution could be evolved from this basis. But this is beyond the scope of my paper. I intended only to record recent trends in Philosophical Analysis, in so far as they have a bearing on the study of religious language. In the face of such trends, it is not enough, I think, to examine religious languages from within each faith, nor at the higher level of fully developed theologies, but the philosopher's task is first to face the very problem of God's existence and to find in the solution of this problem the basic rules of philosophical religious language.

## A Study in the Vedanta Theory of Meaning

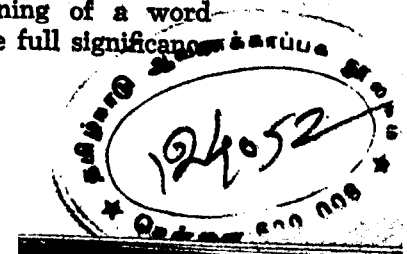
by

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In this article I shall confine myself to an examination of two and only two questions, raised and answered in the Vedanta literature of Samkara School of Philosophy. The two questions are connected, and the first one leads to the second. The first question that is raised and discussed is, what does the primary meaning of a word consist in and what connection has this meaning with the objects denoted by the word? The second question that is discussed is, when can a sentence be said to be absolutely complete in meaning, and whether there are propositions at all that are self-complete in meaning according to this criterion? I select these two questions for my paper, firstly because they appear to me to reveal most eloquently the nature of the philosophical programme of these philosophers, and secondly because even though all his critics, eastern and western, have invariably ignored his observations in respect of these two questions, Samkara himself has clearly stated that these questions are of utmost philosophical significance in-as-much as his observations thereof provide the final proof for his philosophical conclusion. In course of this article I hope to be able to show that Samkara is fully aware of the fact that the philosophers' business is not to prove the existence of a transcendental Deity like the theologians' God, but to carry on a kind of logical analysis which is of absorbing interest for him. The programme which he works out is one of philosophical analysis and he is fully aware of it.

(1)

Samkara discusses the question of the nature and meaning of words in his commentary on Vedanta Sutra 1-3-28. According to him, a word like 'Cow' primarily stands for the class-characteristics. The individual cows which constitute the denotation of the term cannot be signified by the term. If the meaning of a word stands for the individuals, we can never know the full significance



of it as the number of such particulars is infinite. The meaning therefore is a universal or a *Jāti*. "Now it is with species that the words are connected, not with the individuals, which, being infinite in number, are not capable of entering into that connection."<sup>1</sup>

Thus it is clear that according to Samkara all words are connotative. Even proper names (*Samjnas*) have a general signification. Samkara makes the general observation that all names have general meanings, and that a proper name is not different in kind from a common name like the designation of an army officer.<sup>2</sup> Madhava, the author of *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, elaborates this question regarding the meaning of proper names like 'Devadatta'. "So in the case of words expressing particular names, in consequence of the cognition that 'this is the same person from his first coming into existence to his final destruction, in spite of the differences produced by the different states of childhood, youth, adolescence, etc.', we must accept a fixed genus as Devadattahood, etc. (as directly denoted by them)."<sup>3</sup>

After the discussion of the general meaning of words, a further question is raised in this connection as to how a word which primarily signifies a universal can at all mean the particulars of the class to which it is applied on account of their possessing the universal or the class-characteristics. One answer that is given by the author of *Vedantaparibhasa* does not seem to be satisfactory. According to him, though a word primarily means a universal, it can secondarily or indirectly (*Lakṣhanaya*) mean the individuals to which it is applicable. It is unsatisfactory because the same objection which was raised with regard to the question of the primary meaning standing for the individuals may also be raised here. Since the members are infinite in number, it will be impossible to know what exactly the secondary meaning is; and if we can never know the secondary meaning of a word, the phrase 'secondary meaning' will have no use at all. Samkara seems to have been worried with the same question also, but the answer that he gives is different. According to him, a proposition like 'this lotus is blue' has to be interpreted with reference to the universal meaning of the words 'lotus' and 'blue'. We can at best suppose that there is a reality outside the meaning-complex of this proposition about which reality we intend to talk by means

1. *Brahma Sutra Samkara Bhasya*, Vol. 34, p. 202.

2. *B. S.* Vol. 34, p. 203.

3. Translated by Cowell and Gough, London, 1914, p. 217.

of this proposition. But the intention and the achievement fall apart. The reality is presupposed but does not directly come within the meaning-scope of the proposition. This is picturesquely pointed out as a proof of the inherent defect of the finite intellect, that it can move in the realm of name and form but cannot know the ultimate reality which eludes our grasp.

If words mean in all cases, according to Samkara and his followers, only universals, and the world of reality remains outside these universal meanings, what then can sentences, which are made up of words, mean at all?

## (2)

A sentence-meaning is constructed out of the expressed meanings of its constituent words. So in order that a sentence may yield a unitary meaning its constituent words must serve as each other's complement in completing its sense. They must be so related that the expectancy of the words is fulfilled and the meaning of the sentence completed. This relation of mutual expectancy is due to the syntactical rules. A syntactically complete sentence does not depend upon any other word outside of itself to complete its sense. If one does not complete one's sentence syntactically, one fails to speak anything meaningful. A mere string of words does not form a meaningful sentence.

So far Samkara is following the grammarians, though his standpoint is not one of grammar but of meaning. He then follows a line of reflection which is of enormous consequence for his monism. He says that a grammatically complete sentence is not absolutely complete in sense. An isolated statement has all kinds of implications. An isolated statement like 'he will perform a sacrifice' may give rise to all kinds of questions due to expectancy—who is he, what kind of sacrifice, how long it will take, what people are invited, who is to act as the chief priest etc? This kind of expectancy is logically interminable. In actual speech activity we do not raise so many questions. Our interest being practical, we are satisfied with the answers to the questions that we actually raise. But theoretically speaking or speaking from the standpoint of philosophy which is concerned with the completeness of meaning in the absolute sense, we must admit that any statement or set of statements is syntactically incomplete. If we follow up the implications of meaning of any statement which is descriptively used, it will develop into an entire system of meaning-

ful propositions about all things of the world and we can never achieve this impossible task. But a statement like 'That thou art' is absolutely complete in sense. It is an identification statement which, therefore, is non-relational in character. Since no relation is asserted, no further question is logically possible. The proposition therefore is self-complete and does not give rise to any further questions, because nothing is left out in relation to which further information could be sought. Class-membership, subject-predicate and relational propositions necessarily lead you out of your immediate experience and thereby become unstable in respect of their meaning. Only an identification statement keeps you exclusively confined to your present subject. Samkara says that this is his final proof for the assertion that plurality is false and unity of all things is the highest truth. "Finally here is the ultimate (decisive) argument to prove the oneness of the Atman. There is nothing further beyond it of which an expectancy exists. While in an ordinary statement such as 'one should make an offering', there arises the expectancy 'unto whom', 'with what' and 'in what mode', no such expectancy is known to arise with declarations such as 'That Thou art' or 'I am Brahman', in-as-much as they convey the absolute oneness of true essence. It is only when some other object exists as a remainder that there might arise an expectancy; but there does not exist any other object apart from and beyond the Atman which can give rise to the expectancy."<sup>4</sup>

In amplifying his meaning Samkara and his followers maintain that there is an obvious contradiction in the case of such simple identification statements. The words 'That' and 'Thou' have different meanings. Hence the true meaning of the proposition is reached by sublating the differences of the meanings of these two words and thereby reaching the identity in meaning through (exclusive non-exclusive) metaphorical meaning. Similarly also, with regard to any other identification statement like 'This is that man'. The 'This' as determined by the present now and the 'That' as determined by another time determination have different meanings. But since this is a non-relational proposition and we wish simply to identify the present object rather than describe it, we have to purge these two words of their differences in meaning, and thereby keep them as pure demonstrative words which only point to the world but do not describe any part of it.

4. Belvalkar's translation of Brahmasutra Samkara Bhasya, 2.1.14, Poona, 1923, p. 30.

Thus according to Samkara, all *Samsargāvagrāhī* statements which include both the subject-predicate and relational propositions are ever incomplete in their meaning. Since the number of questions that can be raised about the subject of their discourse is theoretically interminable, it is impossible for them to express their fullest meaning with the help of any completed system of propositions. But a proposition which makes use of only demonstratives, whose only function is to point at the facts and not to describe them, does not give rise to any such *ākamkshā* and therefore there is no need of expanding their meanings for satisfying the *ākamkshā*. If demonstratives are to point at the facts, their function is completely over after this pointing is done. In such cases to ask further questions is to ask what they are not intended to do.

## (3)

We are now in a position to appreciate the answers that are given by Samkara and his followers to questions which they raise; and in trying to understand the nature of the answers that they give, we can also understand the nature of the activities in which they are busy.

Samkara asks the question,—if the meaning of a word is a universal, how can we mean the particular objects by these words? In one particular answer, both Samkara and his followers seem to come very close to the right point. They have said that even though a word primarily means a universal, there is no difficulty in our applying it to particulars, because we have learnt the use of it by observing the linguistic behaviour of our elders. From this the author of *Vedantaparibhasa* has concluded that though words primarily mean universals they also secondarily mean the particulars. This we have already seen to be unsatisfactory. Samkara also, in a different mood, has maintained that since the primary meaning is the universal, the particular can only be supposed to be outside the meaning-complex of a sentence but cannot be directly talked of.

Now it is clear that Samkara and his followers have argued that since the primary meaning of a word is universal, it cannot at all mean the particular; and since it cannot mean the particular, our talk is not directly about the particulars at all. In this connection we have only to point out that words have universal meaning and that they never mean the particulars. But we can mean the particulars with their help by using them referringly when we want to talk about the world. There are conditions which determine

the use of a word, and there are occasions when we use the words to refer to objects. The conditions which determine the use and the actual use are different. In the first case we speak of the logical meaning, and in the second we have to point to the referring rules.

Samkara and his followers insist that there is no difference in kind between a general word and a proper name. But in this case we can point out that they are definitely mistaken. Unlike the proper name, a common name is applicable to different members of a class, and the word serves a classification function and not a referring function at all. But a proper name like Devadatta merely refers and directs out attention to a particular object but does not classify it. Dr. D. M. Datta's defence takes the help of an entirely irrelevant point. If the word John applies to several individuals, it is a matter of linguistic accident only and not a linguistic rule. But the word Zebra is applicable to the different members of the class according to a definite linguistic rule.

Now coming to the question of meaning of a sentence in the absolute sense, which is raised and answered by Samkara and his followers, we have to observe that the analysis given is defective and the conclusion reached is wrong. A descriptive sentence like 'He is to perform a sacrifice' or 'He is performing a sacrifice' is not incomplete in meaning in the absolute sense. In fact there is no such absolute fact. Language is a social institution devised for the practical purpose of communicating ideas and giving information. What questions will be raised and how many of them will be raised will always be determined by the problem in hand. Samkara's insistence that we stop short at a definite step and do not carry on the logical possibility is based upon his misunderstanding of the practical function of language. Further, his remarks about propositions which are confined to the use of demonstrative words alone, though correct, are of little consequence. Such propositions like 'that thou art' or 'this is that' are self-complete or self-contained, not because they are superior to the descriptive propositions in respect of answering all questions at once, but because by their incapacity to give any information at all they do not arouse any question at all. They are linguistic substitutes for mere physical gesturings towards facts without speaking anything about the facts at all. Since they do not speak anything at all, they could not be said to be self-contained and self-complete in respect of meaning. They are self-complete just because they are bereft of any factual meaning. They are made in the factual

context, but they do not describe any facts at all. Hence the question of their misdescribing or underdescribing does not arise and so also the question of their attaining completeness in meaning.

But whether we agree with what Samkara and his followers say in reply to the questions that they raise or not, it is obvious from the foregoing discussion that Samkara and his followers are interested in detecting linguistic peculiarities which are of absorbing interest for them. It is therefore tragically misleading to regard them as authoritarians, who realise the inadequacy of logical reasoning to grasp the nature of ultimate reality and consequently direct us to read the sacred texts. Those who have taken them to be authoritarians have based their conclusion upon Samkara's statement that a transcendental Deity like the ultimate cause of the world is beyond perception and inference, and can be known only from the study of the sacred texts. But such a statement can be construed to mean that anybody who wishes to know about the transcendental Deity of the texts, he should read the texts rather than come to the philosopher. They should not expect the philosopher to provide what he cannot provide. The philosopher is busy in understanding the meaning of meaning in the absolute sense. His is a logical absolute. Thus it clearly seems to me that Samkara does not believe that the philosopher's business is to provide proofs for the existence or non-existence of transcendental deities. He is clearly aware of the fact that a philosopher's business consists in analysis of language and giving proofs for his observations about the different types of linguistic use. The fact that he has asserted that descriptive language is inherently defective and demonstrative language is self-complete, and that therefore reality can be realised and not described,—all this is a statement about linguistic peculiarities put in the ontological mode of speech. Because his critics have misunderstood his linguistic programme and have wrongly taken him to be an authoritarian they have, one and all, ignored this statement of his which the philosopher himself has regarded as his final proof regarding the identity of all things. Because it is an observation about the peculiarity of language and has no obvious relation to the actual words of the sacred texts, it has been natural for his critics to have completely ignored it. And once we ignore it the way to regard him as an authoritarian, because of his statements in a different context, becomes straight. His argument really is final only if we take him as a logical analyst and not as an authoritarian at all. He is not an authoritarian, but a logician and a critic.

The knowledge that he claims to obtain from this type of analysis is not about the world, but about our various uses of language to describe the world. It is a different type of knowledge than our knowledge about the world. It is Pāramārthika knowledge, metalinguistic in character, which is different from knowledge about the world which is practical knowledge or Vyāvahārika knowledge expressed in object-language. Because it is about language and not about the world, Samkara apprehends, this type of knowledge might be ridiculed by one who is not sympathetic towards philosophical activity. To an anticipated objection his answer is that such analysis is neither useless nor erroneous, because it results in cessation of ignorance about the nature and function of language, and also because advancement in the field of actual knowledge cannot contradict it. He says, "Nor again can such knowledge be objected to either because of uselessness or erroneousness; firstly it is seen to have for its result the cessation of ignorance, and secondly there is no other kind of knowledge which it could be sublated."<sup>5</sup>

5. B. E., Vol 34, p. 328.

## God and the Absolute

by

G. R. MALKANI

There is a view that *philosophy* conceives of reality as the changeless noumenal reality. It is the Supreme Spirit. *Religion* conceives the very same reality as a personal God who arouses in us the specifically religious emotion. It is then argued that there is no contradiction between philosophy and religion. For the theoretical consciousness, reality is one and absolute. For the devotional consciousness reality is a person. All this indeed may be true. But still the difference cannot be denied. The question is, is the difference ultimately real? Is reality both personal and impersonal *in itself*? Or alternatively, is the human mind alone responsible for falsely introducing the distinction where it does not really obtain?

(a) Let us suppose that reality is both personal and impersonal *in itself*. In that case, the theoretical standpoint that it is impersonal would not be correct. It would be a half-truth only. We must say that it is *both*. But how is this possible? The same thing cannot have two contradictory epithets. To reconcile the two, we must say that reality is somehow composite,—it is part 'personal' and part 'impersonal'. But this makes of it two different realities somehow joined together, not one. If philosophy reaches one kind of reality, the impersonal, it is partial and false. If religion reaches the other kind of reality, the personal, it too does not know. The truth is that reality has a division within it into two separate parts. The question here to answer is whether we can theoretically establish that reality in itself is so divided. We suggest that this is not possible, and that the two forms of reality cannot be theoretically ultimate and irreducible. All that we can say in this connection here is that the evidence on which philosophy relies is pure cognitive evidence, and it is, therefore, theoretically more reliable. The evidence on which the religious consciousness relies has reference only to the emotional requirements of a finite person. But emotion is not a theoretical form of consciousness.

(b) It may now be said that there are indeed not two different realities somehow joined together, one 'personal' and the

other 'impersonal'. Reality is one and the same,—only it has two different faces or aspects. You cannot have the one without the other, even as you cannot have the obverse of a coin without the reverse. But even then we shall have to prove on the basis of cognitive experience alone that reality is not simple, and that it is two-faced. Can we do that? The Absolutist systems at least have argued that personality has certain necessary limitations, and that ultimate reality cannot tolerate any of them. Similarly, those systems that exalt personality above everything have argued that the category of 'personality' is the very highest, and that therefore reality is essentially personal, not impersonal. *By what logic* can we prove that reality is two-faced and that it is both personal and impersonal at the same time? It is just commonsense to note that if the same thing can have both the epithets, only one of the epithets can truly belong to it, while the other can only belong to it through false attribution.

(c) We shall now suppose that it is not reality that has any distinctions within it. Distinctions are due to a difference of *stand-point* only. Says Sri Radhakrishnan, "To compare the Supreme with the highest kind of being we know is nearer the truth than comparing him with anything lower. Though the supreme spirit in its essential aspect is the changeless noumenal reality, its representation in the form of a personal God who is the source, guide and destiny of the world seems to be the highest open to the logical mind. The difference between the Supreme as spirit and the Supreme as person is one of standpoint and not of essence, between God as he is and God as he seems to us. When we consider the abstract and impersonal aspect of the Supreme, we call it the Absolute; when we consider the Supreme as self-aware and self-blissful being, we get God." (A Source Book in Indian Philosophy, p. 629).

But the question here is, can both the stand-points be equally true? They evidently give us two different versions of reality. Either therefore one of them is true and the other false, or both are false. One of the stand-points is supposed to relate to God as he is. That then alone is likely to give us the truth, if it is at all available to us. God as he seems to us can only be a subjective God.—a creation of the finite mind. He cannot be a *real* God. To say that the distinction is a matter of stand-point is really to give up the case for a real distinction in the nature of things themselves. And then what about the logical mind? Would it be logical enough if it recognises a higher level of truth, but is content with

a false representation of it at the human level? A truly logical mind seeks truth and is satisfied with nothing less than *the truth*. To suppose that the highest open to the logical mind is a man-made God is to condemn that mind to perpetual error and ignorance.

(d) Religious men, however, are loath to give up their strong belief in the reality of a personal God, and so they indulge in some vague talk about the failure of the human mind. Says Sri Radhakrishnan, "The real is beyond all conceptions of personality and impersonality. We call it the 'absolute' to show our sense of the inadequacy of all terms and definitions. We call it 'God' to show that it is the basis of all that exists and the goal of all" (*Ibid.* p. 629). We ask, what can possibly be beyond the conceptions of personality and impersonality? Is there a real third alternative for thought or meaningful discourse? Once we take our stand on the reality of the spirit, this reality will be either personal like the God of religion or impersonal like the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta. The only thing that can transcend the dualism is actual mystic experience, which cannot be spoken. But then we are already beyond all meaningful discourse and beyond all philosophy. Within the limits of the latter, we have to decide what satisfies a truly logical mind. Is ultimate reality personal or impersonal? It is a significant question, which must be answered one way or the other. Impersonal reality has a meaning for us. But what is neither personal nor impersonal is just meaningless. We may choose to go beyond all meaning; but then we are only unconsciously supporting the very thesis which we want to reject, namely, the impersonal character of ultimate reality.

It is true that personality can be symbolic for what is essentially impersonal. We can thus say that the individual 'I' is symbolic for the universal *ātman*. We therefore agree with the statement of Sri Radhakrishnan that "personality is a symbol and if we ignore its symbolic character it is likely to shut us from the truth" (*Ibid.*, p. 629). In this sense, it would be true to say that "God is a symbol in which religion recognises the Absolute". But then invariably the symbol is less than the symbolized. The former must be rejected in favour of the latter. The literal meaning of God is 'a person who creates the world'. This must be rejected in favour of the Absolute, who is not a creator, but who is the ultimate ground of both God and his creation. If we accept the Absolutist logic, God cannot be ultimately real. But if we do not accept that logic, we must at least be candid about it and not indulge in vague talk about God and the Absolute making up a

higher unity. We cannot therefore agree with Sri Radhakrishnan when he says, "God is a symbol in which religion cognises the Absolute. Philosophers may quarrel about the Absolute and God, and contend that God, the holy one who is worshipped, is different from the Absolute which is the reality demonstrated by reason. But the religious consciousness has felt that the two are one" (*Ibid.*, p. 630).

We contend that the guidance of reason is to be preferred to the uncritical guidance of the religious consciousness. There can be different approaches to Truth. But the theoretic or the purely philosophic approach is primary, and it takes precedence over all other approaches including the religious. Or to vary the idea, the highest religion is the religion of Truth, understood as the object of the theoretic consciousness. It is practice that must follow theory, not vice-versa. Religion is essentially a practical affair — a matter of feeling and will. It is naturally subordinate to philosophy, the Higher Wisdom. If we mix up the ideals of the two, we can only succeed in creating confusion of thought. Let the logical mind prevail!

## The Epistemological Realism of Saṃkara

by

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In this paper I propose to bring into bold relief the epistemological realism of Saṃkara, one of the most celebrated philosophers of India. Saṃkara is a metaphysical idealist and epistemological realist. That he is a metaphysical idealist follows from the fact that the Ultimate Reality or what he chooses to call Brahman is infinite light or consciousness as such (*Brahmano'pi caitanyasvarupasya samastajagadava-bhāsakatvādudupanno jyotiḥ śabdaḥ*. Brahma-sutra 1/1/24 with Saṃkara's commentary thereon). According to him, Brahman which is consciousness as such is the sole truth or reality. The Upanisadic dictum "*Neha nānā'sti kiñcana*" (there is no plurality, no diversity here) is interpreted in accordance with his non-dualistic metaphysical position.

If Brahman alone is the sole truth or reality, which means negation of all plurality and diversity, how are we to explain and account for empirical or temporal knowledge which implies and involves plurality, diversity and difference? Saṃkara speaks of beginningless ignorance (*Avidhyākhyam*..... *adhyāsaṃ puraskṛtya sarve pramāṇaprameyavyavahārāḥ*. *Adhyasabhāṣya*), which is said to be responsible for the appearance of plurality, diversity and difference essential to all empirical knowledge; and these are said to be all false from the transcendental or higher stand-point (*pāramārthikadṛṣṭi*). So it is obvious that from the transcendental stand-point Saṃkara cannot afford to have anything like empirical or temporal knowledge (*vṛttijñāna*). It is only from the empirical or lower stand-point (*vyavahārikadṛṣṭi*) that Saṃkara can speak of knowledge in the usual sense of the term. Such knowledge as *vṛttijñāna* is a mental event in time and involves the distinctions of knower, known and knowing. This knowledge of the finite individual (*Jīva*) as a mental mode in time is to be clearly distinguished from Brahman which is non-temporal Intelligence or Knowledge. According to Saṃ-

kara, such knowledge (*ṛttiñāna*), as is commonly known to us, points to an object independent of it (*Upalabhyate hi pratipratyayam bahyo'rthah—stambhaḥ kudyam ghataḥ pata iti.*—Brahma Sutra, 2/2/28 with Śaṅkara's commentary thereon). This is the view of knowledge in the common acceptance of the term, which Śaṅkara advocates and defends against the attacks of the Yogacara school of Buddhism. While explaining and commenting on the Brahma-sutra "*Nabhāva Upalabdheḥ*", 2/2/28, Śaṅkara assails the Buddhist view known as subjective idealism (*viññānavāda*) and establishes beyond doubt his theory of epistemological realism. Let us take note of some of the arguments with which he tries to refute the Buddhist view of subjective idealism and seeks to place his theory of epistemological realism on a sound footing.

First, external objects cannot be supposed to be non-existent by the vijñānavādi Buddhist, simply because they are known or experienced (*Upalabdheḥ*); all knowledge in the usual sense of the term points to an object external to, and independent of, it, such as pillar, wall, pot, cloth, etc. Whatever is known or experienced cannot be said to be non-existent. For example, a man partaking of a dish can ill afford to say that he is not partaking of anything. Similarly, a man perceiving an external object by means of sense-contact can hardly continue to say that he is not perceiving it.

Secondly, the contention of the viññānavādi Buddhist that what is known or experienced is nothing but knowledge or experience and not any object does not stand the scrutiny of reason, because it offends against the nature and verdict of experience itself. Every man knows pillar, wall, etc. as the objects of knowledge and does not take knowledge itself for pillar, wall, etc.

Thirdly, whatever is known by any of the valid sources of knowledge such as perception, inference, etc. claims to be existent; and what is not known by any of these sources cannot claim to be existent. External objects, however, are known by all the valid sources of knowledge; and therefore they are existent. According to Śaṅkara, *percipi est esse* (to be perceived is to be existent) and not *esse est percipi* which Berkeley holds.

Moreover, if objects were really non-existent, there would be no sense in speaking of the essential identity between knowledge and objects. Besides, one knowledge is distinguished from another only with reference to its object; because knowledge *qua* knowledge is the same.

Thus with the foregoing arguments Śaṅkara establishes the existence of objects external to, and independent of, knowledge. Negatively speaking, where there is no object, there cannot be any knowledge. What however are we to say about the knowledge of 'sky flower', 'barren woman's child' etc.? Since these are empty words having no objects corresponding to them, there can be no knowledge of them except a verbal one. (*Śabdajñānānupatī vastuśūnyo vikalpaḥ.*—Yoga-sutra 1/9). A question may naturally arise here: If all knowledge alike, as Śaṅkara contends, points to an object beyond it, how do illusions or cases of illusory knowledge occur? How are we to distinguish between illusory knowledge and non-illusory knowledge?

The advaitin replies consistently enough that even in illusory knowledge there is an object cognised in it, and that the distinction between knowledge and illusion is due to the *character* of the object cognised and not due to the presence or the absence of a real object. Let us consider the example of rope-snake illusion. Suppose you have mistaken a rope for a snake. Here the object of the illusory perception is snake, which is 'personal' or 'private' to you in the sense that the snake in question is perceived by you and not perceived by others; while an object of ordinary knowledge (e.g. a real or jungle snake) is 'impersonal' or 'public' in the sense that it is sharable by all.

Secondly, the snake referred to above is *temporary* in the sense that it persists only as long as the illusion continues or until it is sublated by a later knowledge such as "this is not a snake, but a rope", whereas an object of ordinary knowledge is more *abiding* or *stable*. Thus even in illusory knowledge there is an object cognised. The illusory snake is objectively present to the perceiver as a real snake. Only the illusory snake is a private and temporary one, and should be recognised as neither real nor unreal but indescribable.

Hence we conclude that the epistemological realism of Śaṅkara, viz., all knowledge, illusory or non-illusory, points to an object is not without sufficient justification.

## Logical and Metaphysical Arguments for Puruṣa in the Sāṃkhya

by

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Let us take up the different proofs that the kārīkā advances in order to prove the existence of Puruṣa. Before doing that we assume that the assertions of the kārīkā are not clear and definite, and in order that we may clearly understand their import we take the help of Vāchaspati Misra. We shall follow Vāchaspati pretty closely in his interpretation of the kārīkā:—

*Samghātāparārthāt Triguṇādiviparyayādādhīṣṭhānāt  
Puruṣo'sti Bhoktrbhāvāt Kaivalyārtham Pravṛttescha.*

Prof. D. D. Vadekar, in his "The Sāṃkhya arguments for the Puruṣa" (Published in the selected papers of the 34th session of the Indian Philosophical Congress, Cuttack, 1959) translates the above kārīkā as follows. "The Puruṣa exists (1) from the character of being-meant-for-other of the collocations, (2) from (this other having to be) the opposite of the three guṇas and so on, (3) from (the necessity of there being) a controller (for the collocations), (4) from (the necessity of there being) an enjoyer (for collocations), and (5) from (the fact of the existence of) an activity for the purpose of aloneness (freedom or release)". But if we interpret the above kārīkā with Vāchaspati the translation will be as follows: "The puruṣa exists (1) from the character of being-meant-for-other of the collocations and (the other in this case having to be) the opposite of the three guṇas etc., (2) from (the necessity of there being) a controller (for the collocations), (3) from.....

Let us examine these arguments one by one and see whether they conclusively prove the Puruṣa which is Sākṣī, kevala, Madh-  
yastha, Draṣṭā and Akartā as depicted in the 19th kārīkā.

*Argument-1-Samghātāparārthāt Triguṇādi Viparyayāt.*

Since the composite things are for the enjoyment of another, the existence of the enjoyer is proved from the existence of the

composite things or the Saṁghātas; and this enjoyer must be a non-composite enjoyer, for only the enjoyables are composite. This is the simple contention of the kārīkā, and we should not object to it by arguing that all the enjoyers in this world are also enjoyables and so composite. To such an apprehended objection Vāchaspati replies: "*Drṣṭāntadrṣṭa Sarvadharmānurodhenatvanumānamicchātā Sarvānumānocchedaprasaṅgaḥ*". All the characteristics of an object, cited as an instance, should not be sought in the object to be proved. Here the enjoyed object's character of pointing to the enjoyer, who is not the object of enjoyment at the same time under the same circumstances, only is to be taken account of.

Prof. D. D. Vadekar, in his article mentioned above, objects to this argument in the following way. "But if we suppose that the purposive character of things implies a being other than the things themselves, it is evident as a consequence that such a being must obviously be a purposeful being, one who has ends or purposes to be served by those things. And yet it is clear that such a being cannot be identified with the Sāṁkhya puruṣa, whose non-agency (*Akartṛbhāva*) is announced in kārīkā nineteenth....."

This very objection Vāchaspati himself apprehended, but only in a different fashion. If all composite things are for another's sake, the other is also a composite thing as experienced by us. If the objects of enjoyment are composite, the enjoyer is no less composite in this world, and this point constitutes the objection to the above argument.

But Vāchaspati vindicates the validity of the Kārīkā argument by pointing out that this objection holds good only if the phrase *Saṁghātaparāthavāt* is taken in isolation from the phrase *Triguṇādiviparyayāt*. We have to put the argument (1), in the following way. The puruṣa is *Triguṇādiviparyaya*, because the *Saṁghāta* is *Parārtha*. All things that have the triple character etc. (*Triguṇādi*) are necessarily composite (*Saṁghāta*). So the puruṣa is not of the triple character etc., since it is not composite; and it is not composite, for it must be the other (*para*) of all that is composite. All objects of the world are composite enjoyables; the very logic of an enjoyable points to an enjoyer who is different from all that is enjoyable; and if he is different from the enjoyables, he is different from the triple character etc., (*Triguṇādi*), just as one cannot be a *kaṭha* if not a Brahmin.

*Tatsaṁghātatvam asmin Parevyāvartamānām traigunyadi  
Vyāvartayati Brāhmaṇatvam iba Vyāvartamanam  
Kaṭhatvādikam.*

From this it follows, we may remark by the way, that the word 'enjoyment' here is not used to mean enjoyment that other composite things get from their own class, but simply *darsana* or non-attached perception, that does not render the percipient an object of perception.

The fallacy of infinite regress which follows from the assumption that from the composite enjoyables we can infer only the composite enjoyers is also another reason why we must stop short at a non-composite and ultimate enjoyer. If from composite things we can infer only composite enjoyers, then these composite enjoyers will also point to other composite enjoyers; for whatever is composite is enjoyable, and the process goes on *ad infinitum*. In order to avoid this difficulty, the *Triguṇādiviparyaya* puruṣa is required. *Tasmādanavasthāvīyā'syāsamghātatvamicchātā atriguṇatvam Vivekitvamaviṣayatvamasāmānyatvam Chetanatvama-prasavadharmitvam Chābhhyupeyam.*

For the above reasons *saṁghātaparāthavāt* and *triguṇādiviparyayāt* are intimately interwoven and the first leads to the second and the second fulfils the first. The objections raised by Prof. Vadekar have already been anticipated by Vāchaspati and answered.

Another difficulty, raised by Prof. Vadekar, is that "...if the puruṣa is 'discriminating' and 'subjective', and 'intelligent' it will be realized that it cannot be neutral (*Madhyastha*) (kārīkā 19) or indifferent (*Udāsīn*) (Kārīkā 20) as it is said to be, as 'discrimination' and 'intelligence' and even 'subjectivity' do involve 'valuation', which would give a direct lie to the alleged 'neutrality' and 'indifference' of the puruṣa". Here again Vāchaspati will help us by clarifying the meaning of the word '*avivekī*' in kārīkā 11. '*Avivekī*' there is not used to imply 'non-discriminating', but 'indistinguishable' as translated by Prof. Ganganath Jha. Just as *pradhāna* is not distinguishable from itself, even so the *Mahat* etc., are not distinguishable from *pradhāna*, since they are essentially of the very nature of *pradhāna*. There is also another alternative meaning, suggested by Vāchaspati. The word '*avivekī*' may stand for 'non-separative'. *Athavā Sambhūyakāritā Atrā Avivekitā*. No particular thing in this world can produce its effect without the help of some other thing, and this character of dependence upon others is *avivekitā*. In short *avivekitā* is not 'non-discrimination' but either 'indistinguishability' or 'non-separativeness', the latter, in our opinion, being more appropriate. The puruṣa being the opposite of the characteristics of *prakṛti*, is

'vivek' i.e., independent. Difficulties as those raised by Prof. Vadekar would arise only if we translate the word 'Vivek' as 'discriminating'.

The other word that puts Prof. Vadekar into difficulty is 'aviṣayaḥ', for he translates it as 'subjective'. But the more accurate translation is 'non-objective'. Such a negative characterisation does not commit anything. Its function is only to omit certain characters from the puruṣa. Even though this word 'aviṣayaḥ' is translated as 'subjective', this subject is not of the sort of a subject in whom subjectivity and objectivity are mingled together. It is not, in other words, a finite subject. The pure subject may not have any tinge of objectivity in it. Consequently that which is the pure subject is only the seer, unaffected by the things perceived.

Intelligence, another word that is objected to by Prof. Vadekar, is also not used here to mean defective intelligence. The intelligence that we find here, in the sphere of nature, is not perfect intelligence, and it is either pleased or displeased at its enjoyment. If this intelligence is what is proved by the above argument, we have seen how it will lead to infinite regress. The other (Para) of these does not possess the characteristics that these intellects, that we come across in nature, possess; and hence the ultimate intelligence is not 'valuational'.

From the above analysis it will be clear that 'independence', pure 'intelligence' and perfect subjectivity do not involve valuation; whatever involves valuation is on the objective level, and the pure subject is different and opposite to all that. The puruṣa with these characteristics is perfectly the puruṣa depicted in the 19th kārikā.

#### Argument 2—Adhiṣṭhānāt

Whatever is *triguṇātmaka*, i.e. with pleasure, pain and delusion, is seen to have a controller, which is different from that thing, just as a chariot controlled by the charioteer. Hence *buddhi* etc. being *triguṇātmaka* have a controller. If this controller again is *triguṇātmaka*, then it will lead to *regressus ad infinitum*. So the ultimate controller must be without the *triguṇā* if he is to be different from them. This argument is very similar to the first one. Prof. Vadekar's apprehension that "this argument, most evidently, proves, if it proves anything, the 'agency' (*Kartṛbhāva*) of the puruṣa, rather than its non-agency...", is justified only if we are prepared to admit the regressus. That which is an agent, can also be a patient. But the ultimate agent is not a patient. In fact

Isvarakṛṣṇa admits at a later stage that the influence of the puruṣa upon the prakṛti is not a desired end of the puruṣa. It is an automatic process as it were that the prakṛti is influenced by the puruṣa. But in reality the puruṣa is not affected in any way by the evolution of prakṛti: "*Prakṛtīreva tu Nānāśrayā Śativadhyate Saṁśarati Muchyate Cheti*" (Tattvakaumudī-62). So here comes in the question of immanent finality. Prakṛti does not consciously serve the puruṣa, for she has no consciousness. Again, the order and system of the evolved world is not due to any desired end of puruṣa.

#### Argument—3. Bhoktṛbhāvat

Everything of this world is with pleasure, pain and delusion. Since these have to please, displease or delude not themselves but somebody different from them, this somebody must be the puruṣa of the 19th kārikā; for things cannot operate upon themselves, (*Svātmani vṛttivirodhāt*). This sounds absurd. How can things please, displease or delude that which is not related to pleasure, displeasure or delusion in any way? We can do away with this difficulty by pointing out that the very nature of things as infected with *sukha*, *duḥka* and *moha* is self-stultifying. They are pleasant, painful or deluding to the empirical subject; but so far as the ultimate puruṣa is concerned, they are neither and the puruṣa is wholly unaffected. So this nature of things does not conclusively establish the puruṣa, but only points to him. If the things are pleasant, they are pleasant to one who is different from the thing which is pleasant; and he who is different from things that are pleasant is not pleased, and consequently the thing is not pleasant for him. The concepts of pleasure, pain and delusion point to something neutral (*Madhyastha*).

#### Argument—4. Kaivalyārtham Pravṛttescha

Prof. Vadekar elaborates this argument as follows:

".....the striving for aloneness implies a 'striver', or that aspiration implies an 'aspirer', and that this 'striver' or 'aspirer' is not the prakṛti, for it is the prakṛti from which separation is sought for, and therefore the striver or aspirer must be other than the prakṛti, and this other, therefore, is the puruṣa".

But Vāchaspati Mishra's elaboration of this argument is somewhat different and more acceptable in the context. This is more a scriptural testimony than a logical argument. The scriptures and the great sages recognise the state of isolation (*Kaivalyam*),

the state without pleasure, pain or delusion. Prakṛti or any of its evolutes cannot be said to be without them, for a thing cannot be divested of its own essential nature. *Te Hi Duḥkhādvyātmakāḥ Kathaṁ Svabhāvādviyojayitum Sakyante?* So, that, which will be isolated or released, must not be of such character as duḥkha etc.; for if duḥkha etc. constitute its essential nature, it can never be divested of them, i.e., its own nature. So if the testimony of both the scriptures and the great sages is to be accepted, it can be accepted only on the ground that he who will be freed is different from prakṛti and its evolutes, and this is the puruṣa of the 19th kārīkā.

The difficulties of Prof. Vadekar arise from the fact that he construes the words of Isvara-kṛṣṇa without the help of Vāchaspati. The meaning he gives is unacceptable at least in the present context. This argument does not prove the striver from the strife, but it establishes the puruṣa from the prescription of the authorities for kaivalyaṁ. The word 'pravṛtti' may be interpreted as *vārtā* or *vṛttānta* of the srutis and not as the strife of the individual agent.

So we cannot agree with Prof. Vadekar when he concludes that "these arguments, on the other hand, point to a different kind of puruṣa—a purposive and active kind of principle or agent or elan which directs and activates the evolution of nature towards the ends cherished and appreciated by it". We have seen on the other hand that these arguments point to a puruṣa which is pure consciousness, inactive, the ultimate subject of the evolutionary process, and one who is not an agent. The influence of puruṣa upon prakṛti is inexplicable and yet prakṛti evolves. We have also seen how the conception of things as pleasant etc. points to the "*Nitya-Suddhabuddhamuktasvabhāva*", to put it in the words of Kapila. The difficulties of these arguments can be clarified by a different type of analysis than the one carried on by Prof. Vadekar. The fallacy of illicit generalisation, in our opinion, is the most fatal objection against the above arguments. If some things are for somebody else, are controlled, or are enjoyable, that does not mean that all things are so, and we cannot legitimately conclude from the enjoyability of some things that all things are enjoyables.

## Elementary Proposition in Wittgenstein's Tractatus

by

BANWARI LAL

One of the big pillars of logical atomism was the notion of elementary proposition put forward by Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Miss Anscombe, former student of Wittgenstein and one of the translators of his later works, devotes one full chapter of her book<sup>1</sup> on the explanation of Wittgenstein's view of elementary or atomic proposition.

A brief introduction to this notion as it figures in the *Tractatus* may be given here.

It is only facts which constitute the world. Two kinds of facts are there—*Sachverhalt* (uncompounded or atomic or which do not contain facts as their parts), and *Tatsche* (compounded or molecular or those having *sachverhalt* as constituents). For example, "Russell is clever" is both *sachverhalt* and *tatsche*, whereas "Russell is clever and he taught at Cambridge" is only *tatsche*. The first kind of facts, i.e., atomic facts have objects as their constituents. These objects are not epistemological atoms or sense-data. But they are a necessity in logical analysis however far it may be carried. Russell explains an object in these words: "It is a logical necessity demanded by theory, like an electron." The pattern of objects comprising a fact is known as the structure of the fact. Even if the objects composing a particular fact are the same, the difference in pattern makes it a different fact. In the world of human discourse these facts have models in the medium of language. These models, also called pictures,<sup>2</sup> represent facts. The elements of facts have corresponding elements in pictures. A picture, in order to represent a fact, must have something in common with the fact. This common feature is called by Wittgenstein the form of representation. If the form of representation is logical the

1. Anscombe: *An Introduction to Wittgenstein's Tractatus*. Pb. Hutchinson & Co., 1959.

2. A good account of Wittgenstein's picture theory of propositions is given by Prof. Eric Stenius in his *Wittgenstein's Tractatus*. Pb. Basil Blackwell, 1960.

picture is a logical picture. These pictures, in language propositions, are elementary or atomic if they represent atomic facts. Atomic propositions are logically independent of one another. In other words, an atomic proposition contains too little to let us infer anything from it alone. Facts make propositions true or false. If an elementary proposition is true, its corresponding atomic fact exists, if false, it does not.

Although Wittgenstein does not give any example of an elementary proposition, yet its notion plays an important part in his theory. Miss Anscombe rightly shows that Karl Popper's (and some others') interpretation of Wittgenstein's elementary proposition as an observation-statement has no appreciable support in the *Tractatus*. This interpretation springs from one aspect of the notion of name. 1. A name is a simple sign (i.e. none of its parts is a sign). 2. A name names only one particular and no other (according to Wittgenstein the particular must be an object or simple in his sense and not a fact). 3. A name names a particular with which one is acquainted, otherwise the name is used as a description. 3 is not Wittgenstein's but Russell's<sup>3</sup> view, and has probably led to the observation-statement interpretation of atomic proposition.

The following statements, extracted by Miss Anscombe from the *Tractatus*, give a good idea of the notion of elementary proposition.

- (1) They are a class of mutually independent propositions.
- (2) They are essentially positive.
- (3) They are such that for each of them there are no two ways of being true or false, but only one.
- (4) They are such that there is in them no distinction between an internal and an external negation.
- (5) They are a concatenation of names, which are absolutely simple signs.

The truth of these statements is not in question here. But it will be shown that the first four of them can be derived from the fifth. Also comments will be made on her explanation of some of these statements.

(1) is derivable from (5). According to (5), an elementary proposition cannot contain a sign standing for a class, concept or

3. For the notion of name Russell's "Logic and Knowledge" may be seen.

indefinite description. Since elementary propositions do not have any of these, there cannot be anything logically common or contradictory or incompatible in them. It might be suggested, as somebody in fact did, that there might be incompatibilities in elementary propositions like that between red and blue. The simple answer is that red and blue are anything but objects. Or 'red' and 'blue' are not names. Therefore we can conclude from (5) that elementary propositions, since they contain only names, are logically independent of one another.

(2) from (5). Having seen the above conclusion it becomes clear that the question of an elementary proposition being false in the sense of being inconsistent with any other elementary proposition does not arise. The only sense in which a concatenation of names can be false is that it does not picture or represent any atomic fact. And this is possible only if at least one name in the concatenation does not have any reference, i.e., there is no particular or object which it names. In other words, such a sign is not a name which is contrary to (5). Thus it is necessary that all elementary propositions are essentially positive.

(3) from (5). (5) leaves no doubt that there is no scope for an elementary proposition to be false and elementary at the same time. Since one name names only one simple object and no other and since elementary proposition is a concatenation of names, there cannot be more than one fact or situation which makes it true and that is an atomic fact. The only possibility of its being false has been already considered before. It may be noted that any proposition which can be made true or false by various situations does contain at least one indefinite description or a concept or any complex sign except names. But (5) rules out everything except names; therefore, an elementary proposition is true or false only in one way.

Let us consider non-elementary propositions for a moment. Russell's "The present king of France is bald" can be false in two ways: if the description standing for the subject is false, or if the predicate is not true of the subject. Many different situations can make Miss Anscombe's quotation from Wittgenstein, (a) "My watch is lying on the table," true. (a) is true no matter the dial of my watch is facing upward or upside down. (a) is true no matter the table is wooden or iron. And so many other possibilities. Now, if, While explaining (3), Miss Anscombe calls each different situation making (a) true as a different way of (a)'s being true, then, it may be noted that these different ways of (a)'s being true

cannot be brought out in logical symbols, as different ways of (a) 's being false can be done.  $(\exists x) (\exists y) (\exists z) (Fx \cdot Gxy \cdot Hxz)$ '<sup>4</sup>

'F' for 'is a watch', 'G' for 'belongs to' and 'H' for 'is lying on'; and let us suppose, for the sake of simplicity, that the variables 'y' and 'z' range over the classes of human beings and tables respectively. Then, (b) can be false when either of '-Fx', '-Gxy' and '-Hxz' is true. Or all of them together are true. And each of the possibilities gives a different way in which (b) can be false. (We shall see more of negation later). But there is only one way of making (b) true, and that is that the truth-value of all of (b)'s components is positive or true.

(4) from (5). In dealing with (2) and (3) it was shown that there is only one way in which an elementary proposition can be false. So, there are no two ways of its being false however they be named. In fact, (4) says nothing different than (3) so far as the notion of elementary proposition is concerned. (4) is derivable from (3) and hence from (5).

Through (4) Miss Anscombe introduces a new-sounding distinction and terminology. Her distinction between external and internal negation corresponds to the contradictory and contrary or subcontrary of the traditional logic. Take, for instance, her

#### Negation

(A) 'Everyone is wise' Int. (B) 'Everyone is not wise (unwise)! Contrary.

Ext. (C) 'Not everyone is wise': Contradictory.

Interpretation of "not wise" as equivalent to "unwise" is rather dubious.

In symbols the distinction is clearer,

in terms of conj.

(A) ' $(x) (Fx \supset Gx)$ ' (B) ' $(x) (Fx \supset \neg Gx)$ ' ' $(x) \neg (Fx, Gx)$ '  
(C) ' $(x) \neg (Fx \supset Gx)$ ' ' $(x) (Fx \neg Gx)$ '

where 'F' stands for 'is a human being' and 'G' for 'is wise'.

Although conjunction with one false component in (C) is false as is (B) yet (B) and (C) are not equivalent. Once again we

4. The symbolic convention used is the same as Quine's in his *Methods of Logic*.

see that the notion of absolutely simple sign dismisses such a possibility of two ways of being false.

In brief, (1), (3) and (4) are contained in (5) simply because (5) excludes all other signs (concepts etc.) except absolutely simple signs i.e. names. (2) is contained in (5) because the latter does not include any sign which can express negation. Names can't do this job. And that is why Wittgenstein says in the *Tractatus* that an elementary proposition negated does not remain elementary.

So, I believe that (5) is the fundamental of the five statements, although no doubt the first four throw light on the notion of elementary proposition.

Apart from the main stream that (1) to (4) are implied by (5), it may be added, on Miss Anscombe's line of thought, about the so-called two ways of being false and internal and external negation, that that is not all. Propositions can be false in innumerable ways. For instance, "The Queen of England loves the Prince of Wales" can have three negations (or can be false in three ways). "The Queen of England" can be denied or "the prince of Wales" can be denied or "loves" can be denied. In general, ' $Fx \cdot Gx \cdot Hx$ —' can be negated by negating either of them. If (B) and (C) which is the negation of (A) depends on the fixation of terminology, yet, it is proper to reserve "negation" for the sense in which  $\bar{p}$  is the negation of  $p$  and ' $\neg(p \cdot q)$ ' the negation of ' $(p \cdot q)$ '.

## Can a State of Affairs Make a Statement True ?

by

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To show that the sentences 'I feel a headache now' and 'I felt a headache then' have the same meaning when they refer to the same moment, Ayer argues that "the state of affairs which makes what is expressed by either of them true is one and the same"<sup>1</sup> But this argument fails to show what Ayer is proposing to show through it. (1) Firstly, to say that the state of affairs which makes what is expressed by either of these sentences true is one and the same merely means that this state of affairs is one and the same. It does not mean that the statements expressed by these sentences are one and the same. Ayer's argument presupposes that two sentences or statements have the same meaning if the state of affairs which makes one of them true is the same which makes the other true. This presupposition is questionable. Ayer has first to prove the truth of this presupposition. In the absence of such a proof his view is no better than someone else's who may say in regard to the sentences 'I feel a headache now' and 'I felt a headache then' that they are different sentences of such a kind, that the state of affairs which makes what is expressed by either of them true is one and the same. (2) Secondly, there seems to me something quite unsatisfactory in saying that a state of affairs makes a sentence or statement true. By 'a state of affairs' is meant a non-verbal occurrence to which words may be used to refer. If this is what Ayer also means then a state of affairs does not seem to me to make a sentence or statement true. Of course a statement may be said to describe or refer to a state of affairs, but this is very different from saying that a state of affairs makes a statement true.. What may be said to make a statement true is not a state of affairs but an observation or a series of observations recorded by myself or by someone else. For example, in the morning newspaper I read that a man was murdered near the station. Normally I should accept the truth of this report. If I

1. Vide, *The Problem of Knowledge*, p. 55, Pelican Edition.

do not, I would not have bothered to purchase a newspaper. No one purchases newspapers just to enjoy reading falsehoods as children enjoy reading fairy-tales. Suppose on some abnormal grounds I do come to doubt this report, then to make this report true the only proper course for me is to contact the police station or to meet the eye witness of the murder if there exists any. For I cannot make the state of affairs described by the expression 'murder of a man near the station last night' to recur again. So there is no question of my making the newspaper report true by a state of affairs which it happens to describe. What is true about this newspaper report is also true about my memory report that 'I had a headache yesterday'. Normally I should accept the truth of this report. However, in case I doubt it, then what is open for me so that I may make my memory report true is to see my diary in case I keep one, or to consult my friends who met me yesterday. What I cannot do is to undergo yesterday's headache again, so there is no question of making my statement 'I felt a headache yesterday' true by the state of affairs which it happens to describe. But what about experiential statements? Does not a state of affairs make an experiential statement true? There simply arises no question of making an experiential statement true, so there arises no question of making an experiential statement true by a state of affairs. Since one does not miss the truth of an experiential statement, so one cannot be said to make an experiential statement true. The question of making a statement true does not arise unless one entertains doubts about its truth. Experiential statements, as Ayer himself believes, are not doubted when the experience described in them is actually occurring. That they can be doubted in the future is a questionable assumption. Even if it is granted on some theoretical grounds that an experiential statement can be doubted in the future, what one directly doubts in the future are one's memory statements. And we have already seen that memory statements do not function in the way in which Ayer thinks that they function. So the question of experiential statements remains to be considered only when they are detached from the future. And in this condition Ayer himself recognises that they are not doubted. But if they are not so doubted then there arises no question of making them true by a state of affairs or by anything else in the world. (3) Thirdly, what makes a statement true, as we have already seen, is an observation or a series of observations recorded by myself or by someone else. In the case of an experiential statement it is my observation which can make such a statement

true since an experiential statement uniquely refers to me. But it makes no sense to say that 'I am observing my present feeling of a headache'. So it makes no sense to say that I can make my experiential statement 'I am feeling a headache' true.

Ayer thinks that one and the same state of affairs makes both the statements 'I feel a headache now' and 'I felt a headache then' true, whereas the truth is that a state of affairs cannot be said to make any statement true. Even if it makes sense to say that a state of affairs makes a statement true, Ayer's argument fails to show that the statements in question have the same meaning.

## Books Received

1. *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekanand*, by his Eastern and Western Admirers, published by Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, price Rs. 7/50 nP.

2. *Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death*, by F. W. H. Myers, published by University Books, Inc., N.Y., price \$10/00.

3. *Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita*, by S. M. Srinivasachari, published by Asia Publishing House, Bombay price Rs. 12/-

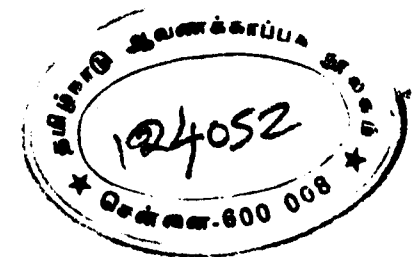
4. *The Holiness of Beauty*, by Rev. John F. Butler, published by The Epworth Press, London, price 3s./6d. net.

5. *Yoga—Union with the Ultimate* (A new version of the ancient yoga sutras of Patanjali) by Archie J. Bahm, published by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., N.Y., price paper \$1/25c. cloth \$3/50c.

6. *The Science of Yoga* (A Commentary on the yoga-sūtras of Patanjali in the light of modern thought), by I. K. Taimni published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, price Rs. 17/50 nP.

7. *Indian Idealism and Modern Challenges*, by Dr. P. T. Raju, published by Punjab University Publication Bureau, Chandigarh, price Rs. 10/-

8. *Tables of Weber Functions, Vol. I*, by I. YE. Kireyeva and K. A. Karpov, published by Pergamon Press, Ltd. Oxford, price £7/- net.



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# METAPHYSICS OF ADVAITA VEDANTA

BY

G. R. MALKANI

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